

Dykes FORUM

As a child I was always haunted by an identity crisis. It wasn't so much *who* I was but *what* was I. After years of short hair-cuts, torn jeans and inner psychological turmoil, I became aware that I was, what some people called, Gay; some would say Lesbian; some would say Dyke.

So, at the ripe old age of 17, I was a woman attracted to other women. However this identity thing still haunted me. I knew I was gay but yet I was a woman, a student, a daughter and a product of the working class ghetto mentality, (I jest!)

How we identify ourselves and are identified is important. Nowadays every skinhead may be seen as a Neo-Nazi, and in the same way every lesbian may be seen as a 'Docks-wearing' separatist! This is the area I have problems with. Why does the lesbian community identify only with part of itself?

I am firstly, a woman and secondly, a gay woman who is (I hope) part of a vibrant community. This begs the question 'why do I often feel only a

part of some of the community?'

I can hear you saying 'That's the way the lesbians want it', but why do all gay women have to buy into this? If I had my way (not a chance), I would have separate men/women only events along with mixed ones. Our community is too small and too fragile to continue with the divisions and marginalisations which the wider society inflicts upon us.

Arguments and discussions can continue for years in lesbian and gay organisations as to who can or cannot be a member, or who can or cannot come to discos, but we need all the solidarity and support we can get. Personally, I feel that if the Left-Handed Vegetarian Bassoon Players Organisation wants to support, and be involved in, the Lesbian and Gay Community we should let them.

Back to me and my identity crisis. I think I will now resolve to be 'a woman who is lesbian', after all, if I wasn't a woman I couldn't be a lesbian, could I.?