

# 'I am a lesbian: do you know what I look like?'

From the 'MANITOBAN'

I am a lesbian. No picture needed.

A lot of you probably think you know what I look like. About six feet tall, broad shoulders, lots of facial hair, generally pretty unattractive. (Only ugly women, unable to attract men, become lesbians.)

My days, behind the wheel of a truck, are filled with fantasies of young girls, some merely children, that I want to strong-arm into bed. My nights are spent trying to fulfill these fantasies.

This sexual obsession may spring from an unfortunate anatomical abnormality, or from a traumatic and pathological childhood. I hate men, and attempt to avoid them at all times. I carry a complete stock of artificial penises, and my greatest dream is that someday I may have a real one. I drink beer and watch all the football games.

If not mentally ill, I am at least emotionally disturbed. Any lover that I have remains with me solely out of fear. Most of the general public could pick me out of a large crowd at a glance. I am a danger to young children, the nuclear family, and society in general. Right?

Wrong. But even as a parody, it's probably not far from what many of you believe behind your liberality. One of the greatest threats I pose is that I look, and act, "normal", may sit next to you in class, on the bus, in the cafeteria. If you're male, I may be the girl who turned you down for coffee. (Only a dyke could refuse you.)

For me, as a young lesbian, it is almost unfortunate that the stereotype did not exist. I spent six long years of my life in search of another lesbian, unaware, for a long time, that there were lesbians in Winnipeg. All the knowledge that I possessed from diligent reading consisted of reinforcement that the stereotype existed, and as such, left me completely unprepared for the very ordinary people I discovered. It was hard to discover that world: straight society has so oppressed the lesbian, that weeks of sitting in our well-known bar will bring no results; there is such pervasive fear that only by being vouched for by another known lesbian can one 'come out' into the Winnipeg gay scene. And at first the gay scene can be very frightening.

There is no manner in which the gay scene approaches normal social intercourse. Because of difficulties in licensing, social events are few and hidden. Word of them is spread by word of mouth. And herein lies one of the insidious traps laid by the straight world. Consider. If you, as a heterosexual, were allowed only a few hours a month to interact with other heterosexuals, could you find a compatible mate or dating partner? Would you possibly 'try out' a number of different partners in your search? The answer is yes. Yet heterosexual society in referring to the homosexual, cites the low rate of long-term relationships among us as a



symptom of our emotional maladjustment.

There are other social realities with which I must live. My lover and I must avoid all physical contact in public. Social life outside of the gay scene, in the heterosexually-orientated pubs or recreation centres, is full of male intrusion, which, if ignored, often brings abusive comments. Perhaps now that the Campus Gay Club is in existence, another alternative will be formed for the young gay. In the meantime, I stay indoors a lot.

Every day that I live as a lesbian, I am leading a double life. Somehow, when I say, 'I am a lesbian', all that has gone before, all that I may be, to my family, my school, and my profession, becomes irrelevant. A heterosexual society has labeled me illegal, immoral, and sick, and what activities of mine it cannot legally restrict, it seeks to curtail through discriminatory attitudes and moral sanction. Therefore, I guard my secret jealously. Should it be revealed, I would expect to be asked to leave my faculty, or my profession, and possibly even my place of residence. Paranoia? Consider. A woman in this city was discovered to be a lesbian by virtue of her appearance at an educational on homosexuality. Although she was not asked to leave her place of employment, (perhaps, because this is a concrete act which the Human Rights Commission can deal with) she was demoted, from a supervisory position which she had held from some time, to a menial job in the same department, at a lower salary, working odd shifts and holidays. Under these conditions, she left and sought other employment which despite many years of experience, seemed impossible to find.

At the same time, she and her lover were facing eviction, which they fought against and won, only to be replaced by a constant theft of their mail and gifts of dog shit outside their door. Yet even under such aversive conditions, if one of these women had broken down and sought psychiatric help, it is entirely likely that they would have

been treated solely to cure their homosexuality.

A white male-dominated society has learned many tactics of oppression in dealing with blacks, chicanos, and women, and is now using those tactics to insure that my sexual orientation is a cause for removing my identity as a person, and treating me as a less than healthy object. But I am a person, and there are many like me, who will no longer be subjugated.

Gay is Good. Gay is Proud. And Gay wants equality. But gay does not want tokenism or preferential treatment, as was the case with women when medicine and law lowered their standards so that women, assumed to be unable to meet regular standards, could be admitted in greater numbers. We demand acceptance not in spite of or because of our gayness, but irregardless of it.

The oppression of the lesbian, in particular, and of gay people, in general, is closely related to and a legitimate concern of, the feminist movement.

As a woman, I share with all women oppressive laws, the treatment of women as sexual objects, attempts to legislate, and failing that to coerce, male control over female minds and bodies. I was coached, as a female child, in the standard ethic of dolls and frilly dresses, was discouraged from rough play, learned to cook, clean, sew, and display myself as a sexual object, was fed the tradition of the male-dominant, female-submissive nuclear family. I rejected this enforced sex role as my gay brothers have rejected the "mariboro man" dictum, and chose instead an alternate life-style.

STAFFERS INTERESTED  
IN  
HELPING WITH  
THE BRUNS  
RED'N BLACK SKIT  
ATTEND  
THE SUNDAY MEETING  
7:00 p.m.

It is a life-style which strikes out at a most sacred bastion of male power: the nuclear family and its oppressive sex role attribution for the female. Equally as important is the assailing of another stronghold: that only a man, through the all-powerful penis can fulfill a woman sexually and emotionally.

It is interesting to note that male writers on lesbianism, both trained and untrained, must first portray us as mimicking heterosexual life-style with one partner assuming a "male" role; secondly, theorize that all lesbians secretly desire a penis; and thirdly, content that all lesbians need is "a good fuck" which will bring realization of what they as a lesbian have missed.

Such statements are baseless lies, used to bolster a male ego which dares not face the fact that being a male is not better or best,

only equal. A great number of gay men and lesbians have had heterosexual relations or been married, and have come to homosexuality as a rational and valid alternative which they, as people, find more emotionally and sexually satisfying.

This has not been a policy statement. It is one young lesbian's view of her oppression, a view reinforced constantly on this campus by both male and female heterosexuals.

I am a lesbian. And that's not so much my problem as it is yours. My homosexuality is as natural to me as your heterosexuality may be to you. The problems that I have connected with my sexuality, stem from without, from your oppressive laws and attitudes, which not satisfied to repress me as woman, must also repress me as homosexual.

## Business Administration Final Year Students

Today, the Chartered Accountant plays one of the most exciting roles in business management. He tackles complex and fascinating problems. For the professionally-trained man the scope is limitless.

Discuss career opportunities with Clarkson, Gordon representatives, on campus

**Nov 7 and 8**

Appointments should be made through the Student Placement Office.

**Clarkson, Gordon & CO.**  
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

St. John's • Halifax • Saint John • Quebec  
Montreal • Ottawa • Toronto • Hamilton • Kitchener  
London • Windsor • Thunder Bay • Winnipeg  
Regina • Calgary • Edmonton • Vancouver • Victoria

## Final Year Students

Today, the Chartered Accountant plays one of the most exciting roles in business management. He tackles complex and fascinating problems. For the professionally-trained man the scope is limitless.

Discuss career opportunities with Clarkson, Gordon representatives, on campus

**Nov 7 and 8**

Appointments should be made through the Student Placement Office.

**Clarkson, Gordon & CO.**  
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

St. John's • Halifax • Saint John • Quebec  
Montreal • Ottawa • Toronto • Hamilton • Kitchener  
London • Windsor • Thunder Bay • Winnipeg  
Regina • Calgary • Edmonton • Vancouver • Victoria

### NORGE LAUNDROMAT & CLEANERS

open 8am — 9pm  
(except Sunday)

191 Main Street, Nashwaaksis  
(opposite York Plaza)  
Dial 472-6551

DOUBLE LOAD WASHERS (new & modern)

SAVE YOU Time, Money & Detergent

also, big savings on coin-op Dry Cleaning