

contradictions can lead to an erasure of new (to many in the west) frameworks for thinking about sexuality, gender, and the self. As she elaborates,

The West's global intellectual hegemony leads us to suppose that everyone everywhere understands exactly what we mean by the sexual categories that identify homoerotic behaviour, as evidenced by the number of books and articles which attempt to discuss "homosexuality" on an international level, and in doing so, subsume all homoerotic activities under one rubric. This tendency renders different notions of same-sex activities invisible. However, it is important to recognize that it is not merely a difference in words that we are discussing, nor is it just particular meanings of corresponding terms. It is a distinctive conceptualization, different in theory as well as in substance, and thus could be said to refer to a different reality.... Not only do such sexual categories exclude the experiences of men and women of the "Third World," but the terms seem to be insufficient to capture the myriad differences in sexual expression. (Khayatt 10-11)

While educational strategies may include the language of "identity" they must, at the same time, extend an invitation to examine the problems inherent in this process. For it is only through making the messy contradictions of our various histories and locations visible, that we will have constructed a pedagogy that does justice to any of our sexualities.

If sexual categories are both inevitable, and inevitably troubling, I would argue that we must *wear* these notions of "identity" lightly, so they do not contain us, or contain the work of understanding desire. To do this we must not erase the profound differences and contradictions found in historical texts, or in educational

contexts, but instead mine them. For it is only in so doing that our pedagogy can re-construct the passions which have made up both our movements and our lives.

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<sup>1</sup>For a fuller examination of the material which follows see Francis.

<sup>2</sup>For Canadian figures see Ornstein (50). For information on the United States see Patton (109).

<sup>3</sup>This story was told by Dutch sociologist Ingrid Foeken about her own experience in Africa at the "Which Homosexuality?" International Conference on Lesbian and Gay Studies" in Amsterdam, Holland, in 1987. It is documented by Baird in *New Internationalist*. This issue of *NI* continues to be an excellent popular education tool for classroom use and can be ordered from the *NI* office in Toronto, Canada.

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## ELISAVIETTA RITCHIE

### Sacred Places

If all you have is  
one rock amid sand or snow,  
that rock is a god.

*Elisavietta Ritchie's poetry collections include: The Arc of the Storm, Elegy for the Other Woman, Wild Garlic, Raking the Snow, and Tightening the Circle Over Eel Country.*