value-free neutrality has on academia.

3 All of this is an overview of the bias in academic scholarship and does not treat important details. If the situation were simply this, we would not expect Women’s Studies programs to be allowed at all. Thought in universities is, of course, not monolithic and biases are not necessarily conscious on the part of professionals themselves. Universities operate within an ideology of liberalism, with some room for diverse opinions. This, however, does not change the systematic bias toward the maintenance of the status quo in the mainstream disciplines.

4 Some feminist scholars have not stayed in academia. Those that have not, however, have generally used the other structures that provide credibility, such as publishing.

5 Some toleration of ties between organized labour and the university exist, but in a top-down way that usually does not contribute to any progressive tendencies in the unions.

6 Physics and mathematics may be possible exceptions to this statement. In these fields, the constraints on both the questions that can be asked and on the possible results are so great that they appear to unfold in a deterministic way, unaffected by social factors. These constraints are due to the narrowly defined systems under investigation, the dependence on the existing theoretical framework, the already known facts and the state of experimental development.

7 A complete look at the mechanisms for controlling the directions of research calls for a long discussion. Funding is clearly an important component.

8 Note that one implication of this discussion is that a real world does exist out there that we can try to learn about. However, even within the limited questions we necessarily ask, we can never be absolutely sure that we have found the truth.

References

Author’s Note: Much of Margaret Benston’s work is relevant to this discussion. See the bibliography in this journal.


HELEN POTREBENKO

A Song for Maggie

Goodbye old friend
Longtime friend
Now beyond time
Goodbye friend
Longtime friend
Now beyond, now beyond time

Never again to pick up the guitar
Never again to sing like an angel
Sing out on the picket line
Sing, sing, sing to soothe a friend
Now beyond, now beyond comfort

Never again going for a walk
It was a good road you travelled
Every step of the way
Now it’s a long, long, it’s a long road without you
Now beyond, now beyond distance

No more talk
No more papers
Ideas are for living
Students to other classes now

Never again to come over for dinner
No longer needed
The earth is now your home
Returned to the earth, returned to the air
Returned to the wind and the sea

Goodbye friend
Never helped you live
Couldn’t help you die
Now beyond pain
Never again will I bring you daffodils
Now beyond, now beyond season

Helen Potrebenko was a longtime friend of Maggie Benston’s. This poem was written for her memorial service and was set to music by Phil Vernon.