

Ancient Hatred and Its Contemporary Manifestation: The Torture of Lesbians

Susan Hawthorne, Ph.D.
Victoria University
hawthorne@netspace.net.au

ABSTRACT

This paper looks at a number of different elements that make up the experience of torture by lesbians in the contemporary world. I draw together elements of popular culture, along with testimonies by lesbians, concerning torture in diverse countries, as well as citing some historical sources. I examine the justifications and excuses given for torture, including the view that rape is a normal part of heterosexual activity. I argue that domination is exemplified in the punishment of lesbians as outsiders in patriarchal culture, in particular when groups and nations go to war.

I also look at the way in which arguments for the legalization of torture share similarities with arguments in favor of prostitution, pornography, and consensual BDSM. I challenge the defenders of these acts and argue that such defense is a case of moral neglect. I conclude with the contention that the freedom of lesbians from torture and violence may be an indicator of the social health of a society.

This paper is dedicated to the countless—and uncounted—lesbians who continue to be tortured around the world.¹

Lesbians are not the political priority of any well-funded policy-making organization.² Moreover, they tend to be invisible both in policies of governments and in agendas of social justice organizations. When it comes to campaigns on violence against women, lesbians are either left out or included only in a footnote or in passing in the terms *sexual orientation* or *same-sex relationships* or *sexual minorities*.³ None of these specifies lesbians. In campaigns or documentary research on these groups, lesbians are once again referred to in much less detail, if they are included at all. Because lesbians are “disappeared,” in the mainstream terminology, and because no one wants to make lesbians the center of any campaign, lesbians continue to be tortured around the world. The torture of lesbians occurs under every kind of political regime, and the so-called developed world is not immune. But who cares? Is it, as Monique Wittig argued, that “lesbians

are not women” (Wittig 1992, 20),⁴ or, as popular discourse would suggest, that homosexuals are not lesbians?⁵

I. THE PARADOX OF LESBIANS UNDER PATRIARCHY

. . . no training session prepared me for this intense pain . . . my pain . . . the one I did not choose . . . all this alienation, this empty vacuum . . . , my body, my mind, my pain . . . this is not happening . . . I am a little speck in the universe . . . which universe? . . . the world is not anymore . . . I am . . . disintegrating . . . bit by bit . . . yell by yell . . . electrode by electrode . . . The pain . . . all this pain here and there, down there in my vagina . . . the agony . . . where am I? Where is my I? (Rivera-Fuentes and Birke 2001, 655; italics and ellipses in the original⁶)

“Rap Game,” Eminem

When I see that little (blanked) dyke get sniped out,
Lights out bitch, adios, goodnight (blowe)
Now put that in your little pipe and whipe down,
Think for a minute cause the hype had died down,
That I wont go up in the oval office right now,
And flip whatever ain't tied down upside down,
I'm all for america, fuck the government,
Tell that seat of laws, tell that slut ta suck a dick

He's walking again. Long slow paces. He plays with me. Offers to remove the hood. Says I'll be able to breathe more easily. I want this, but I don't want him any closer. I don't want to agree to anything. He pauses by my head. Breathes. Takes a step. Pauses. Breathes. Takes a step. And another until the slow pacing takes up its own percussive rhythm. He stops and someone else moves quickly across the room towards me. The string that closes the hood is loosened. I can feel the cool air rush in. Light with it. Artificial light. I relax. I drop my guard. Then I'm choking as something is forced into my mouth. Hard. Metal. I choke and vomit releases from my throat. I'm fighting and thrashing. It stops. I'm struggling to breathe through the vomit. They roll me sideways. *Can't have you dying yet when the fun's just beginning*, comes velvet voice. He turns and walks slowly away. The door closes and I'm trying to feel if there's anyone left in the room. It's quiet. Too quiet. I can't move my hands so I shake my head. Feel the vomit on my cheeks. Feel my revulsion against the gun in my mouth. And his thrill at my fear. His relishing of power. The symbolic power of a hard gun. (Hawthorne 2004d, 43)

One way to keep bondage erotic is to ask yourself the question “Why is

this person being tied up?” Is it because you want to make them helpless for torture? Make their sex completely accessible . . . as a pain trip, or as sensory deprivation? (Califia 1988, 55)

Consuelo Rivera-Fuentes was tortured in Chile during the 1970s. The question she raises—Where is my I—is central to the explorations in this article. Where is my lesbian I? What kind of lesbian I is reflected in the words of Eminem?⁷ What kind of lesbian I is denied by the torturer in *The First Song* manuscript? What kind of lesbian I is portrayed by Pat (now Patrick) Califia in her *Lesbian S/M Safety Manual*? Further questions are, where is the centrality of the experiences of lesbians recorded and recognized? Where is the recognition that the violation of lesbians goes on day after day and no one speaks of it? Over the past thirty years, feminist scholars have brought into the light many aspects of violence against women. But when I began to follow up on the torture of lesbians, I was confronted by a severe dearth of research and an excess of invisibility.⁸

The other side of the coin is the eroticization of torture as simply another sexual thrill. Are we—researchers—not to notice that “lesbians plus torture” typed into a search engine on the Internet brings up a massive amount of pornographic material rather than material that deals with violence against and the torture of lesbians? Is sadomasochism creating acceptance of political torture? Is pornography used to generate and escalate violence against lesbians?

Furthermore, how are we to deal with the problem of the researcher’s needing to read between the lines of accounts of torture in order to find the raw data referring to the torture of lesbians? Who can afford to report her own torture when hatred of lesbians persists even in relatively open societies? Behind these issues lies another question: Why is it that lesbians are so rarely mentioned in the literature on torture?

One of the defining elements of lesbian existence in a patriarchy is its vulnerability to the demands of secrecy, silence, and non-existence. Like other marginalized and oppressed groups, lesbians are often trapped in a “culture of silence” (Freire 1972, 48). But lesbians remain largely unrecognized when it comes to suffering the trauma of disappearance and denial. Victims of torture are silenced in the doing of torture and in the widespread denial of governments concerning their use of torture.⁹ Under patriarchy, lesbian existence is denied, or made illegal. Lesbians who are tortured suffer multiple layers of silencing and denial. Lesbians appear when the political atmosphere is open, and disappear again during times of repression or backlash.

Like indigenous peoples whose cultures have been denied, and who through long political activism have built sustaining social myths and pride

in their communities, lesbian feminist activists since the late 1960s have been engaged in a similar process. But I still hear people say there is no such thing as lesbian culture.¹⁰ Like black existence under Apartheid, lesbian existence inside the enemy territory of patriarchy is an affront to the ideology of hypermasculinity. When conformity becomes the norm, when masculine power is entrenched, and when governments sanction human rights abuses or use torture, lesbians are among the victims.

To repeat my question, why is it that lesbians are so rarely mentioned in the literature on torture? A clue lies in the following statement from a Peruvian lesbian:

When I speak of my right to my own culture and language as an indigenous woman, everyone agrees to my self-determination. But when I speak of my other identity, my lesbian identity, my right to love, to determine my own sexuality, no one wants to listen. (*ILIS Newsletter* 1994, 13)

It is this distancing of political support from others who may well deem themselves progressive that is a feature of lesbian existence. Lesbians have joined with a host of others in supporting and fighting for political and social rights, but often when lesbians ask for support for their own cause the lack of response indicates that “only other dykes are proud of dykes” (Hanscombe 1992).

Kate Millett, in *The Politics of Cruelty: An Essay on the Literature of Political Imprisonment* (1994), has written that “torture is an index of unfreedom” (307). It appears we have a long way to go in creating freedom for lesbians. It is perhaps even the case that the practice of torture on lesbians is the litmus test of social freedom. While any lesbian is tortured and there is no opposing outcry, society is implicated and complicit in this violence.

Amnesty International’s *Crimes of Hate* report concludes with the following statement: “The struggle to protect the human rights of LGBT people should be one that is waged by all” (*Crimes of Hate* 2001, 28). I agree, but I believe it is time for a report that focuses specifically on lesbians.¹¹

II. SILENCE, AFTER SILENCE, AFTER SILENCE¹²

The emphasis on silence cannot be overstated. Lesbians have long been subjected to silence, to denial, to being ignored within the dominant heterosexual discourse. Lesbians who are tortured face multiple layers of silence. First, there is the silence surrounding lesbian existence. Second, in quite a few jurisdictions there is legal silence: Punishment is not meted out formally, but occurs instead on an informal basis, inflicted sometimes by

the state and sometimes by members of the woman's family or the community. When this occurs it is often difficult to have the punishment recognized as a violation of the lesbian's human rights and as an instance of torture. In such circumstances the torturer can continue with impunity because "no one will ever know, no one will ever hear you, no one will ever find out" (Millett 1994, 300).

The scream of the lesbian tortured in families, in prisons, in mental asylums remains unheard. She may call out to others in her pain, but she cannot be heard because no one appears to be listening. Few dare to listen. Almost no one speaks out. And I would add that few seem to care about her torture, perhaps because she dares to be a lesbian. However, lesbians have spoken out in spite of the pressures to remain silent, and it is to the words of these lesbians I now turn.

Tina Machida is a Zimbabwean lesbian who lives in Harare. She writes:

They locked me in a room and brought him every day to rape me so I would fall pregnant and be forced to marry him. They did this to me until I was pregnant. (Machida 1996, 123)

Her rape was instigated by her parents in the mid-1980s, in an effort to "cure" her of her lesbian existence.

In nearby Uganda, Christine and Norah were tortured by military police, along with three gay male activists in 1999. Uganda's political leaning is left, but President Yoweri Museveni, like Mugabe in Zimbabwe, has no time for homosexual rights.

The report on Christine is as follows:

When they took the blindfold off, Christine found herself in a secret detention centre. She was stripped naked, beaten and threatened with rape by the soldiers holding her. She was then taken to another detention centre where she was interrogated about the human rights group the friends had set up and about her sexuality. (Crimes of Hate 2001, 4)

She was later raped by three male detainees. As she remembers:

Coming midnight, they said, "We want to show you something." They took my clothes off and raped me. I remember being raped by two of them, then I passed out. (Crimes of Hate 2001, 4)

There is a double jeopardy for lesbians who are arrested. They are at risk of being tortured not only by the guards but, as Christine's story indicates, also by other prisoners.¹³

Her friend Norah was taken to a different place, a military barracks. Of her ordeal she says:

I was also beaten, abused both sexually and physically. My clothes were ripped off. Nasty remarks were made that I should just be punished for denying men what is rightfully theirs, and that who do I think I am to do what the president feels to be wrong. They even suggested that they should show me what I am missing by taking turns on me. (Crimes of Hate 2001, 5)

I want to emphasize the fact that torture against lesbians continues.¹⁴ Lesbians continue to be raped and murdered. On September 29, 2004, FannyAnn Eddy was found dead after being repeatedly raped. She had been working in the offices of the Sierra Leone Lesbian and Gay Association (*Human Rights Watch*, 4 October 2004, Morgan and Wieringa 2005, 20).

Africa, however, is not the only place where torture of lesbians has occurred and is still occurring. In Romania, Mariana Cetiner was arrested in October 1995 for “attempting to seduce another woman.” She writes:

Criminals are better regarded than a relationship between two women. . . So because of this homosexual or lesbian thing. . . I was treated like the lowest of the low. (Crimes of Hate 2001, 11)

During her imprisonment, after complaining about her treatment by prison authorities, Cetiner was *handcuffed to a radiator and made to stand for 11 hours “in a position like Jesus Christ” without food (Crimes of Hate 2001, 11)*.

Equating lesbian existence with psychiatric disorders is not new. It is a particular way in which families deal with unruly young women. Alla Pitcherskaia, a lesbian from Russia, was charged with the crime of “hooliganism” (*Crimes of Hate 2001, 20*). Long-term forced institutionalization can be the ultimate result for many young women,¹⁵ and, as in Alla Pitcherskaia’s case, her girlfriend was also “forcibly held in a psychiatric institution” (*Crimes of Hate 2001, 20*). Alla Pitcherskaia’s crime consisted of continuing to work with a lesbian youth organization.

Giti Thadani (1996), in her research on conditions for lesbians in India, found many examples of lesbians committing suicide. She cites the cases of Malika and Lalita, both twenty years old, who attempted suicide by drowning together when one failed an examination, which would mean separation; also of Jyotsana and Jayashree, who jumped in front of a train because they could not bear the separation caused by their respective marriages; of Saijamol and Gita, who committed suicide in a joint poisoning; of Gita and Kishori, both 24-year-old nurses who hanged themselves from a ceiling fan

in the hospital quarters (Thadani 1996, 102-104). Although India's Section 377 does not name lesbianism as a crime, it has nevertheless been used to harass lesbians and put pressure on them to enter heterosexual marriages (Voices Against Section 377 n.d., 31-32). When the pressure to heterosexualize lesbians is extreme, lesbians suffer and some, as indicated by the above examples, are driven to suicide.

Western countries are not immune to engaging in torture. Lesbian prisoners everywhere, no matter what the reason for their incarceration, are likely to be subjected to torture and abuse. An example is that of Robin Lucas, who was jailed for credit card fraud in 1995 in California. As was reported,

One evening in September 1995, three male inmates unlocked the door of her cell, handcuffed her and raped her. Robin Lucas suffered severe injuries to her neck, arms, back and vaginal and anal areas. (Crimes of Hate 2001, 18)

Consider the treatment of this lesbian and then read what Pat Califia has to say about sexual excitement:

By reviving the notion that sex is dirty, naughty, and disgusting, you can profoundly thrill some lucky, jaded lesbian by transforming her into a public toilet or bitch in heat. (Califia 1988, 52)

This "invitation" strikes me as an insult to all the lesbians who have ever been tortured or violated, and it ignores the reality of the lives of so many lesbians in countries around the world where being a lesbian carries an immediate jail sentence: Algeria, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Morocco, Tunisia, the Bahamas, Trinidad and Tobago, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Oman, and Romania. Persecution, however, extends to countries where *technically* to be a lesbian is not an infringement of the law, but in reality remains so. This is the case in Colombia, Nicaragua, Sri Lanka, Brazil. In others, death is the penalty. This is the case in Afghanistan, Bahrain, Iran, Kuwait, Mauritania, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Chechen Republic, Sudan, northern Nigeria, Taiwan, and Yemen (Amnesty International 1997, 77-90). In Iran the methods of execution are cruel and painful: "hanging, stoning, being thrown off a cliff or high building, or facing a firing squad" (Reinfelder 1996, 12). Other reports indicate that lesbians "have been beheaded or stoned to death" (Reinfelder 1996, 12). Under fundamentalist regimes the torture of lesbians can even be justified on the basis that the man is doing his sacred duty.¹⁶ It is also difficult to ascribe the word "torture" to heterosexual rape when it is regarded as so normal. In fact it is a quintessential form of torture used against lesbians.

Rape, beatings, humiliation, forced pregnancy, infliction of physical and mental pain, false diagnoses of mental illness, forcible confinement and detention, and death are clearly all abuses that have immediate and long-term implications for the individual lesbians affected. Further, the promotion of sadomasochism by Califia (1988), Weiss (2005), and others contributes to the escalation of violence and social acceptance of violence under the guise of “free choice.” Carole Moschetti (2006) names this collusion “sexual relativism.” Sexual relativism excuses and invisibilizes sexual violence against women on the grounds of “naturalness” and the “male sex right,” or the notion that men have the inherent right of sexual access to women. In the context of the torture of lesbians, it can be seen as the extreme violation of lesbians for their resistance to heterosexuality and the model of the male sex right. Sadomasochism by lesbians complicates the issue, but domination, an integral part of male sex right practices, is the model for lesbian sadomasochism.

The long-term implications of acts of violence for the health of the social matrix are also significant. When a society allows or enables violence against a group of its members, there is an impact on social health. Such violence generates fear and distrust. It fosters social disconnection. It condones violence. It calls for scapegoats and creates what we are now seeing in the Western world, a new kind of fascism: postmodern fascism, slippery as an eel, multifaceted, dispersed, and often difficult to pinpoint. In a social sense, it is like the experience of pain in the body. It is hard to talk about, although many of us feel the distress and discomfort.¹⁷

Let me explain a recent conference presentation by Margot Weiss (2005).¹⁸ In her paper Weiss discusses attending a BDSM¹⁹ class in California at which two people—a woman and a man—present BDSM “scenes” around the use of a “spy.” The “spy”—a woman—is penetrated with a hammer handle. The use of a condom seemed to legitimize this action in the presenter’s eyes. Electroprods are used on the “spy”—and at this point I was too disturbed to take in the third element of the “play torture.” Weiss stated specifically that BDSM is not torture; indeed, she described it as “consensual.” She went on to say that BDSM classes are “consensual non-consent play” and that Amnesty International documents are a useful source of ideas for creating interrogation scenes. Later in the “play torture” one of the players holds a knife to the throat of the “spy,” and an unloaded gun is pointed at her. The clothes are cut from the body of the “spy,” who is lying prone and spreadeagled on the floor. The “spy” then tries to kick at the “torture players.” The “spy” can stop the “consensual non-consent” by using the word “Rumsfeld.” Weiss’s question at the end of her description of “play torture” is, “What does this performance tell us about the Abu Ghraib photographs?” Abu Ghraib, she argues, is merely a scene, a spectacle. And SM

serves as a critique, as it disrupts how people understand the world. And further, that because “scenes” are parodic, they become a creative re-enactment about powerlessness over the war. But the thing about torture is that you do not know whether you will be alive at the end of the day. You do not know when it will end. It is more than just “powerlessness”; it is subjugation, degradation, abandonment, and dehumanization. To defend such acts as “performative” is an instance of moral neglect.

This experience has made me ask myself difficult questions about complicity, about the subtle and not so subtle ways we go along with social pressure. When is it okay to do so and when not? Graham, Rawlings and Rigsby (1994) argue that women’s social relationship with men suggests a form of societal Stockholm Syndrome, that is, that the institution of heterosexuality and the individuals who patrol it—men and apologists of men’s power—act as though women are hostages to men. The captive perceives the behavior of the captors as ranging from extreme violence to kindness. The kindness creates a belief in safety in the midst of violence and abuse. It is this aspect that I find interesting in the light of postmodern feminist defenses of BDSM and performative sexuality.²⁰ The defense of BDSM—including in an all-female setting—is no better than the defenses by the makers of pornography, the customers of prostitutes, and the apologists of torturers.

In relation to the “performative” and the parodic, I find the slippage of responsibility, the movement of focus from the victim of torture to the audience of torture—whether it is BDSM class participants or those who look at photos of Abu Ghraib—deeply troubling. The academic acceptance—even apparent “feminist” acceptance—of torture as a game is deeply offensive. It is appropriative of people living under totalitarian regimes who do not have the “luxury” of saying “No,” or of saying “Rumsfeld” as a parody. This postmodern move to a performative, audience-centered analysis will have dire consequences for all victims of torture, and add a significant twist to the torture of lesbians, who are already abandoned as an invisible and a marginal group not in need of human rights campaigns.

Complicity is the product of fear. It is how fascism digs in its roots. It reminds me of other debates among feminists. We have here on the one hand postmodern “feminist” theorists arguing for the healing power and the performative value of torture, while on the other hand we have legal theorists—including women—arguing for the legalization of torture because it will be safer. This is very reminiscent of the alliances made over prostitution (Sullivan 2004, 2006). Both are libertarian stances and dangerous to feminism. Annie McCombs points out that “when a man is tortured to death anywhere, people see political persecution; when the same thing happens to

a woman, the same people see sex” (1985, 86). When depictions of lesbians are sold as pornography, a similar slippage occurs.

D.A. Clarke argues that the use of “girl/girl porno” (2004, 198) as a profitable commercial enterprise is based on the belief that the shift from private acts to public fantasies—otherwise inaccessible to men—is sexually thrilling because in the process lesbians have been humiliated. As lesbians, they are humiliated when the intimate is made public; or if they are heterosexual women posing as lesbians, the sexual acts are perceived to be humiliating. Further, she argues that lesbians, along with the Arab men depicted in the Abu Ghraib torture images, represent the threatening figure of the “Uppity Other” (2004, 1998). The eroticized “suggestively homosexual tableaux” are humiliating to the Abu Ghraib prisoners. They are the feminized bodies of the enemy. Pornography that uses so-called lesbian images represents a lesbian feminized, a lesbian who has moved back into the category of women, as described by Monique Wittig.²¹ Through pornography, the lesbian comes back into the control of the patriarchal framework of naturalized women and men.

III. PORNOGRAPHY AND TORTURE

In societies in which particular groups are “objects of hatred,” that hatred is extended to images that demean the people of that group. That is what pornography does to women and to lesbians. Pornography is sexualized violence or an expression of power for the gratification of the violators. Pornography relies on the eroticization of power differences, whether they be the systematic differences between women and men, between different cultures or classes of people (Kappeler 1986), or whether they are “consented to” by people in a relationship based on domination and submission. As De Clarke notes, there is a crossover between the images of torture at Abu Ghraib and pornography. She writes:

What no one wants to face—in America, anyway—is that these pictures are not just like pornography. They are pornography, the raw essence of pornography: taking trophy pictures of people being stripped, sexually humiliated, raped—so that you can brag about it afterwards. (Clarke 2004, 205)

I argue that Pat Califia’s *The Lesbian S/M Safety Manual* (1988) is a manual in self-annihilation, in extermination of lesbian culture, in parading pornography as freedom, just as repressive political regimes have talked of liberation when they have meant death. To reinforce this, let me cite another extract from Califia.

[Humiliation]. . . is the deliberate lowering of the bottom's status to an eroticized, yet stigmatized, identity. This may include turning the bottom into: (1) an object or a machine, (2) an animal, (3) a child or baby, (4) a member of the opposite sex, (5) a sexual object or genital, (6) a servant or slave. Humiliation can also involve treating the bottom as a member of a racial or ethnic group, sexual orientation or socioeconomic class which the top pretends²² to resent, dislike etc. (Califia 1988, 52)

Sadomasochism is a form of consumerism of experience. In a similar way to that in which Western culture has appropriated the cultures of indigenous and non-Western peoples, the practitioners of S/M are appropriating the experiences of oppressed peoples who have been tortured by dictatorial governments or who have been slaves under racist regimes or the lesbians who are tortured by fundamentalist and militarized regimes. As Brennan (2003) has indicated, the only thing that all fundamentalists agree on is the importance of repressing women's sexuality and punishing breaches of the heterosexual code.²³ The practitioners of S/M turn an uncontrollable experience of torture into a game that can be stopped (but people undergoing real torture do not have the option of saying no).²⁴ The "near death experience" of S/M can be read as just another consumerist game. The consuming of material goods has reached its limits, so instead S/M practitioners attempt to simulate death in the pursuit of yet another thrill. S/M is a luxury game. It is expropriation of experience. It is ultimately full of contempt for others.

In a society in which torture can be described as "performative" or as "direct communication with Iraqi prisoners"²⁵ and BDSM can be presented as a series of classes to those interested in "healing themselves"²⁶ or simply interested in the experience of powerfulness, these are central questions of social health. Given that it is the marginalized, lesbians among them, who are most prone to being tortured, the issue of social health is an important indicator of levels of social justice in a society.

When acts of torture and acts of "non-consensual consent," as BDSM is described by Weiss (2005), are placed against the reality of the torture of lesbians, what statement is made about contemporary culture? Pornography is a way of making money out of torture, and it is appropriative. It is appropriative of lesbians who are tortured because they are lesbians; of lesbians who have been pushed off buildings in Iraq, falling to their death, because they are lesbians; of lesbians who are beaten and raped because they are lesbians; of lesbians who are whipped, whose hands are amputated, who are forced into unwanted marriages because they are lesbians; and of lesbians in most countries who are silenced because they are lesbians (Hawthorne 2004a; Hawthorne 2004b).²⁷

Furthermore, if Weiss (2005) can argue (and her audience can feel

comfortable applauding her arguments) that acts identical to torture—humiliation, violent penetration with objects, cutting off of clothes, bondage—are acceptable in a BDSM scene, and are deemed philosophically acceptable, where does the slide down the slippery slope begin and end? These are complex questions of morality. They concern issues around consent, power and lack of power, justice, and a disbelief in justice as central. The effect of the acceptance of torturing acts is a de-moralizing of the culture. A demoralized person is one who cannot fight back, who has been kicked too many times. The effect results not from the nature of any one kick, but rather from the cumulative effect of multiple kicks, “a thousand small cuts” that leave the person too dispirited to make a stand. The demoralizing of a victim of torture is cumulative and the result of many humiliations, painful experiences, isolation, and dehumanizing acts. Such is the society in which we are living. Even those of us who are not consciously aware daily of the thousands of cuts are affected nevertheless. Those who ignore and deny lesbian dignity are eventually affected too. Among feminists it is argued that acts of racism gnaw at the social fabric, create racialized violence (be it against diasporas and natives of Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, or against indigenous peoples from the colonized world). From this perspective, sexualized violence against women—including lesbians—also tears apart the social fabric.

Each day they unstitch a new part of me. There's the relentless beating. The reminders of the gun. My brain stalls each time I think of it. The pointedness of their violence is increasing. Velvet voice visits randomly. When I hear his footsteps, the fear rises like vomit. Today they had me spreadeagled on the floor. Face down. Urine filling my nostrils. He paced in a decreasing spiral shape. Laughing at our weighing of the spiral with such import. *I'll show you what a spiral's for*, he said. And at that he stepped onto my left hand. *Get rid of the left hand*, he said. *I know you like language games. Sinister sister*. At that he stepped onto my right hand. *Rosie fingered dawn, you slut*. He stepped and twisted his foot heavily over my fingers. *No more fingersmithing for you*. He stepped and twisted. Paced and stepped and twisted again. The bones broken. The fingers flat and useless just as he wanted. He always leaves me in pain. He always leaves and I'm wracked with sobbing. The horror of what he does. My fingers crushed like broken twigs. My hands rotting stumps. In Iran, I remember, they amputate the hands of lesbians. (Hawthorne 2004d, 48)

IV. FLEEING TORTURE: LESBIAN REFUGEES²⁸

At the 8th International Interdisciplinary World Women's Conference

in Kampala in 2002, I was speaking about lesbian issues in a session toward the end of the conference. A woman approached me and said that there were big problems for lesbians in Uganda and that gaining recognition as refugees was particularly difficult for them. This appears to be the case so often that some authors suggest there is no documentary evidence on lesbians (McGhee 2003; Magardie 2003).

This in spite of the well-documented case of two lesbians mentioned earlier—Christine and Norah—who were tortured in 1999. So fearful were they for their safety, they fled to a neighboring country. There too, lesbian existence was criminalized and so they were unable to claim asylum. They “were forced to spend several months in hiding while they tried to find a way to get protection as refugees” (*Crimes of Hate* 2001, 5). Features of this kind are what distinguish lesbian refugees from other groups persecuted for political or religious or ethnic reasons. “Treatment” and “cure” strip away the political element.

It seems, therefore, that the evidence exists, but is not seen.²⁹

Alla Pitcherskaia from Russia, who fled to the USA after receiving threats to her liberty because of her alleged “hooliganism” and her activism, lodged an application for asylum. Initially it was rejected because “they claimed the motive for the forced institutionalization was the desire to ‘treat’ or ‘cure’ and not to punish and therefore was not ‘persecution’” (*Crimes of Hate* 2001, 19).

Monika Reinfelder notes that in 1990 the German government granted asylum to an Iranian lesbian “who would have faced the death penalty had she been forced to return to Iran” (1996, 18).

There is a problem with the invisibility of lesbians as refugees. The cases are not numerous, but they do exist and must be made visible. As Reinfelder comments, “The hatred of lesbians in most countries has prevented many persecuted lesbians from applying for refugee status on the basis of their sexual orientation” (1996, 18). Many lesbians therefore apply for asylum on the basis of political persecution. But this can result in a failure to prove their status as refugees, since the worst abuses have occurred to them because they are lesbians. If these circumstances cannot be revealed, the case is weakened.³⁰

The UN has a stated aim of protecting those harmed by discrimination, but the reality is that when sexual orientation comes to the vote, detrimental alliances are made by Saudi Arabia, Iran, the U.S. and The Vatican, just to note some of those who have voted together at the UN. The UN has a number of provisions that broadly cover discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. They include the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Labour Organization Discrimination

(Employment and Occupation) Convention 1958 (“ILO 111”), and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). Protection, however, is not guaranteed unless a government has signed on to these agreements, and many have not. There are no provisions that specifically cover discrimination against lesbians, who usually suffer at least a double jeopardy of sexuality and gender in addition to any class, caste, ethnic, cultural, religious or racial discriminations.

Claire, a lesbian refugee from a powerful Ugandan family, now living in the UK, fears daily for the safety of her girlfriend, who helped her escape and then followed her into exile. Claire does not know her girlfriend’s whereabouts and fears that she is dead or has been pushed into prostitution to pay back her debts (Townley 2005).

As this article was going to press, I have just seen in Melbourne a new film, *Unveiled (Fremde Haut)*, made by Angelina Maccarone. It is a film about an Iranian lesbian seeking asylum in Germany. The main character, Fariba Tabrizi (played by Jasmine Tabatabai), has had a relationship in Iran with a married woman which has been discovered and broken up by the husband. When she is interviewed by the German officer at the airport, she cannot speak of what has happened to her or give her real reasons for seeking asylum, in part because of the presence of an Iranian translator. The film depicts the extraordinary difficulties faced by lesbians and what they must do to survive.

V. TORTURE, SLAVERY, WOMEN, AND TRUTH

A “curious device [was] . . . [s]haped like a pear, made of wood, but with metal attachments and pointed wood pieces set into it. The caption said that the torturer put it into a woman’s vagina and gradually expanded it inside her body until it broke” (du Bois 1991, 3).

An artifact of European history, this object is a reminder of just how long the hatred of women and practices around that hatred, especially the hatred of lesbians,³¹ have persisted.

In ancient Athens and in Renaissance Florence—two hallmark periods in Western history of the apparent flowering of “freedom”—torture was used as a means of acquiring evidence (du Bois 1991; Lapierre 2001). Torture was heralded as the best avenue by which to extract truth from witnesses. I mention these examples because it is important to recognize how violence against women and the torture of women are structured into the history of Western culture, even—or perhaps especially—in its supposedly highest moments of civilization. In sixteenth- and seventeenth-century

England and France—another apparent high point of civilization—torture warrants were issued.³² It reminds us that torture is not what someone out there, different from “us,” does to lesbians. It is a reminder that torture has happened—and continues to happen now—around the world in apparently civilized countries. It is a reminder that apparently civilized countries are the trainers of torturers in countries steeped in conflict and war and civil unrest. It is a reminder that women—and hence lesbians—who step outside the patriarchal and heterosexual normative modes of behavior will be punished. Lesbians epitomize the “other” in the western philosophical tradition, and the lesbian body is very clearly a world of “otherness.” As I have argued elsewhere (Hawthorne 2003), the non-existence and erasure of lesbians in heterosexual discourse is central to the normative structure of our society. Lesbians share with torture the denial of existence.

Denial is often not accorded much importance, but anyone who has been ostracized or has had the experience of being a member of a despised group will testify to the pain that accompanies such a denial of existence, or denial of experience. Torture annihilates the victim. The prisoner cannot determine when torture will cease, even by giving true and honest answers to the questions asked of her.

VI. THE BODY OUT OF CONTROL

The body remembers again and again . . . and again . . . The body remembers and pain becomes a part of our dreams and of our nightmares because we don't have a valve to release them in any other way. The body wishes to be a body again, to have a mind . . . the body wants a soul (Rivera-Fuentes and Birke 2001, 657; italics and ellipses in original).

Among the difficulties experienced by anyone subjected to torture is how to convey the experience of pain inside the body. Elaine Scarry, in *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (1985), argues that pain in itself “is language destroying” (1985, 19). For a lesbian this is doubly difficult because the heteronormative discourse of society is not open to the utterances of lesbians. It is hard enough to get people to empathize with and understand a person from another culture, another political regime, an unknown country. Add to that the prospect of lesbian existence and lesbian culture, and the difficulty of the task is amplified still more. Here I am intentionally speaking as if the reader is a heterosexual. For the lesbian reader, the experience is likely to be very different.

Within heterosexual discourse the lesbian epitomizes the body untrammelled. The lesbian body is a body out of control in a heteropatriarchal

sense; that is, it is ungoverned by heteropatriarchal rules. For the torturer, the prisoner's body has also become a body out of control, and this lack of control is shown each time pain is inflicted.

. . . all wave after wave of electricity, no control . . . I am losing control of my/self . . . I can't stop the shit, the piss, the tears, the jerks, the yells.
(Rivera-Fuentes and Birke 2001, 655; italics and ellipses in original)

Elaine Scarry writes of the prisoner's lack of control, and the way in which responsibility for it is deflected back to the prisoner so that the confession "will be understood by others, is an act of self-betrayal" (1985, 47).

There is an element here of wondering just why it is that sexual orientation has been considered outside the ambit of UN Human Rights rules and why lesbian refugees struggle so hard to be recognized, heard, and acknowledged as "genuine" refugees. It is about the self-betrayal of the body. If lesbian existence is a choice, so the argument goes, then the lesbian can just as easily choose not to be a lesbian.³³ The problem is that her body betrays her. Her speech as a lesbian is taken to be a self-betrayal. The situation is read this way, rather than as a problem of patriarchy and oppression. It is an instance of what Mary Daly names "reversal," in which the victim is perceived to be the one at fault, rather than the perpetrator.

The torturer, through this process, dispenses all culpability, all responsibility for the pain inflicted on the tortured person. His conscience is clear. It is all her fault. If only she would do what is best for her, she would not have to suffer. In fact, he will help her by raping her, by showing her what a real man can do for her, how what she needs is "a good fuck, from real men" (Rivera-Fuentes and Birke 2001, 656). This psychological stance, I suggest, is the source of the proliferation of male sexual fantasy about the torture of lesbians.

To summarize my argument: The prisoner of torture is considered out of control; the lesbian is considered out of control. The tortured lesbian is therefore doubly out of control (and in a society where lesbians are defined as mentally ill, triply out of control). Since she is so clearly out of control, anything that happens to her is her fault because if she chose to behave differently, she would not be tortured. The torturer/male sexual fantasist/pornographer is therefore able to abandon all sense of responsibility for his actions and for his beliefs about lesbians. It is in her interest that he torture her, rape her, show her just how good he is. Or, as Elaine Scarry writes, "Every weapon has two ends. In converting the other person's pain into his own power, the torturer experiences the entire occurrence exclusively from the nonvulnerable end of the weapon" (1985, 59).

VII. IF LESBIANS ARE NOT WOMEN, CAN LESBIANS CLAIM
HUMAN RIGHTS?

Monique Wittig, in her extraordinary essay “One is Not Born a Woman,”³⁴ writes:

Lesbian is the only concept I know of which is beyond the categories of sex (woman and man), because the designated subject (lesbian) is not a woman, either economically, or politically, or ideologically. For what makes a woman is a specific social relation to a man, a relation that we have previously called servitude, a relation which implies personal and physical obligation as well as economic obligation (“forced residence,” domestic *corvée*, conjugal duties, unlimited production of children, etc.), a relation which lesbians escape by refusing to become or to stay heterosexual. (Wittig 1992, 20)

This confronting challenge to patriarchal “naturalism” is a clue to the reason behind lesbians’ being so forcefully punished under patriarchy. The very existence of lesbians is a challenge to the property rights of men as a group. It challenges the assumption that there is something natural about the categories of women and men, and it suggests that there is an alternative to those naturalized categories. It challenges men’s proprietorial ownership of the category *women*, in a way that is reminiscent of the challenge posed by Native Land Rights of indigenous peoples. For indigenous peoples the land is not *owned*, it is *maintained* by responsible activities, many of which are deemed sacred. The collective maintenance of land does not strip indigenous peoples of human rights. In a similar way, lesbians who want to live lives unencumbered by heterosexual servitude, unencumbered by alternating violence and kindness by the dominant group, do not give up their human rights, do not give up a wish to be respected. Indeed, those lesbians who use this as a model for their lives could well provide a model of freedom for all people. By this I mean the ability to move freely, love whomever one wants, laugh and walk in ways that denote *joie de vivre*.

As FannyAnn Eddy, lesbian activist murdered in Sierra Leone, said less than a year before her death:

Silence creates vulnerability. You, members of the Commission on Human Rights, can break the silence. You can acknowledge that we exist, throughout Africa and on every continent, and that human rights violations based on sexual orientation or gender identity are committed every day. You can help us combat those violations and achieve our full rights and freedoms, in every society, including my beloved Sierra Leone (Eddy 2004).

VIII. HOW MIGHT THIS RESEARCH AFFECT SOCIAL POLICY?

Because lesbians have distinct needs and because in their daily lives lesbians—although they share some elements with the groups “women” and “LGBTI”—confront different problems, it is essential that both policy and research not result in further invisibilizing lesbians. Lesbians will be “seen” only if:

- research that is focused on lesbians is carried out;
- research names lesbians rather than trying to hide behind terms such as “same-sex-identified” or “sexual minorities”;
- researchers respect the names lesbians choose to use in their own local contexts;
- researchers interview lesbians and ask them to identify treatment that is connected to their lesbian sexuality;
- researchers and policy makers recognize that lesbians are violated for at least two general reasons: as members of the class *women* (or not-men) and as members of the class *not-heterosexual*;
- researchers and policy makers recognize that lesbians are violated for a third reason: as members of the not-men, not-women and not-heterosexual classes, that is as lesbians;
- researchers and policy makers recognize that lesbians come from all ethnic, cultural, religious, and social groups, and that because of the needs of personal safety, they sometimes hide within the groups of men, women, and heterosexuals;
- lesbians, who have never been the focus of any well-funded campaign, are treated with respect in the same way as any other marginalized and persecuted group whose personal and collective safety is at risk.

X. CONCLUSION

We are living in dangerous times. I believe a new fascism, postmodern fascism, is on the rise. It takes the form of defending the freedom of the powerful whose hate speech is protected: corporations, armies, men, the wealthy, and the elite. It defends pornographers and pimps, pharmaceutical companies and reconstruction teams, soldiers and torturers. We know now how these political policies are run. It is through false kindness (Graham et al. 1994); it comes wrapped in choice; it comes with the word *freedom* emblazoned across it. We need to invent strategies for exposing these systems of injustice for what they are. We also need to invent ways of fighting social demoralization and of increasing the social glue. Indigenous communities in Australia (dé Ishtar 2005) have found that increasing the social power of women strengthens the social fabric and reduces violence. In the

last thirty years, as a radical lesbian feminist, I have been active in women's communities that are creating vibrant feminist and lesbian cultures and in groups that are working to reduce social injustice. However, in 2005 I saw feminists and lesbians support the practice of torture because it was called BDSM, because it was categorized as "play" and as "consensual non-consent." This in a country engaged in widespread abuses of power, including torture against its own and other people. If feminists and lesbians pivot toward "consensual violence," we can expect to see increased violence against women and indifference toward the torture of lesbians.

If violence against lesbians is a matter of indifference, and lesbians remain outside the scope of social justice reform, then everyone's civil and political rights remain in jeopardy. The most difficult political reforms to make are, in the long run, the most important, because they give us a clue as to the limits of our preparedness to live an ethical existence. If we are unable to be concerned for the lives and well being of those who are most different, then we are incapable of defending justice for all—even at the most basic level, that involving freedom of association, freedom to love.

APPENDIX I
GUIDELINES FOR OFFICIALS INTERVIEWING
LESBIAN REFUGEES³⁵

- It should not be assumed that women presenting for asylum are seeking asylum simply because their spouse or another male family member is doing so; they may need asylum in their own right, and for very different reasons, *including persecution on the basis of their sexual orientation*.
- Some women may however be persecuted because of their association with men who are under threat. If they are lesbians, their level of risk may be increased.
- It should not be assumed that a married woman cannot be a lesbian. In some countries, marriage is the first level of protection a lesbian might seek.
- Lesbians seeking asylum are likely to be politically active, but even lesbians who are not politically active come under threat in some countries.
- Do not assume that because a woman does not use the word *lesbian* to describe herself, that she is not a lesbian. It may have been too dangerous for too long for her to be able to speak the word *lesbian* (or the equivalent in her language) out loud.
- Do not assume that because there is no word for lesbian in any particular language that there are therefore no lesbians in that society or linguistic group.
- Do not assume that if a woman comes from a country where it is not illegal to be a lesbian, that she is therefore not able to claim having been tortured or in danger of torture or other external harm to her self.
- Do not assume that your interpreter is open to her experience. The interpreter may be hostile to her claim.
- Lesbians who have been tortured will find it difficult to speak of their experiences. Speaking to a stranger is difficult; speaking to a strange man might be impossible. Uniformed men may precipitate reliving the experience of torture.
- As a result of trauma, some lesbians may be unable to relate the experience at all, or may appear detached and emotionless. This should not be read as evidence of fabrication.
- Lesbians who are refugees might also be in danger from their families, in particular from the men in their families. Their confidential interview should not include asking questions of other family members about their sexual orientation.

NOTES

1. I am grateful to a lesbian in Uganda who may prefer to remain anonymous and who drew my attention to the injustices against lesbians in her country in 2002; to Consuelo Rivera-Fuentes and Linda Birke (2001), whose article I stumbled across soon afterwards; to the anonymous researchers at Amnesty International whose reports on the torture of lesbians provide much of the firsthand material, and to Lara Fergus, who sent me the *Crimes of Hate* document from Amnesty International; to Monika Reinfelder whose book *Amazon to Zami* (1996) contains some of the other firsthand accounts; and to an unnamed friend with whom I discussed at length her experience of torture. I thank her for her time and generosity in sharing what was an extremely painful experience. I also thank Renate Klein for many discussions about issues raised in this article, and to Carole Moschetti for her suggestions.

2. This is so in Australia and internationally. In Australia there is the Coalition of Activist Lesbians (COAL), the only formally registered lesbian NGO, but all its work is done on a shoestring and in a voluntary capacity.

3. As in other research on homophobia and sexism, lesbian existence tends to be confounded with the lives of gay men, or subsumed under the broad and unsatisfactory term of *homosexuality*, or of *queer* or *LGBTI* (Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual-Transgender-Intersex). All these terms are used to simultaneously contain and exclude lesbians. More recent terms—*same-sex attracted* and *sexual minorities*—fail for the same reasons. Lesbians who are tortured disappear. Lesbians are to be found as side issues in the literature on torture of LGBTI (*Breaking the Silence*, 1997; *Crimes of Hate*, *Conspiracy of Silence*, *Torture and Ill-treatment Based on Sexual Identity* ACT 40/016/2001), and secondly as a side issue on the torture of women (*Broken Bodies*, *Shattered Minds—Torture and Ill-treatment of Women*, AI Index: ACT 40/001/2001). There is a significant shift in the balance of cases reported by Amnesty International between 1997 and 2001. This could be due to several factors: 1) a greater willingness on the part of AI to look into torture of lesbians; 2) an increase in the incidence of torture of lesbians; 3) an increase in the reporting of the torture of lesbians; 4) a combination of these and other factors.

4. Her point is both interesting and radical. It is so because it gives clues as to why lesbians are so threatening to patriarchal heterosexist society. I will expand on this later in the paper.

5. For an interesting analysis of the similarities and differences between the experiences of violence by lesbians and gay men, see Ohms and Stehling (2001, 190-222). For the German-language version, see pp. 17-52.

6. Quotations from lesbians who have been tortured are distinguished by the use of italics throughout. In the case of Rivera-Fuentes and Birke (2001), the original story told by Rivera-Fuentes is in italics. Quotations from other sources retain roman typeface.

7. For a very fine analysis of how pornography interacts with everyday life, see Caputi (2004, 74-116).

8. For the purpose of this paper, I deal solely with the torture of lesbians. The paper does not focus on torture of gay men, bisexuals, transsexuals, or intersex people. While some of the issues overlap, because I am concerned with the absence of research on lesbians, that is where my focus lies.

9. Almost every government denies using torture, and in the post World War II era, few have attempted to justify its use. The exception, prior to September 11, 2001, was Israel, which, in following the recommendations of the Landau Commission in 1999, was the only country to “legitimize torture, both rhetorically and judicially” (Felner 2005, 42).

10. For a lengthy discussion of this, see Hawthorne (2003) and Hawthorne (2005a).

11. I suggest that separate reports are required on the different groupings represented by the acronym LGBTI, as each faces different and specific causes. It is time to spell out some

of the nuances rather than calling for blanket inclusiveness, a strategy which in the long run will be detrimental to lesbians.

12. Cited in Rivera-Fuentes and Birke (2001, 656).

13. For other examples see IGLHRC (2001, 7).

14. On 20 July 2005, Ugandan lesbian activist Victor Julie Mukossa's house was raided in an attempt by the police to arrest her. Victor Julie Mukossa is the chairperson of Sexual Minorities Uganda (SMUG). She went into hiding. Another lesbian activist from Kenya was "arbitrarily arrested and detained" and "subjected to humiliating and degrading treatment" (Amnesty International ai-news@amnesty.org 2 August 2005).

15. Think about the lesbians you may know who have been incarcerated and labeled as mad. Think about the "treatment" they have received. Was it electroconvulsive therapy? What is the difference between this and the shocks given to prisoners who are tortured? Was it the use of drugs? What is the difference between this and a host of other silencing techniques used by torturers? In most instances the difference is simply the name of the institution in which it occurs; in some instances there is also a difference in intensity, or in the fact that "patients" are given shock treatment while unconscious. See Millett (1994) for a discussion of the similarities. Rivera-Fuentes and Birke also discuss the role of doctors in places where torture is inflicted (2001, 658-60).

16. See Arberry's version of the Qu'ran, 4:34: "Men are the managers of the affairs of women for that God has preferred in bounty one of them over another, and for that they have expended of their property. Righteous women are therefore obedient, guarding the secret for God's guarding. And those you fear may be rebellious admonish; banish them to their couches, and beat them."

17. In the U.S. and Australia, legal theorists are arguing for the legalization of torture. See for example Bagaric and Clarke (2005).

18. I have requested a copy of the paper by Weiss from the author, but have not received it. The quotations here are based on notes taken during her presentation.

19. In this paper I use the abbreviation S/M when speaking generally about sado-masochism, and I use BDSM when discussing the paper by Weiss (2005). BDSM is an abbreviation for bondage and discipline/dominance and submission/sadism and masochism.

20. Among those I refer to in the paper are Butler (1997), Califia (1988), and Weiss (2005). There are many other defenders in the lesbian, gay, queer, and transgender communities.

21. See page 42 for further discussion of Wittig's essay "One is Not Born a Woman."

22. The use of "pretends" is disingenuous. Pretending to hate can quickly slide over into real hate. This is particularly so when resentment, dislike, and hatred are pretended in order to achieve pleasure through sadomasochistic sexual practices.

23. "Only on the question of women and sexuality do the fundamentalists of either side begin to converge. Homosexuals and loose women are held responsible for God's turning away from the US, just as they are sometimes blamed for the woes of Islam" (Brennan 2003, xvi).

24. The much-touted "rules" of S/M, however, need to be adhered to. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the "rules" are broken in the same way that laws against rape are broken with great regularity.

25. Weiss (2005), based on notes I took at the presentation of this paper.

26. Audience members at the paper by Weiss (2005) argued that S/M was about "healing." It is not the first time I have heard this defence of S/M.

27. In the lead-up to the federal elections in Australia in 2004, a Family First Party campaign worker made a joke about burning lesbians at the stake, and no media organization objected. If such a bad joke were made about anyone from a marginalized ethnic group, voices would be raised in protest. All that happened was that the worker was later stood aside. To speak out on behalf of lesbians is somehow seen as passé, boring, not relevant to

the real political fight. To that extent lesbians have become—and perhaps in the coming years will become even more—difficult to center a campaign around. See Hawthorne (2004b, 10).

28. For a longer discussion of the issue of lesbian refugees, see Hawthorne (2005b).

29. Another case of a lesbian seeking asylum is contained in the *Crimes of Hate* Report: “Irina, a Russian lesbian, claimed asylum in the USA on the grounds that she had been tortured or ill-treated by a range of people, including police, private investigators and her own family members. Irina described how, in 1995, her sisters demanded she give up custody of her son and get psychiatric treatment in order to “cure” her homosexuality. Her mother threatened to disclose her sexual orientation to the authorities unless she gave up her son. Irina’s parents hired two investigators to probe into her lifestyle. The investigators claimed to have a videotape of Irina having sex with her partner and threatened to report her to the police unless she paid a large sum of money. Irina and her lover went to the police to report this attempt to blackmail them; the officer responded by sexually harassing them. One day, the investigators abducted her at knifepoint and took her to an apartment. Together with another man, they raped Irina to ‘teach her a lesson’ and ‘reorientate’ her sexual identity. Irina decided not to report the rape to the police because of her past experience at their hands” (*Crimes of Hate* 2001, 22).

30. The Appendix contains some guidelines on how to treat lesbians applying for asylum based on their sexual orientation.

31. For a very interesting history of the way in which hatred of lesbians was played out in England against Radclyffe Hall in the banning of her book, *The Well of Loneliness*, see Souhami (1999). Lesbian existence is referred to as a pestilence, depraved, “defiling young souls” (2001, 177) and many other inflammatory terms.

32. This argument is put forth by Dershowitz (2003), cited in Bagaric and Clarke (2005, note 114); also see Dershowitz (2002). For the counter argument see Gaita (2004) and Roth et al. (2005).

33. See Millbank (2003), who discusses the case of two gay men refused asylum on the grounds that they could choose to “be discreet” and not have to fear for their lives.

34. First published in French in 1980 in *Questions Feministes*, No. 8, and in English in 1981 in *Feminist Issues* 1 (2). It is included in her collection of essays, *The Straight Mind* (1992).

35. The idea for this came from a similar list of guidelines contained in *Agenda* (2003).

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