

TEACHING BIOPOLITICS TO HUMANITIES STUDENTS

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Abstract. The article describes a course entitled "Biosocial Approaches to Political Theory," which is currently being taught at Griffith University. Course orientation, pedagogy, assessment strategy, teaching aids, and course bibliography are described. The humanities milieu of the course produced collegial friction whose management by the instructor is discussed. The legitimacy dispute arising from the friction led to a public controversy in the national media. The politics of that dispute are analyzed.

Introduction: The Instructional Context

The humanities are not especially favorable territory for recruiting interest in behavioral biology. When it is offered in combination with political science rather than, say, anthropology, you must try a little harder still.

The School of Humanities at Griffith University, now in its eleventh year of teaching, embraces humanities and social sciences fields. Staff holding humanities degrees—chiefly in literature and cultural studies—comprise 60 percent of the staff of fifty-four. The social scientist cohort is composed mainly of historians and sociologists, plus a scattering of political theorists, anthropologists, and political economists. Their orientation tends to be theoretical, although most are engaged in at least one empirical research project.

The prevailing idea of theory in humanities is the kind of thing done by Raymond Williams, Foucault, Derrida, Klaus Offe, Theda Skocpol, Althusser, and the like. It is characteristic of these writers that they disregard disciplinary boundaries, mix genre, and roam in search of the Shade of Marx. This posthumous philosophy, if I may so style it, is known locally as "interdisciplinarity," for Griffith's founders decreed that teaching and research at all levels should be interdisciplinary. Although this quality was not defined, it was entrenched organizationally by regulations requiring staff from different fields to collaborate, especially in first year teaching. The endeavor to create new courses having an undefined property led to a great deal of turmoil that was eventually settled by the outcomes of power struggles: interdisciplinarity meant what the dominant group said it meant. In Asian studies, it meant area studies. Among scientists, it meant ordinary science. In humanities it means the sort of lit-phil theorizing just mentioned.

This setting defines the parameters of the legitimacy struggle in which the course has been entangled: while it can be plausibly argued that biopolitics is eminently interdisciplinary, the content and theory involved are perceived to be antagonistic to the dominant local definition. There is a decided impulse in humanities to eliminate from the curriculum, as "unsuitable" or "inappropriate," all instruc-

tion that does not fit the local definition. This has not proved to be possible for reasons familiar to political scientists. The strategy has been to marginalize nonconforming instruction and/or instructors, and from time to time to test resistance by applying methods of administrative harassment.

The humanities line on the course derives from the Science for the People Group and the British Society for Social Responsibility in Science. Briefly, the linkages being made between behavioral biology and a number of social sciences are reduced to a single linkage, sociobiology. Sociobiology is burdened with an extreme (genetic) determinism at odds with nurturist views. Nurturists are said to be politically progressive; biologists are bad guys.

Given this context, it was supposed that the nature/nurture controversy would be a suitable introductory topic for the course. This orientation prevailed through 1983, when it was dropped. Since there are lessons in this experience that may have general application, I shall attempt to draw them out.

The Nature/Nurture Debate as Introductory Topic

In 1980 and 1981, readings from Caplan's *Sociobiology Debate* were used to familiarize students with the nature/nurture controversy as conceived in those areas covered by Caplan. In 1982 the course was not taught. I was overseas, and, among other activities, attended sessions of the Association for Politics and Life Sciences at the Denver APSA meeting. Discussion with colleagues reinforced my sense that the sociobiology debate was not the best choice as introductory material. In 1983 the Freeman/Mead controversy suggested that Samoa might be a more suitable door. This substitution was made and the course that year had pizzaz. I arranged for students to attend sessions of the 18th International Ethology Congress, which convened in Brisbane. A social meeting with notables was arranged and there was the possibility that Freeman would attend the Congress and hold a seminar for the class. While this version of the course fully engaged student interest, I was not satisfied that the Freeman/Mead option was more effective pedagogically than the sociobiology option.

On reflection I concluded that the nature/nurture debate, in any form, was not suitable introductory material. Colleagues who think that the nature/nurture distinction is to be avoided as specious rather than cultivated for light will not wonder at this result. I do not agree with their logic. As an academic whose training was philosophy, I am persuaded that appropriately selected and presented specious views can be effective introductory material. The problem was not with the material, but with

the misfit between the material and the students. The misfit was that while students were saturated in nurturist views, they could not grapple effectively with the terms of the debate because they had only the vaguest ideas of nurturist modes of causality. Essentially they believe that behavior follows from attitude; attitudes are thought to be absorbed by repeated exposure to attitudes prevalent in a milieu. This idea, implanted in high school, is given Durkheimian and Marxian interpretations in humanities. Students are not introduced to the experimental evidence and theory partially supportive of this view, namely, conditioning theory. They have no concept of the ad hoc nature of social learning theories that do not systematically distinguish between stimuli that condition and those that do not. I had been attempting to bypass such basics by discussing nature/nurture in anecdotal and argumentative format. This was the mistake.

In 1984 the pedagogy was modified in accordance with this diagnosis. Dialectical considerations were eliminated in favor of a direct scientific approach supplemented by a historical perspective on the advent of biosocial science. The picture presented is roughly as follows. The course is presented as addressing a central problem that first came to light in the developmental or evolutionary sociology of the last century, namely, the attempt to describe "the progress of society." Several readily understood models (from Mill, Spencer, and Marx) are reviewed and the remoteness of their predictions from outcomes is emphasized. It is suggested that the defects stem in part from the rudimentary condition of knowledge of the human species at that time. Transition to the course material is made by a review of new discoveries that enable contemporary investigators to resume the nineteenth century inquiry on a new and sounder basis.

This approach has the advantage that it does not force open doors. Students accept that knowledge of human behavior and evolutionary history has considerably advanced since the early sociologists wrote; by this evident and unpolemical appeal, the intellectual inspiration of present-day opponents of biosocial science is courteously consigned to the museum of intellectual history. Instructors acquainted with the history of social inquiry can use that familiarity as an effective means of dealing systematically with the nurture dogma as it arises. In general one says that such opinions belong to a specific stage of the growth of knowledge about the human animal, and that their plausibility depends on the mix of knowledge (small) and ignorance (great) at that stage. This general point is reinforced throughout the course as the assigned readings exhibit how unobvious to naked observation the causes of behavior are. By semester's end, the light dawns that significant human behavior and cogni-

tion are subject to experimental investigation. This does not lead all students to conclude that social science unintegrated with experiment is obsolete: the cognitive reorientation required would be too great. But they can entertain the idea.

Details of the Course Pedagogy

The course was taught under the title "Political Theory" until 1985, when it was renamed "Biosocial Approaches to Political Theory." Since discussion of the details of the pedagogy presupposes an approximate notion of its content, I reproduce here an edited version of the Class Schedule, contained in the Course Outline distributed to students.

Week 1

Lecture Topics: Introduction to Homo sapiens; Course Objectives and Aims

Readings: Caton, "The New Horizon of Biosocial Science"; Freeman, "Towards an Anthropology both Scientific and Humanistic"; Wilson, "Biology and the Social Sciences"; Scott, "The Application of Biological Concepts to Human Political Systems"

Week 2

Lecture Topics: Ethology and Sociobiology; The Concept of Behavior

Readings: Lorenz, "Functional Limits of Morality"; Tinbergen, "Functional Ethology and the Human Sciences"; Wilson, "Comparative Social Theory"

Week 3

Lecture Topics: The State in Historical Perspective; Herbert Spencer's Theory of Political Evolution

Readings: Freeman, "The Evolutionary Theories of Charles Darwin and Herbert Spencer"; Service, *The Origins of the State and Civilization*, Chs. 1-2; Wilhoite, "Political Evolution and Legitimacy"; Peacock and Kirsch, *The Human Direction*, Ch.3; Adams, "The Origin of Cities"

Week 4

Lecture Topics: Hunter-Gatherers; Non-verbal Communication

Readings: Eibl-Eibesfeldt, "Human Ethology: Concepts and Implications for the Science of Man"; Ekman and Friesen, "The Repertoire of Nonverbal Behaviors"; Washburn and Lancaster, "The Evolution of Hunting"; Premack, "The Codes of Man and Beast"

Week 5

Lecture Topics: Reproduction and the Evolution of Hunter-Gatherer Social Organization; Unique Features of Human Sexuality

Readings: Alexander and Noonan, "Concealment of Ovulation, Parental Care, and Human Social Evolu-

tion"; Dickemann, "Female Infanticide, Reproductive Strategies, and Social Stratification"; Paige and Paige, "Menstrual Restrictions and Sex Segregation Practices"; Shepher, "Mate Selection Among Second Generation Kibbutz Adolescents and Adults"; Almagor, "Gerontocracy, Polygyny and Scarce Resources"; Velle, "Sex Hormones and Behavior in Animals and Man"; Vessy, "Dominance Among Rhesus Monkeys"

Week 6

Lecture Topics: Reproductive Competition and Political Institutions; Primitive Warfare: Genes and Protein as Booty

Readings: Masters, "The Biological Nature of the State"; Dickemann, "The Ecology of Mating Systems in Hypergynous Dowry Societies"; Durham, "Resource Competition and Human Aggression"; Gross, "Protein Capture and Cultural Development"; Weinrich, "Human Sociobiology: Pair-Bonding and Resource Predictability"; Eibl-Eibesfeldt, *The Biology of Peace and War*, 60-77

Week 7

Lecture Topics: Political Ethology; Bonding and Grooming Behavior

Readings: Bowlby, *Attachment and Loss*, 210-235; De Waal *Chimpanzee Politics*, 85-154; Schubert, "Political Ethology"; Caton, "Descriptive Political Ethology"; White, "Bonds, Brains, and Bureaucracy"

Week 8

Lecture Topics: Arousal, Threat, and Appeasement Mechanisms; Ritual

Readings: Eibl-Eibesfeldt, "Ritual and Ritualization from a Biological Perspective"; D'Aquili, "Human Ceremonial Ritual and the Modulation of Aggression"; Caton, "Descriptive Political Ethology"

Week 9

Lecture Topics: Social Structure and Political Structure; Rationality: Fabrication and Manipulation

Readings: Masters, "Evolutionary Biology and the Welfare State"; Reynolds, "The Ethology of Social Change"; Caton, "The Social Technology Model of Political Organization"

Week 10

Lecture Topics: Complexity and Synergism: Agriculture; Warfare

Readings: Corning, *The Synergism Hypothesis*, 355-75; Freedman, "Village Fissioning, Human Diversity and Scarce Resources"; Adams, "The Origin of Cities"; Eibl-Eibesfeldt, *The Biology of Peace and War*, 196-219

Week 11

Lecture Topics: The Composition of Institutions; Political Hierarchy

Readings: Corning, *The Synergism Hypothesis*, 355-75; White, "Locals, Cosmopolitans, and Politics"; Dawkins, "Hierarchical Organization"; Willhoite, "Political Evolution and Legitimacy"

Week 12

Lecture Topics: Cooperation and Reciprocity; Ideology as Affiliative Artifact

Readings: Alexander, "A Biological Interpretation of Moral Systems"; D'Aquili, "Human Ceremonial Ritual and the Modulation of Aggression"; Tiger, "Ideology as Brain Disease"; Willhoite, "Evolution and Collective Intolerance"

Week 13

Lecture Topics: Ideology as Symptom of Social Stress; Political Pathologies

Readings: Caton, "A Method for the Analysis of Neurotic Political Thought"; Cawte, "Gross Stress in Small Islands: A Study in Macro-psychiatry"; Wallace, "Revitalization Movements"; Lex, "The Neurological Basis of Revitalization Cults"

It will be seen that instruction covers a wide range of technical topics. When one considers that it is not an advanced course in a degree program but an isolated course for students enjoying no prior acquaintance with the subject, its viability may well be doubted. Five years ago this would certainly have been my attitude, because at that time the instructional supports required for its success had not been developed. I will discuss how it is done.

Presentation. From the beginning the instructor enjoyed an advantage that in retrospect seems critical: clarity about the over-all character of the instruction. The aim was to produce popular scientific lectures of good quality. As a sometime historian of science, I was familiar with the popularizing tradition, and admired particularly the popular lectures of T. H. Huxley and Hermann von Helmholtz. When still a novice in biosocial science, I had worked through "pop ethology" with the assistance of one of its foremost critics, S. A. Barnett, then professor of zoology at the Australian National University and author of fastidious ethological studies. While there is much to admire in the expository talents of some ethology popularizers, the author who subsequently arrested my attention was E. O. Wilson. It was not the message as such, but Wilson's dexterous neglect of seemingly essential technical vocabulary and his agility in rendering complex concepts accessible to the uninitiated. The example of his success encouraged me to upgrade course readings to the full complement of current research quality, while yet controlling its potentially mortifying effects by appropriately popular lectures.

The rationale for this procedure is partially explained to students in the following terms. The instructor advises that he holds no advanced degree

in a biological science nor indeed any degree at all in biology. The object is not to acquire proficiency in biology but to glean some suggestions and insights. In other words, it will be a Cook's Tour of an exotic landscape. The instructor's want of expert proficiency is kept before students by mentioning, from time to time, unmastered aspects of material discussed. Students are not told—lest they be intimidated—that the course work passes muster as an upper level undergraduate behavioral biology course. Instructor performance is tested by occasional enrollment in the course by science students and by postgraduate supervision, by selected double marking of assessment items by science colleagues, by discussion with science colleagues, and by publication. It should be noted, as a caveat to adventurers, that the measure of success achieved here undoubtedly owes something to the circumstance that the instructor's spouse is a senior lecturer in ecology who provides on-the-spot general biology as required and professional responses to behavioral hypotheses. Without this facility for self-testing and correction, the instructor certainly would not have ventured so far from his formal academic training.

There is a technique for popularizing lectures. The matter just discussed belongs in the repertory; Aristotle called it establishing the ethos or credibility of the speaker. If you come before your audience as a distinguished scientist, you must win audience confidence by demonstrating promptly that you will not talk over their heads. If you are a professor known for delivering two hour lectures without consulting notes, you will have the same problem.

One way of remaining down-to-earth is to take advantage of the information students have assimilated from the media. This information is latent; few can reproduce it as a coherent statement. But it is a substantial deposit that can be parlayed into an effective information and interest base for teaching. Let me mention two types of information upon which I have relied.

The state broadcasting service here televises numerous naturalist shows. Some are Cook's Tours conducted by Australian naturalists. Others are highly professional popular ethological films, usually hired from the BBC. *Life on Earth* is the granddaddy of these, but there are many more series of lesser scope and surprising subject matter: recently there was a series on the historical development of ethological concepts! Awareness of such exposure greatly assists calibration of the lectures.

A second type of information is print media reporting on "gee whiz" biological discoveries and medical news. I have been clipping and storing such reporting for some time. Three years ago I estimated a weekly average of two significant stories. Today

(thanks to AIDS and feminists), the average rises to about fifteen. The weekly average of all biology-related stories is twice that number. Thus biological exotica thrive in the familiar ideational habitat.

This information is frequently conjured parenthetically in the course of lectures, usually through a locution such as: "You may have seen that article on the Bulgarian government's population policy. . . ." It is a handy peg. Those who read the article have an instant associative recognition; those who didn't feel that if it was in the news, they can understand what is about to be said. On occasion a particularly apt news item is photocopied and brought into class for discussion. This was done when the story of wife-burning in India broke: we happened to be expounding the sociobiological analysis of hypergynous dowry societies. Direct hits of this kind are more frequent now than when the course was initiated in 1978.

Another technique, at the core of popular lectures, consists of identifying what students are meant to retain, and devising means to make it memorable. A specific procedure is used to effect each of these objectives.

Essential material is put across with a view to creating "thought blots" in the minds of students. This notion is the analog of endocrinologist John Money's concept, the "love blot." A love blot consists of vivid images (aural, visual, tactile) of the beloved in highly appealing states, associated with a congeries of more or less vague feelings and ideas about the kind of person the unique beloved is. The love blot Money supposes to be the affective-cognitive aspect of the pair bond. Similarly, the thought blot consists of vivid images—mostly visual—associated with a congeries of emotionally toned informational bits and pieces.

Blots are magnets drawing new information toward a center of coherence; they are memory depots. Experience suggests that lecturing is most effective when the aim is to produce about one blot per hour. This is a case of more being less, because a good blot will connect an immense amount of information.

Blots are impressed upon memory by use of visual aids. A half-dozen apt slides will anchor almost any discussion; they are particularly helpful when highly technical or very general concepts are presented. Science teachers have long since understood this. But since I write for political scientists, the point may warrant illustration.

The task is to put across the distinction between genetic, gonadal, and endocrine sexuality and information about endocrine effects on normal sexual behavior. Students will recall the stirrings of their own puberty, and slides of adolescent affection

displays are readily obtained. But there is nothing in them to suggest the invisible endocrine biochemistry. The images selected in this case were medical slides of gonadal abnormalities in infants and pubescent youths. Every student will have heard of the fabled hermaphrodite; now it is there on the screen. With attention thus arrested, you may expose students to a five minute burst of genetics and endocrinology. The details will not be retained, but the explanation strategy sticks. This enables you to discuss, e.g., the 5-alpha reductase deficiency as a proof of hormonal control of male and female sexual behavior and gender identity.

The incentive to develop a slide collection was the difficulty—I should say the impossibility—of putting across the concept of behavior without them. This collection will be discussed presently. I should like to touch briefly on the use of audio aids, which are effective in illustrating a point about the signal-character of behaviors. The point is that behaviors signify only if the neural receivers are calibrated to them. The signal band-length, in other words, must be hard-wired into the receiver. I put together an audio from recordings of sounds used in horror films. Ferocious animal growls, creaking doors, the ominous footfall, the thunderstorm, send students into shivers (which are explained as an effect of the autonomic nervous system). The demonstration concludes with a large bang that evokes the startle response. Students often report that they had not previously been aware that they could be so agitated by such a variety of sounds.

Graphics

The course is supported by about 120 slides, mostly color, and some 30 overhead transparencies, mostly black and white. The slides cover human and animal behavior; Homo evolution and prehistory; urban and hunter-gatherer habitats; religious symbolism and ecstatic behavior; ethological laboratory equipment and experiments; and sundry slides on genetics, gonadal pathology, and the like. The transparencies reproduce illustrative material too unwieldy for slides, along with diagrams, tables, graphs, and outlines.

The assembly of such a resource requires sustained effort by the instructor and promptness from your institution's audio-visual section. The Griffith University audio-visual section provides very professional service promptly and with a smile. This is not a negligible factor.

Since the time required for assembling graphics is greatly reduced when one knows where to look, I will describe my sources.

National Geographic. This monthly spares no cost for artwork; it regularly publishes classroom materi-

als of the highest quality. About 40 percent of my slides are from this source. Its photos are outstanding for evolution, body decoration, village and urban habitat, prehistory, climatic effects, and concept illustration. But it is no good at all for behavior, because its photographers go for the posed shot, the dramatic image, and the artistic image. Its ethnographic essays are uninformed by the ethological concept of behavior. That a human or animal behavior is so infrequently captured in *National Geographic's* thousands of photos is a small commentary on the distinctiveness of the concept.

Manwatching and *The Soccer Tribe*. These coffee table collections by ethnologist/artist Desmond Morris are the principal source of my human ethology slides. I use them in lieu of technical ethological photographs, which are surprisingly scarce in view of the extensive use of visual recording.

There are about 20 technical photographic sequences in *Human Ethology* (von Cranach, 1976), mainly from Colwyn Trevarthen's lab. The reproduction, though lack-lustre, is satisfactory for class use. Studies of the human face are easily obtained from most texts on non-verbal communication.

Presumably the scarcity of technical film studies of behavior will be remedied with the recent publication of Irenaus Eibl-Eibesfeldt's textbook on human ethology, *Biologie des menschlichen Verhaltens: Grundriss der Humanethologie* (not yet available in Australia). He and his team at the Max Planck Institute, Seewiesen, FRG, have accumulated about 200 kilometers of film documents (for information, write the Institut für den Wissenschaftlichen Film, Nonnenstieg 72, D-3400 Göttingen, FRG).

Photographs of animal behavior are not a problem. Frans de Waal's *Chimpanzee Politics* is outstanding for chimp behavior. Wilson's *Sociobiology* and Barnett's *Modern Ethology* are good for the range of animal behavior. The quality of the photographic reproduction in Barnett's Oxford University Press volume is outstanding. It is also valuable for its photographs of experimental apparatus and experiments.

Photographic sequences of human sexual displays proved to be difficult to locate. Single slices of sequences are common, but I have yet to find a signal photographed as a unit. It is gratifying to realize that there is something about sexual come-ons (and turn-offs) that girlie magazine editors don't know.

Bibliography

When the course was initially taught, the bibliography consisted of forty-one titles distributed under two headings. It now consists of about 1200 titles

distributed under eleven headings. Some 850 of these titles were published in 1984 as *A Bibliography of Biosocial Science*.

A large bibliography has a number of advantages. It lays to rest stray suspicions that the subject is academically marginal. It assures students that there is no want of resources for their essays. Those who study the bibliography—some do—obtain an impression of the scope and detail of a field that can be acquired in no other way. The pedagogical effectiveness of the bibliography is probably enhanced by a reserve shelf containing a substantial number of the articles listed in the bibliography. This enables students to consult titles that aroused their interest while perusing the bibliography.

Assessment

Assessment consists of two topic essays, weighted at 35 percent and 40 percent, and a report weighted at 25 percent. The report, due at the end of Week 3, is a description of one animal behavior, the aim being to clarify and entrench the concept of behavior. The topic essays test the ability to synthesize research findings from diverse fields and apply them to the analysis and description of topics in political ethology or policy.

Assessment by examination is not attempted because the scope of the course, together with the novelty of the material, would impose a learning burden beyond that expected of a one credit unit course.

Students are informed that the assessment strategy bears a specific relation to lectures and seminars. Lectures introduce basic concepts from three fields (ethology, sociobiology, and psychobiology) and apply them to the construction of models that attempt to isolate the elements of institution construction and, to a lesser extent, their dynamics. This is a story about origins. But it is a story of considerable complexity, hence students are advised that they should attend primarily to the plot line, and attempt to gain some command of only a few areas of detail. The essay topics are means of identifying and selecting areas for detailed study. That the strategy described is distinct from the tendency of students to approach course materials selectively will be appreciated on noting that the strategy is not compatible with assessment by examination. Its distinctiveness is also apparent in the circumstance that it presents opportunities to minimize class attendance and/or reading. Happily, this option has not been frequently exercised. The reason, I believe, is the care taken to make every lecture humanly interesting.

The Public Controversy

In October of last year the long legitimacy struggle over this course led to a public controversy that in 60 days accumulated 850 column inches of newsprint and about 80 minutes of radio and TV time, much of it in the national media. As I write (mid-February 1986), the controversy is again in the news and could become the tertiary education story of the year, owing to the involvement of the Queensland government in a hot issue during an election year. My remarks are not intended to tell this story as a connected narrative, but to identify the parameters likely to be relevant to the birth pangs of biopolitical instruction elsewhere.

The conceptual topography of the dispute resembles E. O. Wilson's contest with the Science for the People group and Derek Freeman's ruction with anthropologists. Wilson's institutional ambience gave him at least equal terms, perhaps an advantage. Freeman's institutional ambience, the American Anthropological Association, was loaded against him. My situation is like Freeman's. We could get no hearing, let alone win, so long as the contest was played on institutional turf where the home team supplied referees and score keepers. To achieve leverage, the venue had to be changed. In Freeman's case the venue was shifted to the public forum by the publicity department of the Harvard Press. No such shaker and mover was at my disposal. I was obliged to manage press relations in a campaign whose success depended upon making the credibility of an individual match the credibility of an institution. Success in this risky business was achieved by careful preparation and by the early discovery of the formula that establishes credibility with journalists (candor and accurate information in the right amounts).

Leverage on Griffith University was obtained by confronting its self-perception with ambient values. That self-image, focused in the humanities curriculum, pictures the university as an enclave of righteous knowledge directed toward reform of the profane world. Its administrative arrangements, which may be styled "democratic centralism," are sold to students as the model that they are to transfer to institutions they enter after graduation. Its instruction is meant to furnish the intellectual tools required for that conversion. This self-perception is encapsulated in the sobriquet that I advertised in the media, Fortress Griffith. If it calls to mind a medieval university or a political cell, you have the idea.

The obverse of this image is Griffith as seen from the profane world. The State of Queensland is conservative. In size, climate, sources of wealth, and social attitudes, it may be compared with Texas. For over two decades a coalition of Liberal and National

Parties had the government. In 1983, the more conservative Nationals won government for themselves. Nationals' conservatism emphasizes free enterprise combined with government initiatives in economic development. The Party's weakly articulated but strongly felt social conservatism consists of traditional rural and town values religiously entrenched. From this perspective Fortress Griffith seems to shelter a foreign enclave corrupting the youth and spreading confusion in the body politic.

These images abbreviate a quite real concern. The venue of the contest over the legitimacy of biopolitics could be altered if it could be spliced into the ongoing struggle. This was by no means easy. Biopolitics is arcane and lacks public identity. Besides, its evolutionary basis would be offensive to many religious conservatives. Biopolitics therefore had to be coat-tailed on another issue, which turned out to be women's studies. Secondly, there was the problem of bringing the two images together in a public and unequivocal way. Doing so meant removing the buffer of pleasantries that facilitate the daily passage between Fortress and milieu. This buffer is the liberals who dominate Griffith's governing body, the Council. The buffer accomplishes its mediation by denying the conflict between Griffith and its milieu. The one sure means of drawing a neutral into conflict is to cross its borders with an army. I therefore devised a strategy that would enable me, an employee of the Council, to invade its territory. The army was organized public support. Its weapon was the accusation that the Council was in dereliction. This strategy was executed during the 60-day media whirlwind.

With this overview in mind, let us examine some details inside the fortress. Griffith is composed of two science schools, a business school, Asian studies, and humanities. It is not an ideological monolith. Our scientists do not perceive their teaching subjects to be in any way political. The early tendency of Asian studies faculty toward Marxism was arrested by Deng's embrace of capitalism. There is room then for opposition. But opposition hasn't coalesced because the ruling clique tightly controls rewards, and it hasn't yet experienced a split. Consequently, the clique does as it pleases, which often entails operating contrary to accepted university norms. Scandalous practices are therefore abundant, and the one I seized upon bears discussion.

Interdisciplinarity as interpreted in humanities contains a mandate to indoctrinate students and to safeguard curriculum against heterodoxy. Since the practice offends accepted norms, the bosses must pretend that it isn't happening. This pretence moderated the homogenizing impulse to a policy of mere marginalization. But personnel changes at the top in 1983 rekindled the impulse, which surfaced in a

school-wide program for curricular reorganization and expansion. One feature of the expansion was the projected elimination of certain courses, including my political theory course, which has been subject to administrative harassment since inception. A new round of harassment in 1983-1984 caused the 1985 enrollment to fall from the usual 15-20 to four. There was no doubt that my colleagues meant to write "finis" after the course. (An obvious solution—to shift the course into a science school—could not happen because of bureaucratic sclerosis.)

One aspect of the proposal presented an opportunity for exhibiting to my colleagues the relevance of biopolitical instruction in a humanities curriculum. Two women's studies electives were to be upgraded and expanded into a B.A. program. On reading the course proposals, I discerned a number of points at which the findings of behavioral biology could make solid contributions. I decided to establish the legitimacy of biopolitics by criticizing, on scientific grounds, certain aspects of the proposed women's studies curriculum. A lengthy memorandum of July 1984 described what behavioral biology might contribute to the proposed courses. It also pinpointed assumptions that were in conflict with well-established facts. The legitimacy question was raised by asserting that a university which taught as true what is known to be false betrayed its public trust.

It was not expected that this new version of the legitimacy dispute would win the hearts and minds of my colleagues. Quite the reverse. But it altered my position from defense to attack. The weighty criticisms and allegations contained in the memo obliged the administration to take them under advice. I had surveyed the evidence from ethology, endocrinology, behavioral ontogeny, sociobiology, neurology, and psychobiology, documented by about 160 references. A very wide flank was thus deliberately exposed to refutation. None was forthcoming. During the next 18 months the memo passed like a leper from committee to committee until a formal consideration was held in November 1985. The decision was to retain the curriculum as proposed by my feminist colleagues. My objections were set aside on two grounds. The committee accepted the Dean of Humanities' statement that the proposed emendations were "inappropriate" for humanities studies, even though they would have enhanced "interdisciplinarity." Secondly, the committee allowed itself to be persuaded by relativist arguments according to which nobody, especially scientists, can refute anybody, especially humanists. Readers will note that this was the same line taken by anthropologists in their tussle with Freeman.

This outcome was not unexpected. The point of changing the terms of the legitimacy dispute was not to persuade colleagues but to transfer it to a public forum. The women's issue in Australia today is about where it was five years ago in the United States. Equal employment femocrats armed with administrative tribunals are bullying "patriarchy." Feminist advocacy is prominent in the media, and women's studies is the academic fashion. No political party has formulated a criticism of the feminist push and few Australian academics have entered the lists against it. There was a niche to be filled.

In August 1984 I established contacts that by April had involved several civic groups and appropriate members of the government. The shooting commenced in June with a barrage of letters to newspapers, followed by the circulation of a petition calling upon the government to investigate the teaching of subjects pertaining to the family in tertiary institutions. But by August the government began to evince signs of hesitation about getting "bogged down" in a dispute that might cost votes—an important by-election was coming up in November. My argument that an issue that could lose votes could also win them was answered with the Party's standard excuse for inaction: media bias would wreck their case.

This was the immediate background of my address to a branch meeting of the National Party, "Feminism and the Family: A Policy Framework." Its argument sets out an analysis of the causes of the present discontent of women quite at odds with the diagnosis common in women's studies curricula. Feminist advocacy is treated as a defensive reaction to the brutalization of women resulting from the permissive relations unleashed by the Pill. Assisted by abortionists, *r*-strategist males have deserted *K*-strategist females, who are in high dudgeon as a result. The crucial factors about the speech, as a policy framework, is its protective attitude toward women and its insistence that feminists are not an exotic sub-species. The culprits are men who have abandoned paternal duty. Wimps, the medical profession, and homosexuals are singled out for reprobation in the name of women. I concluded by accusing the Council of inflicting confusion and failure on Griffith, and declared it the government's duty to apply remedies.

The impact at Griffith was instantaneous. A few courtesy copies distributed several days prior to the scheduled date of delivery were multiplied a hundredfold. The tocsin so sounded brought the Council together to consider how to respond—before the speech was delivered. A memorandum circulated among staff calling for my immediate suspension from duties, for disciplinary action, and examination of my credentials—again, prior to actual delivery of

the speech. On the day subsequent to media coverage of the speech 250 students and staff passed a censure motion against me, and a week later I was banned from first year teaching. These ructions riveted media attention and confirmed the Queensland public in their opinion of Griffith University.

The media gambit succeeded in polarizing public opinion along what were for me the right lines. Academic feminists around the country were appalled that they had been so thoroughly gotten at, but their noisy propaganda machine was silent. The one word from that quarter came in a network radio debate between myself and a Sydney feminist whom I know and like. From the average public there was an outpouring of support for someone whom they perceived to be reaffirming the old truths: "I could not believe my eyes" was the line that frequently occurred in the mail received. The government was startled by the extensive media coverage, and feared that it would spill-over into the by-election. My suggestion that the issue would win the party more votes than it would lose did not alter the cringe strategy adopted for the campaign. After the election was won on absentee ballots, discussions on the Griffith matter were held and decisions were made. Action will not be taken until after the general election in November 1986.

An intelligent observer recently asked me whether there was any intrinsic connection between biopolitics and conservatism. He understood that there is not. The bond between an avowed evolutionist and the tradition-minded public is manly endeavor in a moral cause. My Leftist colleagues view this association as confirmation of their belief that behavioral biology is inherently right-wing. It does not occur to them that the evidence of behavioral biology might be as inconsistent with crucial conservative beliefs as it is inconsistent with certain socialist beliefs. It is true, however, that if you are a conservative with a propinquity to science, you are likely to find biosocial science attractive.

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