

Academic Impasse

If a professor were permitted to be a scholar and a gentleman he might spend his time like this: He would teach six hours a week and use twelve to prepare his presentations. He would keep abreast of the tide of literature by reading five books a month; two would be new books, three would be old; if he read thirty pages an hour, he would require about eleven hours a week for the task. Then twenty-five new and five old articles would need study each month, consuming seven hours a week. The New York Times and two weekly magazines would

take up about nine and a half hours. His creative literary work would consist of preparing syllabi and other instructional materials (one hour a week), and writing one article (250 hours), one book review (twenty hours), and about thirty pages (thirty days) of The Book, per year. Thus far our professor has used up 52-1/2 hours of the 168 hours in a week.

Since our professor's university is one of the best (viz. six hours of teaching), his additional duties are minimal. An hour a

week for MA and one-half hour for PhD students, one hour for grading papers, two hours in committee work, one hour for personal grading, one hour of extra appearances before students and outside groups, three hours visiting with students, and two hours of professional correspondence and activities. Our scholar has now given up sixty-four hours.

Today field research is important. Our professor--alone, with a colleague, with his students--would be engaged yearly in at least one small field research project leading to the publication of an article. Whether it is spread out or is concentrated in the summer, an average of five hours a week per annum will go into it. Our man's week is now sixty-nine hours long.

So far no gentleman has had then he belongs to a church (five hours), spends time with his family (fourteen hours), reads "evening literature" such as The Times (one hour), and listens to the radio (one hour). He has to spend at least three hours in commuting. An average active citizen takes another hour.

Recreation and amusement of vacation had best be counted as substitutes for some of the duties of the academic year, for weeks already up to ninety hours a week. If the family will not feel neglected if some eating time is devoted to family time. But still, at least five eating hours must be added. Seven hours are not excessive for personal care, nor two hours for housework and one for gardening. We settle at 108 hours per week, leaving sixty-three hours for sleep and many other activities.

Under the circumstances, any interest he might have in the problems of leisure in modern society is academic and altruistic. So persistent are the extra non-scholarly demands, that only the rarest scholar can live on this minimum

intellectual level for more than a few years. Then illness, romanceing, reading habits, holding a governmental or private position, engaging in politics (including engaging in causing politics), traveling teaching tours (at night schools out of town), being a "pat" to the students, having an avocation or regular sport, army service, hyper-erotic reading habits, and nonchalance, will singly and together cancel out many years of an academic life.

The same minimum number of years, say ten, must go into this procedure for the scholar in order to be considered a scholar. Therefore, in a country where the vast majority of men will be engaged in non-academic scholarly work, it is not surprising that these men should be considered as to be a "scholar" only in a technical sense.

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