Speaker: Now, how did this happen? Well, as someone who tends to lean Conservative, I blame all bad things on the 1960s. But I thought maybe I should be a little more granular about that. I think there's been a confluence of several things including the kind of institutionalization of a youth culture that is constantly questioning to the point of incoherence sometimes, but I think it's more than that. Some of it has been aided by technology, and some of it has been aided by the way we do higher education. Some of it has been aided by the way our journalistic institutions have splintered into a million different pieces.

Specifically, in the book, I talk about three things and I put the Internet last actually because when I started working on this, people said, well, it's the Internet, right? My answer was, no, it predates the Internet. This phenomenon actually predates the Internet. I talked about education, specifically higher education, where the rush to make college a mass experience is creating successive generations of people who have gone to college as an experience but who are not actually college educated in the sense that we would once understand that -- with the critical thinking skills, the breadth of exposure to ideas, the overall understanding of their own civilization. We have people that have gone to some kind of post-secondary education where they've been treated like clients.

I really hammer this in the book pretty hard, that a lot of universities -- and let me just say I still believe American universities are the best in the world. I still believe they provide the greatest education if you are conscientious about getting one. But they provide a client servicing mentality where -- as one of my colleagues many years ago said to me, "I don't feel like a professor. I feel like a clerk in an expensive boutique."

Speaker: And that has enabled all kinds of other problems including grade inflation. Students are coming out of college and saying, "Well, I must know a lot of stuff. I had a 5.7 GPA on a 4.0 scale. I must be awesome especially in math." I think that is a serious problem. Now, one rejoinder to this is people say, "Well, yes, but not in STEM." Well, I can't speak for the STEM fields, and I don't know -- you know, that's not a world I'm deeply familiar with. But let's face it, most college students don't go to school and become STEM majors. This is a broader problem of a kind of foe university education. In fact, I note in the book -- and maybe it's happening here in California because I can tell you it's definitely happening in New England -- how many small colleges that were once content to be small colleges have rebranded themselves as universities? Every time I drive by a sign, it's a brand new sign that has turned some small college into Galactic State University. I don't understand how they manage to make that claim. But, of course, that's because students want to say, "I went to a university, I have a university education," when, in fact, they don't.

So a big part of this is the client servicing mentality that takes a lot of younger people, pushes them through four or, increasingly, five or six or seven years of an expensive undergraduate education, tells them that they're smart because we've been telling them from K through 12 that they're smart, and then we tell them for the next four years or five that they're smart. And then when they get out, they say, "Well, I must be able to comprehend everything because I'm smart." That's a real problem.