

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

Native women across Canada who worked hard on a grass roots level to politicize both the Canadian public and Native bands about the need for change. *Enough is Enough: Aboriginal Women Speak Out* is one book that tells the story of a group of Native women, the Tobique women on the East coast, who were instrumental in bringing about the legislative reform.

The Tobique Women's Group have "written" their personal stories of resistance — those "unofficial" histories of political transformation in our everyday lives — in a special way. I put "written" in quotation marks because the book is actually a collection of taped recordings that have been transcribed. Rather than providing the reader with a managed, written account which follows a well worn narrative logic, this book becomes an event in which a group of Native women tell you, the reader, about their daily lives, their political commitment and their resistance to oppression, in their own way, in their own voice. You can hear the texture of the women's voices as they tell about the pain, anger, racism and classism they have suffered living in a country that has been taken from them by a historical imperialism and an on-going colonialism. You can hear their joy when they speak of their children, their humour, their frustration as well as their commitment and strength to struggle and resist oppression.

When we look at the cover of books, we are used to seeing below the title a name or names signifying the conventions of authorship or editorship. On the cover of *Enough is Enough: Aboriginal Women Speak Out*, we find something very different: "As told to Janet Silman." Silman has written a good and brief introduction to the book, providing an outline of the history of Bill C-31 and generally contextualizing the stories that follow. For the most part, however, Silman has acted as a cultural mediator, using her education and skills in the service of the Tobique women and at their request. As Glenn Perley, a Tobique woman says:

We have been thinking about a book we do ourselves, with you to help us. Journalists and others have come in to do stories and films about us, but they leave and we never see them again. A book really telling our story would offer

different things to different people. Indian women who read it would see, "Why, if they could do that — accomplish that — then we can, too." To white women and others, it would be an education: they would see what life on a reserve is like for women. They would see what all our protesting has been about.

A lot of careful thought has gone into the production of this book by the Tobique Women's Group and Janet Silman. They have organized the book along chronological lines and divided the larger story into six chapters. Thirteen women testify to their individual battles, their growing political and collective awareness and grassroots action that eventually culminates in a march from the Oka reserve outside Montreal to Parliament Hill in Ottawa, and their after thoughts on achieving victory but with a steady eye on the work that must still be done.

It is important to tell our stories in our own way, with our own voice(s) and to read and listen to each other's stories. But telling our own stories "in our own way" is partially misleading and it represents a structure of oppression that actively contains those ways for Native women; I am referring here to the predominance of the use of the English language in shaping their voices. And the Tobique women are keenly aware of the limits of the English language as a vehicle for expressing certain aspects of their experience: as Bet-Te Paul says, "The culture is in the language so much." It is not difficult to hear the frustration in the voices of the women telling Janet Silman their stories when they want to say it in their Native language, Maliseet: "There is so much more I could tell you in my own language, but it's impossible to translate" (Eva Gookum Saulis); "I wish I could sit here and talk to you in Indian because the meaning comes out so much better, so much stronger" (Mavis Goeres); "They don't teach culture in the school here, only beading. They don't teach language and Maliseet should be the first language in that school" (Juanita Perley, 221); "We'd say in Indian — well, it's really hard to translate into English — 'Here we go, our heads bouncing off to Ottawa again!'" (Karen Perley). And if she had said it, what would it have looked like on the printed page (if Maliseet has a script

—? —) or sounded like to a non-Native, such as myself, illiterate in Native languages?

When we speak of literacy and illiteracy we immediately imply the existence of a model language that regulates the production of a standard to which other forms or uses are compared and placed in a hierarchical relation to it. But what is also suggested by this form of social regulation is the predominance of "one" language as the principle language of exchange authorized by the state and its educational institutions. Which is to say that the concept of literacy and illiteracy has an internal as well as external ideology; internally, in that a model form of a language is ideally constructed and externally, in that one particular language is chosen to represent the model. One has only to think of the struggle in Quebec to maintain the teaching and usage of the French language, as well as the recent struggle of Native people to preserve their languages, to realize the political and cultural power contained by the use of the English language in Canada — there are of course global implications particularly in the arena of commerce. Beth Cuthand, in her essay "Transmitting our Identity as Indian Writers" (*In the Feminine: Women and Words/Les Femmes et les Mots*, 1985: 53-54) recognizes this power; at the same time she sees a possibility for a strategic intervention in Native people making use of the English language. Cuthand has the following to say about the use of English as a vehicle for Native writers:

I think it's crucial that we develop our skills in the English language because there are many Indian nations in Canada and many languages. Maybe one of the most valuable gifts the colonizers gave us was the English language so that we could communicate with each other. I fully believe that we can use English words to Indian advantage and that as Indian writers it's our responsibility to do so.

While Cuthand's subversive underwriting of the colonizer's "gift" is strategically useful, particularly for Native people within the professional and educational institutions, it does not address a majority of Native people who are excluded or marginalized from this particular class. For those Native people dispos-

sessed by the colonial system, the English language is an instrument of oppression: "I lived in Oxbow, Maine," writes Mavis Goeres, a Tobique woman,

for seventeen years and then in Brockton, Massachusetts. You know, the man I married was white and he wouldn't let me speak my Native language or teach my children the Native language, so when I go away from him didn't I ever talk Maliseet. (laughs) My youngest daughter, Susan is the only one that can really speak Maliseet. The others know just little words, bits and pieces, but Susan can speak it when she wants to. It's a shame, though, she doesn't because the other kids don't speak it; we're losing our language.

Another Tobique woman, Juanita Perley, writes with anger:

When people went shopping, they never got money to buy the groceries; the Indian agent would write up a purchase order at his own store — McPhail's store. I can remember how they ridiculed the Indian people who came in there and even as a little kid I resented it. But you had to go in there with this little piece of paper that said you could have, say, \$10 worth of food, or whatever struck his fancy at the time. They'd be making fun of the Indian people that came in — they called us 'gimmies' — like 'gimme this,' 'gimme that.'

The way we talk, you never say, 'Please,' in our language because nobody was ever made to beg. So when

Indian people said something in English they translate it literally from the way we speak and it sounded like a demand. I always resented the way the white people treated us and even today I resent it — I don't like them one bit, and I don't care if that is printed in the book, either!

Teaching languages, teaching children the languages of the world, is perhaps one of the most estranged and unacknowledged aspects of women's work. For Native women, Native languages can not be separated from the preservation of a Native cultural identity. Women are producing their own spheres of exchange, their own terms of mediations and negotiations between men and women within their communities, between the Canadian State (the force of legal denominations) and the many forms of Native self-determination (the force of legal counterdenominations). In the past, Native women who married non-Natives were forced to assimilate to a non-Native culture. Divorced and cut off from their own culture, they bear the scars of dispossession; they could not acknowledge their cultural heritage and they remained unacknowledged persons, with a non-Native culture. In struggling to achieve a Native women self-determination, Native women are ensuring that any collective effort to achieve Native self-government will only succeed when the equality of Native women has also been acknowledged.

I have tried to show what is valuable about the way this book has been produced and what I have learned from it

about the need to preserve Native language. The production of this book, however, raises an economic and political problem. Produced by a mainstream women's press, with the help of a non-Native, under the liberal mandate of cultural diversity, the process of decision making that controls who or what gets published ultimately lies with non-Native women. As non-Native women, we must remind ourselves of those Native presses such as Theytus Books, P.O. Box 218, Penticton, B.C. and Write-on Press, Box 86606, North Vancouver, B.C., which are struggling and succeeding in publishing work by, for and about Native people. While it is important for Native women's voices to be heard in mainstream presses, it is just as important, if not more, to support, to buy, to read books published by Native presses in order that they may continue to publish Native writings.

Glenna Perley anticipated that the readership of *Enough is Enough* would be doubly directed towards both Natives and non-Natives. And she envisioned that the experience of those readers might also be different. I can only speak as a non-Native woman, who has learned a great deal from this book and from writing this commentary. For the non-Native reader, unfamiliar with the struggle of Native women in this country, this book is a place to begin listening to Native women or for the already initiated reader, familiar with Native women's writings, poetry, novels, essays and criticism, another book that will engage you in the struggle. To Native women readers, I look forward to listening to your commentary.

WOMEN WRITERS OF THE RENAISSANCE AND REFORMATION

Edited by Katharina M. Wilson. Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1987.

Joan Gibson

Katharina Wilson is prolific in bringing the works of women writers from the early periods of European history to a wider audience. The author of two books on Hrotsvit of Gandersheim, a tenth-cen-

tury Saxon canoness and dramatist, Wilson has previously edited *Medieval Women Writers* (Georgia, 1984) and plans to continue with a volume on seventeenth-century women writers. Even more ambitious is the massive forthcoming two volume reference work, *Encyclopedia of Continental Women Writers* (Garland Publishing, 1989). The edited volumes follow a format of introductory essays of biography and critical assessment, with bibliographies of primary and secondary works and lists of English translations. The period collections also include selections from the works of the women discussed.

The renaissance and reformation vol-

ume concentrates on women of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries with a few examples of renaissance style and sensibility from the early seventeenth century. Organized geographically, the book includes twenty-five authors, five each from Italy, England and the German-speaking countries. France has seven representatives and Hungary, Spain and the Low countries one each. The volume is inclusive in other ways as well; a wide variety of social background is represented which Wilson fits into six broad categories of social/functional identity. She relates these to the women's audience, their choice of Latin or vernacular languages, subject matter and chosen