

Maxims on Academia & (Unsolicited) Advice to Aspiring Scholars*

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1. The Opposite Is True

Doublespeak, groupthink, and thoughtcrime. $2+2=5$. Thought Police and Unpersons. A non-existent enemy to convince you that scarcity is a self-evident given, rather than produced by the system to perpetuate the system-as-system. Room 101.

~ *Nineteen Eighty-Four (1984)* by George Orwell (1903-1950)

2. Mediocrity Is the New Excellence

“Do you in all conscience believe that you can stand seeing mediocrity after mediocrity, year after year, climb beyond you, without becoming embittered and without coming to grief? Naturally, one always receives the answer: ‘Of course, I live only for my “calling.”’ Yet, I have found that only a few men [*sic*] could endure this situation without coming to grief.”

~ *The Vocation Lectures* by Max Weber (1864-1920)

3. The Real Project Involves Making You into *Homo Academicus*

To distort your sense of self and relationality to the point where affiliation, position, power, recognition, reputation, status, title, etc. are your *modus operandi*. To the point where you will betray your principles, conscience, and friends. Where eventually you may not even have residual conscience. And self-as-institution/institution-as-self. Populated by corporate skills, psychopaths, system-agents, and technocrats masquerading as scholars and intellectuals. There is an undisclosed (and mandatory) spine-extraction machine. “Thank you, sir/madam, may I have another.”

~ *Homo Academicus* by Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002)

4. You Don't Belong Here (Or, We Can Smell Your Background)

Academia is its own culture, actually pseudo-culture. Academia is a corporation and a country club. Your background, including accent, class, degree, geography, etc. will determine your access, opportunities, and support. There are silver-spoon scholars (SSS), with their “legacy degrees,” whose positions have been held and/or bought. If you are a blue-collar scholar (BCS), you will not be recognized (i.e., recognized for what you are). They can smell the working-class stench on you. They are laughing at your “work ethic” and “productivity” while drinking cognac and smoking cigars in the faculty clubs and faculty lounges. And job interviews are not actually job interviews. Either are appointments and promotions. Or perhaps they are.

~ *Faculty Towers* by Elaine Showalter (b. 1941)

~ *Eros, Magic, and the Murder of Professor Culianu* by Ted Anton (b. 1957)

* Or, “Visiting the Basement of the Slaughterhouse and Avoiding ‘Professionalization’.”

5. Academia Is a Cult and Series of Sub-Cults

You have to drink the Kool-Aid to believe. The Kool-Aid (or alcohol with meat, perhaps that one lavish, comped campus-visit dinner) laced with LSD and/or Cyanide. Bizarro World, Curb Your Enthusiasm, House of Cards, Hunger Games, and Kafka novels as allegories and instruction manuals. The cult has its own ideology, lingo, propo, etc. Bureaucrats and their toadies tend to call it “ethos” and “mission.” It’s not “brain-washing” and “mind-control.” You are saying/have said yes. One way to determine the extent to which you are in said cult(s) involves speaking with custodians, groundskeepers, and other members of the so-called “operation and maintenance services.”

~ *The Wrong Way Home* by Arthur Deikman (1929-2013)

6. Mainstream Education Is Indoctrination and Suppression

The curricula and canons are intended to reproduce the status quo, to make you part of consensus mind/reality. Why are you reading what you are reading? Even the new “alternative canons” are tribalist projects, reactions to and attempts to replace (become) the received. If you find yourself teaching or learning (or, worse yet, thinking or doing) something dangerous, subversive, unexpected, etc., it fits into the larger educational project. Pedagogy as “child-leading.” Anomalies support the system. They/you may even find themselves/yourself incorporated into branding and capital campaigns. The truly dangerous are not in the room. Consider Noam Chomsky at MIT or Cornel West at Harvard.

~ *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed* by Paulo Freire (1921-1997)

~ *The Medium Is the Massage* by Marshall McLuhan (1911-1980)

7. Those in Power Like Psychopathy

They will conduct and fund experiments without concern for the psychological impact on or welfare of the “subjects.” (Consider Ted Kaczynski’s connection with Harvard University.) In fact, they rely on some members of the experiment to “go rogue,” becoming so distorted as to be sadistic. To create chaos and trauma. These are funhouse mirrors and smokescreens for larger furtive agendas and projects. *They make and empower psychopaths* to do their bidding. Their power actually depends on it. Also gaslighting and Stockholm Syndrome. And others willingly play their roles. Appointments, promotions, and raises follow suit.

~ *Obedience to Authority* by Stanley Milgram (1933-1984)

~ *The Psychopath Test* by Jon Ronson (b. 1967)

8. There are House Slaves and Field Slaves

The house slaves believe they are free and identify with the plantation owners and their representatives. They live in the master’s house. In academia, they tend to be department chairs and program directors, but there also are the professors who make backroom deals, work in the shadows, and become administration lackeys, surrogates, and enforcers. The field slaves are those who struggle “outside,” who actually conduct the hard manual labor that keeps the plantation going. The house slaves ensure that the field slaves remain enchained. Nonetheless, both are slaves. As are the masters.

~ *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* by Malcolm X (1925-1965) and Alex Haley (1921-1992)

9. Some Enjoy Torturing and Scarring Others

Perhaps initially hesitant, some (many/most?) individuals learn to be rewarded for hurting others. Over time, they identify with it and enjoy it. Most are so conditioned that they don't even know they are deviants and miscreants. They usually have accompanying and entrenched legitimation narratives. Sadism and sadomasochism as a way of life. Schadenfreude as epidemic. Inherited trauma. Also forced bootlicking.

~ *The Lucifer Effect* by Philip Zimbardo (b. 1933)

10. Some Even Become Fascists and Willing Executioners

Many of the most prominent and celebrated are allied with systems of control and structures of oppression, perhaps while telling themselves and others that the opposite is true. In fact, their livelihoods and funding come from such sources. Deeper investigation and analysis confirm this. Power, corruption, and lies. The Military-Industrial-Prison-Slaughterhouse Complex (MIPSC). They may even find themselves shooting innocents with their families in self-dug ditches and then burying the bodies. It's not surprising; *it's expected*. The costs of membership and "survival." What will really surprise them is when they find themselves in that same ditch or on trial for war crimes.

~ *Hitler's Professors* by Max Weinrich (1894-1969)

11. Most Survive Through/On Pharmaceuticals

Taking substances that anesthetize and distract to the point of sedation and compliance. Note that such substances have been and continue to be used to fuel armies and other covert missions. Blitzkrieg and Islamicist Jihadis. Hallucinations within hallucinations. Warning: You may even find yourself believing that you are enlightened. You are delusional. When you finally see through, you will either need more drugs or leave. Destinations unknown. Beyond "respectability."

~ *The Anesthetic Society* by Donald Demarco (d.u.)

~ *The Harvard Psychedelic Club* by Don Lattin (b. 1953)

12. You Are Being/Have Been Made into a Secular Materialist

"Don't be a criminal in this police state. You better shop and eat and procreate." The meaning and purpose of life is to consume and be consumed. You are a consumer among other consumers in a consumer-collective. But what you really need is a Mercedes or BMW or Tesla. Perhaps all of them and more. "Trophy-wives" and "sugar-daddies." There is nothing else beyond what you have. What you have is who you are. Make products; buy products; become a product. Sell things; buy things; process things. Sell things bought or processed; buy things sold or processed; process things sold, bought, or processed; repair things sold, bought, or processed. We can help you with that. Frank's Wild Years.

~ *One-Dimensional Man* by Herbert Marcuse (1898-1979)

13. Revolutionary Education and Work Are Still Possible

The majority of academics, and academia as a whole, are reproducing the status quo, creating and recreating consensus mind/reality. Being and producing good drones, sheep, puppets, slaves, etc. (No offense to sheep and puppets.) But something else and something more are possible. Beyond manufacturing consent. Education as revolutionary, liberational, and transformative. Freedom beyond the known and imagined. Radical free and open inquiry. Following our own interests and callings. Meaning, purpose, fulfillment. No compromise; no retreat; no surrender.

~ *Manufacturing Consent* by Noam Chomsky (b. 1928)

~ *Teaching to Transgress* by bell hooks (1952-2021)

14. The Most Radical and Inspiring Live at the Margins and in Exile

Given the cultic characteristics of modern academia, the profound and innovative are unlikely to be recognized or rewarded. In fact, such individuals tend to be disempowered, marginalized, and/or exiled. They/we are excluded from mainstream gatherings and erased from the citations and bibliographies of pseudo-scholars and faux intellectuals. Footnotes and bibliographies are political documents. Nonetheless, the counter-culture and underground vanguard exist and persist. There are greater possibilities in academic dissidence, radical intellectualism, outsider-scholarship, and thought-criminality. Seeing and being beyond.

~ *The Outsider* by Colin Wilson (1931-2013)

~ "Outsider Scholars" by Jean Stefancic (b. 1940) and Richard Delgado (b. 1939)

Critical Inquiries & Admonitions

- ~ Ask Human Resources for a Report on Recent Investigations ~
- ~ Consult the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) ~
- ~ Consult a Local Labor Lawyer ~
- ~ Contact the Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH) ~
- ~ Contact the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) ~
- ~ Inquire about Environment, Ethos, & Mission ~
- ~ Interview Other Faculty, Students & the Surrounding Community ~
- ~ Investigate Institutional History & Major Funding Sources ~
- ~ Read Pages 2-3 on Google for Recent and Scrubbed Media Reports ~
- ~ Request Informed Consent for Human Subject Research ~
- ~ Search the Backgrounds of the Board of Directors ~
- ~ Search Faculty Backgrounds, including Assaults, DUIs, and Sexual Harassment ~
- ~ Get *Everything* in Writing ~
- ~ read the fine print ~