

Doing IT is a valuable resource for challenging the technologically-determinist worldviews which are often uncritically presented in technical, policy-oriented and marketing discourses. To her credit, Scott-Dixon does not provide us with categorical answers to questions such as: Is work in the IT field a major advance to achieving equality in the work-place or does it continue or even worsen existing inequalities? Instead, she makes the case convincingly for seeing IT work as more fluid - a process unfolding and contingent - thus leaving open the possibility for political intervention by those who would use the opportunity to create a better future.

Janice Newson  
York University

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*Troubling Women's Studies: Pasts, Presents, and Possibilities.* Braithwaite, Ann, Susan Heald, Susanne Luhmann & Sharon Rosenberg. Toronto: Sumach Press, 2004; Acks; i + 258 pages; ISBN 1-894549-36-8; \$28.95 (paper).

This volume is an insightful collection of stories about stories: more specifically, the stories that academics tell about the field of Women's Studies. The text contains four separate narratives that seek to illuminate the process by which Women's Studies has sought/seeks to define itself and its relationship to the women's movement(s) and feminism more generally. The trouble with Women's Studies, it posits, centres around feelings of ambivalence, separation and alienation: a recurring theme of "Paradise Lost" that is embodied within the internal debate around the discipline's own genesis, ascension, and perceived "fall from grace." The authors trace the attempt of the founding mothers to construct a "master narrative" of Women's Studies, and demonstrate how this process has excluded a polyphony of voices, erasing the disparate experiences of class, culture, ethnicity, and gender. If the "prime directive" of Women's Studies is both self-reflexivity and accountability, then Women's Studies epistemology contains a serious flaw, since it spends little time "exploring the difference that difference makes" (132).

While the motifs of alienation and loss lend the text an internal thematic cogency, they also give the work an overall flavour of Judeo-Christian-liberal ideology that is overwhelming at times, undermining

the authors' appeals to inclusivity and polyphony. The implied assumption throughout is the notion that the "new" and "innovative" are always "progressive," and that continuity retards evolution. As a professor of First Nations Studies who has taught courses in Women's Studies, I found myself questioning the "naturalness" of this attitude. First Nations cultures tend to stress continuity over radical change, recognizing a cyclical cosmology where nothing is ever really new, but is derivative of what came before it. In this worldview, continuity does not preclude change, innovation, or diversity: rather, continuity provides the social stability necessary for those elements to evolve.

Nevertheless, I found the text valuable for reflecting upon the state of my own discipline, noticing many parallels between the debates and dilemmas of Women's Studies, and those that occur in First Nations Studies. Particularly interesting was Susan Heald's examination of the Tayloristic aspirations of the modern academy, in which a university degree has been reduced to a commodity for which students are the intended consumers. In this model, curricula in disciplines such as Women's Studies (or First Nations Studies) that are rooted in experiential and emancipatory ethics don't pass the "cost-benefit" analysis of university administrators, students, or prospective employers: the benefit of receiving the education is not perceived to outweigh, or even match, the cost of its production (in terms of dedicated funding) or consumption (in terms of securing employment, or its potential use to employers). Overall, the text left me wondering if the modern academy has any room left for pedagogies that require a meaningful form of self-reflexivity and accountability, and if marginalized disciplines like Women's Studies sometimes choose co-optation as a form of survival. Ultimately, in contemplating our own disciplinary origins and identities, we must realize that we can't go "back to the garden" because it didn't exist in the first place.

Allyson Anderson  
Malaspina University College