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A UBC philosophy instructor heads for a job in New York, blaming reverse-discrimination hiring policies in Canada

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FAIR NEW WORLD



LOU TAFLER

LIMITED EDITION

Staff photos by Arien Redekop

UBC instructor Louis Marinoff, who writes under the pseudonym Lou Tafler, at launching of his latest book, Fair New World — a satirical novel about the battle of the sexes.

Male prof flies south

By Holly Horwood
Staff Reporter

After three years of getting kicked in the teeth by politically correct hiring policies, University of B.C. applied ethicist Louis Marinoff is giving Canada the kiss-off.

The 42-year-old bilingual Marinoff, who grew up in Montreal and holds a doctorate in philosophy from University College in London, England, is heading to a tenure-track assistant professor's post at City College in New York.

He offers his third book penned under the pseudonym Lou Tafler as a final shot at liberal-left reverse-discrimination hiring prejudices. Entitled Fair New World, it is a satirical novel which paints an alarming world of extremes in the battle of the sexes.

"I've been chased out of here, because I want to pursue my vocation. This is my farewell present to Canada," says Marinoff, who leaves for New York in July with his sculptor-artist wife, Liv.

It's taken 180 rejections in three years for tenured positions (from assistant professor upwards) from institutions in North America and Australia to force Marinoff out. He was short-listed six times for jobs in the U.S.,

twice in Australia, zero times in Canada.

He insists he leaves with positive feelings toward UBC. But after three years working at four part-time jobs, the writing was on the wall.

According to Marinoff, Canadian post-secondary hiring policies which consider gender over merit have sparked an exodus of qualified white male academics.

"You recall the brain drain of the past generation," says Marinoff, who won research fellowships and scholarly awards at UBC, London and the University of Jerusalem. "Well, this is a gene drain, of the first order."

Marinoff offers these examples in Canadian university philosophy departments alone:

■ An Ontario institution recently had 163 applicants for a tenure-track position — 150 men and 13 women. All 13 females were short-listed; not one male made the list. A woman was eventually hired.

■ A prairie university shortlisted all five female candidates of some 150 applicants for a tenure-track philosophy job. The job was offered to the first four women in turn, as one after the other turned it down for better jobs elsewhere. When the fifth woman rejected it because the university could not find a job for her husband, a man was hired. Loud protests over gender inequality erupted on campus.

The rules changed in 1991, at an emotionally charged annual meeting of the Canadian Philosophical Association. New hiring targets called for 40 per cent of all faculty positions to go to women by the year 2010. Women now hold 13 per cent of positions.

"There was a lot of pressure to bring this measure in," acknowledges UBC Centre for Applied Ethics director Michael McDonald, then national association president. He describes the recommendations as "moderate" — aimed at attracting more women to a vocation that now has fewer women than any other department except religious studies.

Meanwhile, Marinoff, who has published his book under his own Backlash Press, will set up a publishing booth at the Canadian Learned Society Congress early next month in Calgary, where he hopes to attract the attention of 8,000 academics.

He agrees inequities may have excluded women in the past.

"But we will not solve the problem by reverse discrimination. That's really going to disenfranchise a new group of people, who are going to become angry, are going to become frustrated and who eventually will find some way of exercising this discontent."