

REVIEW

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Fair New World, by Lou Tafler
 Vancouver: Backlash Books, 1994.
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Lou Tafler's *Fair New World* depicts a future world in which political correctness has run its logical course. This pc realm has dedicated itself to "fairness". Fairness, undefined and unquestioned, is all. What unfolds is an exercise in *reductio ad absurdum*.

While its residents never define 'fairness', except ostensibly (much as is the present case), the Fair World is not without inner conflict. At some time in the recent past the Fair World broke into three different societies, each one characterised by a different attitude to what is "fair": Feminania, Bruteland and Melior.

The residents of Feminania (femininnies) conform hilariously to the extant stereotypes of radical feminists. The brutes of Bruteland are clearly the fully-fleshed-out "real men" that modern radical feminists insist are the unavoidable natural consequences of testosterone poisoning and the genetic defect known as the Y Chromosome. The third land in the Fair Trinity is Melior. Melior is "better" (a manifestly value-relative term) if only in comparison to the other two. It is ruled by self-effacing Philosopher-Kings who campaign for office by showing no interest in wielding power.

In Feminania, the doctrine of fairness is particularly evident in its effect on language and social relations. In language any word that seems to imply the existence of men has been expunged. Thus, the family name Grossman is transmuted via Grossperson into Grossperdaughter, Sherman becomes Shewomban and manners, wombanners. Since social mores prohibit direct confrontation the only sources of social change are via duplicity and external force (such as war).

Allegiance to truth is gone. Making certain that feelings are not hurt is paramount. Those who most readily take

offence are those who control the tenor of daily life. The thinnest skin, the rawest nerve, the most suspicious mind, the most cowardly heart, is best.

Intimate human relations, particularly with the opposite sex, are clearly far too dangerous for "normal" femininnies. Fortunately there is an ersatz substitute. Virtually Latin (or alternate) Lovers can be programmed to any set of specifications by using the FemiSoft VGR (Virtual Gendher Relations) hardware and software. The femininnie can encase herself in virtual-reality clothing and then run the programmed romantic encounter. True, FemiSoft faces several lawsuits because the virtual men have been programmed with a "no means yes" override and have taken excessive liberties with the programmer. On the whole, however, this approach to intimacy is quite popular.

Bruteland's approach to fairness has few of these electronic aids. Men who seek physical affection can obtain the services of a female provided by RentaKunta or one of its competitors. Any woman seen in public without male escort is deemed fair game and a wide variety of liberties can be taken with her.

The only way two such contrary collections of people can survive is via external support. This is the role of Melior under the policies of the Philosopher-Kings. They treat both Bruteland and Feminania as colonies and garbage dumps. It is Melior's industries which ultimately sustain both Feminania and Bruteland.

Tafler's book attempts to depict how a politically correct world would actually appear. To the casual reader some of these excursions may appear too bizarre to be taken seriously. The truth, however, is more disturbing. *Fair New World* satirizes the actual daily life in a growing number of North American universities. As these words are being written the administration of the University of British Columbia has suspended the acceptance of any new graduate students in the political science department for actions which, on the whole, might generously be described as "insufficient amounts of

politically-correct sensitivity". Characteristics of Feminania, Bruteland and Melior can readily be identified at UBC today.

Reading this book suggests a question: would I pay taxes to support any of these countries?. If the answer is 'no' then ask a second question: would I pay taxes to support a university acting like these countries? Tafler's *Fair New World* is not just a fictional excision into the national future but a realistic vision of the possible future of the academy itself.

Annual Meeting Report to Come

The annual meeting was held on May 20 and well attended in spite of having to be scheduled on Victoria Day.

Brief reports will be included in the next newsletter. Ed.