Chapter 9

Sins of a Syndicate: Arresting Malicious Mob Assaults Against Academics

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ABSTRACT

This chapter presents a fictitious and satirical story, which explores how individuals and groups of privilege in a university structure exert their power (through intimidation and other oppressive actions) on targeted individuals who are perceived as challenging or disruptive to the power group’s existing control. The story is presented as an allegory of the 1920-1940’s mafia.

INTRODUCTION

Criminal organizations generate power and control by instilling fear in others through domination, oppression, coercion, manipulation, bullying, extortion, threats, and violence. Many organizational structures in society, such as businesses and universities, operate in a similar fashion where privileged groups wield unchecked authority resulting in strategic intimidation of members. Academic environments are analogously afflicted with hegemonic challenges where underserved individuals are suffocated and choked into silence or are manipulated into adopting complacent, cooperating or consenting stances. Satirical storytelling, framed in a 1920-1940’s mafia power construct metaphor, lends well for exploring organizational mob mentality within an academic environment, while retaining anonymity. This chapter, through
fictitious narrative, expresses the author’s experiential observations of faculty and administrative authorities’ calculated attacks on and silencing of targeted vocal academics viewed by those in power as disruptive discontents in higher education.

**Ratting Out**

Divert the bright light for interrogation purposes, it’s not necessary. I confess. I am driven by urges to write viciously and fictitiously. I cannot deny that I was once a non-believer in the spoils of fictitious prose; as it countered the research writing expectations in academia (of which, as a junior faculty at the time, I was beaten into submission through brutal and bloody initiation processes). So be forewarned, I must now come clean and admit, use of metaphors, analogies, idioms, alliteration, assonance, allegory, and satire cathartically intensify my empowerment as a renegade writer. Also, I plead guilty to plundering, pilfering, and pillaging words that tickle my own fancy and fantasy. Lastly, I am neither a criminal nor victim in this testimony. Rather, I am an appalled bystander who has observed severe crime scene offenses and abhorrent assaults on innocent, undeserving others who became targets of an academic syndicate’s mobbing and robbing hit list. With this deposition, I request witness protection services (as through the aftermath of public or media exposure, retaliation by offenders is highly suspect).

**LITERATURE**

**Auto-Fictitious Storytelling**

Telling fictitious stories based on real-life ostracizing experiences, eloquently and poignantly reveals organizational power-structure inequities (Boje, 2008; Gabriel, 2000; Sole & Wilson, 2003). Fictionalizing situations sanctions the confrontation, challenge, and denouncement of power groups as flaccid and impotent oppressors. Through fiction, targeted victims have a fair, toe-to-toe, facing-off opportunity to punch back at offending archetypical assailants through the safe space of cleverly veiled anonymity. Ultimately, fictionalized storytelling empowers individuals to reshape and justify their professional identity from their perspective and on their own terms; where on some level, victims become victors (McDonald, 2016). Lastly, fictionalization sanctions latitude and liberty in broadening a writer’s perspective through transforming the *strange as familiar* and the *familiar as strange* (See Caine et al., 2017; McDonald, in press).
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