MONOGRAPH

ON THE FETISHISM OF PUBLICATIONS AND THE SECRETS THEREOF

BY GORDON FELLMAN

THE REQUIREMENT THAT faculty members publish is defended and attacked endlessly. Yet rarely do we seek reasons for its power and persistence. The publishing imperative disparages the other major piece of professors' work, teaching; and it discourages critical inquiry into conditions of liberation of the self and of society. Further, normative concentration on publishing encourages us to ignore or reject, in academic work, the expression of the self's empathizing, nurturing, caring qualities and to sacrifice the self's delight in real connection with others. The publishing imperative requires us to forego what we learn from process in favor of the mandated alternatives of reification and quantification.

The academy recognizes two kinds of expression: the written word and the spoken word. One is declared in the article, the book, the paper delivered at the professional conference. The other ripens in the classroom.

Employed at a "research university" that officially considers teaching important, my colleagues and I are expected to focus on publish-

Gordon Fellman is associate professor of sociology at Brandeis University.

ing. Each year, we are instructed to complete the Academic Activities Report for the Provost's office. We list particulars on courses, advising, thesis and dissertation supervision, and department and university activities. We also report on our research, publications, artistic creations, awards and honors, and professional activities outside the university. Merit raises are awarded on the basis of these reports, and publications are the key to pay increases.

Emphasis on publication, while effective in motivating some academics to work hard and to make valuable contributions to knowledge, can also stand in the way of useful inquiry, authenticity, and growth. The publishing imperative can corrupt the effort to take time in formulating and presenting one's thoughts, the style, often, of those who wish to write only when they are convinced they are ready to say, as best they can, something of consequence.

EMPHASIS ON PUBLICATION CAN ALSO STAND IN THE WAY OF USEFUL INQUIRY, AUTHENTICITY, AND GROWTH.

Wayne Booth distinguishes between writing, the effort to say what one means, and publishing, the presentation of it to others.[1] The pressure to publish belittles the struggle to identify issues worthy of study. It discourages the care and discipline required by the intricacies of growing which may include, but do not rest exclusively or primarily upon, written productivity. And it undermines dedication to the classroom, collegiality, and self-respect among professors whose talents lie more in teaching than in publishing or who choose the classroom, rather than the printed page, as the focus of their scholarship and epistemology.

The academy's conventional emphasis on publishing caricatures productivity itself. By linking pay increases to publications, it encourages anxious deference to authority, ritualizes compulsivity, and mocks engaged teaching. In its insistence that scholars make their names known, the publishing mandate rewards excessive narcissism, denies the human centrality of relatedness, and serves unwittingly as a strategy for avoiding society and the self and their intricate interconnections. Careful examination of these functions might contribute to freedom from their odious effects.

THE MOCKERY

MARX DISTINGUISHES "USE-VALUE" from "exchange value." He observes that prior to capitalism, items are made for their intrinsic usefulness: a pair of shoes to be worn, a table to be set. Capitalism transforms the thing that is valuable because it can be *used* for comfort, pleasure, and function into a thing that is valuable because it can be exchanged for something else, usually money to be employed to yield still more money or to purchase some object or service.

The transition from use-value to exchange-value has finally caught up with the academy. "Exchange-value, at first sight, presents itself as a quantitative relation, as the proportion in which values in use of one sort are exchanged for those of another sort, a relation constantly changing with time and place...."[2]

In the university, publication has tended to move from use-value (Do we learn something significant from it? Does it shed new insights on its topic?) to exchange-value (How does this book or article further my career? Does it contribute to my university's reputation?). As exchange-value, the publication is the vehicle for esteem and promotion according to professional criteria that, except in cases of work that truly affects its audience, split accomplishment from significance. It is primarily the **fact** of the publication, and even its **length** and the **name of its publisher** that determine **value** in the dynamics of professional and institutional rewards. Thus does the academy genuflect to the larger culture's defining the worth of products in terms of **what they can be exchanged for**, rather than their own intrinsic value.

In this frequently frenzied system, more is better. One very, very good article in any journal in five years is **worth** far less than five mediocre articles in "leading" journals every year. Junior faculty now routinely, upon gaining their first academic appointment, begin the search for grants that allow a leave as often as possible, so that they may rapidly build their resume. They are all but formally discouraged from devoting heart and soul to teaching, their departments, people they love, their own inner struggles and growth, and the institution itself. Academic reputation is stressed above all, and that is defined by articles and books, of which the more the better.

This is not to suggest that content is meaningless; the frantic professor can "produce" significant work, but as often as not, importance is defined by esoteric appreciation of a small group of colleagues who support one another both in their choice of topic and in their quest for prestige and promotion. Professional circles become self-contained mutual respect and endorsement systems whose purposes are at least two: one is the genuine camaraderie and congeniality of people with shared interests and the decency and respect for each other that allow for excited communication and emotional support. The other has less to do with enhancing knowledge than with promoting careers.

There is a madness to this process that catches people up in an orgy of "productivity." The cliche mandates the academic to "publish or perish," but the injunction says nothing of the importance or utility of what is brought forth. Suppose the charge were, "Publish something significant or hold your tongue." Or, "Learn to teach while you are also learning to write, and if you have something truly consequential to publish, then take effort and care in doing so. But don't waste trees, your own time and that of countless others, from reviewers to typesetters to tenure-committee members, if self-promotion is your primary goal."

A colleague said to me, "They don't care about the content, only the quantity; so just keep publishing." I thought the remark to be disquieting—and accurate. Yet I have refused to join in the academic equivalent of keeping up with the Joneses. I would like to see the provost or dean look askance at long publication entries on a curriculum vitae and to attempt to determine whether the professor is truly engaged in meaningful work or is simply

out to achieve reputation and promotion for their own sake.

Why do intelligent faculty produce what many of their peers and even they themselves may not really respect? The answer, at least in substantial measure, is fear of failure: low raises or none at all, no promotion, feeling the sting of powerful people's unapprovingly arched eyebrows, and—the worst nightmare—no tenure.

In the remarkably tight job market of today, not just promotion but having a job at all demands yielding to the publishing edict, and even then, chances of finding employment are not good in many academic fields. The able, conscientious, normally ambitious younger academic has virtually no chance to opt out of the mania I am examining here.

Why do so few professors object to this scheme of things? In all institutions, those who question the achievement premises, those reluctant to go along with the game, are defined as spoilsports, losers, failures. They are, ordinarily, feared, ridiculed, punished, and marginalized. To criticize the established norm of productivity is considered sour grapes, heretical, lazy. Yet the hostility of those who choose conventional careerism, toward those who make other choices and toward students so often (not always) neglected, is considered appropriate, normative, acceptable.

PUBLISHING AS COMPULSIVE ACHIEVEMENT

IN A SOCIETY THAT EMPHASIZES WORK AT THE expense, usually, of social engagement, self-awareness, inner calm, emotional richness, personal growth, mature love, parenting, sensitivity to nature, and gratifying relationships, the achievement motive generalizes to all lines of endeavor. Much is to be said in its favor. Without work we have no food and no entertainment.

Achievement, though, that is undifferentiated, compulsive, and external equalizes a great novel, a stock market victory, an electoral conquest, a fortune cynically and ruthlessly gained, a marketing triumph, an ecologically sound innovation, an athlete's record, a vaccine, a real estate kingdom, a trivial appliance, a pornography empire, a weighty bibliography, and any other accomplishment that is not formally illegal. The university version of achievement—publishing more and ever more—ranks academic work as equal to any other quantitative attainment. And like so much achievement in our society, it passes the threshold between what is meaningful and pleasurable and what is compulsive. What Marcuse unflatteringly calls the "performance principle," defining the self and its purpose in terms of achievements, recognition, and output, contrasts with what he makes of Freud's "pleasure principle," the pursuit of desire in terms quite different from those of performance and external reward. Marcuse contends that the pleasure principle, which includes erotic, intellectual, artistic, and other forms of gratification, is all but completely subordinated to the performance principle, which has come to dominate life in all institutions of our society.[3] The academy is no exception.

Sport helps children learn to develop and enjoy their athletic capabilities, respect and ripen their bodies, and hone certain social skills and pleasures. But it can also catch children in frenzied Little League rivalry that sacrifices self-development and pleasure in play to competing, often for parents' benefit more than that of children. Socialization into that kind of frenetic activity sets the norm and pace for compulsive achieving that accounts for Donald Trump's dedication to making money as an end in itself and for academics slaving for the ever-longer resume.

Professors who produce publications in abundance rarely do so from unworthy, disturbed, or dishonorable motives. Rather they respond to *systemic imperatives* that offer them little choice if they wish to gain a job and keep it, let alone "get ahead," and which all but factor out possibilities of a critical, thoughtful, political response to what many experience as unreasonable demands. They accept the publishing edict due in part to tendencies to submit to authority and in part to fears of winding up at schools with lower prestige and higher teaching loads, thus drastically reducing the likelihood of time and support to publish at all.

Dedication to quantity characterizes processes not only inside the academy. Legislators and foundations who fund universities and faculty are often bewildered by the very difficult task of assessing what professors and universities do. In a society enamored of numbers and supposed objectivity, and in a business culture that takes numbers more seriously than anything else at all, the pressure for quantitative measurements like numbers of publications is immense.

Academic deference to norms of productivity thus reflects the quantitative obsessions of the larger society which both accepts and mocks the pressure to achieve. Cynical Bart Simpson catches the imagination of Americans, and the Bart Simpson t-shirt celebrating underachievement is a best-seller. A corresponding Japanese cartoon character named Chibi Maruko is a nine-year-old unaccomplished girl. Featured in comic books, television, and a movie, she is reported to have taken Japan by storm.[4] It is no accident that Japanese society is if anything even more seized with production imperatives than is our own.

PUBLISHING AS DEFERENCE

THE PUBLISHING MANDATE SETS THE terms of dominance and subordination for academics who choose to follow the careerist path. By careerism, I mean the work commitment to advancement in a profession and in a university as ends in themselves. That goal, for the careerist, is paramount over addressing real human problems of suffering and fulfillment, growing as a person and a scholar, and teaching as a valued endeavor. It is even paramount over meaningful contributions to a field. At its best, as a vital piece of one way of knowing, publishing opens one's work up to extension, enhancement, qualification, and helpful criticism from other scholars. At its best, publishing is, as advertised, crucial to the growth of certain forms of understanding. But it is deceptive to

claim that most, or even much, publishing in our era serves these functions.

Careerists may not even know if their desires truly coincide with the productivity norms that weigh so heavily upon them. Those pressures are especially high at the most competitive universities, perhaps the "top" fifty or so, but they appear to be penetrating ever further into the ranks of the remaining two to three thousand institutions of higher learning in this country.

WHY DO SO FEW PROFESSORS OBJECT TO THIS SCHEME OF THINGS?

The power and role of leading schools in maintaining the publishing ethos through controlling reward structures cannot be overestimated. Deference patterns are crucial in determining salary increases and promotion. They regulate recognition and support at professional meetings, membership on journal editorial boards, and invitations to conferences. They are the basis for conferring almost all academic awards.

A dominance order is taken for granted as natural in universities just as it is in hospitals, law firms, businesses, labor unions, and psychoanalytic institutes. It is rarely examined critically and dispassionately as an overdone response to the need for structure and as a destroyer of souls.

There are academics for whom "my work" or "my own work" is a phrase connoting only research and publishing. It seems rarely to apply to teaching, which raises the curious question of whose work is the teaching I do if not "mine"? The written word, as contrasted with the word spoken in the classroom, is invoked in such a way as to suggest the sacred. Teaching is, then, by implication, profane, unworthy of the fast-tracker's time, necessary for generating income but not much more than that.

Publishing is one of many approaches to knowing. Teaching is another. In the classroom, professors can think and rethink as they convey information, ideas, and struggle itself to people less experienced in this captivating work. Plato observed two millenia ago that the mutual questioning between teacher and student can be part of a process of discovery for both;[5] the learning of each is enhanced when the classroom is functioning at its best.

Whom is the careerist professor trying to please? Students hold minimal power. Unfavorable course evaluations, unless atrocious, can usually be cast aside, as can students' pleas, direct or veiled, for understanding, meaning, respect, response, and human connection. A student may be grateful toward a mentor, an inspiration, a caring and supportive other, a revealer of information, insights, and paradigms. But the effect of the professor on that student earns no points in the professional association, many departments, and the offices of most deans and provosts. Indeed, faculty and administration elders may look askance at student appreciation of a teacher. It is suspected that he or she is "too" well-liked, a "panderer" to base tastes, a popularizer and entertainer. "Professor X is a good teacher, but...."

Where rewards follow publishing, one ordinarily tries to please those in power. Hence, for conventionally ambitious academics, university and professional hierarchies, not classrooms, define the location of the "significant other.". And deference to authority proceeds as in any other institution, uncritically even if sometimes grudgingly and grumblingly.

This is not a plea to elevate teaching over publishing. Each venture draws on different skills, and most faculty are better at one than the other. Each could be honored equally as vital to the purposes of higher education. Neither need be subordinated to the other as less important, less serious, or less worthy.

Demands to publish, even for those more inclined to write than teach, can in some ironic way silence the scholar. A true voice, which may require great time and effort to discover and develop, is sacrificed for the expediency of jumping through mandated hoops, defined and timed by those in power.

Publishing becomes ritual, obeisance to vague and distant gods and their all-too-visible administrative and faculty priests who can punish and exclude and whose authority does not stop short of ideological censorship. I have noticed that younger colleagues who "get ahead" have tended to steer away from issues and positions that are "controversial." Maybe that is their genuine inclination; maybe they have simply learned the rather clear lesson not to offend the ideological convictions of their "superiors."

One way of managing the frustration and pain evoked by pressures to publish much and early is to accept established authority in the institution as reasonable.[6] By acceding to publication norms without protest, many academics understandably cope with their anxieties about power held over them but also unwittingly model this defense against self and possibility for their students and junior peers, to say nothing of the rest of their society. They may even, not uncommonly, lash out in resentment against colleagues who question and challenge the production norms of the academy.

No one is exactly at fault here. Impersonal bureaucracy makes it all but impossible to locate responsibility for certain practices, or even someone to whom to complain.

Students suffer from this vagueness and normative discrepancies in power by learning, often to their chagrin, how difficult it can be to gain professors' interest, respect, and time. They discover that for many faculty, career advancement is more important than genuine, demanding human interchange across generations.

Too often, society is denied the fruit of the encounter between professor and student that can mean serious growth for both. And society loses in professors who engulf themselves in modish research rather than taking time and care to design investigations and teaching of great scholarly and/or social consequence. One rarely hears academics worry whether their impact on their field and their students, let alone on history and the social order, is worthwhile. One often hears, by contrast, of struggles to make it into prestigious journals, be invited to important conferences, and be awarded tenure.

Indeed, I believe that one of the effects of university and professional reward structures, defined largely through publication, is to neutralize the potential influence of good minds on society. The university is one of numerous institutions that have discovered ways of silencing potentially enlightening critics. Religious hierarchies in certain eras, communist parties in this century, establishments as diverse as the medical profession, arts organizations, and corporations have been able through conventional reward systems to siphon exceptional critical intelligence away

from possible impact on these institutions and on society in general. And so with the academy today. The university is in this respect as conservative as any other institution. None, under most circumstances, takes well to wave-makers or to those who challenge power structures they find stifling and/or corrupt.

Thorstein Veblen observed, "It has generally held true that the accredited learned class and the seminaries of the higher learning have looked askance at all innovation."[7] When some Catholic clergy preached a "social gospel" in Spain, Italy, and Latin America, Rome decided to do as much as possible to offset them. As they retire, die, or are killed, they appear to be replaced with "establishment" types, just as radical professors denied tenure almost always give way to less "threatening" successors. There continue to be people in the Church, the academy, and other institutions who work for social change and social justice, but the institutional pressures against doing so are not diminishing.

IN A SOCIETY ENAMORED OF NUMBERS AND SUPPOSED OBJECTIVITY THE PRESSURE FOR QUANTITATIVE MEASUREMENTS LIKE NUMBERS OF PUBLICATIONS IS IMMENSE.

In the academy as elsewhere, the sin of the rebel is challenging established authority in the institution and in the larger society. Rewards operate in such ways as to dampen and nullify, as fully as possible, all such resistance. Correspondingly, innovative work is discouraged and often squelched. It has been amusing, to say the least, to see some of the radical graduate students and young faculty of the sixties, including those with "socialist" commitments, succumb to such norms and even to the conventional dress codes of the academy in the eighties and nineties.

Indeed, the self-styled radical professoriate is rarely seen in protest politics any more; most content themselves with pleasing those with authority over them. Some decry currying favor with power even as they do it. The powerless will wait for another time, or perhaps another sixteen articles and books about them.

Yet it is not ill will or mendaciousness I criticize here. It is the systemic coercion to which faculty with even the most glorious visions of liberation usually yield.

RITUAL AND COMPULSIVITY

RITUAL MAY HELP CONTROL ANXIETY and, through its own form, also generate it.[8] Like all institutions, the academy is permeated by ritual. Modes of lecturing and discussing, assignments, responses, and evaluating are all forms of ritual, as are many aspects of faculty meetings, student social life, sports, and more.

I turn now to one particular set of academic rituals, those associated with publishing. Rituals in this area can help bind work anxieties about success, promotion, and worth, as well as to provide a context for alleviating anxieties that have nothing to do with the academy. It is one thing for ritual to serve these purposes; it is another for its products to be considered significant on their own terms.

Not infrequently, publications are the academic equivalent of the emperor's new clothes. They are by convention widely admired although most faculty even within an author's own discipline may be unable to see anything there at all.[9]

Profound ceremonial meanings inhere in compulsive publishing. The scholar very much in print engages, tacitly, in ritually sanctioned behavior like that of the worshipper in religion: a community's norm is upheld, with the smiling support of co-communicants with its gods.

Ritual is an essential point of connection between self and group. Among its many meanings, the publishing rite is an induction event, a statement of professional commitment, which, like developing fluid in a photographer's tray, helps fix the budding identity of young academics in a way that makes them safe entrants into the sacred temple as defined by its ever-vigilant guardians.

Part of the force of religious ritual is that in addition to allaying free-floating anxiety whose origins are not examined and whose existence is ignored, it helps allay doubts in the worshipper as to whether the commanded behavior is worthwhile. The doubter takes comfort in seeing other participants, who might somewhere deep inside doubt equally, join in shared sacred rituals. By engaging in unacknowledged agreement to deny doubt, each helps assuage the other's hesitations, questions, and reservations: thus the pleasure in welcoming the neophyte as well as the returnee—the temporary doubter—to the fold.

By its nature, ritual tends to be compulsive, and compulsive behavior suggests metaphor. Anxiety about drought, pain, death, and emptiness inspire religious observance. What might be the symbolic meanings of the publication ceremony in the academy? The root issues are probably similar to those of religion. Publishing can effect relief from feelings of emptiness and doubt and can also bolster fantasies of immortality. We may not be Plato or Einstein, but a modest place in the texts of one's discipline would be pleasing. Likely lingering in the recesses of every older academic's mind is hope for such immortality. (For most younger academics, the quest is mainly for a job, on whatever terms are demanded.) Correspondingly, anxiety about one's worth, the worthiness of one's work, uneasy questions about the value of the scholarly enterprise altogether, are temptingly reduced by acceding to the demand to publish compulsively.

If one craves eternal life and relief from a myriad of doubts, one can wonder why the yearning becomes attached to publication *per se.* The publication as an inert object suggests by contrast, and in some crucial fashion substitutes for, pleasure that might be more directly and fully gained in the classroom.

The need for human ties can be realized, as can a kind of immortality, in teaching, in passing on significant parts of one's un-

derstanding, culture, and self to others eager to learn. How full of meaning is the transaction that helps younger people name and claim their own formulations, their grasp of whatever interests them and their relationship with it, their own growing sense of who they are and their understanding of where they are. Why is that form of immortality so maligned that, despite lip-service to the contrary, at "ranking" universities the motto might well be not only Publish or Perish, but equally powerfully: Teach Conscientiously and Risk Perishing.

THOSE WHO CAN, TEACH

ONE OF THE LESS CHARMING CLICHES of the academy is, "Those who can, do; those who can't, teach." See how it sounds turned around: "Those who can, teach; those who can't, publish compulsively." That is an exaggeration, of course, but so is the more familiar formulation.

An oddity of graduate "training" is the absence of attention to the craft of educating. The student is paid to be a teaching assistant but is rarely offered instruction in how to go about the work, or even much pedagogical or emotional support for it. There are few required seminars or even non-credit workshops on challenges in teaching, its problems and crises, the accumulation of wisdom about how to do it. Nor is there serious supervision. It is simply assumed that one who knows enough about a topic to earn a Ph.D. can teach it. Of some people that happens to be true; there are "natural" teachers who easily captivate and successfully instruct students, there for so many different and conflicting reasons.

But teachers not uncommonly flounder before their student-clients. Stories of mediocre teaching abound. It is not only neophyte professors who often seem unaware of the challenge to self that teaching entails, challenge not just to articulate abstractions but also challenge to relate as a full self to those other full selves paying tuition to be in one's presence.

Educating is a serious business, arduous, risky, threatening. Ordinarily, it is harder to establish a good, productive, satisfying relationship with students than with academic peers. The former are more demanding, less willing to accept one's assumptions or even recognize them, and they are not sympathetic age-mates who know exactly the perils and rewards of different avenues to the monthly paycheck.

As the classroom is also a place for conveying understanding and critical inquiry, why is it considered less prestigious than the conference, the journal, and the book? It is obvious that fellow academics can engage in sophisticated intellectual exchange beyond what the classroom usually offers. Yet the classroom is threatening in ways the peer setting is not.

Undergraduates (except for some academic offspring and those few students who have chosen an academic career already) are rarely socialized into the norms of academic disciplines to which they are exposed in courses. Not only can they contest fundamental assumptions, they also need not be impressed with esoteric insights and arguments, and don't even have to feign interest.

Although peer criticism might be more severe than that from students, it is compensated for at least partially by shared valuing of the endeavor. It is also offset by the assumption by many that scholarship is a "calling" while teaching is paid drudgery that permits time and resources for publishing.

The peer accepts the terms of a delightful collusion: to assume primacy of one's research topic. With some exceptions, students have no such commitment. As often as not, they enter the classroom skeptical and wary of the course and of the person standing before them. The professor encounters real people, usually late adolescents and young adults in many of whose lives much turmoil surrounds study, and the teacher might be called upon to respond to a student beyond the confines of the course title.

The professor too enters the classroom skeptical and wary. Who are these young people sitting there with excited or expectant or jaundiced or curious or complex or pained or vacant looks on their faces? What can I expect of them? What do they know? How much can I assume? Why are they here? What do they want? Who will be provocative, stimulating, fun? Who will be irresponsible, bull-slingers, cheaters, slow-witted, disinterested, wasters of my time, maybe even exploiters of my vulnerabilities?

It is not easy to figure out how to connect with such a range of human beings, many in the classroom unwillingly in the first place. Indeed, determining how to speak to and with such a motley assemblage is quite a task. It is tempting to opt out by doing the minimal job required for one's pay and to invest energies and talents in pleasing peers, academic seniors, and administrators.

As if these were not enough problems, the teacher is often unable to face what might be experienced as puzzling feelings of resentment and aggression toward the young. Freud draws our attention to children's feelings of aggression toward parents but pays no attention to the reverse. It was, after all, Laius who instructed that his son Oedipus be killed and Abraham who responded to the divine command to kill Isaac.[10] The oracle and angel can be seen as the unconscious anxiety common to parents, that comes from recognizing that their offspring will likely outlive them, may fulfill parts of life the envious parents could not master, and will be much trouble to raise. The not uncommon teacher's sarcasm, impatience, and scorn for students are among other things barely disguised generational antagonism.

THERE ARE ACADEMICS FOR WHOM "MY WORK" OR "MY OWN WORK" IS A PHRASE CONNOTING ONLY RESEARCH AND PUBLISHING.

Among the complexities of the classroom is what Erik Erikson calls generativity, which he defines as "primarily the interest in establishing and guiding the next generation or whatever in a given case may become the absorbing object of a parental

kind of responsibility."[11] Erikson tends to minimize the negative side of this relationship, which complicates teaching as well as parenting. Responding to students, taking their needs and quirks into account, and struggling with one's aggressive inclinations toward them are far harder than connecting with willing colleagues who may tacitly share one's fears of the classroom.

There is indeed great pleasure in peer association; but just as it can be enjoyed for stimulation and friendship, it can also become a retreat from the puzzlement and threats of teaching. Professors commonly complain that their students are hard to reach, and colleagues knowingly nod their recognition that they too aren't sure how to get to those "kids." It is exceedingly difficult not to feel that the problem lies with the kids rather than with the professor's approach to and understanding of them.

NOT INFREQUENTLY, PUBLICATIONS ARE THE ACADEMIC EQUIVALENT OF THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES.

What is to be done with the demands and pains of teaching, with the difficult, threatening, and often frightening work of relating to a younger generation? How does one estimate students' reactions at all?

One of the many reasons for accepting publications as more important than instruction is that the former can be reviewed by colleagues for purposes ranging from evaluating grant applications to recommendations for promotion. And of course they can be counted. Methods of assessing teaching are, by contrast, extremely slippery. Few people seem very comfortable with course evaluation questionnaires, faculty reviews of classroom effectiveness, or any other measures yet devised for appraising what goes on between professors and students and how effective it is.

Yet another reason for the publishing mania, then, is its relative attractiveness as an indicator of performance. In a society that treasures measures and that fetishizes objectivity, publications offer something more tangible than teaching. Number of courses taught is usually a constant in a given institution, and number of students enrolled may reflect ease of grading, lightness of assignments, flashiness in the professor, trendiness of the topic, or any number of other criteria justly held in suspicion by administrators and peer reviewers. (These criteria may also, of course, indicate effective instruction.) The inordinate attention to publication may suggest implicitly, then, among its multitude of meanings, exasperation in not being able to evaluate teaching and fear of facing its human complexities.

COMPULSIVE PUBLISHING AS ANTI-SUBJECTIVE

EVEN FEMINIST FACULTY SEEM UNWITtingly drawn (or pushed?) into the publishing passion. This could be seen as ironic, as the very norms of achievement in the university are paradigmatically patriarchal. Feminist faculty have not succeeded in displacing or, with some exceptions, even challenging these norms.

It is commonplace to observe by now that in Western culture (among others) women, far more than men, have kept alive the nurturing, caring, supportive, empathic, humanly responsive capabilities of the species.[12] All these qualities, largely emotional and subjective in contrast to "rational" and "objective" ones more commonly associated with men, properly belong to all people. True liberation includes recognition that all human qualities belong to all humans and need not be considered gendered in any essential way.

In its capitalist form, patriarchy has stressed the objective and the measurable, power and accomplishment; in the academy, as elsewhere, that means that individuality is valued over inter-connection. And that means in career terms that publishing is more important than teaching.

Although instruction can be defined in conventional masculine terms as an authoritarian and authoritative passing on of knowledge by the expert, it can also be defined as including warmth, caring, nurturance, and full recognition of the human realities of teacher and student alike. When teaching recognizes the classroom as a setting in which humans encounter each other in very complex ways, it calls upon teachers to appreciate vulnerable others with involved agendas, some parts of which may inspire the professor and some parts of which may frighten and truly offend, even to the point where the wise teacher will look inward and grapple with the displeasure felt with an annoying, disliked, or feared student.

In the classroom, people can encounter each other in more than intellectual ways. The expert needs to convey information to the neophyte. But even then, the student need not simply sit there and passively record the data. What transpires in education is infinitely more complicated than that, but professors rarely talk about how to make information meaningful and alive, and how to draw the student into actively struggling to understand, question, and apply what is offered in the course.

Faculty seldom examine the processes of teaching and learning, either in their departments or at professional meetings. Indeed, as a collectivity, they rarely attend to them at all. *They struggle to be current in research methods and findings in their disciplines but few even are familiar with research on teaching itself, let alone are they expected to know or care about it.*

Parenting offers chances to think and act in highly complex ways that lend themselves to systematic understanding.[13] The groundwork for this insight is laid by psychoanalysis and developmental psychology as well as parts of contemporary feminism. That teaching might in its own way be equally compelling and call upon practitioners to make complex judgments based partly in knowledge, partly in intuition, and partly in self-understanding seems to evade many of those formally paid to work in the college and university buildings of instruction.

For some people, academics included, gratification of the self includes involvement in the larger society, not necessarily in objective, academic ways. The fetishism of publications devalues the contributions and subjective satisfactions inherent in community service and activism, even where professors use intellec-

tual analysis and understanding to be as effective as possible in the larger community as well as in the university. Women faculty are sometimes doubly penalized thus, for the time given to their feminist praxis and by their exclusions, either by choice or rejection, from "top" academic rewards and honors.

Conventional publishing norms further handicap academics who choose not to subordinate their love and family lives to the imperatives of professional commitment. The academy has never devised a "superman" image corresponding to the "superwoman" one that insults more than it flatters women expected to master, juggle, and integrate a greater quantity and variety of work and household tasks than are their male counterparts. The realities of the lives of both women and men who reject conventional gender and professional norms are still all but invisible to great numbers of academics who for whatever reasons embrace those norms.

NARCISSISM IN THE ACADEMIC CALLING

PROFESSORS TEND TO BE PRIMA DONNAS. We have almost unlimited authority in the classrooms, and, as we usually feel much passion for what we are teaching there, that can feel good.

Like entertainers, star athletes, and political figures, professors are forgiven their tendencies to self absorption; observers may with some good reason envy them. People who have wisely renounced the child's healthy narcissism may nonetheless enjoy seeing it enacted in others.[14]

Heinz Kohut claims that exhibitionistic and grandiose parts of the child's self ordinarily become moderated in the adult and integrated into ambition, enjoyment, and self-esteem that allow mature attachments with others.[15] The prominence of exhibitionism and showy self-importance among professionals (surgeons and criminal lawyers come readily to mind as other examples) helps explain a tendency among many academics to be concerned with their own needs more those of others. Such faculty do not think students can satisfy them as fully as can peers and administrators.

Professors can, if they wish to, ignore students' appetites for clarity and coherence, recognition and involvement, challenge and respect. Because of the power of the grade, professors have at their disposal a structured impediment to the fuller conversation and collaboration that are potentially meaningful in the classroom and that could transform it into a system of mutuality and shared learning. Now and then, these possibilities are realized, but rarely.

Academic work, in the conference as in the classroom, lends itself exquisitely to narcissistic engagement. The professor faces a captive audience whose only escape from a disappointing talk is daydreaming or angry inner dialogue with the speaker, who can in turn pretend to hold a willing and grateful audience even in the face of visible evidence to the contrary.

People crave contact but, except in families and close friendships, reasonably organize it around some topic important to them. Academic conferences often seem at least as significant as social events as they do intellectually.

Granted, some presentations are revealing, innovative, insightful, provocative. And some conferences truly deepen participants' understanding and appreciation of their subject. But many do not. An ethnomethodologist might examine posture, voice, tone, and content of speakers' remarks to get hold of the self-promotion and self-importance that frequently highlight academics' behavior at conferences as well as elsewhere.

What about the substance? I do not mean to minimize the meaningful exchanges on some such occasions; maybe in some quasi-Darwinian way there is no way to get the significant presentation without dozens that are not.[16] Yet could it be that in a profession where people commonly work alone, the academic hungers for colleagues and audience so much that the fact of human company outweighs the content of the communication?

Except for the rare charismatic teacher, the classroom does not lend itself to self-promotion as easily as do journal, conference, and book. Although many do, professors need not consider the adequacy of their teaching nor the fairness of their grading. They thus might find even the possibility of fuller and genuine relationships with their students problematic. Correspondingly, many students abjure relationship and authenticity with the teacher, choosing to do instead whatever seems required for the good grade; they fear that candor could cost them more than they wish to spend. And they can be perplexed anyway as how to relate to elders in positions of authority and control, elders who often seem quite aloof and unconcerned with their students.

Professors' power before students is nearly complete. Some take advantage of sexual appeal and its convoluted relationship to their role; others exploit non-sexual inclinations to idealize the professor, the "transference" phenomenon so complex, so delicate, so central to teaching and learning (as is "countertransference"), and so easily abused. Rarely conscious, the temptation to take advantage of students' fears and fascinations with the authority of parents and other elders is no stranger in the classroom.

THE THREAT OF SIGNIFICANCE

"The intelligentsia is power's hall of mirrors."
—the Situationists

MOST ACADEMIC WORK APPEARS TO be "objective." One can investigate biographies, the history of medieval manuscript illumination, the solar system, a composer's style, distribution of health care services. This is part of what it means to explore whatever is there for the taking, so as to try to control events a bit, and to try to satisfy what seems to be insatiable curiosity about ourselves and our milieux.

All this is to the good; any restrictions would undermine the very ethic of freedom that defines the university at its best. There are, though, working subtly and insidiously, two forms of censorship that oppose the academy's implementation of fully open inquiry. One is political and the other, social psychological.

The search for truth is permissible until it jeopardizes the applecarts of the larger forces that own and control the wealth of a society; boards of trustees and the administrators they employ are the agents by whom wealth perpetuates ideology even in the academy. Thus can "Critical Legal Studies," a claim that law serves to perpetuate power hierarchies and unjust practices, be ridiculed and marginalized even at a major law school. Thus can "radical" professors find it more difficult to get tenure than those who stick to "safe" topics of inquiry.

Citing Vernon Parrington, sociologist Robert Lynd, in his classic *Knowledge for What?*, remarked near the close of the 1920s that political scientists and economists (other social scientists can be added now) had "largely joined the Swiss guards' protecting the inner sanctuary of the vested system..."[17]

> Without invoking the phrase "sociology of knowledge," Lynd observed that...the social sciences are parts of culture, and it so happens that they are carried forward predominantly by college and university professors, who in turn are hired by businessmen trustees. The stake of these last in the status quo is great. That is why they are trustees. The social scientist finds himself [sic] caught, there-fore, between rival demands for straight, incisive, and, if need be, radically divergent thinking, and the growingly insistent demand that this thinking shall not be subversive...[18]

Censorship can operate very subtly, not on juridical standing but rather on tacit understanding. Robert and Helen Merrell Lynd wrote decades ago of a minister of a toney church in "Middletown" who did not have to be instructed in what topics to avoid in his sermons.[19] He submitted to the implicit censorship of the church board so fully and agreeably (they would not otherwise have selected him for the job) as for the very fact of it to be most likely hidden from himself, the board, and the congregation.

If a professor is committed to exploring possibilities of greater human self-realization and helping free the student for projects of self-liberation and larger social transformation, then the professor may prompt disquiet among the guardians of established norms and privileges. The mandate to publish compulsively serves not only to stifle any such project—for its content is not welcome in most professional settings—it also discourages writing for a broader readership in op-ed newspaper pieces, magazine articles, and the like. Even though one might be enlightening and influential in such publishing strategies, they are dismissed as unprofessional, as if one's well-honed skills are illegitimate when extended beyond the boundaries of the university and its extensions, the conference, the journal, and the book.

The fetishism of publications is thus a very powerful way of diverting academics', students', and the public's attention away from real issues of suffering and possibility of overcoming them. Yet where better than at colleges and universities to try systematically to comprehend the entire range of ills of one's society? How the integrity of the academy would be renewed and refreshed if the dominant issues of the era were laid upon the table and examined closely, carefully, and without fear of reprimand or punishment for taking them seriously.

THE THREAT OF SELF-DISCOVERY

"Intellectualization is the self's hall of mirrors."

—G.F.

THE OTHER BALLROOM WHERE CENSORship dances is that of inner emotional reality. I suspect that the primary reason why most academics, including many who call themselves socialists and feminists, join other students of society in avoiding inner issues is that they do not want to subject themselves to the pain, surprises, anguish, and potential upset of opening up long-scabbed sores in the private attics and basements of their lives.

Anger about external structures of domination is fully justifiable and is necessary to excite the effort to understand and confront it. But there is also inner domination, the struggle of forces within the self against one another, that causes so much bewilderment and pain as to make it powerfully tempting to concentrate only on conflict outside the self.

For many reasons one often fears oneself and thus also fears others' candor that can touch one's vulnerabilities. Most people are uncomfortable with whole ranges of memories, deeper impulses, repressed desires, disappointments and aspirations, longings, hurts, rages, terrors, fears, and pains.

Through honest, open, and powerful engagement with others, one can learn most about oneself, and that includes relationship to work, friendship and love, connections with the world, and possibilities of change and growth inside and outside oneself. For most academics, I believe, the possibility of such growth through real confrontations of selves—colleagues or students—is ignored. Or it is subordinated to stylized camaraderie and the comfortable working relationship.

The fetishism of publications thus includes displacement, motion that bypasses conquest and humiliation, lust and rage, the mystery and dread that define human interests and inclinations at levels so deep as commonly to terrify those who would look them in the face. They can be avoided, at least consciously, by beefing up one's *vita* for the next academic appointment, honor, or professional office.

ACADEMIC WORK, IN THE CONFERENCE AS IN THE CLASSROOM, LENDS ITSELF EXQUISITELY TO NARCISSTIC ENGAGEMENT.

Careerism, the motor driving the publication fetish at the author's end and the don't-rock-the-boat injunction at the institution's end, can be seen, then, as a gigantic device for diverting good minds from projects of change of society and self. Trustees, professors, and administrators join in tacit conspiracy to forestall the anxiety of possible turmoil and change in the self and in society.

To deconstruct the publishing compulsion, both from the self's involvement in it and the institution's, is to open the possibility of rethinking commitments of energy, time, and identity. Among the im-

plications is the possibility of re-experiencing teaching, or perhaps experiencing it anew, as the fully human, intricate, frightening, and sometimes exhilarating experience it can be. Properly addressed, the classroom, like the thoughtful written piece of exploration and reflection, can engage the professor fully enough to lead to significant change in all the selves involved. To understand what it is to educate, to learn, to resist teaching and learning, to be bewildered by society and by education itself could paradoxically lead to published reflection and inquiry that would build fully from the classroom and also transcend it.

Approached as a fully demanding human enterprise that does not systematically avoid revelation of the selves involved as well as the course content described in the catalog, teaching is a method by which understanding can be enhanced and extended; it can be valued as a fully worthy, provocative, fulfilling end in itself.

This is not to celebrate teaching at the expense of useful original research and the desire to bring it to the attention of others. But it is to oppose the *commodification* of the publication as enhancing a career but inconsequential in its actual content. It may be that we need more far more writing and far less publishing. The structures that support publishing in its fetish form ill serve those who succumb to their would-be imperatives and the students and society who suffer thereby.

One whistles while walking by the graveyard to distract oneself from numerous fears of death, rage, and destructive wishes that are inevitably surfaced by the sight of row after row of tombstones. *Fetishism is a form of whistling in the dark,* to dodge the turmoil both in the social order and in the self, that might erupt and threaten to overwhelm, were one to pay attention to it. In this respect, the fetishism of publications is not unlike that of rocks, trees, cars, shoes, jewelry, leather, or anything else in religious and sexual fetish systems. And in Marx's sense, the fetishism of publications helps convert writings from things of use-value to commodities, of exchange-value.

Given their youth, students perhaps lend themselves more readily than faculty to exploring the terms and conditions of pain in the world and pain in the self and possibilities of working to overcome both. The potential for an exceptionally rich relationship between classroom, writing, and publications has yet to be canonized in the academy.

Teachers who feel honored and respected for their teaching could feel moved to discuss matters of significance from positions of conviction and strength rather than submitting to frantic competitiveness and the fear of salary- and promotion-sticks clobbering them for not "producing" adequately. Students could gain the attention and respect that would likely motivate them to take thinking, learning, and their society and their own lives more seriously. Society would gain in strengthening inter-generational relations and in reducing the frenzied and often farcical hypocrisies of one of its leading institutions. Professors might possibly even find themselves teaching and learning with spirit and joy. How the integrity of the academy would be renewed and refreshed if these issues were released from the bottle and examined closely, carefully, and without fear of reprimand or punishment for taking them seriously.

Notes

[1]Wayne C. Booth, *The Vocation of a Teacher,* Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1988, p. 63 and passim.

[2]Karl Marx, *Capital,* Vol. 1, Ch. 1, Commodities, New York, International Publishers, 1987. p. 44.

[3]Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization,* Boston, Beacon Press, 1955.

[4]*Boston Globe,* November 20, 1990, p. 2.

[5]John E. Thomas, *Musings on the Meno,* The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1980.

[6]Anna Freud reveals "identification with the aggressor" as a way of defending against the fear that those in power may harm one, i.e., if you can't figure out how to deal with 'em, or confront 'em, or lick 'em—then join 'em. See Anna Freud, *Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense,* New York, International Universities Press, 1957, Ch. IX.

[7]Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class,* quoted in John Kenneth Galbraith, *The New Industrial State,* p. 407. Galbraith goes on: "It is not, in general, my instinct to avoid controversy or criticism. Those who seek to do so have, not infrequently, reconciled themselves to irrelevance."

[8]For a discussion of basic terms of the relationship of anxiety and ritual, see Bronislaw Malinowski, "The Role of Magic and Religion," A.R. Radcliffe-Brown, "Taboo," and George C. Homans, "Anxiety and Ritual: The Theories of Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown," in William A. Less and Evon Z. Vogt, eds., *Reader in Comparative Religion,* Evanston, Illinois, Row, Peterson and Company, 1958.

[9]A lawyer recently told me that in his opinion about 5 percent of what is published in law journals is worth reading. He asked what would be the corresponding figure in my field. I replied that 5 percent seems about right, and that according to associates in other fields, that is perhaps the accurate estimate elsewhere too.

[10]David Bakan, *The Duality of Human Existence,* Chicago, Rand McNally, 1966, pp. 205ff and 230; and Bakan, *Pain and Sacrifice,* Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1968, p. 104.

[11]Erik H. Erikson, *Childhood and Society,* New York, Norton, 1950, p. 231.

[12]The best-known work in this tradition is Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice,* Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1982.

[13]Sara Ruddick develops this analysis in terms of mothering; it seems to me reasonable to extend it to sensitive, engaged parenting in general. See Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking,* New York, Ballantine, 1989.

[14]Sigmund Freud, "On Narcissism: An Introduction" (1914), in Freud, *General Psychological Theory,* New York, Collier, 1963, p. 70 and *passim.*

[15]Ch. 34, "The Psychoanalytic Treatment of Narcissistic Personality Disorders," in Paul H. Ornstein, ed., *The Search for the Self, Selected Writings of Heinz Kohut: 1950–1978,* Vol. l, New York, International Universities Press, 1978. See also Ch. 40, "Thoughts on Narcissism and Narcissistic Rage," in Paul H. Ornstein, ed., *The Search for the Self, Selected Writings of Heinz Kohut: 1950–1978,* Vol. 2, New York, International Universities Press, 1978.

[16]In a complex article both ridiculing and praising the academy's tendency to reward publications more handsomely than teaching and admitting that most research is of little value, Derek Bok suggests that nonetheless there may be no other way to significant findings. Oddly, he does not suggest even a judicious discouraging of research for the sake of career. See his "What's Wrong With Our Universities?" *Harvard Magazine,* May–June 1990, pp. 44–59, particularly pp. 48–49.

[17]Robert Lynd, *Knowledge for What?,* Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1948, p. 4.

[18]*Ibid.,* p. 9.

[19]Robert S. Lynd and Helen Merrell Lynd, *Middletown in Transition,* New York, Harcourt, Brace and World, 1937, p. 86 and Ch. 8.