

certainly the silence regarding sexuality. These anecdotes also reveal the depth to which colleagues are silent and often collude with a way of being, or with ideological practices they would adamantly deny both theoretically and politically.

The ways in which we are conceptualized within a traditional social work practice and/or education model, reveals not only ways of thinking about female sexuality and sexual regulation, but also about how that sexuality is allowed to be. O'Neill for example argues that while social work professors and students are relatively accepting of gay men and lesbians particularly in comparison to the larger university, schools of social work lack supportive policies and accurate curriculum content to support this acceptance. As a matter of fact, while the Canadian Association of Schools of Social Work accreditation standards

prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation ... in contrast to other minority groups, there are no requirements that schools ensure equity in the treatment of gay and lesbian faculty and students. (11)

While these practices are contested by lesbian and gay social work practitioners, policy-makers, academics, and students, they point to the contradictions within the profession; for, if there are no administrative, or even social mechanisms in place to legitimize lesbian couples lives, then no one knows what to do.

When we first began thinking about this article we viewed it as a piece we could easily draft; however, throughout the writing and discussion we have had to question our own responses to often painful situations, and the times in which we silenced or made ourselves invisible because of fear, lack of support, and so on. It is apparent that we are only beginning to define our experiences to ourselves, and that our invisibility to ourselves parallels our invisibility in the university community. What it has re-

vealed is the need for a more in-depth examination of some of the issues touched on too briefly here. To paraphrase Nicole Brossard (1988), "lesbians who do not reinvent the world are lesbians in the process of disappearing."

This article was originally presented at the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Studies Association Learned Societies Conference in 1995.

Barbara Isaac is an assistant professor in the social work program at the University of Northern British Columbia.

Barbara M. Herringer is an assistant professor in the social work program at the University of Northern British Columbia.

References

- Brossard, Nicole. *The Aerial Letter*. Trans. Marlene Wildeman. Toronto: Women's Press, 1988.
- Canadian Association of Schools of Social Work. *Manual of Standards and Procedures for the Accreditation of Canadian Programs of Social Work Education*. Ottawa: Canadian Association of Schools of Social Work, 1992.
- Garber, L. *Tilting the Tower: Lesbians, Teaching, Queer Subjects*. New York: Routledge, Chapman, and Hall, Inc., 1994.
- Ng, R. *Teaching Against the Grain: Contradictions and Possibilities*. Unpublished paper, 1990.
- O'Neill, B. "Canadian Social Work Education and Same-Sex Orientation." *Canadian Social Work Review* 13.1 (Winter 1996 forthcoming).
- Smith, D. *The Everyday World as Problematic: A Feminist Sociology*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987.
- Smith, D. *The Conceptual Practices of Power: A Feminist Sociology of Knowledge*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990a.
- Smith, D. *Texts, Facts and Femininity: Exploring the Relations of Ruling*. New York: Routledge, 1990b.

Smith, D. "Writing Women's Experience in Social Science." *Feminism and Psychology* 1.4 (1991): 155-159.

Warland, Betsy, ed. *Inversions: Writings by Dykes, Queers and Lesbians*. Vancouver: Press Gang Publishers, 1991.

KAUSHALYA BANNERJI

Pachacutec

Ochun
they tell me
glances at you
from a woman's
eyes or hips or
the faces of five o'clock

dreaming of the moon's
hands in night's dark river
curved
around Earth
where Ochun
honours you
or so
they tell me
by calling
your secret name:
the free one

*Kaushalya Bannerji's poetry
appears earlier in this volume.*