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THE COLLEGIAL ALTERNATIVE

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Abstract

Professionals and managers promote authoritarian ideologies which justify their claims to privileges of authority

The egalitarian, collegial ideology provides a genuine alternative that is particularly relevant to educators.

Magicians

Human beings have traditionally used sorcerers to interpret the meaning of their experiences for them, and to solve their problems for them. A magician is recognised and rewarded because of his unusual skills, which may be mainly a personal characteristic (as with a shaman) or mainly an outcome of training (as with a priest). The sorcerer retains his privileges as long as his interpretations make sense to his clients and his performances satisfy them. When his interpretations appear to be nonsense, or his performances don't succeed, he is generally disposed of (e.g. in a lion's den) and replaced by a magician from a rival school.

The primitive shamans and witch-doctors served the communal demos; i.e. the consensual will of the people (Fischer, 1981:41). As such, they were wise servants without authority (Lao Tzu, 1975:112). Their descendants became the artists, sages and prophets of history, for the sage 'accomplishes his task yet lays claim to no merit . . . he does not wish to be considered a better man than others' (Lao Tzu, 1975:139).

On the other hand, the primitive priests soon found that they could use their magic to control rather than to serve the community. They achieved this authority in symbiotic association with princes whom they served in place of the demos.

Magico-priests claim privileged access to a body of esoteric information and skills and hence profess a special expertise that is inaccessible to clients. The Latin Bible of the medieval church

contained a store of such privileged, professional information. The modern university contains many similar sources of magic.

The modern professional caste derives from the magico-priests, and its history can be traced from the ancient Magi of the Medes and the Persians, through such practitioners as Zoroaster, Moses, Pythagoras and Saint-Germain to the modern university-trained professionals.

The Priestly Caste

The professional tradition of the priestly class displays four characteristics in common with most self-conscious groups:

1. a secret, symbolic language (jargon),
2. secret skills and techniques,
3. ritual, ceremony, status-badges, dress-identification,
4. rites of initiation and transition.

In addition, however, these sorcerers lay claim to marvellous feats and amazing power (to heal or to hurt) and a corresponding entitlement to reward and status.

The client served by the magico-priest is ultimately the controller of the community: the chief, the royalty, the managerial caste, the junta or the party. The magician facilitates and endorses this control by the interpretation that he places on experienced reality and the wonders that he performs. 'A profession, like a priesthood, holds power by concession from an elite whose interest it props up' (Illich, 1977:17).

Today, we can see these specialist wizards 'falling into pits of learning and floundering, and never scrambling out again . . .' (Butler, 1979:XI) as they dig deeper and narrower holes into the meaningless dung-hills known today as universities. They are becoming more and more separated from their fellow-magicians, and from laypersons, within a non-sensical Tower of Babel, wherein each cabal speaks a different dialect and follows a different set of rules.

Yet these professors continue to perform an essential function for societal dominants and are protected and rewarded accordingly. They legitimate the authoritarian social structure by giving it the authoritative seal of professional approval. They 'are more deeply entrenched than a world church, more stable than any labour union, endowed with wider competencies than any shaman, and equipped

with a tighter hold over those they claim as victims than any mafia' (Illich, 1977:15).

Professionalism versus Bureaucracy

Much has been written about the hypothesised clash between professional and bureaucrats in modern organisations (e.g. Corwin, 1965).

On the one hand, there is professional ideology based on:

1. a claim to exclusive, technical competence in the provision of a unique, indispensable service; a monopoly of specialist skill derived from the acquisition of a body of systematic information during a long period of training and maintained through a continued enquiry into this speciality.
2. a belief that such competence is objectively quantifiable, but by initiates only; a claim to be accountable for competence, or incompetence, to initiated masters and not to outsiders.
3. A claim to professional control over the professional client interaction.
4. acceptance of a set of professional client interaction.
5. a belief in the legitimacy of a professional organisation that promotes the interests of the initiated.

On the other hand, there is a modern, managerial ideology which is based on:

1. a claim to rational-legal authority.
2. a belief that the competencies for such authority are identifiable by lawful superiors; a claim to be accountable for competence, or incompetence, to appointed superior officials.
3. a claim for managerial control over the superior-subordinate interaction and the organisation-client interaction.
4. acceptance of a set of managerial norms as outlined in detailed rules and regulations.
5. a belief in the legitimacy of using the authoritarian organisation to promote the interests of those in positions of authority.

The conflict between these rival authoritarian ideologies is more apparent than real.

Traditionally, the clients of the professional caste have belonged to the managerial caste. Within this symbiotic relationship, the

professional has traditionally been accorded professional freedom as long as the patron found the professional service to be profitable. If not, as Henry VIII showed, it has generally been a relatively simple matter for the manager to withdraw his patronage and allocate it elsewhere.

During the modern rational-scientific era, it has become increasingly difficult to distinguish professionals from managers. Most professionals have replaced their former claims to the authority of revealed-mystical knowledge with trendier claims to the authority of rational-empirical knowledge. At the same time, most managers have replaced their claims to traditional and charismatic authority with claims to the rational-legal authority of the bureaucratic organization.

Many modern managers are being converted to the professional ideology and are enrolling in large numbers in university programmes to emerge as certificated wizards of the 'social science of management'. The masters have been seduced by the value system of the servants, and management is well on the way to becoming the youngest profession.

Collegiality

The collegial ideology of the sages is significantly different from the egalitarian ideologies of both the professionals and the bureaucrats.

Today's professionals and managers share claims to the authority of the law and the authority of esoteric, rational-empirical skills and information. They have, as Allport (1960) says, hidden religion with the fervour that Victorian intellectuals hid sex. As mammonites, they enjoy the rewards and privileges that terrestrial authority attracts, and they are threatened by the collegial values that are professed by sages and endorsed by many laypersons.

Collegians interpret phenomena in association with (and not on behalf of) their clients, and they solve problems with (not for) those clients.

The collegial ideology is based on:

1. an appeal to human reason rather than acceptance of human authority.
2. a belief in egalitarian, power-equalised, democratic organisation.

3. a commitment to consensual collaboration among specialists and between specialists and clients.
4. a commitment to personal integrity and self-responsibility in decision-making.
5. a commitment to the abolition of secrecy and privilege for profit.
6. a search for exoteric understanding i.e. common sense.

It is the inherent antagonism between the collegial ideology and the professional ideology that is at the root of the major tensions within today's schools, organisations, professions and societies. It is a struggle between those who want to exercise control over men's minds and those who seek to free men's minds, including their own, from such control.

In this struggle, the sages are being joined by many laypersons, who are concerned, among other things, at the extent to which in so-called democracies 'public affairs pass from the layperson's elected peers into the hands of a self-accrediting elite'. (Illich, 1977:20). Claims to privileged authority are always antagonistic to the practice of genuine, collegial democracy.

As anarchists have long known, 'Where there is authority, there is no freedom'. (Woodstock, 1979:206).

Authority versus Collegiality

As well as the relatively unimportant clashes for supremacy between priests professing rival specialities, and between priests and princes, there has always been a far more significant war between the professors of authoritarian ideologies on one hand and their ultimate rivals, the sages, on the other.

Priests and sages (or prophets) have been engaged, and continue to be engaged, in the contest between the sacred and the profane, the hidden and the revealed, the esoteric and the exoteric, secret doctrine and common sense, expert authority and native wit, induction and education. It is the war between authority and freedom. The sages are concerned to 'show man alternatives between which he can chose, and the consequences of these alternatives' (Fromm, 1976:117) but they demand nobody's obedience.

The advocates of this alternative, egalitarian viewpoint, can be traced historically from Lao Tzu, through Jesus of Nazareth, to

Rousseau, and a handful of modern sages who continue to challenge the 'empire over men's minds' (Butler, 1979:18) traditionally exercised by the magico-priests.

In Hebrew history, 'the prophets opposed a corrupt priesthood allied with corrupt kings and princes... and they foretold the downfall of the state and of priestly power' (Fromm, 1976:132). Whereas the professional specialist serves his authoritative school and the authoritarian state as a functionary, the sage is a threat to all factional privilege, serving the truth and ultimately the plebeians, the proletariat, the ordinary people. The sage does not claim to own or possess knowledge, Rather, he is engaged in the search for understanding, which he believes can be, and should be, accessible to, and attainable, by all, irrespective of race, sex, or intelligence quotient.

In this enquiry, he accepts the legitimacy of metaphysical knowledge equally as well as that of physical knowledge, and the value of intuitive insight equally as well as that of rational empiricism.

His aims are egalitarian, not elitist. He demands access to, not ownership of, knowledge. Hence he is a threat to the priests and the lawyers of the professional caste, and the governors of the managerial caste, and generally suffers the consequences.

'As long as man takes the wrong way in his political action, the prophet cannot help being a dissenter and a revolutionary' (Fromm, 1976:118).

Conclusion

Today, there is a concerted effort being made within Australian society to establish school teaching, school administration and curriculum design as professional occupations, requiring lengthy induction periods and a minimum of accountability to clients. This is a very effective way to ensure that societal control remains in the hands of like-minded people of authoriarian disposition, and to increase the impotency of uncredentialed parents and laypersons.

It is high time that the uncredentialed clients of our schools resisted this professionalisation of education and asserted their democratic rights. Sagacious teachers and administrators might join them by denying professional privilege (which may be appropriate within schools devoted to training and induction) and advocating instead the collegial ideology that is appropriate to the emanipatory process of education.

Such a move would, as always, be seriously contested by managers and professionals who realise that they have selfish vested interests to defend. Nevertheless, if successful in the schools, such a move towards egalitarian collaboration would probably be followed by the members and clients of other organisations, for the ultimate benefit of us all.

Professionals, such as medical practitioners, may certainly be necessary to treat the symptoms of a corrupt mankind. However, if the causes of the corruption are to be cured and mankind is to graduate to a higher level of humanity, then it is their adversaries, the collegians, who show us the way that needs to be followed.

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EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH — TWO PARADIGMS: TWO EPISTEMOLOGIES

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Put simply, educational research is the systematic study of educational problems and practices. Its basic purposes would at least be seen to cover such things as evaluating new and existing policies, programmes, curricula and practices; strengthening the information base underlying educational planning, the formulation of educational policy and the design of educational programmes; increasing the problem solving capacity of education systems, institutions and teachers; increasing knowledge and understanding of educational problems and processes; and raising questions concerning assumptions and identifying weaknesses. Research into these problems and practices has commonly been designed and structured so as to lay claim to 'scientific' respectability (Brim:1974). This claim remains a constant theme throughout the literature concerning education and in the normal parlance and value judgements made by educators. However, it has also been a feature of educational research that many of its practitioners have confused academic excellence and scholarly endeavour with the requirement to become as 'scientific' as possible in their research designs¹. This is in spite of the now recognised triviality and irrelevance of much of the so called 'scientific' research undertaken by postgraduate students.

While there will always be the need in the humanities for increased rigour, more systematic, encompassing theory, and a growth of comparative analysis and literature, these modest aims often would seem to have become secondary in the rush to overcome an imagined inferiority. A common response to the perceived inferiority complex held by some educational researchers has often led to research work on issues of minutiae and the further regressive splitting of education research into smaller and smaller studies with more and more 'perfect' methodologies.