

The following is a translated segment of Isabel Franc/Lola Van Guardia's essay "Del pozo a la hiena: Humor e ironía en la llamada literatura lésbica." *Cultura, homosexualidad y homofobia* Vol. II Amazonia: retos de visibilidad lesbiana. Ed. Angie Simonis. Barcelona, Laertes: 2007. 153-162. In her essay, Franc describes the importance of humor for the lesbian community as well as its role in her own writing.

"Sincerely, I do not think that it's a question of hormones. Patriarchal power has never wanted the lesbian collective to reach maturity. First it made us believe that we didn't exist, then that we were sick, that we were errors of nature, lastly, it treats us like adolescents and tries to destroy our self-esteem. To provoke the feeling of nonexistence or dramatic existence does not cease to be a good strategy for annihilation.

In this context, resistance has been an act of heroism, as Margherita Giacobino indicates in her *Viaggio eroico nella letteratura lesbica*. But we can feel prideful of our resistance. The creative current that, supporting itself with a sense of humor, exhibits and reclaims the right to diversity, enjoys great success. What the gals that have read the Lola Van Guardia [Franc's pseudonym] trilogy most often say to me is: 'Thanks for making us laugh,' a phrase that excites me each time that it reaches me. And it's nice to see how times change. In contrast to the excruciating 'Why is loss the measure of love?' that Winterson submitted us to less than a decade ago (a beginning that does not do justice to her exquisite literary quality), the Italian dramaturge Elena Rossi alleviates us affirming that, 'the true measure of loss is in the irony with which we manage to surpass it.'

Bravo for Rossi!

The enthusiastic response of the public to Rossi's work and, modestly, to my own is not anything more than the need for a new discourse. Not only do we exist, we are tired of tragedies and we have surpassed the adolescent state in which patriarchy has wanted to submerge us. We want to laugh and to laugh at ourselves, because we know that it is the only way to escape a life dominated by fears, suffering and feelings of guilt. We know that humor helps us to learn about our own errors, of experience and of failure."