

Mutant Akademy: *Walking the Middle Path*

It is not only the majority of activists and revolutionaries who have perceived the vast gap between our perception of what an ideal society should be and the current reality, but also a significant number of philosophers and scholars from across the globe, dating back to the sapient dawn of humankind. The body of work of such notable, even legendary academics such as Plato, Hegel, Derrida, Foucault, Butler, Cixous, Hooks and D.L. Wallace all dealt with the clearly perceived deficiencies of academic, socio-political, corporate and religious institutions, ranging from a lack of activism and social awareness within them to racism, xenophobia and stereotypes; identity dichotomies as well as religious ones and others; patriarchy; misogyny; linguistic hegemony; homo, andro, queer and transphobia; colonialism and eurocentrism, to name but a few.

From this, one could construe that there is quite an academic consensus on what needs to be done in terms of social activism and education, yet not enough of this awareness, ironically, has concretely been translated into significant and lasting change, though it is slowly in the process of occurring. Mutant Akademy is a direct response to this, one which I have been formulating now, with the help of many other activists and artists, as well as anticolonial and alternative scholars, for a significant amount of time, as it was in a sense our collective vision and brainchild since our days as idealistic teenagers.

Mutant Akademy is not a mere theoretical project which I hope to one day manifest, but rather one which, as I mentioned, has been seriously developed by numerous collaborating creative minds, and which happens to gracefully coincide with a perceived social deficiency expressed in a number of activist, academic and philosophical bodies of work since the dawn of organized societies. The idea of Mutant Akademy is quite similar to that of its original inspiration, which is to say, Charles Xavier's *Academy for Gifted Youth* in the comic book, cartoon and movie series “The X-Men”.

Charles Xavier, or “Professor X” as they have nicknamed him, is a mutant with powerful telepathic abilities which he uses to gather and round up other like-minded mutants with various supernatural abilities from across the globe to a place which becomes, in effect, the first officially recognized alternative & esoteric educational training facility on the planet. Henceforth, as time passes Professor X gathers more and more minds to form an ever-growing global collective of mutants dedicated to healing and advancing society.

The Mutant Akademy project shares the same goal, albeit with a slightly less fantastic and somewhat more realistic and educational approach: although we cannot yet (for the most part) teach things like telepathy and tele/psycho/pyro/aerokinesis, we do have a significant body of esoteric and paranormal, as well as non-conformist academic, holistic, medicinal, poetic and/or sacred writings, oral traditions and teachings which can be incorporated within an alternative educational context to aid the brilliant yet oft-times muddled and confused minds which society has deemed to be broken or dysfunctional (chemically imbalanced, abused, addicted, homeless, etc) due to the prevailing of what in most cases can only be referred to as conservative, Eurocentric and neocolonial ideologies which Plato was already hinting at with his allegory of the cave, and which Western philosophers with Eastern influences such as Hegel would further develop a millennium and a half or so later with his idea of *Herr & Knecht*, Lord & Bondsman, in reference to what others have sometimes termed lower & higher self, Yin & Yang, or subconsciousness & conscience.

Mutant Akademy, then, is an alternative, esoterically and mythologically inclined anticolonial educational institution which aims at offering its students and members precisely what all these aforementioned theorists suggest is sorely lacking within present society and, to a lesser extent, academia as well. We are an institution in which imagination, creativity and dreaming go hand in hand with academic knowledge and learning, one where there is no possibility of learning how to forcefully extract and chemically alter and synthesize toxic substances from the Earth in a non-sustainable way for economic profit, but where rather environmental awareness and symbiosis with our surroundings is key, where rather than taking pharmaceutical constructs to temporarily mask or alleviate suffering we actively and naturally address and heal the root causes of that suffering, both medicinally, physically, mentally and spiritually, as the Nobel co-laureates & revolutionary minds Dr. Abram Hoffer & Dr. Linus Pauling have pioneered with their concept of Orthomolecular Medicine & Megavitamin Therapy, of which I was one of the original patients.

When I spoke with Dr. Hoffer a few years before his death (he was well into his 90's), the concluding statement he left me with after an hour long conversation about alternative & holistic medicine was that people like me with so-called "mental illnesses" were actually the future of humanity, similarly to the Native American, African & Asian shamanic concept (which is also paralleled in Western theological doctrines in many cases) that humans who hear voices & have supernatural experiences and beliefs are actually meant to be seers, prophets, shamans, oracles & gatekeepers that guide the rest of humanity into a better understanding of the spirit world and all the beings, knowledge & wisdom within it.

To more specifically address the previous issues, a blueprint for the foundational class of the Akademy and functioning will be briefly detailed here, suggested as an undergraduate level intensive three week course, titled **Walking the Middle Path: Balancing Eastern Philosophies & Western Metaphysics and Sciences**. The program will be divided into 5 hour long subsections, including a meditative/yogic introduction and conclusion.

First, students will begin the class by a guided meditation/bhakti yoga practice, with varying styles of relaxing instrumental music on each day ranging from classical, to jazz, to reggae, to world and "new age" music. During this meditation, the instructor/yoga teacher (which may be a guest lecturer for this particular portion) will offer specific yogic positions and guidance to those seeking it, but students will be free to explore and try out positions of their own choosing as well. Bhakti yoga, which is also called devotional yoga, generally only implies a metaphorical yoga, or yoga of the mind, but in this case students will be encouraged to have various group conversations centered on a specific subject which again, from day to day will vary as the music does, ranging from political activism to identity discussions, spiritual, philosophical ponderings and more as they simultaneously ease the tension from their bodies and minds and exercise both in the process.

One specific question they will be invited to reflect upon is the Baha'i concept that each different philosophy, faith, religion or belief is but a facet or a step in one's educational journey and can never in and of itself represent the entirety of the spectrum of reality if it simultaneously denies all others' validity. Students will also be encouraged to take an anticolonial anthropological approach to the study of esoteric and sacred texts rather than a Faith-based one, as well as a non-binary approach to all other topics discussed, in keeping with the ideas of scholars such as Foucault, Derrida, Hooks, Butler and many others.

Emulating this transcendence of patriarchally, socially imposed dichotomies, Mutant Akademy will be a space where there is no underlying supreme creed or truth which is held above any other, where the idea of equality is not simply passively observed but rather actively fostered in a more than merely fleeting illusory manifestation of awkward political correctness, one where colonially oppressive sponsors such as Coca-Cola, fast-food chains & corporate entities such as pharmaceutical conglomerates have no space because they are recognized as antithetical to a facility that claims to uphold a standard of higher education. And so, in keeping with these ideals, the second portion of the course will focus on different facets of holistic living ranging from alternative medicinal, nutritional and physical health alternatives to specific workshops on totemic hunting, wild and urban foraging as well as alternative energy sources, re and upcycling, gardening, composting, thrift shopping and self-sustainability.

The third portion will have a definite artistic and creative emphasis: students will be encouraged to channel energies creatively into different physically and mentally artistic outlets such as poetry, creative writing, drawing, painting, graffiti/street art, music and dance. All of this may seem to be very loosely structured but in reality, similarly to the drastically different educational focus of alternative schools such as Montessori & Reggio, Mutant Akademy will emphasize creative freedom and hands-on learning through an active interaction with all the elements in one's environment. Again, from one day to the next different artistic approaches will be studied and focused upon theoretically, while still offering an unlimited practical expression of them. Specific themes for art will be pondered upon which students will be encouraged to creatively reflect upon on both ends of the spectrum from Freedom, Equality and Love to colonialism, imperialism and racism.

The fourth portion, for its part, will focus on revolutionary thought and activism, from an academic and historical perspective as well as a socially engaged one, where the main task of each student will be to join at least one non-profit/activist organization they will actively be involved in, which they will discuss with classmates and on which they will regularly report. The theoretical aspect of this segment of the course will cover figures ranging from the most famous revolutionaries of our time -not only as idealized constructs but also as human beings- examining their limitations and flaws as much as their achievements. We will study militant minds ranging from activist pillars such as Ghandi, Mother Theresa, Che Guevara, Martin Luther King, Rosa Parks, Malcolm X & Marcus Garvey, to foundational figures of communism such as Karl Marx & Frierich Engels, but also far lesser known activists of the present day and age which have not yet become idealized myths, along with mythological beings as ancient as Thoth, Ishtar, Kali and Enki, who all challenged established institutions and rules in order to advance society and better humankind.

The concluding hour will be a relaxation session at the end of the day involving *pranayama* yoga, which is a specific breathing/relaxation technique dating back to ancient India. Students will lay down in *Sivasana* on their backs, or in whatever position they feel most comfortable in, and they will be guided by a breathwork teacher instructing them on the rhythm and intensity of their breathing while a sonic shaman/binaural musician creates a dream soundscape with crystal and Tibetan bowls and other soft instruments to facilitate the transcending of emotional tensions, fears, worries, and foster an enhanced clarity of mind and spirit which has been known to trigger higher conscious awareness and epiphanies. There have been a considerable number of scholarly and other alternative health articles describing the significant difference in students' focus after breathing/yogic/binaural meditation exercises.

As previously mentioned, this is not merely another fanciful utopian ideal which will likely end up being no more than a pipe dream of sorts: this project as such has existed since the summer of 2015, when me and the other founding artists/members toured across Canada to raise money for AIDS orphans through Plan Canada, and established vital links and contacts with other activists, artists & scholars across the country and beyond. At the time, we officially opened the first Mutant Akademy in the north end of Edmonton (in Griesbach Village) in November 2015, which then expanded into a 17 000 sq ft. Yoga community space (Lumière Creative Incubation Space) in Edmonton's Arts District, and soon had the H.E.A.L. (Help Earth Awaken Love) Akademy in Vancouver in conjunction with several organizations there as well, and many others across Canada & the U.S. & now in Mabo (Australia) as well, where we are an officially registered community non-profit. We have been working in partnership with the *John Humphrey Center for Peace & Human Rights*, *iHuman* youth society, *CEASE* sexual abuse center, *ADLC's Going Global* program, *Amnesty International*, & *Young Diverse & Proud Youth Development Project* in Edmonton among many others. We now have 8 akademies across the planet, mainly from the East to the West Coast of Canada and in Mabo (Australia), and we have constantly been expanding to connect and partner with more non-profits and organisations to develop more.

Future development plans include an Akademy in Kensington Market in Toronto, as well as another outside of Montreal, both of which are already purchased, but simply need additional resources and permanent resident mutant tutors in order to properly operate them. We also have several plans to expand across the U.S. And in Mabo & Aotearoa (Australia & New Zealand). Mutant Akademy is also soon to be in the process of being registered as a worldwide non-profit organization (currently we are only registered in Australia). I believe this project in fact exemplifies the epitome even in its embryonic stages of what many of the revolutionaries, activists, scholars, philosophers and authors previously enumerated have yearned and, in many cases, actively campaigned for. The ultimate goal of this project is to not only complement but also drastically enhance and revitalize the current educational institutions. This is truly his story, her story and their story, indeed all of our stories, in the making.

For more information on the Akademies & our projects, please visit
<http://www.revolt-motion.com/mutant-akademy.html>

Sincerely yours,

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