

influence of two world leaders --"He" and "She."

*Solution Three* is an attempt to control population growth and reduce aggression by promoting homosexuality, labelling heterosexuality as "deviant" and producing leaders by cloning He and She. Heterosexuality is permitted legally but is socially unacceptable. Only the pregnancies of "Clone Mums," who carry the replicas of He and She, are sanctioned. Children produced through "random heterosexual couplings" are considered to be surplus population.

This programmed world is threatened by the appearance of a blight on genetically engineered grains and fruits (the "best" strains are grown exclusively, reducing the gene pool and leaving the remaining strains vulnerable to the unexpected blight). To counter this threat to the food supply, a search for wild grains to strengthen the existing genetic stock is launched.

Mitchison uses this search to draw an analogy with the potential danger of limiting the human gene pool. Wild triticum stains are found to strengthen the wheat stocks. What will be available to strengthen the human gene pool if it is critically diminished by the virtual elimination of sexual reproduction and only a few selected people are cloned? Human heroes ("He" and "She") had appeared when needed. Their "excellence" saved humanity. As circumstances change, will different types of "excellence" be needed? Could the children produced by "deviants" be the source of the genes needed to enrich and possibly save humanity in some unforeseen future? This is the beginning of a groping toward "Solution Four."

The society resulting from *Solution Three* is earnest and humourless. Unfortunately, the book is also pretty much earnest and humourless, although the author has some sly fun in the reversal of societal attitudes toward homo- and heterosexuality. This book is interesting in light of the recent explosion of interest in genetic technologies and the ethical and moral dilemmas they pose and can be recommended on this basis. However, the plot was minimal and the characters little more than representatives of various political positions. It was a worthwhile read but not much fun.

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***Changing Our Lives: Doing Women's Studies.*** Gabriele Griffin (ed.). Pluto Press, London, England, 1994.; x + 196 pages, ISBN 0-7453-0752-3; \$16.95 (US)

***The Journal Project: Dialogues and Conversations inside Women's Studies.*** Dana Putman, Dorothy Kidd, Elaine Doman, Patty Moore (eds.). Second Story Press, Toronto, 1995.; ii + 224; ISBN 0-929005-69-4; \$12.95.

These two texts provide an account of women's experiences of studying and teaching Women's Studies in the UK and Canada. As a general introduction, both books are informative in their attempt to tell the stories of what teaching and studying Women's Studies is about.

The UK contribution, *Changing our Lives*, is organized in two parts. First is a compilation of taped accounts of the experiences of students. The second part of *Changing our Lives* consists of short academic essays by Women's Studies tutors that examine some of the issues involved in teaching the subject. Topics discussed by students include why they became involved in Women's Studies, and their aspirations before, during and after the Women's Studies experience. For example, Elspeth began an MA in Women's Studies to gain academic recognition. However, she became disillusioned at the way that other students preferred independent learning to working collectively. A previous tutor of Women's Studies courses, she fantasized about being part of a group of radical feminists sitting together discussing French feminist theory.

At the beginning of *Changing our Lives*, there is a section called "Notes on Contributors." The female academics are listed with their titles and academic credentials while the students are presented in the following manner: "Suki, a mixed race woman with a history of modelling." The editor, Gabriele Griffin, states that many of the students did not want to be identified--hence the use of pseudonyms. Yet,

arguably this different manner of describing the students versus the teachers evokes a power imbalance. For example, "Gina - a woman of 60 with an upper-middle class quasi-Victorian upbringing," is placed next to Celia Kitzinger, who "teaches Social Psychology and Women's Studies at Loughborough University." For me, this set up an uneasy tension, and it seemed as if the students were being used as raw data whose experiences could then be theorized by the professionals. And I wondered why an editor who regarded Women's Studies as a discipline that "explodes the notion of a division between the knower and the known" could be so apparently unaware of the uneasy dichotomy that was being constructed between student and teacher?

A constant theme running through *Changing our Lives*, was that of too much academic pressure. Elspeth points out that there seems to be a conflict in teaching Women's Studies within the academy because professors become part of the patriarchal institution. In her experience, "ideas taught in Women's Studies often don't match how they are taught." She stressed the importance of designing courses with students where there could be a "dynamic interactive process" developing, whereby the group would collectively define what they wished to learn.

In contradistinction, the Canadian exploration into Women's Studies is much more dialogic. *The Journal Project* was set up as a collaborative venture whereby students and teachers could share their experiences of journal writing. The editorial group consisted of "two students and two teachers, and several students and teacher volunteers who perform specific tasks." The authors felt that the experiences that were being shared in the Women's Studies program at Langara College in Vancouver were worthy of wider readership because they served as a microcosm for some of the problems endemic to many women such as racism, violence, poverty and heterosexism.

This text looks at different women's experiences of journal writing and the value of journal writing inside and outside the classroom. However, unlike its British counterpart, the Canadian study is up-front about the power imbalance that

exists between students and teachers. Indeed, the editors emphasize the need to acknowledge "the social power we all have as instructors," and to recognize that some women respond differently because of our "individual identities as white or Black, lesbian or heterosexual, younger or older women." Notes on the contributors are placed at the end of the book and each reader is cautioned to guard against making assumptions about the contributors. Each contributor has her own identifiable style and the reader becomes familiar with the different voices who express themselves in their own way, be it through poetry, prose or visuals. This book also includes a very useful bibliography.

To conclude, I want to return to a remark made about Gina in *Changing our Lives*. When I read that Gina "wanted to encounter the challenge of feminism, to the amazement and delight of her tutors," I would question the patronizing way that this woman's views are trivialized. It reminded me of an incidence I'd encountered while being part of an undergraduate course in Women's Studies in the 1980's in the UK. One student asked a panel of teaching staff whether conservatism and feminism were compatible. To the delight of most students, including myself, one of the tutors responded "No, that's a contradiction in terms." I thought about that student, who was brave enough to ask an unpopular question, when I read about Gina and the way in which some left-wing feminists, myself included, have silenced voices of dissent. It raises a crucial dilemma within feminism: how can we portray feminism as an inclusive movement when dissenting voices are silenced? Neither the UK or the Canadian text include male voices: does it matter? Do we care? And, if not, hadn't we better think carefully about what we mean about inclusiveness?

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***Breaking Anonymity: The Chilly Climate for Women Faculty***, The Chilly Collective (eds) Wilfrid Laurier University Press, Waterloo, Ontario, 1995; 390 pages; ISBN 0-88920-245-1; \$24.95.