

Indoctrination 101

Professor lifts the veil on the radical takeover of liberal arts classrooms and curriculum

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The following article is taken from an interview with an English professor at a major research university, who wishes to remain anonymous.

This professor no longer receives any merit raises from her university because of her conservative viewpoints, and she fears further reprisal if she speaks out publicly against the system. She has observed the increasingly radical trends seeping into the university and her discipline in particular. Here, she lifts the curtain for us on the radical takeover of the classroom:

When you read "Women in Literature" as a course heading, you would expect the course to include books about women, and that's usually what it is, except from a feminist slant. However, the special topic next term for this course is female sexuality. These days, when you read "female sexuality" you have to translate that as "lesbianism." Here is the course description for "Women in Literature: Female Sexuality":

We will read works written by a diverse group of women in order to explore ways in which women's sexuality has been represented in literature and culture. Although our emphasis will be on female sexuality, especially so-called "transgressive" sexualities such as lesbianism, we will also pay close attention to race, class, (dis)ability, and other aspects of identity and society that affect women's erotic experiences. We will ultimately attempt to ask, as have many queer theorists, how female sexuality might be reconfigured, once we decenter heterosexism as the defining standard of sexuality.

Notice, it's taken for granted here that we're going to "decenter" heterosexuals.

This course is for juniors and seniors, and what I find really ominous about this, is our pre-education majors in English *have to include* a course in Women's Studies of some sort. So all our pre-ed majors really *must take this course* since it's the only Women's Studies course offered for an English major. That means all of our potential high school teachers are going to wind up in courses like "Female Sexuality."

When I started my graduate work, the really awful things had not hit yet. Sometimes when I saw the latest radical ideas in journals, I would laugh. In fact when I first got to [my present position], the first four years seemed fine.

Occasionally I would "crack-up" at a staff meeting when somebody would talk about one of these radical ideas, thinking it was a joke.

Then I discovered it was not a joke. Around 1988 or 1989 I suddenly realized what was happening... I started seeing a trend toward such radicalism more and more in my own department. Now, my department has been completely overrun. I've let almost all my journal subscriptions lapse because it's all just "porno-Marxism." It has gotten very, very bad. In fact some of my students refer to their courses as "Indoctrination 101."

The New "Logic"— The Lived Experience of Members of a Victim Group

English is a kind of "soft" discipline...a lot of it is open to interpretation, and once a person is free to say, "Well, here's what I think it's supposed to mean," without requiring any hard evidence, then feelings and emotion become more important than logic.... This is where it gets so fuzzy today. Logic itself, according to modern thought, is a "patriarchal" concept; it's described as "linear thinking" and "phallo-centric." These days we're supposed to depend on our feelings and experience. Logic is taught to be irrelevant and sometimes even harmful. All we're supposed to use now is lived experience—but it has to be the lived experience of the group to which you're assigned: a victim group of some sort, like homosexuality...

Those who flocked to the soft disciplines are now senior faculty and administrators; they are the protesters of the late 1960's. These radicals handpick their disciples from among the graduate students, and they train them...

These radicals don't have any fear of reprisal for what they espouse. But if you disagree with [the radicals], you have to fear revenge. You're declared a racist, sexist, homophobe...that's the new Holy Trinity; you have to say those three words together.

"I used to think I was a liberal..."

There's no suspicion in my department that I'm different because it's always been known—which is funny because I've always thought of myself as a liberal, but suddenly I discover I'm a "right-wing fascist wacko."

The real trouble for me started when I was interviewed by a reporter about political correctness. As I was leaving the

interview I commented off the record, "Sometimes I get discouraged with the field. But like I tell my students, I stay here to hold the line against the barbarians." The reporter printed that. Then the barbarians came out of the woodwork after me.

I not only started receiving hate mail from my colleagues, but one of them tried to have me fired. This colleague sent a letter all the way up the chain of command to the president of the university. The letter attacked my character, my credentials, and especially my teaching—said I was a terrible teacher, my students hated me, and no one wanted me. It is ironic that was the year I won the arts and sciences "Outstanding Teaching Award."

That was a pretty horrible year. That year I stopped getting merit increases. I didn't get a merit increase the year I won the Outstanding Teaching Award, I didn't get one the year one of my articles was reprinted in "The Year's Best Shakespeare Studies," and I didn't get one the year I won the John Donne Society Award for Distinguished Publications.

Last year, I finally went to the dean with a paper trail of all of my accomplishments including all of my peer group's comparative publications and comparative salaries—by this time I had dropped to the third-lowest paid associate professor in the department—and I managed to get an equity raise. But I don't anticipate getting any more merit raises; every five years I'll have to go through this again.

The Safest Course: Say Nothing

It is dangerous to speak up, and I've learned not to complain officially. When the "Give Us Your Children: What We Can't F—, We Eat!" poster appeared on a professor's door, I brought it to the attention of the secretaries. They looked at it and complained. Also, about 20 people called into the department, apparently mostly students, complaining about the poster.

Finally, the chairman asked the people who posted it to take it down. They took it down for a day or two, and then promptly put it up again with a sign saying that the department was full of homophobia. The chairman had to go talk to them again because the complaints kept coming in, but by this time the term ended and the problem went away.

But the chairman still sent everyone in the department a letter about this uproar in which he apologized *not for the flyers, but for the necessity of taking them down* for two days. He spent two pages going around and around the bush saying "we have to understand that what is one person's favorite poster is someone else's offense," and "we are dedicated to academic freedom here," and he just waffled about the whole thing.

Incredibly, nobody felt able to say, "This is disgusting. This is not a matter of whether it's homosexual or heterosexual—it's child-abuse. It has no place here." No one had the courage to say that.

I don't think this is an isolated case. It's rampant throughout the discipline. The scholarly publications are proof that everybody has to teach and research and write in either Marxism or "queer theory"—I call the whole thing "porno-Marxism;" it's all either Marxist or pornographic.

I don't want to communicate that I'm the only one not doing porno-Marxism; there are some places where decent scholarship can get published. There are still some people working on traditional things, but the field is flooded with the others, and of course they are the most vocal—and they get the biggest raises.

A Warning to Parents: The New Orthodoxy

But there's something more dangerous that parents ought to be aware of. At the university we are flooded with the notion that everything is a matter of emotion, and there is no objective reality. We are not supposed to make judgments any more, except about the religious right, of course.

We cannot make any canon of good literature as opposed to other literature, because doing so is a very "eurocentric" and "patriarchal" exercise. Simply the whole idea of making judgments is taught as discriminatory. Everything is now on the same level: comic books, advertising, graffiti, Shakespeare. Our own experience is our guide.

Writing assignments tend to be about one's own experience. Feelings are all. The goal is to keep students from making the assumption that there is objective reality. Even when the teacher is trying to be non-biased, this insidious relativism creeps into everything.

If you attempt to defend your beliefs by reason, logic and evidence then you are just showing how "eurocentric" you are. So you can't win.

I've seen students pick up the lingo without thinking about what they're saying: to object to any kind of sex outside marriage, but especially homosexual sex, is to be "homophobic." Students feel apologetic, as though they have no basis for their beliefs; their beliefs have just become another form of experience.

And yet there is such a hunger for the grounding in reality they had before they came to the university. There's something in the back of their mind that tells them there *is* an objective reality. ■