

sexes feel the need to distinguish their language from the other. It is to be hoped that this "war of words" receives further attention in the succeeding volumes of *No Man's Land*.

Although it has some of the problems of an introductory volume, generally stem-

ming from too much to cover in too little space, *The War of the Words* augers well for the rest of *No Man's Land*. Gilbert and Gubar may at times frustrate the reader, but they are never dull, nor do they fail to challenge the reader's preconceptions of twentieth-century literary history. Their

wit and fresh perceptions demand the reader's engagement with their text. Just as *The Madwoman in the Attic* necessitated a new reading of nineteenth-century literature, so *No Man's Land* will generate much debate over the next years, revising our understanding of literary modernism.

TEACHING WRITING: PEDAGOGY, GENDER, AND EQUITY

Edited by Cynthia L. Caywood and Gillian R. Overing. Albany: State University of New York, 1987.

Deborah F. Kennedy

The subtitle registers the difference between this book and the many other writing books on the market. This group of essays by American academics (twenty women and two men) attempts to present a feminist approach to teaching composition. The editors and many of the contributors assert the connection between theories of writing as process and feminism. While the book contains some excellent suggestions for a feminist to use in the classroom, I object strongly to the often explicit equation of the irrational aspects of writing with the female mode of being and the rational aspects with the male mode of being.

Drawing on Carol Gilligan's *In a Different Voice*, many of the authors identify a less hierarchical, pluralistic and relational mode of being as female. Thus they see the revisionist theory of writing, which makes use of prewriting, free-writing, and journal writing, as representative of a female style because these forms of expression mirror those to which women

have historically had access, such as letters, diaries, and oral narratives. As Wendy Goulston states, "Prewriting is, after all, what women have been doing for centuries." But surely men also write letters and journals. The point is that women have been excluded from using other forms of discourse like scientific writing and journalism. We need to read the letters and hear the stores of women, but we should not deduce that these are the modes in which women best or "naturally" express themselves.

Olivia Frey follows Goulston's essentialist argument when she protests against the violence done to students by grading and competitiveness. Ironically, her ideas reinforce the patriarchal myth of the nice, unassertive female: in the new writing class, the "teacher no longer has the Truth about writing... [she] questions and suggests, but rarely mandates." Caywood and Overing similarly criticize colleagues for marking against an ideal text. Yet, neither paper addresses how to deal with grading or how to schedule student-teacher collaboration and peer editing. I would like to know how collaboration works when one has one hundred students who must each submit eight essays per term, as is often the case. Typically, a teacher of composition has little freedom to design a syllabus or choose a textbook, let alone time to read every draft of every essay. As well, composition teachers are often women without tenure and with no institutional

power, hired as teaching assistants or part-time or sessional instructors to do the "housework or dirty work of English departments," as Elisabeth Daümer and Sandra Runzo describe it. Yet, in this collection, scant attention is given to this important feminist issue.

Caywood and Overing complain that "the expository essay is valued over the exploratory;...the impersonal, rational voice ranked more highly than the intimate, subjective one". Indeed, college composition courses are not group therapy sessions; rather, they often have as their goal to provide students from a variety of fields with the skills to write adequate essays, reports, memos, and business letters. It seems to me that learning how to write a clear sentence or coherent paragraph is important for students. These are not evil, male things.

One can find in this book some useful ways to highlight feminist concerns. Susan Radner, Diana J. Fuss, and James D. Riemer discuss their use of themes of family, gender, race and class, which, for Radner, infuses "a feminist perspective into a rigid syllabus." As well, Alice F. Freed discusses one of the most important concerns for a teacher: sexist language in the classroom. She offers a number of ways to correct the gender biases in our speech and writing.

These practical suggestions help us to learn a new way of teaching, without demanding that we put the chairs in a circle and paint the walls pink.

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH: Aboriginal Women Speak Out

Janet Silman (recorder). Toronto: Women's Press, 1987.

Julia Emberley

On 28 June 1985, a piece of federal legislation known as Bill C-31 was passed

by the Canadian government stipulating that those sections of the 1869 Enfranchisement Act and the 1876 Indian Act which discriminated against Native women in general, and prohibited Native women who married non-Natives from maintaining their native rights and associations, be removed. Academic writers and journalists have told this story. They tell an official story that records the historical and political events involving large organizations such as Indian Rights

for Indian Women, the Native Women's Association for Canada and the National Action Committee for the Advisory Council on the Status of Women, all of which brought significant pressure to bear on the federal government to change its policy. But as official stories go, they fail to tell of the personal struggle and resistance carried out by Native women on a daily basis to change the conditions of their life. The success of this piece of legislative reform owes a great deal to