with the concept of 'false awareness'. The 'experiences, desires and needs of women' are also regularly and heedlessly presented as unequivocal and recognizable factualities. In our opinion the interesting question of the possibilities and impossibilities of 'agency' and 'change' within a postmodern framework merit discussion in greater detail.

Getting Smart is above all a quest by Lather the academic and teacher through reams of literature about postmodernism, feminism and pedagogy for an explanation for her ambivalent attitude towards the postmodern. As a result of this quest the author, according to what she herself says, sees perspectives for 'those who want their intellectual involvement to be able to play a role in the struggle for social justice'. With her book, Lather has stressed yet again that it is important to think about this subject. She has not shown us perspectives for our actual work, in which we want to make use

of the postmodern's intellectual power to attract in research that contributes to fairer education.

Geert ten Dam and Monique Volman

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'Race', Gender and the Education of Teachers

Edited by Iram Siraj-Blatchford

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With so much work published on issues of equality in education generally, it is surprising that this is the first collection to be devoted entirely to teacher education. The stated aim of the book is 'a very practical introduction to the specific issues of concern to teacher educators'. It is divided into three sections. The first section sets out to present a holistic view of 'race' and gender issues in teacher education considered in their wider educational context. The second section is chiefly concerned with the experiences of students and the final section examines policy, strategy and action required to promote equality in and through teacher education. The book is aimed

at teacher educators and students and serves as a good introduction for those coming to the issues for the first time. It is also a useful text in presenting the current debate in a context where teacher education is being politically structured to take place largely in and under the control of schools.

The changes occurring in teacher education parallel those taking place in the school sector. The removal of powers from teacher education institutions themselves and their delegation to schools combined with increased central government direction over the nature and content of courses follows the delegation of school policy from local authorities to school governing bodies and the introduction of the National Curriculum. These political changes are consciously intended to eliminate the promotion of equality under an ideology of choice and standards. In this context the pursuit of equality in

and through education is having to be fundamentally re-thought.

The book reflects the emergence of anti-oppressive (anti-sexist and anti-racist) perspectives on 'race' and gender inequality. The articles seek to take a holistic view of inequality, though issues related to sexuality and disability are not directly addressed. The section which examines the experiences of black and female students in teacher education is a particular strength of the book. The articles demonstrate how racism and sexism impinge on students' experience, motivation and achievement and how this may condition their expectations and practices in schools. For example, the article by Anne Flintoff examines gender relations in physical education courses in an initial teacher-training institution. She shows how strongly gendered interactions between students lead to the devaluing and undermining of women's contributions. The article points to the need to challenge such oppressive behaviour and attitudes if they are not to be exported into schools and transmitted to pupils. Similarly, in the first section of the book the article by Iram Siraj-Blatchford draws on her own research on the experiences of Black students in teacher education to show that racism from fellow students, lecturers and during teaching practice is a common experience for these students and significantly shapes their hopes and aspirations. The book highlights repeatedly the need for further research in this area if action is to be taken to ensure that Black and women students have a positive experience of teacher education and if they are to fulfil their potential in their chosen career. It is also clear that unless racism and sexism in the institutions themselves is challenged they will simply reproduce and help to sustain the culture of oppression and inequality in schools.

The final section of the book considers strategies to promote equality in the political context in

which teacher educators now find themselves. All of the articles deal in different ways with a context in which the control over policy is increasingly fragmented and where it is more difficult to place equality issues on a central agenda. The article by Pratap Deshpande and Nargis Rashid on in-service education for teachers suggests the need to place equality issues on a broader quality agenda as a strategy to enable local authorities to raise issues of equality in schools. In their article John Clay and Rosalyn George argue that the shift to school-based initial teacher education and the modularization of initial teacher-education courses threatens to erode the study of equality issues as a core element of courses. While they recognize the limitations of a 'permeation' model, where the responsibility for dealing with equality issues is devolved to individual modules and courses, they are forced to concede that this may be the only way forward. 'Permeation' is only likely to be effective where it is carefully planned and where there is substantial and a sustained staff development programme to ensure that lecturers are able to deliver appropriately. A more radical strategy explored in this article is the need to empower students and staff to question and challenge oppression within the institutions themselves. They propose the creation of an open forum on social justice where staff and students can share experience and ideas and support each other.

In a context where, across the whole of Europe, racism including racist murders are on the rise, where women are scapegoated as lone parents for all the ills in society and where governments create an ethos in which the far right is able to flourish, the struggle for equality has never been more crucial. The book illustrates, using teacher education as an example, the limits and possibilities of such a struggle.

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