

# Hiram Caton vs. the Radical Feminists

## *In Fortress Griffith*

**L**IKE A PRISM played through morning light, the women's studies controversy at Griffith University teases the eye with its variety of colourful displays. An unusual conservative combination. A university council rattled. The media splashing the story. A drama with a future.

On the face of it, the protagonists seem an unlikely combination. Mrs Jackie Butler is typical of Queensland women leagued to defend the family. Her public life would probably have been spent in church organisations had not the menaces she associates with feminism troubled the domestic world. Ten years ago she became State Coordinator of "Women Who Want to be Women". The challenge stimulated her to become an editor, a tireless organiser, and a soft-sell lobbyist urging Christian values on reluctant law-makers. The 4Ws aren't intellectuals and don't want to be, but Jackie Butler has led her group into the brambles of feminist polemics, blithely affirming the old-fashioned values in the face of change. They frown on premarital sex, think it better that women stayed in the home, and strongly oppose abortion. People certain that such values are a thing of the past view the 4Ws as survivals too inflexible, or just too dumb, to adjust. Hence the 4Ws' reputation in smart sets as wowsers.

The other protagonist is an unabashed intellectual. Hiram Caton defines his field as modern political history, but you discover that it's the tip of an iceberg. He holds higher degrees in Arabic language and in philosophy. But his scholarly centre of gravity lies elsewhere still, in something called "biosocial science". I knitted my brow and admitted to no acquaintance. The confession triggered enthusiastically delivered ignorance remedies. Off the bookshelf came titles vaguely familiar and others completely new: *Chimpanzee Politics* (confirms your hunch), *The Biology of Peace and War* (about aggression and its inhibition), *Promethean Fire* (on the evolution of mind), and *The Biology of Human Action*.

As I examined fascinating photographs and illustrations, Professor Caton spoke of the breakthrough that has brought the study of human behaviour into the harness of evolutionary biology. A new era in human knowledge had dawned, he assured me, and Caton enjoys marching in the vanguard. But if he is so keen to go forward, why

the apparent backward march with the traditionalist 4Ws? How does the advocate of Darwinian social science make common cause with a group that helped instal creationist biology in Queensland schools?

These questions are burning irritants among Professor Caton's colleagues, who are indignant about what they see as his unholy alliance with Queensland reactionaries. They call it opportunism and say that he is using 4Ws muscle to settle old scores with the university. When the *Catholic Leader* ran a profile on him in which he declared himself an "unredeemed Christian" and dilated on theology, to his Humanities colleagues his apotheosis to demagogue and hypocrite seemed complete.

Caton shrugged it off with an anecdote about mistaken impressions. A student asked to interview him, for a class project, as a learned atheist Jew. "I asked her why she thought I was Jewish. It was because I sometimes quote the Old Testament," he chortled. "My colleagues suppose that I must be irreligious because my scholarship is rigidly secular. That mistake is understandable, but they have no business questioning the *bona fides* of the biology angle." The supposedly mindless 4Ws began to scout the findings of behavioural biology after noticing that feminist authors regularly denounce them. If there is a maternal instinct, then there is a drop of destiny in biology and the promise of open choice suffers a little. Caton's academic criticism of the women's study course at Griffith is a dazzling enumeration of scientific findings inconsistent with it, which is the basis of his *mot* that the university is about "to teach as true what is known to be false". The 4Ws women applauded because they believe deeply that the equality touted by feminists disadvantages mothers and confounds the divinely ordained natural order. Is the onus of reaction then passed to the feminists? What about Creationism?

Caton thinks it a simple matter complicated by a thicket of related issues. There is no way, short of rebuilding the conceptual structure of the sciences, to get omnipotent, intentional agency into them. Many scientists have believed or hoped otherwise, but their attempts to construct a natural theology on science merely express a pious wish. Thus conceptual nub; but that isn't what the curriculum squabble is about, he says. The Creationist push is a response to the use of evolution to attack

religious belief and support the values of secular humanism. Caton sides with the Creationists. "The paleontologist Thomas Huxley, who helped fashion secular humanism," he explained, "believed that the facts of animal evolution were incompatible with humanist values. He postulated a non-Darwinian ethical evolution that carried our species beyond animal behaviour. The postulate was a substitute for theology, and had no basis in the biology of his day. Modern behavioural biology is big news because it shows in detail that the postulate of non-Darwinian evolution for ethics and behaviour is superfluous. Secular humanists call on the prestige of science to push Huxley's unscientific view of the status of human values. It's every bit as Creationist as the line pushed by religious groups, but that fact isn't acknowledged. I'll withdraw my support for Creationist biology in the schools when the schools stop teaching Creationist social science." Creationism is a key debating point because it imposes forced choices on humanists. If they accept human evolution, consistency requires them to espouse biosocial science. But biosocial science undercuts their value system and favoured modes of pedagogy. All the *bêtes noires* of the Right would be swept away by a consistent evolutionary approach to man: sex education, peace studies, women's studies, values clarification.

## I

The fracas commenced last June with a barrage of 4W letters to the *Courier Mail* criticising the proposed BA course on a number of counts. The publicity startled the Griffith's governing Council despite warnings aplenty. The Education Minister Mr Lin Powell had appointed a National Party backbencher to the Council, in tandem with another National appointed to the University of Queensland Senate. Obviously the Government meant to take universities more seriously. Griffith especially stuck in the craw of the Nationals from the early days, when it acquired its reputation among them as "the most Socialist university in Australia".

But how well defined the Government's intentions might be was another matter. Ambivalence presides because Nationals have held the education portfolio for many years. They approved the Griffith scheme, appointed its first Chancellor, and enjoyed ample opportunity for influence through ministerial appointments to Council. It was natural for Council to interpret this compliant participation as implicit approval of its management. Ministers had neither the will nor the way to deny this implication.

This predicament stems from a combination of the peculiarities of the education portfolio with National Party structure. Queensland schools, like schools everywhere, are ideological battlefields. Education ministers must service a constant stream of parental complaints about misteaching, in addition to occasional concerted lobbies directed toward specific targets. The highly publicised success of some such efforts gives the impression that social conservatives wield substantial influence with education ministers. Conservative lobbyists don't agree. Most complaints reaching the minister, they complain,

are fobbed off; major issues, such as sex education, inspire a dread that induces chameleon modes of evasion. Queensland ministers can expect to be blamed for timidity and Yes Minister subservience.

Misunderstandings are afoot here, sprung from the tendency of conservatives to attribute too much effect to personal character. The truth is that ministers are weak because the National Party control mechanisms discourage ministerial initiative. All but minor action must have Cabinet approval, while policy is laid down at the Party convention, where parliamentarians have no formal say. The result is that ministerial power is not nearly so large as ministerial responsibility. Ordinary people have no inkling of this, and even seasoned observers are misled by the few senior ministers who are powerful in their portfolios. That is why conservatives are flummoxed when the minister evades their complaints, or when they discover that he has no clear views on major issues and no intention of forming any. But they shouldn't be. It isn't likely that any minister could steal the time from politicking to master the complexities of curriculum debate. The alternative, to use advisers, isn't on politically. So the situation drifts into elaborate charades such as the dance done around Creationism.

The press gives the impression that Mr Powell stirred the controversy by ordering that Creationism be taught. Not so. Creationism was in the syllabus from 1973 until recently, when it was tossed out by the Board of Secondary Schools Studies, prompted by a humanist lobby. Nobody mentions this key fact. Not the humanists, who are happy to let the public think that they oppose an innovation rather than instigated one. Not Powell, who doesn't want to advertise the fact that a Board he appoints went against his strongly held views. Not the Creationists, who accept Powell's assurances that Creationism will be taught. What teachers will make of this mess is anyone's guess.

The Griffith caper was played on this gossamer grid. For a time it seemed that the government knew what it wanted. The backbencher on the Griffith Council roared in a newspaper advertisement blasting the women's study proposal. Constituents were exhorted to sign and circulate petitions calling on Parliament to investigate feminist courses in tertiary institutions. They did. They also pelted the Chancellor with letters complaining about the intended anti-Christian Griffith course. These blows struck close to the bone because the backbencher, Mr Ian Henderson, represents the electorate in which Griffith is located. Evangelical Christianity is a strong presence there, and somehow it seemed undesirable to be branded an atheist in the Christian hometown. Besides, chronic enrolment problems have forced Griffith to dip for poorly qualified students. A bad press so close in time to the annual offer of tertiary places didn't seem a good idea.

The Council's initial response was meant to preserve dignity, whatever else. It struck a pose above the fray, reassuring the public that the alarming allegations had proved on investigation to be false. (The investigation consisted of asking the fox whether it has eaten the chicken; when the fox denied it, the Council expressed satisfaction).

Meanwhile, Griffith's socialist muscle targeted Henderson for a raid. The commandos were already on active duty, struggling to undo consequences of the Government's success in the fight with the power unions. They hit with placards billing him as wanted for "crimes against Humanities"; and with a protest demonstration when he appeared for a Council meeting. Henderson claimed that the placards were defamatory and let it be known that he intended to sue the Council for a lot of money. But writs were never issued, and he did not respond to the protesters despite the presence of a Channel 9 camera recording the event. Soon Henderson was saying privately that he would rather not be on the Council at all.

By a stroke of luck, he got his wish. Somehow the Opposition discovered that a technical lapse rendered his appointment to Council invalid as long as he sat in Parliament. The Labor spokesman gleefully called on him to vacate his seat. In those circumstances the government surmised that leaving Henderson off the Council would hand the Opposition an apparent victory. So the mistake was corrected and the reluctant Henderson was back on the Council by the end of August. He put a brave face on it by assuring the press that he would be around for a long time, to keep an eye on Griffith's radicals.

That performance signalled Henderson's withdrawal from the combination with Butler and Caton, who now were sensible of the gossamer threads of their action grid. It was a moment of agonising reappraisal. Henderson was the link to Powell, and Powell the link to Cabinet. Without him, thunderbolts would be needed to bring Cabinet around to recomposing the Griffith Council. Determined to keep the mission on target, Butler and Caton cobbled together a two-prong strategy: a Cabinet lobby and a media blitz. That was the impulse behind Caton's Coorparoo speech, "Feminism and the Family", which blew the local donnybrook into a national event.

The speech hit Griffith with a tremendous smack. Caton distributed a few copies to feminist colleagues on a quiet Friday afternoon prior to its scheduled delivery the following Tuesday. The collegial courtesy had an electric effect. Word of it spread rapidly, fury mounted, and photocopiers were busy running off duplicates for distribution to faculty. By Monday morning the speech was on the agenda of a university committee, which urged the Vice-Chancellor to take it to the October Council meeting scheduled for that evening. Couriers delivered copies to Council members, and by nightfall Caton was in the Council chamber to defend a speech that had become famous before it was delivered.

That Monday was a watershed. The anger provoked by the speech was expressed by a colleague who attempted to clamp Caton's neck into the guillotine. Tony Bennett wanted him to be brought before a disciplinary tribunal, sought his immediate suspension from duty, demanded that his academic credentials be examined, and even sought strict rationing of secretarial services. Sniffing the ozone of indignation, Caton says he surmised that the Bennett memo might be the signal for turning the Council meeting into a kangaroo court. On top of that, Henderson rang to say that he could not

attend the meeting, which meant that there would be no government presence at the discussion of Caton's call on the government to recompose the Griffith Council.

In the event, Chancellor Sir Allan Sewell conducted a correct and courteous discussion. The Council resolved to express its strong disapproval of Caton's call on the government to intervene in curricular matters, but it recognised his right to debate the issue.

"I left the meeting content," Caton recalled. "Bennett's memo was symptomatic of Griffith's chronic suppression of significant debate. The Council had never before honoured academic freedom in a situation that might involve costs to itself. That it did now was a gift of free air. It also undercut disciplinary action against me. But the Council carved its pound of flesh by adopting the myth that I advocated government intervention, although it was a split vote in which the Vice-Chancellor cast a Nay.

"The myth echoed the paranoid streak in the Fortress Griffith mentality. But it also sent alarm signals across the land by packaging the Griffith action as another SEQEB dispute. It was an effective gambit. I acquired instant recognition as a notorious character, and Labor acquired leverage against the government. In the parliamentary debate on the question, the government spokesman so busied himself with rebutting the myth that he forgot the real issue, the reconstitution of Council."

## II

"Feminism and the Family" can come across as outrageously old-fashioned or as the soul of good sense; or both. That may be its magic. Reading it, I was tugged one way by residual good-old-days sympathies, another by habitual acceptance of current dogmas. The speech exploits this ambivalence and challenges it to a decision. The fulcrum of the challenge is the pain of women's experience today, finely done in the fiction of Helen Garner. The grief of separation. The overt and hidden punishments of casual encounters. Disorientation. The hassle of the working mother. Drifting beautiful males. Mean side-effects of the Pill. The need to have Mr Right's child; anger when Mr Right won't be tied down. These are the wounds and humiliations that Caton invokes to give credibility to his claim that the permissive era has been a calamity for women, and not so good for men either.

His approach to feminists and feminism is the opposite of the tack taken by Michael Levin. Levin beats feminists into submission with the cudgel of refutation and tortures by ridicule. Caton the gentleman pacifies and soothes. He plays down his differences with feminists and prefers declaration to debate. He doesn't regard feminists as an exotic species requiring special handling, but as women with the hopes and fears of all women. Despite the gentility, there is no waffle. "Feminism and the Family" is uttered in the voice of authority, expressed in epigrammatic prose.

Here are some samples. On conservative politics: "Let intellectuals make the revolution and we will preside over the aftermath". The essence of conservative wisdom: "Calm down, it will pass". On male backlash: "They

lash out at feminists as man-eaters determined to humiliate men by usurping their jobs and driving them into buggery". On the abortion industry: "a kind of medical terrorism in which mothers conspire with physicians to murder the next generation". On the Pill: "a massive experiment with human sexual behaviour". On homosexuality: "the most humiliating of all male put-downs. Homosexuals not only insult women by their <sup>performance</sup> performance, they seduce their sons". On wimps: "operators who instinctively avoid decision, evade responsibility, and seek safety in a multitude of appearances". On the Griffith Council: "never an effective deliberative body. It has endorsed numerous delinquencies, notably curricular calamities and confusion of ranks". Disraeli called this style of political prose "dignified pyrotechnics". I don't wonder that the media took a closer look.

Caton's position relates to what is being called "third stage feminism". Bra-burning and rights battles lie behind. In a calmer atmosphere, it's OK to admit that mothering can have rich rewards; that abortion and the Pill are mixed blessings; and to wonder whether the factory is really more liberating and fulfilling than domestic life. He reinforces these second thoughts and introduces a new identification for the male oppressor: neither the patriarch nor the wife-basher, but the wimp. This is an interesting twist that some feminists view with alarm. It snatches away the image of the brutal male and substitutes the image of the effeminate male as the cause of women's suffering: not male strength but male weakness is the problem.

One feminist predicts that because of this twist the Coorparoo speech will become an important statement for third stage feminists. "Till now," she said, "feminists tended to attribute male domination to brute strength that shackled them to the family. The fact that women actively cooperated in this rape was attributed to social conditioning. Now Caton gives us an epitome of the patriarchal mentality. He's deeply concerned for women, and that reminds us of the patriarchal charm that feminists forgot.

"But no doubt about it, life is simple: women want to have babies and men need heroic action. He directs his aggression toward men — homosexuals, abortionists, family planners, wimps — who reject or undermine home-making and heroism. His idea of rehabilitating weak men is to smash wimp institutions and beliefs. This will appeal to lonely single mothers. But it's insidious. The institutions he wants to smash help liberate women. Beware patriarchs bearing sympathy."

The dramaturgy of the speech does convey these impressions. It exhibits a single male doing battle with an institution. The issue: the feminist v. the traditional view of women. The protagonist doesn't attack feminists, but the institutional males who endorse the feminist self-image and ideology. Feminist ideology is viewed as a desperate attempt to salvage a rump of dignity and social traction in a novel situation that has brutalised women. The situation is the permissive era, when abortion and the Pill depress mothering and weak social sanctions allow males to avoid paternal responsibility.

The demand for work and abortion shows that feminists have been coopted by the wimps, whose ideal is the single mother yoked to tough yakka; for it frees them to drift between bedrooms and bathhouses. This brutal desertion forces women to maternal self-denial, partly for practical reasons, but especially to salvage their dignity from the injury of rejection. Hence the neurotic ideal of feminism: yakka is fulfilment, while marriage and family are oppression.

The gallant patriarch comes to the rescue, smites the despoilers of women, herds them into the safety of the home, and calls real men to the flag of the family. The plots of good dramas are few and simple.

Caton advises that feminism is a failed revolution because not even feminists want it as a first choice. There is welcome candour, and incisiveness too, in his reorientation of the issue around reproduction. Reproductive biology is the one thing that undoubtedly distinguishes the sexes. Rejecting this simple fact as "biologism", stage two feminists try to relocate women's gender identity in spaces where it doesn't belong.

Like body-building. Women who patronise iron-pumping shops come out with the same shape they took in, unless they managed to trim off the fat. Except Bev Francis. Her hips, thighs, solar plexus, chest, and biceps belong to a miniature Rambo. It's one thing for glamorous female cops to zonk hardened crims on TV; we accept it as the Amazon myth. But Bev is for real. Feminists went gaga. Glorian Steinem sees Bev as the spark of a new sex confusion conflagration. She said that "women on the frontiers are discovering they can develop the strength and muscles once thought unique to men — and that enlarges the territory for the rest of us."

Steinem might as well talk about the bearded lady as a role model; or urge young women to join SAS because Cagney and Lacey mow down terrorists. These are mirages of feminists attempting to escape their "gender". Women who chase these phantoms are on the way to disappointment and maybe humiliation.

Caton finds a poignant proof of feminist confusion about the feminine in the attempt to identify male bias in the sciences. Here the situation of women is the opposite of body-building. Bev Francis will never win a muscle contest with men, but women can and do win against men in contests that match brain power. Yet here, where the door to unisex is open, feminists try to establish a "women's knowledge" in the sciences by alleging male bias.

"Taken at face value, the thing is nonsense and anti-feminist nonsense to boot," Caton said. "If there were 'gender' bias in the sciences, it would have been detected by the first generation of women scientists. As it is, not one bit of science has been overthrown owing to detection of 'gender' taint."

The allegation is the flip-side of pressing iron. Trapped in their identity dilemma, feminists want to eradicate sexual distinctions that are part of the furniture of the universe, and to set them up where they don't exist.

Does this mean that sex segregation and stereotyped "gender" roles will survive the feminist push? The 4Ws think so, and the reading lists they distribute enumerate

books carrying that message. Among them are surveys showing the universality of attitudes that the Human Rights Commission now penalises as discrimination. The most interesting are large-scale experiments in social equality. They all failed. Soviet women are drudges in an intensely male-dominated society, but aren't allowed to complain because officially there is equality. The same fate befell the idealist *kibbutz*, uncoerced by Leninist rigours.

The *kibbutz* system put into effect the old utopian scheme of abolishing the family and eliminating social class. The one reward of labour was the honour of more labour. Work assignments were made without regard to sex and women were encouraged to participate on equal footing in all community activities. The system was the longest running and most successful social experiment of this kind out of thousands that have been made since the French Revolution. It worked as long as it did because *kibbutzniks* enjoyed the prestige of a sacred order, *kibbutz* economic losses were underwritten by the profane Jews, and because non-conformists were expelled.

But what conservatives call human nature defeated the Marxist theory. Female military units were trained but they never saw action and nobody expected that they would. Labour became sex segregated, with women

concentrated in services and men in production. Men dominated *kibbutz* politics and male students were disproportionately successful in examinations. Monogamy was firmly entrenched from the beginning although a marriage ceremony was not customary (though it is now). Women gradually exchanged unisex dress for marks of sexual distinction. They became jealous of the monopolisation of their infants by the *kibbutz* nursery and gradually drew them into the family quarters. And so on.

With data like this on the loose, the Coalition interests ought to make a jolly good fight against the feminists. Why don't they then? Why do they wear a defensive and defeatist mien?

The "buzz" word lately is that the Liberals are the "stupid party". It's a view happily accepted among Nationals, who tend to view the Coalition as dead in Queensland.

"You have to be pretty bloody stupid," one told me, "to make Socialist Malcolm Fraser your leader."

Was it clever, then, of the free enterprise Nationals to preside over the establishment of "the most Socialist university in Australia? We're going to take care of that," he responded irritably. He didn't answer my question, but I said I would keep a lookout.

## Separation

They parted amicably you might say,  
Her eyes glistening, not meeting his,  
She had drowned in those deep pools before,  
Struggling against the compelling undertow  
Of his animus.

She packed her things neatly in numbered boxes,  
Concerned at the flotsam she was leaving  
For him to wade through.  
She knew his sturdy gaunt frame and its hungers,  
Could already picture him in his books,  
Drifting undisturbed on his own seas.

Their dogs they had sold some weeks before,  
Nothing to keep her now,  
The plants like cats had no loyalty,  
Would adapt to new owners.

She already felt her future churnings  
As his old ute would bumble up her new drive,  
Bringing the last of her things.  
What items had she left unnumbered?  
What of his had she taken?

Anthony London

## Millipede

Across the world beneath my feet a long,  
brown millipede is moving, travelling,  
its body flowing over barriers:  
small stones, thin leaves and stalks of grass,  
gracefully.

Its simple eyes see light and shade,  
its two antennae feel what is before.

Segmented yet so flexible,  
it rides an onward ripple of frail legs—  
though not a thousand, they are surely many.

I'm reminded of the fable  
of a poor, self-conscious centipede  
who lost its power to move  
when asked how it was done;  
but gliding on a wave of limbs,  
this small creature knows.

There is no moral here,  
though this it shows:  
like the clouds, the winds, the waters,  
life flows.

Mark Scrivener

government but also of leading Opposition spokesmen and critics as well as information and analysis of trends in Israeli politics and in surrounding Middle East countries, such as Syria, Egypt, Lebanon or Libya, regional conflicts, rivalries and terrorism. The *Review* argues Israel's case in terms of Australian national interest. It is quite obvious that Andrew Mack is fundamentally opposed to our underlying principle that the democracies should act together, rather than hang separately.

The wide variety of viewpoints provided in comments, articles and essays includes contributions from leading Australian academics like Professors Rony Gabbay, Sol Encel, Bill Rubinstein, Patrick Morgan as well as politicians ranging from Senators Dbn Chipp, Jim Short, Don Jessop and Federal Minister Barry Cohen to a broad array of American, European and Israeli analysts. The *Review's* regular "Document" reproduces statements of note from a wide variety of Arab, Israeli and non-Mid-East sources while the *Review's* coverage of extremists, Left and Right, and its "Briefing" column analysing Australian media coverage of the Middle East and Jewish affairs related issues is highly regarded.

Together with the *Review's* Editorial Committee, Dr Colin Rubenstein, Professor Bill Rubinstein and Rabbi John Levi, we totally reject Mr Mack's remark which smacks of reverse McCarthyism and a slur on our professionalism and complete independence in producing the *Review*. Mr Mack's views on the PLO, calls for a two State solution, gross exaggerations during the Lebanon War and national calls for the US to cut all aid to Israel, have certainly been noted by us, somewhat critically. Our views of the Soviet role in the Middle East as well as strong continued support for Australian participation in ANZUS may well be significant to understanding Mr Mack. He really should learn to play the ball rather than the man and keep his mind on the issues rather than dish out insults.

MICHAEL DANBY,  
Editor,  
Australia/Israel Publications.

## The Subantarctic Islands

Sir,

As one who has spent some time in the Antarctic and Subantarctic, I enjoyed reading Edwin Morrisby's article in the May 1986 issue of *Quadrant*. The Subantarctic Islands have an evocative feeling which one never gets out of the blood.

I should like to be allowed to make a couple of small corrections and add a small piece of information. Firstly, there are four, and not seventeen, species of albatross breeding on the Auckland Islands. There are only in fact thirteen albatross species in total in the world. Secondly, the ANARE station on Heard Island, which was established in 1947, has not been used since it was abandoned in 1955 although several private expeditions have made visits since then.

Thirdly, the name Cape Circumcision (*Cap Circoncision*) was given by J.B.C. Bouvet de Lozier who discovered Bouvet Island on January 1 1739, that is, the Feast of the Circumcision. A similarly-named Port Circumcision was named by Charcot on January 1 1909. It is a cove on Petermann Island where Charcot's delightfully-named vessel *Pourquoi-Pas?* wintered in that year.

ALAN N. COWAN,  
Rivett, ACT.

## "Hiram Caton vs. the Radical Feminists"

Sir,

Edith Southwood is amusing and occasionally perceptive in her article "Hiram Caton vs. the Radical Feminists" (*Quadrant*, March 1986). However, she is grossly misleading on one point, which I would like to correct.

Southwood consistently describes opponents of creationism as "humanists". This is incorrect. I know the major opponents of creationism in Queensland, and almost none fits that label. Not only is none affiliated with the humanists, but virtually all accept the religious idea of a Creator.

Creationism, as pushed in Queensland, is a narrow sectarian doctrine, based on one eccentric reading of the Bible. Beliefs include a universe only a few thousand years

old, creation in six days, and a world wide flood which laid down rock strata and arranged fossils in order. This may well have a place in religious studies. The creationists, though, want their religious views — and only theirs — taught in science lessons!

Southwood might also have noted that the women's studies donnybrook concerned one academic's objections to one (untried) programme of study in one of Griffith University's five schools. Meanwhile Griffith has become a highly successful research university (as Caton has acknowledged). We are also experiencing a boom in student numbers.

Professor Caton is perfectly entitled to express his views. He might even be right on some points. However, mud is a messy commodity, and should be carefully targeted.

MARTIN BRIDGSTOCK,  
Lecturer, School of Science,  
Griffith University.

## "Soviet Terror in Afghanistan"

Sir,

The article "Soviet Terror in Afghanistan" in the June 1986 issue of *Quadrant* was presented with my name in large type as if it was written by me. It was a fine article written in fact by the people mentioned in tiny type at the bottom of the page, Peter Collier and David Horowitz — reformed leftists who now write fervent articles on behalf of freedom. I would have been proud to have written the piece, but Collier and Horowitz were the authors and my name should not have been used on it. My only involvement was as a spotter. I got a roneoed copy of the piece in the mail from the Council for Inter-American Security, and as I do with many such articles I see here, posted it on to *Quadrant* (and I think to *The Australian* and *Newsweekly*) with the suggestion they might be interested in publishing it.

PETER SAMUEL  
Washington, DC,  
USA.

Peter Samuel's covering note led *Quadrant* wrongly to assume that he was the author of the fine article by Peter Collier and David Horowitz. *Quadrant* apologises to all three.

— Editor

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# LETTERS

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## Hiram Caton vs. the Radical Feminists

Sir,

Martin Bridgstock states (in *Quadrant* July/August 1986) that it is "grossly misleading" of me to describe the opponents of creationism in Queensland as humanists. He says that to his personal knowledge "none" of the opponents of creationism is "affiliated with the humanists".

I am unable to accept this. Since late 1984, creationism has been frequently attacked by the *Queensland Humanist*, sometimes in articles signed by Mr Bridgstock's anti-creationist associates. In the May/June 1985 issue of the *Queensland Humanist*, Dr Tony Thulborn, one such associate, took four pages to describe the anti-creationist crusade then being conducted on the University of Queensland campus. The next issue devoted much space to objections of UQ scientists to seminars for school teachers in creation science, conducted under Department of Education auspices. The battle is continued in the March/April 1986 issue, which discusses favourably the continuing agitations of Dr Bridgstock and Dr Thulborn.

Bridgstock's co-edited volume, *Creationism: An Australian Perspective*, is published by the Australian Skeptics. The book's front matter identifies the Skeptics as a "section of the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of the Paranormal". This committee is one of the many arms of the British Humanist Association. In a controversy on creationism in the columns of the *Sunday Mail* a few months ago, the opponents of creationism were twice identified as humanists. No denial was issued by Dr Bridgstock, Dr Thulborn, or the Queensland Humanist Association.

The Queensland fracas duplicates the dispute between secular

humanists and the moral majority that commenced in the United States in the 'seventies. The American Humanist Association rallied right-thinking rationalists against besotted fundamentalists. In the January/February 1977 issue of *The Humanist* there is a "Statement Affirming Evolution as a Principle of Science," signed by many leading scientists. My untrained eye can find no appreciable difference between the American humanists in regard to creationism and Dr Bridgstock and his colleagues.

EDITH SOUTHWOOD,  
Brisbane, Qld.

## Australian Writers' Delegation to USSR

Sir,

I wish to set the record straight in relation to an item in your Commentary pages (*Quadrant* March 1986) concerning the visit to the USSR by a group of Australian writers.

1. As a result of the renewal of cultural relations between this country and the USSR the Literature Board of the Australia Council was invited to send a small delegation of Australian writers to Russia as part of a writers' exchange.

2. As Director of the Literature Board (and as a published writer) I was asked to head this delegation; the Literature Board and the Australia Council requested me to report on the exchange and to make recommendations concerning the possibilities and nature of future exchange of writers.

3. On returning to Australia I made three recommendations: (a) That the recently renewed cultural contacts between Australia and the USSR be continued and that the Literature Board sign a cultural exchange agreement on co-operation with the Soviet Writers' Union for literary exchanges. A draft agreement was presented to me by the Soviet Writers Union and, subject to endorsement by the Australia Council and the Department of Foreign Affairs, I recommend that this be used as the basis for the final agreement.

(b) That in any literary exchange

with the USSR one member of the Australian delegation be a Literature Board member or ex-member or someone closely conversant with the current Board programs and policy, with Australia Council programs and activities and with specific briefing on areas such as Aboriginal arts and society and the multicultural arts development in this country.

(c) That in future literary exchanges with the USSR some preference be given to younger writers from both countries being invited to participate and that some opportunity be made for readings (with translations) in the host countries, as well as seminars and/or debates on themes of literary interest with writers from the host country preferably in informal settings where the opportunity for personal exchange can be fostered.

For a more personal account of that visit I would recommend Chris Wallace-Crabbe's recent essay in *SCRIPSI*: "Lost in Wonderland". (*Scripsi* Vol 4 No 1, August 1986). I would also add that I gave Bella Akhmadulina my copy of Milan Kundera's *The Book of laughter and forgetting*. I would agree that she is one of Russia's finest poets.

I hope that your magazine will publish the recent news that Vladimir Karpov has recently replaced Georgy Markov as First Secretary of the Soviet Writers' Union. Karpov, aged 64, was editor of the monthly literary magazine *Novy Mir*, and during his editorship he turned the magazine back into the vehicle for unorthodox writing it was nearly 30 years ago during Khrushchev's cultural thaw.

THOMAS SHAPCOTT,  
Director, Literature Board.

## Lèse-majesté

Sir,

I apologise for referring again to my review of Tigger Wise's *The Self-Made Anthropologist* (*Quadrant*, April 1986), but Rebecca Glendenning's letter (*Quadrant*, June 1986) deserves comment. She is right: I did get Professor Elkin's first name wrong. *Mea culpa, mea maxima culpa*. Like Samuel Johnson (I have checked his name out), I can only plead: "Ignorance, madam, pure ignorance." Beyond that I must make two points.