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EDITORIAL

The Professions and Scholarly Communities: Creating the Public's Questions and Understandings in the Public Square

Lorraine Kasprisin

Editor

Controversy addressed in this issue:

Professionals and scholarly communities in all fields bring a special expertise to the discussion of ideas in the public square of a democracy. At times, democratic decisions or views widely held by the public conflict with sound professional knowledge of the professional or scholarly community, and challenge the integrity of the choices that a professional must make in a particular case. At other times, the professional is faced with a conflict within the profession itself between deeply entrenched traditions and the challenges posed by newer paradigms. Under both circumstances, the professional is left with a decision about the ethical path to follow and the result will influence the public's understanding and questions. This issue of the Journal of Educational Controversy examines instances where professionals are faced with a dilemma that either pits a democratic decision against the expertise of professional standards or a conflict within the profession itself when traditional paradigms are challenged. How does the professional examine the choices that would have to be weighed and consider the most ethical position that should be taken?

This issue of the Journal of Educational Controversy looks at the ways the professions and the scholarly communities shape the public's understandings and questions. Bringing expertise and professional norms to the public square is fraught with tensions and dilemmas. Sometimes these tensions arise because professional expertise comes into conflict with the democratic will. Other times, conflicts emerge within the communities of scholars and professions themselves when new paradigms challenge traditional ones.

The papers in this issue reflect both of these tensions. In "Privacy and Library Records, a Case Study in Whatcom County," librarian Joan Airoidi gives us an account of her experience when confronted by the FBI with a request for records of library patrons. The paper reflects the enduring tension between security and privacy in a democratic society. Airoidi begins her article by framing it with e-mails and letters that she received from the public as a result of her refusal to hand over the records. The public's response reveals another tension: In addition to the tension between professional authority and political power, there are also conflicting views within the public itself.

Following this personal account of a real-life experience, our next article steps back and provides an analysis of the meaning of terms like public and public speech and examines the "significance of public speech in a democratic polity." In "Freedom of Conscience and the Wall of Separation," John Covaleskie uses this framework to specifically examine the role of religious discourse in the public life of a polity. Two case studies in educational decision-making are used to exemplify the kind of public space that can be created to include religious values and religious ideas within the democratic conversation.

Our next three articles examine issues that arise within the profession or scholarly community. In "The Give Away Spirit: Reaching a Shared Vision of Ethical Indigenous Research Relationships," Jioanna Carjuzaa and J. Kay Fenimore-Smith challenge the dominance of the Western research paradigm with an Indigenous way of knowing. They argue that the Western research paradigm is neither acultural nor apolitical and moreover has historically been destructive, disrespectful, and exploitive of Native communities. The authors provide a model in which more "equitable relationships and interactions between Indigenous peoples and the academy" might be possible.

Who is an insider and who is an outsider is explored in our next article, "Outsiders/Within and In/Outsiders: Varieties of Multiculturalism." Kathy Hoover and the late Mary F. Rogers offer the reader a more complex, nuanced understanding of the lived experiences and roles people play in institutions by rejecting the simple insider-outsider dualisms. Essentially, they place at the center those whose lives have been marginalized or subordinated and focus on the complexity of their narratives and voices along multiple dimensions of social positioning and the intersection of multiple identities. They draw our attention to an "organizational identity ...capable of making psychological and social space for struggle" in a new postmodernist, critical multiculturalism.

Our next author also offers a more complex understanding of another concept that has shaped our public discourse on race. In her article, "Situating Our Racialized Beings in the Race Talk in the U.S.: African-born Blacks, Our Experience of

Racialization, and Some Implications for Education,” Rosaire I. Ifedi goes beyond our traditional dichotomy of Black and White and suggests a reinterpretation of the concept of racialization that involves a more complex contradictory consciousness. Using her experience as an African-born transnational along with research and findings from a study of African-born women faculty in the U.S., the author puts forth a counter-story that “reframes the conversation” of our talk about race in the United States and the implications it might have for how we educate our children. The author calls upon the academy “to facilitate and lead such efforts if it is to live up to its role as a place of transformation and of knowledge creation.”

In “High Stakes Motherhood and School Choice,” Amy B. Shuffelton approaches our topic from a very different perspective. She makes the claim that “at certain times and places, motherhood is treated, in public discourse and by mothers themselves, very much as a profession,” and draws out the implications for such a claim. Using the decision over school choice, Shuffelton ponders the dilemma of the motivational force of the “ideology of intensive mothering,” with its sole and total responsibility for the well-being of one’s offspring, against the moral commitment toward a more just society that supports the well-being of all its children. The author concludes that in its “dismissal of community responsibility for child-raising, professionalized motherhood is bad for democracy.”

In “Ethical Breach and the Schizophrenic Process: Theorizing the Judge and the Teacher,” Heather Greenhalgh-Spencer and Bryce Bartlett look at the similarities and differences between the judging and the teaching professions. Using Deleuzian theory, the authors’ intent is “to track the infiltration of capitalist discourse and economic models onto judging and teaching, its concomitant tensions with the labor conditions and professional identity of teachers and judges, and the development of lines of escape by judges.” For judges, unlike teachers, the authors contend, have been able to escape from the service of the market into a “multiplicity of what it means to labor as a judge.”

Finally, in our review of the film, “Waiting for Superman,” we look at the dilemma from the perspective of the mass media and professional judgment. In the article, “Waiting for Superman: He’s ‘adequate’ and near proficient!,” Alice E. Ginsberg examines the effect that the media has played in manufacturing a particular picture of an educational crisis in the public’s mind. The film, “Waiting for Superman,” which is currently playing in theaters across the nation and featured on such popular TV shows as the Oprah Winfrey Show, reinforces much of the national political rhetoric that has been repeated over and over by mainstream newspapers and magazines. Together they project a view of the purpose of education as linked to “America’s world dominance and economic supremacy.” It is against this view of education as market-driven that the author takes issue and asks the reader to consider the questions that are not asked and the ideas that are silenced in the current debate around the public purposes of our schools.