

This is Not a Sexy Issue

by L. Ashley Turner

En condamnant puissamment les médias et ses employeurs, l'auteure explique sa

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résistance à ce qui est considéré «sexy» et à ce qui est considéré honorable.

You packed the lesbian press conference September 14th, 1995 at the Beijing Recreation Centre in China with your hardware and bright lights, showing microphones in our faces with the inevitable “just how *do* lesbians make love anyway?” and “*why* do you prefer women?”

And we smile and answer for the hundredth time because we understand the curiosity and we appreciate the issues; and yes, being with a man was often like swimming in the river and being with a woman was like playing in the ocean. And although the waters may match molecularly, the swimming be just as vigorous and the warm wetness just as sweet, once the river enters the ocean, there is seldom reason to go back.

But why are you leaving? Another press conference is just beginning and although the transition from our cosy dialogue is difficult and some of you want to ask about what it is *really* like down there, the room is suddenly empty. I sit in her stillness, minus your hardware, rosiness rapidly fading as Jacques Chirac’s ugly legacy is unfurled before my eyes and the bomb he tested September 6th in

the South Pacific jarring my senses once again.¹

I run after you, pleading for you to stay and you make excuses and finally admit “the environment is not a sexy issue” and I want to shrug with you and admit you are right because sex makes me smile too and your curiosity used to be mine. And yet Chirac leers at me as I return to the room and I hear the pain of women giving birth to “jelly fish babies” with no

head or two heads with no limbs or too many and you are outside getting the low-down on my life in an ocean without bombs. I hug Maria Kersakle from Samoa in the French South Pacific and through my tears ask what I can do in my ocean without bombs. Maria tells me to write about what happened in the room today as the women in Samoa fight through and beyond their tears each day of their lives with neither cameras nor microphones.

Back home in Canada (the world’s largest exporter of plutonium),² Chirac sets off yet another bomb to poison not the white French Riviera but the Indigenous peoples of the South Pacific and the ugly waves of colonial imperialism rise over me and I want to find at least one of you reporters and shake you and tell you that, no, this is *not* a sexy issue but neither is a woman making love to man or woman as her reproductive system is being poisoned and our children are dying and the same colonial bastards who employ you are raping mother earth’s ecosystem over and over. Nothing is sexy when the river of lust, of life herself, is dying and the ocean of our dreams, of our childhood play, perishes. Your children may not care that you covered

the lesbian conference ‘cause sexy issues are easy. And reaping bounty from dead waters is not.

I have battled the river; I have played in the ocean and, although the river may still beckon all of us, it is neither sexy nor easy humping a dead river or surfing with dead jelly fish.

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¹Jacques Chirac was elected President of France in 1995; his term is up in 2002. He dramatically defied world opinion by almost immediately ordering underground nuclear tests in the South Pacific to tune up the French *force de frappe*. The Aborigines of the South Pacific have the same history of colonization and nuclear testing. In the 1950s, Aboriginal people’s land was taken from them and used for British nuclear tests. France began testing nuclear bombs in colonial French Polynesia in 1966. In January 1996, amidst continuing international condemnation and a growing boycott of French products, France finally announced a permanent halt to testing at Moruroa (Polynesia).

²Greenpeace Canada is convinced that Canada is supplying plutonium to France for its nuclear testing, a practice that is clearly against our national policy and our national polls.