of sexual violence and one friend or family member of a survivor. A "healing ritual" ends the event with performers and audience collectively expressing their desire to stop sexual violence. The use of students' own stories of sexual assault and harassment is both empowering to the students who tell them and key in bringing home the issues to the student audience.

WHILE EDUCATION IS absolutely essential to building a climate where sexual harassment and violence are no longer tolerated, it has little impact unless the issues are taken seriously by the campus community. At MIT, the general consensus is still that these are not significant problems meriting serious attention. In the last year some changes have been made to improve the existing system, mainly because of in-house pressure from a group of us, the Ad Hoc Committee Against Sexual Harassment [see Barbara Schulman's article, "Harassing the Harassers: Women Make Campus Policy," *Women's Review of Books*, February 1990] and I suspect outside lawsuits brought because of mishandled cases. But the general community remains oblivious to the actual incidence of harassment and rape, and resistant to our still sporadic educational efforts.

At MIT, and I gather at most colleges and universities, unless the student follows through with a formal complaint (which is strongly discouraged), no records are kept of the incident. Without these records (even anonymous, purely statistical ones), it is impossible to estimate the extent of the problem, and to prove that it really is significant. For the most part, the community remains ignorant of the problem, the victims remain isolated and alone, and the perpetrators go unchallenged.

"Security on Campus" is an organization founded in 1987 by Connie Clery and Howard Clery, whose daughter was raped and murdered at Lehigh University by a student she did not know. This group addresses the lack of information about campus crime and the inadequacy of campus crime prevention and response. In part through their efforts, campus security and crime reporting laws have been passed in thirteen states (Pennsylvania, Florida, Tennessee, Louisiana, California, New York, Massachusetts, Delaware, Wisconsin, Washington, Virginia, Connecticut and Texas). The group was also instrumental in obtaining passage of a Federal Law, the Student Right to Know and Campus Security Act of 1990, which includes the requirement that colleges and universities report "all campus felony statistics to the Secretary of Education annually, and to students, faculty and staff and to prospective students and their parents on a timely basis during the course of the academic year." I haven't seen much compliance with this mandate, but I believe it's a good start—though without vastly increased reporting of assaults the published statistics are going to be useless.

Of course, opting for the criminal justice system is not necessarily the best solution, as is clear from the St. John's University sexual assault case last year. A Black West Indian woman was assaulted by a group of white male members of a lacrosse team. Three of these men were acquitted last summer on the basis of her alleged "consent" to their sexual assaults. The trial itself was horrific by most standards of justice, but not unusual. My blood still boils when I think about this case. From the reports in *The Village Voice* (September, 1991), the trial was consistent with this country's legacy of racism and sexism in its handling of rape charges: the woman's testimony was dismissed, her integrity repeatedly questioned, while the white men's identities were bolstered and their integrity fabricated.

Surprisingly, St. John's University decided to expel these men for their actions, despite the court's verdict. Some suggest that this may have to do with the fact that St. John's is a Catholic university. I'm not sure. My years of Catholic training never encouraged the defense of women who were raped and lived to tell about it; if you lived, you were responsible. But whatever the reasons, I was glad they chose to take action against these men, instead of letting them off the hook like so many other colleges and universities.

Another legal option for victims of rape is to file a civil suit against the rapist. The major advantage is that the victim retains control over the process. As Eileen N. Wagner writes in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (August 7, 1991): "She decides if the case will go to trial, when the case will be settled, and for how much." She does not have to rely on some authority to be her advocate or to decide if her case is worthy of prosecution. The standard of proof is also less in a civil suit.

A civil suit might seem less damaging in the long run for the rapist, an important factor for some women's decision-making. Despite the fact that rape is a felony, and despite the fact that rape can fundamentally alter a woman's life, the victim of "acquaintance rape" often worries about the consequences for the rapist if she presses criminal charges that may land him in prison, or if she files a formal complaint that ends with his expulsion from school. (Denial allows us to forget how rarely this happens.) In a civil case, the victim sues for monetary damages, and if they settle out of court, the proceedings may be stamped with confidentiality.

Civil suits do have their drawbacks. The cases usually take years to settle and the initial outlay of money makes this an option only for those women who have the funds. It also makes the college or university community ultimately less accountable for the acceptance and prevalence of sexual assaults on campus, particularly as the cases are kept strictly confidential. At this point, the chances of redress all seem less than optimal, especially since sexual assault continues to be seen as purely a sexual act, not a crime, and women continue to be blamed for provoking or supposedly "consenting" to it.

In doing education on sexual violence, many of us face resistance from administrators, staff and faculty, who claim that we limit ourselves to the already committed, that we shouldn't focus on personal stories of sexual abuse and violence because it's too negative, that men won't be interested. In the face of such claims, I turn the questions back on them. I ask: What do *you* fear? What is *your* response to the stories the students tell?

Over and over again the students tell me how essential it's been for them to hear the stories, and it's never only them. They share them through readings or through talk with their friends, dorm-mates, sorority and fraternity members, colleagues and families. Most students in my class, even the few radical feminists, start the course not believing the issue of sexual violence affects them personally or socially. It is through listening, reading and discussing the painful realities of sexual assault that we're able to overcome this denial. Inevitably most students in the class have their own stories to tell, if not about themselves, then about someone close to them. Once the denial begins to break down, students breathe easier, and we're able to confront the complexity of these issues and to challenge our simplistic responses to them. Then real change is in the making.

Some days I dread going to MIT when I know the students will tell me yet another story of harassment or assault, or of how the system failed them when they sought support. As a part-time, one course per year lecturer, I sometimes feel defeated in the face of it all. Even so, my hope returns each semester I teach my course. I realize that while education alone, especially when it targets mostly women, is not the solution to sexual violence, it is a crucial strategy.

Illiberal reporting

by Alice Jardine

I DIDN'T HESITATE FOR A MOMENT when the smiling, conservatively-suited, young Indian man asked me if he could sit in on my feminist theory class at Harvard one fall 1989 afternoon. Mine is, or has been, an open classroom, which in practice means that as long as the students duly enrolled do not suffer, anyone who wants to visit my classes on occasion may do so.

Little did I know that two years later I would be named by that selfsame "student," Dinesh D'Souza, one of the Neo-Con Stars of 1991, in his best-selling book *Illiberal Education: The Politics of Race and Sex on Campus*. Little did I know that two years later I would begin my classes by asking representatives from the American Enterprise Institute, the National Association of Scholars, or other non-students, to please identify themselves; would begin my courses by cautioning students that in these times it was wise to establish the identity of whoever questioned them about the what and why of their lives and choices at Harvard, because they might be taped and/or quoted without their knowledge or consent, as some students claimed after the publication of D'Souza's book.

Of course, two years ago, I could not have foreseen how a thin media narrative about something called "Political Correctness" could so rapidly and expeditiously become the connective subtext for a series of terrifying televisual specta-tales (the Gulf War, the Hill/Thomas Hearings, the William Kennedy Smith Trial) about the Dangers menacing, both externally and internally, our suddenly quite fiftyish American Way of Life. As in the fifties, the Big Threat is located Over There—then in Korea, now in Iraq—and then brought Back Home. As in the fifties, "Back Home" is the terrain of intellectuals and artists, and of their institutional affiliations—the universities (always among the first on the hit list of reactionary movements), the National Endowment for the Arts, public media, sundry governmental bodies—where "rampant conspiracies" of power-hungry liberals, women's groups, civil rights groups and homosexuals are allegedly utilizing the two big categories of "Race" and "Sex" to destroy the very fabric of Western Civilization.

For the Right, the links between the "external" and "internal" threats remain clear. As D'Souza puts it, "One reason for this increasing radicalism [back home] is that, with the collapse of Marxism and socialism around the world, activist energies previously channelled into the championship of the proletariat are now 'coming home' so to speak, and investing in the domestic liberation agenda."

Much could obviously be said about the larger right-wing agenda and strategy in which Dinesh D'Souza apparently hopes to become more than a bit player. In particular, I think it is worth noting the ways in which he and his right-wing fellow-travelers are projecting onto the Left the mirror image of their own agenda: homophobia, racism, sexism and of course, ever finessed, classism/elitism. My interest here, however, is more local: to trace the connections between Dinesh D'Souza's political orientation and his rhetorical approach, between how he appears and what he intends, and between what he says and what he means, especially as these relate to an area of my intimate concern and knowledge, viz. his description and analysis in *Illiberal Education* of that selfsame class of mine he attended in the fall of 1989. For the issue of what is concealed and what is overt, of the relationship between what is said and what goes unsaid in D'Souza's general campaign-to-discredit, raises questions and images of the covert agent, of the intellectual spy, of infiltration, of a certain provocateurship, of flying false colors and of adopting a rhetorical style to match.

Illiberal Education purports to be a critique of the "rhetorical excesses and coercive tactics of the Politically Correct" and of multicultural activists who have "split the university on moral grounds," producing balkanized tribal enclaves "without a shared commitment to the goals of liberal learning." The book positions itself as a defence of liberal educational values, of a "higher obligation to truth unfettered by ideological predisposition." The casual reader might be easily misled into presuming that D'Souza is himself a liberal, committed to the classic liberal values of unconstrained dialogue and open process. And therein begins our tale.

As Deep Throat said of the Watergate quest to establish agency: "Follow the money"—and D'Souza's patrons establish his actual political affiliations pretty straightforwardly. While accusing everyone in sight of having an ideological agenda, he himself works for two quite unusual "public" organizations: the National Endowment for Democracy and the American Enterprise Institute. Both were set up by Reagan; both are funded by Congress; both have a history of conservative bias. Although taxpayers provide their funding, these organizations do not report to anyone. D'Souza is also heavily involved with the National Association of Scholars, whose Board of Advisors includes Jeane Kirkpatrick, Irving Kristol and John Silber. His other credentials include student editorship of the far right *Dartmouth Review*; an admiring biography of Jerry Falwell; and stints as a domestic policy analyst in the

Reagan White House, and as a soliciter of the Catholic vote for the Bush/Quayle campaign.

Of course these personal economic and political signifiers do not necessarily tell us what D'Souza really believes, but they do point to a large discrepancy between his rhetorical self-presentation and his actual history. They also point to a pattern of intellectual feint that is repeated in *Illiberal Education* itself: D'Souza and his associates are currently polishing their "reasonable," "apolitical," "middle ground" image in order to intensify their appeal to a fundamental anti-intellectualism in the name of something they call "merit." In this way they hope to discredit the younger generation currently moving up the academic and artistic ladders. (I can't help but wonder what would have happened to me if I hadn't had tenure when the book came out.) Intellectual sleights of hand are allowing the neo-conservative forces to build up a McCarthyite wave of fear upon which to ride their candidates and agendas into office in 1992—a fear primarily targeted at a traditionalist, white, especially male population which, within a brief quarter of a century, will itself be a minority in this country.

WHAT I WANT TO LOOK AT more closely is what makes D'Souza not just a well coached and well rewarded spokesperson, but a bestselling storyteller in the era of Reagan-Bush—and that turns on his enactment of certain tried and true rhetorical strategies. Some are obvious: exaggeration, binary framing, and a naive, indeed simple-minded, model of representation. The conservative political agendas being pushed by D'Souza cannot be directly admitted, so they are carefully hidden behind "commonsense" expositions of what are described as other people's political "problems."

Illiberal Education is neatly compartmentalized in this regard. Each chapter of the book is devoted to one major "episode" or "problem" represented by one major (widely perceived as elitist) university: "Admissions Policy" at Berkeley, "Multiculturalism" at Stanford, "The Search for Black Pharaohs" at Howard, "The New Censorship" at Michigan, "Subverting Academic Standards" at Duke and—in climax—"The Teaching of Race and Gender" at Harvard. The "problems" at these universities then become exemplary of "problems" said to be sweeping the rest of the country—a statement that is patently ridiculous to anyone actually trying to put race and gender on the intellectual map at all. Remarkable for its omission in D'Souza's taxonomy is Class, which occasionally rears its ugly head in futile and unfair affirmative action programs, but does not apparently merit its own analysis. Just as obvious is D'Souza's thick-headed tendency toward polar and reductive rhetorical framing: for example, there's something called Western Civilization, and then there are all those other cultures and societies that didn't abolish slavery and don't understand freedom and democracy.

All of this pointed framing, combined with the high level of factual inaccuracy in D'Souza's writing, leads to the difficult question of how to respond in, if not an equivalent sound-bite style, at least in a style that will not bore the reader to death with repetitive "not true, not accurate, not fair, not..." Like Kate Stimpson, when I read D'Souza's version of current, intensely complex, intellectual, pedagogical and political issues, I am often torn "between laughter, because it is so foolish; anger, because it is so false; and frustration, because it is so hard to answer."[1]

But the real perniciousness of D'Souza's rhetoric seems to me to be grounded in his appropriation of the rhetoric of fifties McCarthyism under the McCarthyite guise of defending liberal, democratic Western values. I do not mean this in some metaphorical or abstract sense; I precisely mean that D'Souza recapitulates many of the specific rhetorical devices that Joe McCarthy used so tellingly to discredit and intimidate those artistic and intellectual communities that were resisting the political consolidation of what Eisenhower later called "the military industrial complex."

Having just spent several months intensively studying the McCarthy hearings for a book I am writing on the 1950s, I can attest to the fact that—counter to the current omnipresence of the "McCarthyism of the Left" sound bite—it is the similarities between D'Souza's methodology and that of the McCarthyites that are truly astounding. Especially notable is the self-positioning as defender of the American way, and the repetitive calls for "reasonable people" and the "middle ground" to prevail. (Surely D'Souza must have studied the same videotapes of McCarthy that I have!) What D'Souza does, like McCarthy before him, is draw together (often hodge-podge) items that are verifiable on the level of detail, decontextualize them, and then reassert them within a new code system of his own right-wing making. Like McCarthy, he proceeds by insinuation, a kind of accusation by coding. One becomes guilty by suspicion and convicted by association. He especially prides himself on his access to informer gossip—his book abounds with expressions like "for those who visit the American classroom today" (instead of "for those who question students after class under false pretenses") that are right out of the McCarthy transcripts. When one looks closely at his prose, one finds little but an elaborately coded network of commonplaces, a system whose interpretive community would seem to rest upon some notion of a normal, down-home, bullshit-detecting, commonsense individualism that refuses to be caught up in all these hyper-intellectual but parochial approaches to scholarship and policy.

So, in the passage on pp. 208-210 where my class is named as typifying the "distinctive perspective" of Women's Studies, itself "typical" of a "balkanization" of intellectual work, D'Souza develops his critique not by direct commentary or analysis, but by a detailed description of the "color" and "atmosphere" of the class. This stylized description is in itself presumed to be evidence and conviction. For example, just so that no-one will miss the point, D'Souza introduces "political rally" in the first sentence:

> The atmosphere in Jardine's course resembled a political rally. The seminar group was almost entirely female: twenty-five women versus [sic] three men. Headbands and turquoise jewelry, loose long shirts, and pins advertising various causes filled the room. There were no blacks in the class; a couple of the women were Asian. The mood in Jardine's class, while not exactly festive, was bustling, energetic. A student went to the board and put up a poster of a "Fifty Foot Woman"; everybody smiled at this emblem of female power.

He proceeds like this for a couple of pages, with plenty of direct quotes (a tape recorder?) and a selective wealth of descriptive detail. Space limitation unfortunately prevents me from providing the full text of these rhetorical flourishes; or analyzing their often multiple codes; or addressing in like detail his use of this approach in other sections of his book.

For each set of D'Souza code words, there is an insinuation—and it's bad:

- class "almost entirely female" = "lesbian" and/or "not objective," biased
- "headbands"/ "turquoise jewelry"/ "loose long shirts"/ "pins" = uh oh, the 1960s/1990s, with hippie multiculturalism rearing its standards-debasing head (the long shirts probably also carry a light semantic valence of "lesbian")
- "no blacks" = racist despite the progressive rhetoric, an example of feminist hypocrisy, feminists unable to speak to/for minorities
- mood of class is "bustling, energetic" = "feminine," not serious, like a kitchen not a classroom
- poster of a "Fifty Foot Woman" = anti-male, film, popular culture, not serious
- "emblem of female power" = anti-male, more lesbianism/goddesses

This kind of thing carries on throughout the book and contributes to its wearisome, repetitive quality. What is crucial to recognize is that the book is finally saved for the "average reader" because D'Souza uses these repetitive code systems to tell a story—one which works at all only because of his heavy reliance on what Roland Barthes once called "the reality effect." The realist writer hopes that by providing "the details" (name, date, place, title, brand, quoted dialogue), he or she becomes authorized to generalize, even universalize about—lots of things, but especially about "the human condition." D'Souza tries to do the same thing. His overinsistence on empirical description, facile anecdotes ("I was there," like the Berlin Wall souvenir T-shirts), the complete lack of careful thought about or analysis of the data he collects, turn his "truth-full" non-fiction book into a piece of failed realism, a pot-boiled *roman-à-thèse*.

D'Souza has an embarrassingly naive vision of how the language and logics of representation work—his favorite words are "resembles," "is representative of," "typical of," "typifies"—all of which is consistent with his "commonsense" rhetorical stance, but dramatically damages his ability to address persuasively the complex issues that are his chosen foil.

IN FACT, GIVEN THAT his chosen mode of writing depends for verisimilitude on the accuracy of reported details, it is remarkable that anyone believes anything in this book. At least in the section where I am described in such a paradigmatically McCarthyite fashion, he simply gets most of his "factual details" wrong, leaving me to wonder about other "episodes" to which I do not have such unequivocal access. The way that he omits significant details altogether makes me wonder if he ever stops to think about what he has just said. His smug self-satisfaction with what he has "learned" by attending the class but missing the course makes him a slightly ridiculous—and thoroughly unreliable—narrator:

1) I am not, as he calls me, a Professor of Women's Studies;

2) The seminar he describes is not a Women's Studies course, but rather an advanced seminar in the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures;

3) The title of the course is not "French Literary Criticism" but, rather, "Feminist Literary Criticisms"—a very different matter;

4) He states that my class was "fairly representative of numerous Women's Studies classes attended, at Harvard and elsewhere." This is just silly, but a good example of his tendency to project a monolithic orthodoxy onto the fields he dislikes. My seminar was no more representative of Women's Studies (or for that matter, Literary Criticism) courses at Harvard (or anywhere else) than any course, anywhere, can be said to be "representative" of an entire field, especially one so new, rapidly evolving and highly contested;

5) D'Souza was for some reason irked when a student "put up a poster of a 'Fifty Foot Woman'" on the board. But this was not just any old poster of "a" fifty foot woman. This is what happens when you attend the class but miss the course. The student had brought to class the famous movie advertisement for the 1958 American film *The Attack of the Fifty Foot Woman*, as a footnote to the discussion of "high and low culture" we had begun the week before. This follow-up discussion was with reference to Andreas Huyssen's article, "Mass Culture as Woman," in his book *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (Indiana University Press, 1986).

6) One of D'Souza's longest paragraphs in his trashing of my class describes a quite brilliant presentation by a graduate student of Bessie Head's novel *Maru*. But contrary to his account, the "female student"—he seemed to want to name so many unsuspecting students in his book, one wonders why he didn't name her too—didn't just imply, she actually said that *Maru* is about lesbianism in many important ways.

7) A strange paragraph about missing penises has a hysterical edge to it: "Throughout these descriptions one female student offered ribald one-liners about a man who lost his penis, penises that were cut off, accidents in which every part of the victim was recovered—except the penis. These brought loud and unembarrassed laughter from the professor and other students."

What I believe he is referring to is the ten-minute discussion the class devoted each week to a review of some of the major Greek and other Mediterranean myths, in preparation for a close reading of the French novelist Hélène Cixous. This was a separate discussion, not one continuing "throughout these descriptions." Here I can only postulate that D'Souza is playing a game with either himself or his readers—one knows not which. The myth under discussion was that of Osiris, the most popular of all Egyptian deities, whose body was rent into fourteen pieces by Typhon and scattered throughout Egypt. His wife Isis buried each piece as she found it, and thus Osiris came to be worshipped in many cities. However, the phallus was never found, so Isis made an image of it, an image which the Egyptians use at their festivals and tourists scurry to buy at souvenir shops.

Is it possible that D'Souza, loud defender of the canon, has not read Frazer's *Golden Bough*? This failure to recognize the myth is all the more surprising given his devout Catholicism (we musn't forget that he was, after all, Director of the Catholic Vote for the Bush campaign). For Osiris—hardly the "victim" D'Souza remembers—is widely considered to be the mythical model for Jesus Christ. The fascinating connections between the births, lives and deaths of Osiris and Christ have even been discussed on television by Joseph Campbell. But enough. Here, as elsewhere in his book, the issue is whether D'Souza's accusatory innuendos are grounded in his ideology or his ignorance. And I trust that the ways in which this mythical narrative of missing body parts could lead a class of young people to giggles are obvious.

8) In his mocking of my reading of Marguerite Duras' novel *Le Ravissement de Lol V. Stein*, D'Souza gets the title of the novel wrong by repeating an error made by its English translator, an error whose significance was the very topic I discussed during the class in question. This could perhaps be dismissed as a trivial detail, except that what he does is leave

out of the title the famous "V"—Lol Stein's middle initial. I must admit I am amused by this unselfconscious omission, given D'Souza's longish, deadpan ridiculing of my discussion with the students of the major importance of this letter to the overall logic of Duras' text. "One student asked if Duras intended any of this; it seemed so remote from the language of the novel. 'I've met Duras,' Jardine said. 'I think all of this was massively unconscious. Massively'." Well, I've met Mr. D'Souza too, and I am quite sure that his surprising omission was also massively unconscious. Massively.

9) It was of interest to me that in D'Souza's list of the poststructuralist authorities to which I referred during class, only the woman needed to be marked by a sign of sexual difference: "Foucault, Derrida, Julia Kristeva, Lacan." Is this singling out based on merit? On a fondness for Julias?

10) Finally. The last paragraph of D'Souza's pastiche of my class speaks volumes:

> Talking with students after class, I found that they took all of this with extreme seriousness; there was not a hint of irony in anything they said. Comfortable, well-fed, and obviously intelligent, their conspicuous embitterment with and alienation from American society were hard to comprehend. Besides, whatever the malady, it was hard to imagine it being remedied by this sort of intellectual fare, so esoteric and yet so vulgar, so free-wheeling and yet so dogmatic, so full of political energy and yet ultimately so futile.

The students in that class were not all "comfortable" and "well-fed"—although they were, I grant, "obviously intelligent." A number of those students were incest survivors; several were anorexics; the majority were on scholarship, many from working-class backgrounds; all of them were more than competent to decide for themselves which intellectual frameworks helped them best to understand their various forms of "embitterment with and alienation from" the culture in which they are living. While they may not have experienced the hardships of D'Souza's native Bombay (indeed it is not clear to what degree D'Souza himself experienced them), his presumption to generalize about those young people, to speak in their name, to mock the reality of their cultural embitterment, turns his own intellectual bullying against him: it is his own posture that is "vulgar," "free-wheeling," "dogmatic" and finally, thank goodness, "futile"—for the best students will always recognize empty polemicism when they see it.

As has often been noted, when small minds encounter large ideas violence is often the result, violence to the other—other facts, other representations, other ideas—all of which become alien, foreign, threatening, subversive, in this case "unAmerican." Early on in the book, D'Souza notes that unfortunate acts of bigotry and extremism have been enacted on both sides of the political divide he addresses. But this moment of real balance is almost immediately undermined. His ingenuous and precocious schoolboy style, his "look, the emperor has no clothes" straining for his employer's approval, is a style quite suited for entertaining the Washington Press Clubs in which he currently appears to spend so much of his time. It is an altogether less useful style with which to try and engage the complexities of social and psychic life.

D'Souza has so thoroughly obfuscated his conservative agendas behind a rhetorical stance purportedly defending the values of liberal education that it is hard to know where he really stands. But hey. I for one have long since abandoned the notion of a "higher obligation to truth unfettered by ideological predisposition." And I'm afraid that in large part this abandonment is due to the painful lessons learned through the saturation of our modern and postmodern history with the illiberal politicking and rhetorical imposturing of people—most of them men—like Dinesh D'Souza.

[1] Catharine Stimpson, "Big Man On Campus," *The Nation*, Sept. 30, 1991, p.382.

Life on the faultline

by Toni A.H. McNaron

"COINCIDENCE" NO LONGER SATISFIES ME as an explanation for oddly conjoined phenomena. The current collision of a burgeoning of research and writing by and about lesbian history, culture and theory with the virulent and often downright nasty attack on feminism and multiculturalism seems anything but accidental. Since its inception, the second wave of North American feminist activism and theorizing has been accused of being a "lesbian plot": first by misguided if committed heterosexual feminists, later by men and male-identified women worried about having to change fundamental beliefs about how life is lived.

While the debate over "political correctness" has refrained from focusing on specific lesbian curricula and research, I do not believe that this deep-seated myth/fear has faded from such people's imaginations. Mary Daly has said that men often experience a woman's bonding with another woman as a withdrawal of attention from them. It is precisely this withdrawal of energy from their own preferred agenda that has so incensed academics spearheading the PC debate. Never mind that the arena has shifted from kitchen and bedroom to classrooms and refereed journals; the feelings are similar.

When I narrow my lens to consider the effect of the PC debate on future lesbian-feminist work in universities and colleges, I feel worried. In the past decade, a veritable flood of books and articles focusing on matters lesbian has appeared. *Signs* and *Feminist Studies*, two of the most prestigious journals in this country, along with *Hypatia*, a journal of feminist philosophy, publish special lesbian issues. Lesbian-feminist scholar/theorists continue to uncover, discover and recover coded writers and events from our distant and not-so-distant past—a particular kind of intellectual archaeology that enriches our sense of history and strengthens our entry into the next century assured that there always have been lesbian resisters.

Given all this good news, why worry? Primarily because this happy situation seems to me in large measure a consequence of the success of the broader feminist enterprise currently under vicious and well-funded attack by academics fighting to preserve an elitist, sexist, Greco-Roman heritage from "encroachments" by women and minority writers.

I believe that curricular revision is a powerful strategy for continuing the production of lesbian knowledge. Courses on lesbian culture are taught in a number of Women's Studies programs, and such programs have in recent years stressed the importance of including lesbian material wherever relevant. Courses on lesbian literature or culture occasionally get taught within English or history departments, and up-and-coming scholar-teachers in other fields, like anthropologist Kath Weston and sociologist Susan Johnson, are infusing courses with material about lesbian families. But change at this level has been far less rapid or encompassing than some of us had hoped. And now faculty may well think twice before proposing courses on lesbian reality to curriculum committees peopled by colleagues emboldened by the media hype about "PC on campus" to vote against them.

And what about lesbian faculty and students? The majority still fear coming out within the academy. Some of the reasons are old and familiar: endangering chances of promotion (most likely denied under some other pretext); worrying about getting graduate fellowships when selection committees may include homophobic faculty who remember linkages of one's name with certain conference paper titles or campus activities. I know of graduate students who still ask their professors if there is some other way to sign up for a course whose title includes the word "lesbian," their eyes full of fear even as they evidence embarrassment at their political timidity.

Since most of our campuses do not even have "sexual orientation" in their protected-class statements, such vulnerable students and faculty have no legal protection upon which to rely. In the case of my own university, which has such a clause in its anti-discrimination statement, the atmosphere is not much better, since administrators are unwilling to bring policy into line with rhetoric for fear of antagonizing regents, parents, donors, legislators and assorted others.

"I know of graduate students who still ask their professors if there is some other way to sign up for a course whose title includes the word "lesbian," their eyes full of fear even as they evidence embarrassment at their political timidity."

Over a year ago, several of us proposed a policy extending benefits to domestic partners of gay and lesbian employees. We keep being told that the matter must wait until more pressing issues have been attended to. My present strategy is to place a motion before the campus senate in April striking "sexual orientation" from the protected-class statement. I am unwilling to enable the president and his cabinet to claim they are "addressing an urgent social concern," while remaining distinctly reluctant or oddly opaque about aligning campus practice with liberal rhetoric.

Added to this familiar list of cautionary fears is the special vulnerability of open lesbians on campuses presently under attack from the academic right. This charged climate is exerting subtle pressures on lesbian scholars and teachers of this generation and the next to tone down, to pull in, to fade back a bit. I see this pressure succeeding in such linguistic ways as the willingness to subsume programs that seek to examine the history and nature of lesbian sexuality under the less strident umbrella designation of "gender studies." Many's the time I've heard colleagues say with a wry smile "Oh, you know what that means—so-and-so is really going to conduct lesbian research but knows the NEH is 'off' funding programs that say they are focused on lesbianism." While I am willing on occasion to shape language to win monetary support, especially from institutional agencies, I nonetheless worry about the methods and outcomes of research which has had to advertise itself in less than honest terms.

At the very least, such strategic moves introduce a new level of coding seemingly necessary in some quarters if additional funding is to come to lesbian research projects. I conceive of such ventures as existing along a faultline which offers its researchers little or no real safety, leaving them in danger of being called on the carpet for being wolves in sheep's clothing. I want us to live out our lives as academic lesbian-feminists on firmer footing, asking our own campus funding agencies and those outside to award us grants and support precisely *because* we are doing open lesbian work, not because we make ourselves presentable enough to fit into some narrow definition of worthiness.

It has not been that long since both faculty and students silenced or severely muted our lesbian intelligence. In my Shakespeare courses, I can track a journey from my insisting that the sonnets to the young man were merely paeans to platonic friendship to my presentation of the sequence as a cogent example of Shakespeare's fear of intimacy with either the young man or the dark lady, of his distaste for heterosexuality to which he seems nonetheless addicted, and of his strong homoerotic impulses.

ON MY CAMPUS THIS FALL, rumor had it that the anti-PC people had recruited student "plants" who were going to begin infiltrating classes taught by feminists and multiculturalists. At my stage in the profession—a full professor with 28 years of service who is completely "out" in my department—I can afford to ignore such unfortunate possibilities. After all, the FBI may still have the thin file in my name which it set up during the anti-Vietnam War movement. In fact, I credit my openness as a lesbian scholar/teacher with insulating me from any overt efforts to undermine my work. By being "out" at the University, I effectively disarm the critics who often depend upon veiled threats to intimidate younger or less protected members of university communities.

But my untenured colleagues and the lesbian graduate students just flexing their intellectual muscles must pay more attention to these ugly rumors. And I worry that they will need to shade their best insights and abbreviate their truest findings in the present atmosphere full of scare tactics from the academic right.

For lesbian research to achieve the maturity which it and its hungry readers deserve, institutions of higher learning must supply intellectual nurturance and protection in the form of scrupulous academic freedom. Yet this need collides, not coincidentally, with the increasing pressure on administrators to discipline and monitor the proponents of intellectual change on their campuses. As lesbians we must insist that our applications for grants, leaves, awards, research assistants and the like be judged on their merits, quite apart from what some of our colleagues may think about our work or our lives.

Last year I chaired a committee which nominated candidates for outstanding teaching awards. One of our choices was an open lesbian scholar whose teaching has long been praised. When she was passed over, a heterosexual male dean and I sought an explanation from the chair of the final selection committee. We were told of statements made about our candidate which were clearly coded remarks about her ability to teach well despite her being a lesbian. Even the dean was offended at this cowardly tactic.

A healthy practice in my English Department is for faculty and graduate students to organize ourselves into study groups structured along generic, periodic, or theoretical lines. One of the liveliest of these is the lesbian theory group. Like the other groups, we advertise meetings in the English Department newsletter. Last spring, just as we were hearing that our campus would host a projected regional convention of anti-PCers, the lesbian theory group met to discuss Christina Rossetti's provocative poem, "Goblin Market." To my astonishment, we were joined by a professor who is the regional leader of the National Association of Scholars. His literary training is in the nineteenth century, but he had read neither Rossetti nor the critical essays designated for discussion. He spent much of the hour "sizing up" the participants, most of whom were graduate students who had until that time felt "safe" to be in the group.

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