Twitter Thread by Daniel Heath Justice, Ph.D., FRSC ■



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Having a Ph.D. doesn't make a person special, but it's a gruelling years-long initiation many of us were never expected to survive and did so in spite of shitty, incurious white gatekeepers who kissed other white gatekeeper ass to get access that we kicked doors down to achieve.

My Ph.D. wasn't about just me—it was about my family's and mentors' love and support. Every degree, promotion, accolade, etc., is theirs too. They're proud; so am I. Social capital isn't the same thing as worth, but we'll take it for what it is and never mistake what it means.

We belong at all levels, at all the tables, with all the degrees and the honourifics. And we'll keep earning them, and making space for more of our own. It isn't the only work that matters, and the academy is brutal and corrosive, but so is every other structure and institution.

Degrees and titles aren't who we are; we're helped with perspective by our kin, our friends, and our communities. BIPOC folks questioning value of or complicities in pursuing a Ph.D.—that's an important, complex, and nuanced discussion. But others had best tread carefully.

If patronizing bigots whinge that we "wrong" kind of people are sullying the elitist degrees, titles, and honours that were intended solely for their pale, male, and stale country club cliques, kindly address complaints to me, Dr. Justice, and my Ph.D. colleagues, at Screw U.

For every marginalized emerging scholar struggling again to see their work's value after reading that venomous editorial, just remember: that piece was an expression of fear, not confidence. If this degree is what you want, honour that desire. And you are more than earning it.

If this is where you want to be, keep doing the work only you can do. Keep moving the conversation; keep taking back the space that's yours by right given that *all* these places were built by exploited labour on stolen land. Once you have the degrees, etc., do good with them.

You may not continue, and no shame in that, either—we all need to find where we can do the most good and hopefully thrive while doing it. And we need smart, critical thinkers inside and outside of the academy doing the work that must be done.

But for those of us who remain, the post-nominals are yours to do with as you wish. You earned the credentials and no one can take them away. If you’re a doctor of any kind and call yourself one, that’s as it should be, regardless of what insecure dudes have to say about it.

We’re not second-class citizens, nor are we second-class scholars. We’re the ones keeping these institutions intellectually relevant, pedagogically meaningfully, and solvent. *We’re* the future of these institutions and their communities, not these louche and lazy reactionaries.