

The Commercial Cooptation of Culture and other Poems

by [G. Tod Slone](#) (May 2022)



Journalists, Hannah Höch, 1925

The Commercial Cooptation of Culture

(For Becky Renaud, PR Coordinator, Cultural Center of Cape Cod)

How not to laugh,
though nihilistically,

as I observe how
we, the people
upon the road
to
State Culture,
State Poetry,
and
State Art—
yes, on that road,
culture, art,
and
even verse
must
possess
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tor!

On the Religion of ... Writing*

(Screed of an Outcast Poet Apostate)

Oh, there is money, money, money to be had,
if ye pray to Thoth, oh Thoth, God of the scrib-believers,**
Lord of *Poets & Writers*, *NewPages*, and *Poetry* magazine!
Money, money, money for the Academy and Foundation!
Bow, oh scrib-believers, bow to that great God,
and the Afterlife shall be gifted to you—oh eternal renown!
Write your reams and reams and reams—
Oh, wo is he, oh, wo is she, afflicted by writer's block!
Ah, but hope always riseth for the scripiter-industry
when the wordsmithies again pen ream after ream!
But like an ever present viral threat, the plague

of the infamous block grasps the scrib-believers again!
But then after great sufferance, reams and reams outpour,
and the chosen ones conduct writers workshops,
where scrib-believers commune and pray in harmony
over spoon-fed smithy works and scrib-icons!
And again reams and reams, thanks to dished-out themes,
but then the block, the dreaded malady, returns—
oh, so sad, so depressing, so downright debilitating!
But Thoth appears again and the scrib-believers write
reams and reams and reams on marketable themes!
And hail the prizes, invitations, grants, publications,
fellowships, and even writer-in-residence positions!
But then again the visceral mind-vacuity strikes,
and the scrib-believers search desperately for a cure,
pray o'er and again to the great god Thoth, and
by miracle they write and write and write, until
they no longer have to, for finally the true miracle shines—
Oh anointment, oh great privilege, oh professorial tenure!
Ah, but tis a grievous obsession, a gripping compulsion,
and so the scrib-believers scribble and scribble and scribble!

Dismally, in a nutshell, tis the summary of that industry and
the up and down ride of castrated and coopted devotees today,
certainly not that of the rare apostate—he who writes not to
fill reams,
not to gain notoriety, not to get published, not to get
invited,
and not to rise in the ranks and become one of the chosen
ones.

He worships no scrib-God; he fully realizes the undefeatable—
the very human condition rendering society insanity and enemy,
the utter futility, and thus he chooses to speak nothing but
rude truth,
to go against the grain of the laureates, the chancellors, the
judges,
the publicists, the editors, the contests, the societies, and
the festivals

to provoke the unfurling of disagreeable waves in the halls of
the ivory towers,
to test the waters of the autocracy, to go against the grain
of the order,
and, above all else, to buck the rule of mind-numbing fame,
fame, fame.

**How strange that out of the blue I composed this poem, though
not quite, for it was really incited by the movie, Grandma. In
the beginning of the latter, self-proclaimed dyke poet Eileen
Myles was cited, as if a goddess of the industry of verse:
"Time passes. That's for sure." Brilliant, original, right? In
2016, I dared go against the "how dare you" m.o. of the
protected species of bards, and criticized Myles! Indignant,
furious, incensed, she sent two very brief responses: "Ha boy
are you ever pathetic. Good luck." And "Go away troll." (For
the emails, a cartoon and essay on Myles, see
www.theamericandissident.org.blogspot.com/search?q=myles).*

***Scribouilleur could have replaced scrib-believer. It is
French, though used in English to designate a bad writer
and/or poetaster. By bad, however, let that refer to a writer
who dares NOT buck the writer establishment.*

How Dare You ... or Rather I

*(A Poem for the Cultural Apparatchiks
and Their National Poetry Month)*

And so, you chose NOT to respond,
Madame Learning Director Giardi,
to my request to read a poem or two
at your so-called open-mic event.

And so, what does that say
about the local cultural milieu?
Well, I suppose, in Orwellian terms,
it underscores just how inclusive it is

and, yes, "All the Arts for All of Us,"*
though not my arts and not for me!

And so, how dare I
criticize
the privileged,
the smiley-face elites,
those holier-than-thou apparatchiks!

And so, we have the rise
of a new cultural queen bee,
Madame Molly Demeulenaere,
from the ranks of the hivemind,
a new head of the Cultural Center
of Cape Cod, though really just
an old hater of freedom of expression
and with the banal, spineless inability
to address rare criticism from beyond
her gated-community of in-lockstep comrades.

*The motto of the Cultural Center of Cape Cod.

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G. Tod Slone, PhD, lives on Cape Cod, where he was permanently banned in 2012 without warning or due process from Sturgis Library, one of the very oldest in the country. His civil rights are being denied today because he is not permitted to attend any cultural or political events held at his neighborhood library. The only stated reason for the banning was "for the safety of the staff and public." He has no criminal record at all and has never made a threat. His real crime was that he challenged, in writing, the library's "collection development" mission that stated "libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of

view.” His point of view was somehow not part of “all points of view.” He is a dissident poet/writer/cartoonist and editor of [The American Dissident](#).

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