

Bluff your way in Woke Inquisition Studies

by [Robert Gear](#) (March 2024)



Demonstration, by Ben Shahn, 1933

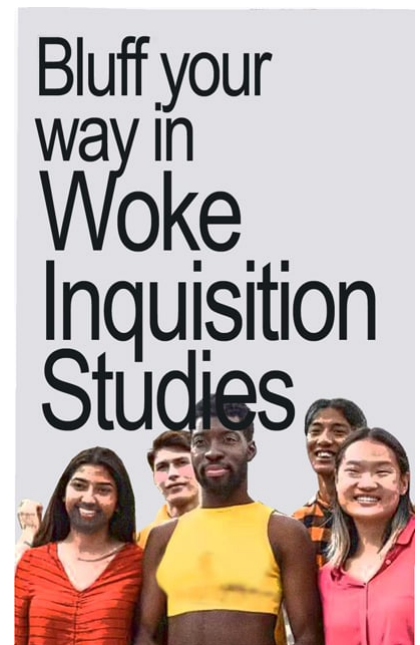
'It is not our business,' he said, to help students to think for themselves. Surely this is the very last thing which one who wishes them well should encourage them to do. Our duty is to ensure that they shall think as we do or, at any rate, as we hold it expedient to say we do.'

[Told by] the President of the Society for the Suppression of Useless Knowledge, and for the Completer [sic] Obliteration of the Past. —Samuel Butler, Erewhon (revised edition, 1901)

Some readers may recall the *Bluffer's Guides* series, published mainly in the 1960s and 1970s. These were condensed and simplified introductions to a variety of areas of interest ranging from Accountancy to Women; from Antiques to World Affairs. The *raison d'être* behind the series was that anyone can pick up the rudiments of any field of study within a short time and be able to pose as a virtuoso. There is a sly cynicism about the whole business, as though the whole of life is all about bluffing.

My copy of *Bluff your way in Literature* opens as follows: 'Bluffing your way in literature is made a lot easier by the fact that everybody else—however knowledgeable—is doing it too, and there's really nothing else you *can* do ... Serious devotion to literature may conflict with your first loyalty, which is always to be to bluffing.'

How does one bluff one's way in 'Woke Inquisition Studies?' This bluffing posture is currently essential in certain environs, such as in the workplace or centers of academic excellence where perhaps the majority of your colleagues will have submitted to the mental virus (or perhaps they too are bluffing and, like you, are merely cowards in the face of the captive mind).



So you too can position yourself like 'a potato in a dark cellar with a certain low cunning which will serve you in excellent stead,' as the author of the above epigraph also wrote. Here are some pointers. Remember, if you let your guard slip you will promptly be dismissed as a demon of Eurocentric whiteness (regardless of ethnicity). Do not raise issues such as the sudden flourishing of gender fluidity, the transing of

young children, the death by drug abuse of George Floyd, the racism of the English countryside, the 'easy-meat' rape gangs, etc.

Be hypersensitive to your own use of pronouns; if you are corrected you might just apologize abjectly. Or you could throw in some esoteric pronoun borrowed from a relatively unknown language. Say something like, "Oh, I find myself using pronouns of the Finno-Ugric provenance; you know, 'Hän' or 'Sinä.' English pronouns are so *infra dig*, don't you think?" In that way you might gain a certain distinction among your conversational partners. But above all, 'beware,' as James Fenton wrote, 'you are entering the climate of a foreign logic.' You cannot stand, Canute-like against an ocean of utter tosh.

Learn to adjust your facial control in the mirror until you have mastered the act. While you are about it, practice rolling off your tongue such important terms such as "*hermeneutics of colonialism*," "*interrogating your lived experience*," "*decolonizing your back garden*," and so on.

If your interlocutor mentions that she learned about something from a news report, try to keep calm and acquiesce sagely as though you know that the media performers are a fount of wisdom and knowledge. Do not on any account question the veracity of the latest truth or even their 'mytruth.' Merely look interested and ask for some clarification. This might bring out a further blizzard of nonsense which you can recall at a later time when you need cheering up.

Remember that the wilder fringe of the wokists could be dangerous, so try to camouflage your true feelings. You don't want to be spat on or incarcerated. If you're feeling courageous you might hint (only hint) that some authorities have suggested that actually, for example, the climate has shown a slight cooling in the last one hundred and fifty years and do not, on any account, press the fact too hard. By

mentioning, even casually, that grant-seekers and other ideologues regularly tamper with statistics and rewrite history, you are done for. If your interlocutor is a work colleague, you will be ostracized; if an employer, dismissed (I needn't add that if a police constable you may be arrested for a non-crime hate incident). So try to gauge the seriousness with which your suggestion is taken. If you notice a narrowing of eyes or a raising of eyebrows you would be advised to make a joke of it. Say something like "Of course, I don't believe a word of it. That's probably just some propagandistic effort on the part of climate deniers." Judge your colleague with equanimity when the acceptable pronoun-person spits out the word "Nazi" or some variant. Always remember that in such an exchange—virtual or real—the most virtuous-seeming will be the first to utter the always useful *reductio ad Hitlerum*.

Do not assume that your entertainer is necessarily a diversity hire, although increasingly this may be likely. If you suspect that skin color, sexual proclivity or otherwise is paramount in their view of the world, keep calm—they may suspect the same of you.

What do you do if contemporary 'events' are raised? For example, if it is argued that our tax remittances are well spent in funding say, UNRWA or other such entities, do not, *whatever you do*, fall over in hysterics of laughter or incomprehension. Your reaction will be noted and, believe it or not, could be held against you. This will be true if you mutely let slip that you are not sure if the 'migrant' invasion of Europe or the USA is always necessarily a good thing. Nod blandly, Keep Calm and Carry On. We are at war.

One of the hardest mental contortions will come when the topic of 'Islamophobia' is raised. Try to maintain a nonchalant exterior. Do not say, "There is no such thing. It is contrived fiction." True, probably within two generations, the UK will be the Westernmost *vilayet* of a giant Islamic Caliphate (oops,

sorry, Westernmost with the exception of the Republic of Ireland), but that should not concern you. You are skating on thin ice here and may have to deflect attention in an effort to postpone an attack of nausea or a beheading or some such. Try saying, “Oh, look! There’s a bunny rabbit. Look over there!” That should do the trick.

One thing you can truthfully agree about without displaying the low cunning of a potato is when an individual with unnaturally colored hair and much facial ornamentation, metallic or otherwise, expresses his or her enthusiasm for going childless into their own good night. Since ideological commitment may have a strong genetic correlation you should concur wholeheartedly. You may consider backing away reverently as visitors to the courts of great kings were obliged to do.

Genuflect before shutting the door on the way out.

[Table of Contents](#)

Robert Gear is a Contributing Editor to *New English Review* who now lives in the American Southwest. He is a retired English teacher and has co-authored with his wife several texts in the field of ESL. He is the author of [If In a Wasted Land](#), a politically incorrect dystopian satire.

Follow NER on Twitter [@NERIconoclast](#)