

The depoliticising of lesbian culture

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One has the imagination of one's century, one's culture, one's generation, one's particular social class, one's decade, and the imagination of what one reads, but above all one has the imagination of one's body and of the sex who inhabits it.

Nicole Brossard. 1988, *The Aerial Letter*. p. 82.

Introduction

I began to think reflectively about the issue of lesbian culture some years ago when I was writing a series of hypertext poems, "Unstopped Mouths"¹, about lesbian culture. In the last year or so I have had women ask whether lesbian culture exists. It has made me wonder, why was it that lesbian culture that was so hard to see, and why did some people think it did not even exist?

The second event was the recent death of Monique Wittig who died in the first week of 2003. I found out through friends on email lists, and there were some obituaries in the US, where she lived, and one in *Le Monde*, Paris where she had grown up and had won major literary prizes. I was distraught by the news and sent it on to friends all around the world. A day later Morris Gibb died and Australian television reported his death for several days. I have not yet heard a whisper in the Australian media about

¹ See "Unstopped Mouths". In Susan Hawthorne, Cathie Dunsford and Susan Sater (eds.) *Car Maintenance, Explosives and Love and other lesbian writings*. Melbourne: Spinifex Press: 120-127. See also "In the Convents". *Heat* 7 1998: 159-162. And "In the Prisons". In Sue Moss and Karen Knight (eds.). 2001. *Interior Despots: Running the Border*. Lauderdale: Pardalote Press: 79-84. See also my essay "Unstopped Mouths and Infinite Appetites: Developing a Hypertext of Lesbian Culture." In Susan Hawthorne and Renate Klein (eds.) 1999. *CyberFeminism: Connectivity, Critique and Creativity*. Melbourne: Spinifex Press: 384-405. "Unstopped Mouths" was also adapted for performance in 1997 and performed by POW at the Pit Theatre, FCAC.

Monique Wittig. For me and many other feminists and lesbians Monique Wittig changed the way we saw the world. The first novel of hers that I read was *The Guérillères* (1969, 1971 in English), a profound meditation on women, war, lesbian culture and a different way of seeing history and imagining the future. Her second with the then controversial title of *The Lesbian Body* (1973, 1975 in English) once again challenged me as a reader. It was published years before anyone thought of writing about the body as a feminist or cultural studies issue. She also co-wrote *Lesbian Peoples: Materials for a Dictionary* with her partner Sande Zeig (1975, 1979 in English), a send up of the dictionary which takes lesbian culture as its centre. And finally there is her novel, *Across the Acheron*, (1985, in English 1987) a rewriting of Dante's *Inferno* set near San Francisco. In 1964 she won the prestigious *Pris Medici* with her first novel *The Opopanax*. In addition to her groundbreaking fiction she was a major contributor to *Questions féministes* and her essays written between 1976 and 1990 were subsequently collected in a volume entitled *The Straight Mind and Other Essays* (1992). Those essays challenged just about every assumption contained in heterosexual discourse. Her work is as revolutionary as any other iconoclast – think of Martin Luther King, Franz Fanon – take several more steps and you will find Monique Wittig. Although it's not unusual for a farsighted thinker not to be acknowledged in her lifetime, for a writer who has consistently challenged the mainstream for more than thirty years, it is unusual for her not to be recognised by the mainstream yet.

I have to ask whether it is because she is a lesbian, and therefore her work is considered to have no cultural significance. For me and for thousands of others around the world, Monique Wittig remains a source of inspiration and an extraordinary contributor to lesbian culture.

The Politics of Culture

When colonisers conquer a land, their first reports back to the empire usually contain something along the lines of “the natives possess no culture”. This is a very fine way of excusing themselves for conquering and dispossessing other peoples. It also excuses their future actions of imposing their own culture and their own values on the colonised peoples for their own good. Eventually the colonised begin to believe the lies they are told by the colonisers and so take up the imperial culture at which they have to excel in order to get along in the world.

Lesbians, in this so-called post-colonial world, remain dispossessed of culture. Many still believe that lesbians have no culture. The dominant heterosexual discourse, such as that of my colleague, perpetuates the myth that there is no such thing as lesbian culture. And the mainstream media does not recognise the work of lesbians until they are well and truly entombed and any relatives scared of the repercussions have also died (Virginia Woolf is a case in point; someone recently found proof in early drafts of *A Room of One's Own* that tells the full story of Chloë and Olivia; lesbians have been writing about this for decades).

The colonisers, patriarchal men (and women) in this case, cannot admit that there is such a thing as lesbian culture because it would put in question too much of the dominant heterosexual discourse and its institutions. It is a little like slavery. While slavery existed in the American south, it was possible to say that slaves were incapable of autonomous life and culture. When slavery is abolished, although much of the discourse remains, those same people are found to be quite capable of autonomous existence. Where lesbians exists openly, it is a challenge to the lie that women can have no autonomous existence from men; that the world of women must revolve around the centre that is male. Lesbians, like former slaves, pose a threat to the dominant culture. This is not to suggest all lesbians and all former slaves fully

understand the political import of their situation, but symbolically lesbians are a threat to the heterosexual discourse and to patriarchal and heterosexual institutions.

The Politics of Language and Imagination

The word lesbian is a powerful word. When I use the word “lesbian”, I mean it to encompass the whole life of the lesbian: her emotional, intellectual, creative, spiritual, moral, political, embodied and social being. The lesbian of whom I am thinking is someone who is inspired by other lesbians and who works, when possible, for the well-being of lesbians as a group. For the lesbian with radical politics, this is not a particularly difficult task. It does not require her to abandon all other relationships, nor to ditch emotionally sustaining relationships with friends and family who are not lesbians. It does involve examining those relationships and looking to see whether they support or challenge the heterosexual political economy. It does mean taking one’s responsibility as a lesbian in a lesbian world seriously.

“Lesbians are not women” writes Monique Wittig in 1978² (32), shocking her audience. What she means is that lesbians do not participate in the social economy of woman-being. One can go to the roots of language to expose this. The Old English word for woman: SING wifmon PL wifmen, is WIFE + MAN. While in Chinese the word fù used for married women is made up of nü (woman) and zhou (broom). This in turn is interpreted as woman being the helper of man³ (7-8). As Wittig points out woman is “the product of a social relationship”⁴(15) and that relationship is “a specific social relation to man” (20). That lesbians are not women is shocking for it means that lesbians fall outside the parameters of power that form the heterosexual view of the world, a view that not only endorses women’s marginal status but also ensures that it remains that way. The world view of the liberal feminist is also one of the supports of

² Monique Wittig. 1992. “The Straight Mind” (1980). In *The Straight Mind and Other Essays*. Boston: Beacon Press.

³ Barbara Niederer. 1995. “Women in Chinese Script”. In Anna Gertslacher and Margit Miosga (eds.) *China for Women: Travel and Culture*. Melbourne: Spinifex Press. 7-11.

⁴ “One is Not Born a Woman” (1981) in *The Straight Mind*.

the heterosexual political economy. If lesbians are not women, then how can lesbians support the structures of power that maintain the global economy? Lesbians will be left outside the structures set up by liberal feminists to convince the ordinary woman that things are really not so bad these days.

In an article about the challenges of lesbian centred research, Chris Sitka⁵ (16) poses an imaginative challenge to her readers. Referring to the imagination of a lesbian paleoanthropologist seeing the footprints of three walkers, walking across the ash-strewn Rift Valley in Africa some three million years ago, she surmises that the walkers were not, as is usually supposed in the literature, a man, a woman and a child – often read as a man, his woman and his child – but rather that the three walkers were lesbians. This proposition is shocking to believers of the dominant discourse who want no truck with the idea that lesbians could be placed at the dawning of humanity, at the dawning of mankind!⁶

The Politics of Love

Passion and the power of attraction lie at the centre of love. As a politics of love, the lesbian is seen spiralling through, writing her way into history. Lesbians, radical feminist lesbians, are the only group to claim that they choose their marginality. Gay men claim genes. Those of us affected by disability, chronic illness claim genes, environment or accidental circumstances. Culture and the accident of birth are key to racial and class oppression. Fear and political repression cause flight from one's own homeland. The lesbian claims what Nicole Brossard has called the “force of attraction”⁷(122). Deciding on a life defined by a political decision – that of committing oneself to living out a passion for other women – is a momentous

⁵ Chris Sitka. 1991. “A Paper in the Life of a Lesbian Researcher”. *Journal of Australian Lesbian Feminist Studies*. Vol. 1, No. 1.

⁶ For a consideration of this see Susan Cavin. 1989. *Lesbian Origins*. San Francisco: Ism Press. Cavin examines the hypothesis that lesbian existence has indeed had a significant impact on the nature of human culture from its very beginning.

⁷ Nicole Brossard. 1988. *The Aerial Letter*. Toronto: Women's Press.

decision. It involves imagination because few of us have models for such a life. Imagination drives that passion which can in turn become a passion for political community, for a creative existence, for a life marked by marginality.

For, whatever one's experiences are around acceptance and tolerance, neither of these is good enough. If the heterosexual tolerates me, that probably means I'm not being very up front about my sexuality. Toleration implies normalisation. I'll tolerate you only if you live a life similar enough to mine. Live a life that is a replica of standard heterosexual union. The heterosexual world calls on the lesbian to celebrate the kitchen, the household, the sporting club and the family.

Acceptance is a little better, but it is only one step up. It encourages us to disappear ourselves, to blend in with the crowd, to avoid speaking from our perspective, our experience. I have had experience of this in rooms filled with lesbians, and no one speaks of the lesbian for fear of intimidating someone. The someone is never named, and the lesbian remains invisible.

Neither tolerance nor acceptance involves a recognition of the richness of lesbian culture; neither includes the acknowledgement of passion, joy, defiance that is so much a part of so many lesbian lives.

It is like walking out on a tight wire over a yawning abyss and not being able to see the other side. Life as a lesbian can be dangerous.

As Nicole Brossard claims, "A lesbian who does not reinvent the world is a lesbian in the process of disappearing."⁸(136) Not only will she disappear, but the culture of lesbians disappears from time to time throughout history because of repression, fear,

⁸ *Aerial Letter*. On p. 136 Brossard uses the word "world" in this quote, but in an almost identical sentence on p. 122 she uses "word" instead.

lack of opportunity. And as no group other than some lesbians seeks to claim it as their history, the stories that keep history alive disappear. It is as Jovette Marchessault suggests, the “Tomb of the Unknown Lesbian.”⁹(35) But this is a tomb that is never celebrated. No one comes to stand in silence before it. It is not only the tomb of the unknown lesbian, it is a tomb with no place dedicated to it for burial. No land, no sea, no tree, no rock where vultures might come to clean the flesh from the bones. Perhaps only a fire, a pyre for all the lesbians burnt as heretics, as witches and monsters.

The Politics of Relationship

For the lesbian, in order for there to be relationship, she must find at least one other like her. In order for there to be lesbian community, she must find many others like her. Not all social conditions are suited to this. If they are not, then she must be able, at the very least, to imagine it as a possibility.

What must she imagine? That she herself can be loved. This is a difficult enough task for most women to stop right there. But more. She must imagine that the love of her and her love of another can survive, or at least be worth the effort, in spite of all the sanctions against it. Sanctions which range from simple disapproval to exile and death. Is it any accident that with the decreasing sanctions against lesbian existence, the numbers of lesbians in existence and further, the number of lesbians prepared to publicly claim their lesbian identity (among others) has increased hugely in the last thirty years in some western countries? The only country in the world to have legislation that protects lesbians just as it protects others (legally speaking) is South Africa.

So the imaginative leap is perhaps slightly reduced in some countries, but this is hardly the case in a host of other countries where exile and death remain the penalties.

⁹ Jovette Marchessault. 1985. *Lesbian Triptych*. Toronto: Women’s Press.

The lesbian, in order to fully enter the world of lesbian existence, must imagine a world full of lesbian imagery. I don't mean the world that exoticises lesbians for men's erotic excitement. I mean a world where the lesbian is in the world and moving through and affecting the world. This is a dynamic view of lesbian history and culture. It includes Sappho, but does not start and stop with Sappho. It includes all the lesbians who have lived somehow in mostly adverse situations throughout history.¹⁰ Some of them we know about. Most we don't. It also includes the lesbians whose names we don't yet know because they are developing and creating new events, new works of art, new politics to take out into the world. They are not yet published, exhibited, performed or given a platform from which to speak or sing.

The lesbian world, like the abyss, is fathomless. We cannot see the other side and we can see only parts of what lie behind us. Sappho noticed this. As she writes in Fragment 147, "someone, I say to you, will think of us in some future time"¹¹ The lesbian world involves a huge task of synthesis, of weaving together the strands, of creating a matrix from the warp and weft of lesbian existence. It is, as Margaret Reynolds points out "A space for filling the gaps, joining up the dots, making something out of nothing" (2).¹²

The lesbian world extends all the way through the body – from every muscle, cell and sinew – through to a spiral of time/space – from every nanosecond/nanodistance to the vast sweeps of curved space/time through and between galaxies. The lesbian world is a multiverse of possibilities.

¹⁰ See Janice G. Raymond. 1991. "Putting the Politics Back into Lesbianism." *Journal of Australian Lesbian Feminist Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 2.

¹¹ Sappho. Fragment 147. Cited in Margaret Reynolds. 2000. *The Sappho Companion*. London: Vintage. (392).

¹² *The Sappho Companion*.

The utterance of the word lesbian can have profound effects. It can destroy friendships, break families, create political, social or economic downfall. It can still do these things, even in the twenty-first century. It can, in effect, change the world. The heterosexual world. The non-lesbian world. It can have a profound effect on the shape of reality.

And what do we find in the use of language today? We find the word queer which through its inclusiveness, disappears lesbians. We find the term (and what a ragged term it is) same-sex-attracted. And I ask, Is that all? Where is the celebration of culture that we find in the word lesbian and its offshoots in various European languages? Where is the poetry? Where is music and song? The joy and outrageousness? The wild and passionate? The language of the twenty-first century is making us retreat; it is clouding, obfuscating, euphemising us out of the world.

How much nicer say the government departments, the fearful politicians to hear the term same-sex-attracted. Same-sex attracted reduces lesbians to a mechanics of robotified sexuality. It is formalin-covered sex. Sex without fun, without emotion, without joy, without even the vagaries of distrust and betrayal. A clinical term stripped of feeling that does nothing for lesbian politics and cultures.

The lesbian might be a kind of nomad. Often she is a nomad of ad hoc family. I do not mean blood kin. I mean a family of friends, ex-lovers and acquaintances formed either through locality or affection. It is perhaps in this sense that Virginia Woolf was thinking when she wrote, "As a woman, I have no country. As a woman I want no country. As a woman my country is the whole world"¹³(109). Colonialist readings aside, this statement – if it is set beside Monique Wittig's statement that lesbians " 'choose' to be runaways and try to escape their class or group ... to stand on one's

¹³ Virginia Woolf. 1938. *Three Guineas*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovitch (1966 edition).

own feet as an escapee, a fugitive slave, a lesbian”¹⁴(xiii), – rings with a new reading, a different way of looking at the world.

In a world where nationalism is becoming increasingly dangerous, to be a lesbian is to resist the impulse to patriotic fervour and bravery for the benefit of the most powerful.

The Politics of Sense

What does it mean to make sense? In language it is to have the means of having others understand your sentences.

But if the word lesbian can range in meaning from an indication of one’s beloved to hatred that causes stoning or murder or self-hatred, how can one speak of the lesbian in this world and make sense?

The world as it operates on a day-to-day basis is dominated by a heterosexual discourse, and since such a discourse cannot really admit the possibility of lesbian existence (as in the case of Queen Victoria¹⁵ or China under Mao) then the lesbian must be a nonsense.

Or perhaps we could surmise that heterosexual discourse the lesbian is like anti-matter. It must exist, and yet finding proof of its existence is extremely difficult.

Sense is generated through a symbolic discourse developed through culture and language, the combination of which – words, symbols and syntax – creates the possibility of meaningful sense.

¹⁴ Monique Wittig. 1992. Preface to *The Straight Mind and Other Essays*. Boston: Beacon Press.

¹⁵ See Sheila Jeffreys. 1997. *The Spinster and Her Enemies*. Melbourne: Spinifex Press.

What would it take for lesbian discourse to make sense? It would take a wholesale shift in perception, in conceptualisation, in language and in power relations.

How might we understand the symbolic code of lesbians?

Symbols are like pearls. They concentrate diverse elements into a single dense form. The lesbian, “is the rage of woman condensed to the point of explosion.”¹⁶ The pearl forms around a piece of grit, and slowly, as time passes, layers and layers of pearl are overlaid on this piece of grit until a solid object is formed. Symbols, likewise, take a tiny grit of meaning and the layers of meaning accrete around it until there is an easy association between the symbol and its referent.

In lesbian culture of the early twenty-first century there are many positive symbols of the word lesbian. But this is an historical exception. Consider the ways in which the lesbian has been symbolised. She is burned as a witch. She is labelled an abomination by the Church. She is killed along with Jews, and gypsies in the holocaust but is remembered even more rarely than the gypsies. She is denied existence in many states. What, therefore, does the lesbian symbolise? Is it fear? Why is she such a threat? What is it about her that draws these layers of meaning around the grit at the centre of the pearl?

These are questions not readily answered unless one is prepared to suggest that it could have something to do with masculinity; with a threat to male power; with the fear engendered by the prospect of women loving one another and creating their own sense outside the sensible dominant heterosexual discourse. For what else could it be? It cannot be answered by a class analysis, since lesbians inhabit every class – from the poorest right through to the ruling class. It cannot be skin colour or nationality since

¹⁶ Radicalesbians. 1070. “The Woman-Identified-Woman”. In Rosemary Silva (ed.) *Lesbian Quotations*. Boston, MA: Alyson Publications. 18.

lesbians (in spite of denials from some quarters) come from every kind of culture, from every region of the world. It cannot be size or age or bodily formation since lesbians come in all shapes, sizes and ages. The only exclusion is being born male. Many will say, aah but that has now changed since even men can be lesbians these days. If that is so, these lesbians are the only ones to pay for the privilege of being lesbians, and the more likely explanation is that capitalism will capitalise on every want and desire and will commodify even the operation for transexualism. Such desires can be fulfilled. But would you accept me as an Indigenous person just because I had an operation to change my skin colour? I think not. The possibility that mtf transexualism can be read as a simple sex change only exists if one denies the existence of lesbian culture.

As I have argued above, although lesbian culture has the same right to existence as has any other cultural group, it appears to be too unthinkable for too many people in high places for its existence to be guaranteed. Do lesbians, like other groups, have a right to claim their culture? Is it a matter of human rights? If so, why is no one defending the existence of lesbian culture?

Lesbian Language Codes

The mouth. The lips. The tongue. The site of speech and song and language. The mouth, the lips, the tongue are key symbols of the lesbian. The association is obvious. It is the beginning of a series of symbolic resonances which lesbian poets have used.

I have referred to it in “Unstopped Mouths”, the mouths of lesbians whose stories, poems and songs are no longer silenced. The flow of their speech and of their sexual energy is unremitting. Like Monique Wittig’s line in *The Lesbian Body* “You sing without pause”¹⁷ I wrote a poem some time ago with the following form:

¹⁷ Monique Wittig. 1975. *The Lesbian Body*. London: Peter Owen. 19.

Composition: Music for lesbian mouths

oo

oooo ooo ooooo oo oo oo oo

O-oo oo-O

O

o o o o o

O O O

oooooo ooo o o

O

In a way, this poem is both a humorous representation of lesbian existence and a serious comment on the use of language and symbolism in lesbian poetry. As Olga Broumas suggests in her book title, *Beginning with O*¹⁸ or as Monique Wittig implies by opening her book *The Guérillères*¹⁹ with a giant O. While Nicole Brossard writes: “I say the text begins here. At the hole ...”²⁰(63) The O, the circle, the ring, the circus and the circuit, the circular return, the ouroboros, the hole is central to lesbian symbolism.

¹⁸ Olga Broumas. 1977. *Beginning with O*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

¹⁹ Monique Wittig. 1972. *The Guérillères*. London: Picador.

²⁰ *The Aerial Letter*.

The lips form an O when they sing. The lips. The labia. They make the shape of a circle with their mouths. They make labile sounds with the hum of lips and throat. My meditation on codes breaks here because I reach for the dictionary and the words labia and labile are not in the dictionary closest to hand. (*The Macquarie Dictionary*; the dictionary used by most school children in Australia; the dictionary that tells the thirteen year old just discovering the language whether or not a word exists, a world exists. The hole, the O that lesbians refer to is far too scary to include in a dictionary, even its outer edges.) I go on to see what, if anything, the dictionary says about lesbian. It says, a female homosexual. Have you noticed that to this point I have not once used the term homosexual in all my attempts to define lesbian? Why? Because it remains a part of the heterosexual discourse in which there are male homosexuals and female homosexuals and the only difference is their biology. This too denies the culture of lesbians. It does not and cannot challenge the universal heterosexualised discourse.

The Politics of Non-sense

Non-sense is what falls outside the world of sense. To the lesbian this is the world of heterosexual discourse. That world is filled with men who are destroying the planet with war, with dreams of immortality (surely this is nonsense), with terror and terrorism – both individual and state sponsored. To the lesbian the call to patriotism is like the call to do violence to the self. Is that why Virginia Woolf felt impelled to fill her pockets with rocks and walk into the River Ouse? Patriotism to the political lesbian is not a refuge. It is, rather, a violation.

As betrayers of the patriarchal system, as disloyal to the (un)civilisation of heterosexuality, lesbians themselves are refugees of that political economy.

Mary Daly²¹ (8) describes the process by which sense becomes nonsense and nonsense becomes sense as the political strategy of “reversal”. When the dominant discourse engages in reversal it claims the world of sense as its own. Under that regime the likelihood of the planet being destroyed, of millions of people dying or living in dire poverty and the nonsense of a few very rich people who have too many resources to know what to do with other than to build weapons of mass destruction to shoot at one another, is claimed as sense. The reversal is to blame lesbians for that destruction as Jerry Falwell did after September 11, 2001²² (24). Let’s not worry about facts. Let’s not ask which lesbians have hijacked planes to fly into tall buildings? Which lesbians have access to enriched plutonium? Which lesbians have an army at their command? But lesbians retain their monstrous qualities. These days lesbians are terrorists.

No one is proud of terrorists, and, as Gillian Hanscombe writes, “No one is proud of dykes.”

No one is proud of dykes (not families not neighbours not friends not workmates not bosses not teachers not mentors not universities not literature societies not any nation not any ruler not any benefactor not any priest not any healer not any advocate). Only other dykes are proud of dykes. People say live and let live but why should we?²³

From *Sybil: The Glide of Her Tongue* (1992).

²¹ Mary Daly. 1978. *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism*. Boston: Beacon Press.

²² Robin Morgan. 2002. “Week One: Ghosts and Echoes”. In Susan Hawthorne and Bronwyn Winter (eds.) *September 11, 2001: Feminist Perspectives*. Melbourne: Spinifex Press.

²³ Gillian Hanscombe. 1992. *Sybil: The Glide of Her Tongue*. Melbourne: Spinifex Press.

I have not begun yet to tell a fraction of the content of lesbian culture. I've not yet mentioned Giti Thadani's *Sakhiyani*.²⁴ I've not touched on nüshu²⁵ or the marriage resisters of China²⁶; nor the lives of lesbians in Japan²⁷ and China²⁸ or the struggles of women in Nazi Germany²⁹ and present-day Zimbabwe³⁰. I've not yet mentioned the mestiza of Gloria Anzandúa,³¹ the work of lesbians from Indigenous cultures³², nor the work of Audre Lorde³³. I've not plunged into the histories by Judy Grahn³⁴ of lesbian codes nor explored the metaphorical richness of Gertrude Stein's *Lifting Belly*.³⁵ There is an enormously rich vein of material from many cultures and times. But that will have to wait for another day.

Are you proud of lesbians? What will you say next time someone asks, Is there such a thing as lesbian culture?

²⁴ Giti Thadani. 1996. *Sakhiyani: Lesbian Desire in Ancient and Modern India*. London: Cassell. Also for a contemporary lesbian life see Suniti Namjoshi. 2000. *Goja*. Melbourne: Spinifex Press.

²⁵ Cathy Silber. 1995. "Women's Writing from Hunan". In Anna Gertslacher and Margit Miosga (eds.) *China for Women: Travel and Culture*. Melbourne: Spinifex Press. 12-19.

²⁶ Janice Raymond. 2001. *A Passion for Friends: Toward a Philosophy of Female Affection*. Melbourne: Spinifex Press.

²⁷ For a contemporary look at Japanese lesbian life see Marou Izumo and Clare Maree. 1999. *Love Upon the Chopping Board*. Melbourne: Spinifex Press.

²⁸ Anchee Min. 1994. *Red Azalea*. London: Victor Gollancz.

²⁹ Erica Fischer. 1996. *Aimée and Jaguar*. London: Bloomsbury.

³⁰ Tsitsi Tiripano. 2000. "Fighting for Lesbian and Gay Rights in Zimbabwe". *Off Our Backs*. Vol. 30, No. 4. April. 1, 6-7.

³¹ Gloria Anzaldúa. 1987. *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. San Francisco: Spinisters/Aunt Lute.

³² Paula Gunn Allen. 1986. *The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions*. Boston: Beacon Press; Ngahuia Te Awakotuku. 1991. *Mana Wahine Maori: Selected Writings on Maori Women's Art, Culture and Politics*. Auckland: new Women's Press. Also see the novels in Cathie Dunsford's Cowrie series, Spinifex Press.

³³ Audre Lorde. 1984. *Sister Outsider*. San Francisco: Spinisters Ink.

³⁴ Judy Grahn. 1984. *Another Mother Tongue: Gay Words, Gay Worlds*. Boston: Beacon Press. Judy Grahn. 1985. *The Highest Apple*. San Francisco: Spinisters Ink.

³⁵ Gertrude Stein. 1989. *Lifting Belly*. Tallahassee, FL: Naiad Press. Also see Judy Grahn. 1989. *Really Reading Gertrude Stein*. Freedom, CA: The Crossing Press.