Alternative models of professorial roles: New languages to reimagine faculty work

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ABSTRACT (ABSTRACT)

The language we use to describe faculty roles is the language of things counted, accountants, accountability. To keep themselves alive as scholars and develop creativity in students, faculty members need to think about their work using the language of play, mysticism, soul, archetype, mythology, passion, madness, emotions, art, and community.

FULL TEXT

How should faculty members think about their work? I believe that language is the key to thinking about faculty roles, because language shapes images of faculty, limits what we can think about them, and creates legitimacy for the chosen images. My purpose here is to consider various roles for faculty members, not to prescribe them. I hope to provide alternate languages that faculty members and others can use to imagine new roles, new ways for faculty members to work. By "roles" I mean the expectations that faculty members have for themselves and the expectations that others have for them.

This is not an article about historical or sociological contexts and assumptions about faculty roles. I make the assertion that the language currently used at research universities to describe faculty work is constraining regardless of its source. It emphasizes quantity as opposed to quality, extrinsic as opposed to intrinsic characteristics of work, a lack of trust of faculty members, and an emphasis on the procurement of resources. The purpose of the article is to propose different languages to think about work. This scholarship involved finding examples of these languages on the premise that if faculty members can talk of their work in a new way, they can work in a new way.

It is often the unseen changes, changes that come upon us slowly, without even our knowing, that are most important. It is not the number of articles we have published, nor the complaints in the newspapers, nor the question of who is in charge, nor our changes in status, nor the number of budget lines in our departments. Each may be important, may draw attention to itself, make us angry or happy; but these are changes on the surface only.

More powerful changes take place when we talk about our lives at work in a different language. When a new language becomes pervasive, it reifies a new world. Our naming and identifying elements in that world make us imagine that no other world is possible. When I think about alternative models of the professorial role, I am thinking we need a new language to think about work. Only then can we reimagine what it is to be a faculty member.

The language of the academy, by which I mean research university, has changed. I don't know when the change occurred; in fact, I may have only a romantic notion that the language I want to use to describe university work ever existed. But I am sure that the language we now use is poison. Once, the undergraduate curriculum held the faculty together: we taught and students learned, and that was our main engagement. After the success of the Manhattan Project and other uses of science in World War II, the research hegemony arose. Undergraduates, once the chief focus of faculty attention, became fodder for the graduate research enterprise; universities became not just big business, but big businesses.

How do we talk about higher education now? This is the language I hear: efficiency, productivity, technology, credit

hours generated, grants with overhead received, accountability, assessment, competition, costs, total quality management. This is not the language of education or morality or scholarship or learning or community; it is the language of counting, accountants, accountability and, to a greater or lesser extent, it is how we imagine our enterprise.

For example, in responsibility centered budgeting, centralized monies are allocated back to subunits that are productive in two ways: in generating credit hours and receiving research grants with overhead. There is pressure to increase the size of classes, whether learning is improved for students or not, and pressure to increase the scale of funded research, whether the research is driven by need for knowledge or not. In both cases, resources for the institution are increased. The institution becomes easier to manage, but whether student learning and disciplinary knowledge are improved by such activities is less certain.

The accountability movement has also heightened faculty awareness that they are being watched, judged, and expected to meet standards. In the best circumstances, the information generated from assessments helps to improve teaching and scholarship. Though helpful to some faculty, an emphasis on accountability shortens the timetables for producing scholarship. There are pressures to forego research that might take several years to complete in favor of scholarship that becomes trivial as faculty search for the smallest publishable unit on the shortest possible timeline.

A "standard" implies "one size fits all," but in academe the diversity of approaches to scholarship is enormous, and standardized practices often fail to produce the intended results. We need to acknowledge the complex context in which faculty are embedded. If we are to change our role, we should recognize what others expect of us, and if we ignore their desires, we should know why we do.

It would be convenient for faculty to believe that the language that we currently use comes from the administration. Some definitional issues should be approached. If we were analytical philosophers, we might never agree on a definition of faculty, or of administrators, or of people like department chairs, who are often faculty-administrators. I sidestep the issue by referring to role theory and defining administrators as those whose primary role is to support the academic enterprise (coordinating efforts and procuring and allocating resources) and faculty as those people whose primary role is to engage in academic endeavors (creating, distributing, and applying knowledge). Precision in definition is an intellectual game that dissuades us from confronting the issue at hand. No matter how we define faculty and distinguish them from administrators, the language used in the academy to describe faculty work has changed.

In earlier drafts of this article I was convinced that the administration was to blame for this change. But the issue may be similar to the Yeshiva and Boston University court decisions related to collective bargaining, in which faculty were found to have responsibilities similar to managers. In particular, faculty participate in setting rewards for other faculty members through peer evaluation and votes on promotion and tenure. Thus faculty have, through intention, collusion, or unwittingly, participated in changes in the language that currently describes faculty roles. The question is not, "Where did the language we currently use come from?" but "What are the consequences of using different languages to talk about faculty work?"

Although the administration may not be responsible for the creation of this language, many administrative practices reinforce its use. Administrators control faculty rewards based on this language. Faculty change their roles in response to changing rewards. Hence, there is pressure on the faculty to change their roles in response to the imagination of accountancy efficiency, productivity, and the rest. It is unwise to ignore these aspects of work, because our institutions have limited resources. It seems equally unwise to equate the success of the academy with the success of the academic bureaucracy.

Administrators play an important part in shaping faculty roles; however, they are not the only actors. If the faculty have wrested the power to determine their work from the administrators, as Jencks and Reisman (1968) would have us believe, then it is obvious that what faculty think about themselves is extremely important in determining faculty roles. Though faculty may be free to make choices, the choices are constrained by what the administration legitimizes through its language. Using administrators' language, therefore, constitutes a de facto acceptance of

administrative control over faculty roles.

A different option would be for the faculty to invent their own work lives, consistent with the language and values of scholarship and education, broadly conceived, as opposed to accountability. Inventing this life is difficult when the language that pervades the workplace reinforces competitive, quantitative success. Competition and the resulting status gained from a win-lose model of academic success is now so deeply ingrained into faculty thinking that they may not even recognize it. Ranking based on grade level, school status, grading, getting or not getting a job, getting or not getting tenure, being published, receiving a grant, being promoted, or receiving good student evaluations is pandemic. Resisting thinking of academic work in these terms is difficult indeed.

Another difficulty with reinventing our work lives has its roots in a general faculty malaise. Academy bashing, which contributes to this malaise, is practiced both inside and outside of colleges and universities. It is reinforced through such popular books as Profscam (Sykes, 1988) or The Closing of the American Mind (Bloom, 1987). Other books, such as Killing the Spirit (Smith, 1990) and The Moral Collapse of the University (Wilshire, 1990), are less well known but echo similar themes. Articles and editorials from publications such as Change, The Chronicle of Higher Education, and Academe are constant reminders of questions that are being raised about appropriate faculty roles. Newspapers and news magazines often carry complaints against higher education that question exactly what roles faculty should play. Legislators provide another venue for complaints about faculty, especially in regard to the costs of higher education.

Perhaps the most stinging problem occurs within the academy under the headings "postmodernism" and "paradigm shifts." The key postmodern criticism is that "truth," the modernist glue that held the academy together, has been replaced by ideology and point of view (Sarup, 1993). Because the academy is a thoroughly modern institution, this criticism cuts to the core. A second criticism, related to shifting paradigms, is also quite unsettling. If the fundamental disciplinary world view is called into question, the rules for "how to behave" are similarly questioned. If we are no longer certain of our ends (what truth to seek) and means (what methods to use), we no longer have the basis on which to clarify our roles. Though both criticisms make role definition problematic, the uncertainty they generate provides an opportunity for change.

Postmodernism, whatever its benefits in making us more self-critical in our thinking and more aware of hierarchies and power imbalances in the academy, has not made us more secure in our identity as faculty members. I am reminded of an aphorism of Sir William Osler, a professor of medicine at Johns Hopkins University a century ago, who was reported by my grandfather to have said about newspapers: "If you see anything in them that you know is true, begin to doubt it at once" (Bean &Bean, 1950, p. 60). Whatever we know as a fact, when we put on our post- (or post-post-) modernist hat, we begin to doubt. Uncertainty in our disciplines is reflected in protracted discussions about paradigm shifts. We bicker about abstractions-analytical issues of epistemology, theory, and methodology that may increase our credibility with each other, but the public and even colleagues in other fields are disempowered when we speak a language known only to ourselves.

To be truthful, true to ourselves, invested in student learning, invested in scholarship and creativity, I take as the basis for any legitimate role as faculty members. What next? We should not ignore efficiency and productivity, but neither should we become cogs in the grand machine. Leadership, much touted in the academy today, may be no solution. The image of administrative leadership assumes that faculty cannot lead themselves. As an archetype, it is the master-slave relationship (Denhardt, 1989).

In bureaucracies it is said a person should have only one boss. If knowledge is our boss, what is our president or dean or department chair? Helpful, I would hope. But not directive. In fact, if administrators feel some need to motivate the faculty to work in a certain way, they make the assumption that faculty do not find that work meaningful. In meaningful work, one needs no extrinsic motivation, only time and resources (Seivers, 1994).

To bemoan the problem does not solve it. There are, I believe, certain positive ideas that should be considered in defining new faculty roles. The first is from Hamlet, "To thine own self be true." I believe it imperative, because if one is not true to one's self, it is unlikely that one can be true to anyone else. To know one's self is not an easy task, and there is little support for introspection. If we neglect the self, the core from which one's integrity emanates, it makes

integrity hard to achieve. Despite these difficulties, a reaffirmation of being true to one's self seems desirable. Especially if a faculty member ultimately must be accountable to his or her self.

The second positive idea is that faculty should value students. Students learn more than facts from us. We are role models for students not only as professionals but as human beings. It is unlikely that any new definition of faculty work can ignore students.

The third positive idea is that faculty should do research or creative work or scholarly work for intrinsic reasons. One should work for the development of one's discipline, or one's self, or of knowledge and expression. To make this point may seem sophomoric, but self-promotion and institutional promotion are constant temptations. We must confront the value of extrinsic rewards used by the administration. Materialism and status should not define our roles, because they conflict with other academic values (Shils, 1984).

Avoiding certain negative ideas could also constrain our thinking about faculty roles. The first is a restatement of the last paragraph. Extrinsically defined roles should be avoided because of their incompatibility with the academic ethos. Serving a second master (money, politics, religion, fame) keeps us from being true to ourselves, our students, or our disciplines.

When our extrinsic rewards are high, we have won the game of evaluation, but we may or may not have served our selves, our disciplines, or our students. The primary extrinsic rewards for faculty are salary and promotion. These outcomes from our work are rewarding if our value system is based on materialism and status, values that are prevalent in American culture; however, there is a dark side to these values. To endorse materialism, to teach our students this value through our example, to export this value through international students around the world, raises the specter of sustainability. The earth does not have the natural resources to provide to all inhabitants of the planet the material standard of living that exists in the United States. Whatever the virtues of materialism, it also contains a death wish for the planet.

Status as a value system fits with the notion of a meritocracy-the rule of merit. Though achieving status is not necessarily a bad thing, status systems are hierarchical and competitive. Feminists and social constructionists have challenged the validity and usefulness of such approaches. The implication of their arguments is that cooperative, relational, and participatory learning and social environments may be preferable to competitive and hierarchical ones (Gilligan, 1982). By extension, if faculty roles are to allow for such approaches, then we must abandon a blind adherence to status attainment.

One extrinsic reward that historically attracted faculty to college and university teaching was summers off that represented the value of leisure time. In The Overworked American Juliet Schor (1992) documented the erosion of leisure time in our society, finding that Americans on the average are working one month more per year than they did twenty years ago. In the sixties the popular and academic presses were wondering what Americans would do with all their free time as we entered an era of thirty-hour work weeks and four-day weekends. Schor argues that it is the nature of capitalism to reduce leisure time, which fits nicely with the Puritan ethic, e.g., idleness is the Devil's work. As a result we have become a leisure-phobic society. The value of leisure, a time of reflection as opposed to action, of play and creativity as opposed to analysis, of rest instead of work, seems to have been lost. One example from the academy is the fate of sabbatical leaves, whose name comes from a time of "laying fallow"; they are now little more than time off from teaching to do research. Rest, reflection, and regeneration are disdained.

Perhaps the greatest danger to faculty members is that the definition of their roles will endorse workaholism as a virtue. Jung might have considered workaholism as the shadow of being productive. The discussion of workaholism in The Addictive Organization by Schaef and Fassel (1988) is the source for many of my arguments in the following paragraphs.

First and foremost, workaholism is a pathology, not a virtue, even if it is rewarded and even if it is a norm. A person addicted to the process of work is out of control. Characteristics of addiction include denial, confusion, dishonesty, a scarcity model, the illusion of control, frozen feelings, and an ethical deterioration that leaves an addict spiritually bankrupt. Denial that there is a problem is the most important symptom, because it prevents the addict from acknowledging a need to change. A reader of the academy-bashing literature might find this language familiar in the

criticism of faculty members.

Addiction relies on processes such as the promise, which takes a person out of the present time into the future. Academic tenure is one example of socializing faculty members to respond to a distant "promise." Another process is external referencing, in which one's sense of self is developed outside oneself. Faculty members often depend on external references, like the editors of refereed journals, to assess their worth as scholars. A third process is invalidation. Here the addict defines into nonexistence ideas that she or he doesn't like or can't control. This process has been observed in "groupthink" situations (Janis, 1972). Invalidation, and the associated self-censorship, can often be seen in faculty meetings. Each constrains possibilities for new faculty roles. Whether we're workaholics or not, it is invalidation that makes changing roles in the academy so difficult. Hard work is to be admired; workaholism is not. "Flow," a concept described by Csikszentmihalyi (1975), is an effortless kind of work that exists between boredom and anxiety. Now anxiety seems to be winning out. For the workaholic work is not a natural part of life but a neurotic activity used to avoid feeling alive.

Three desirable things to consider in a new definition of faculty roles are to be true to ourselves, to value students, and to work for intrinsic reasons. Simultaneously, we should avoid externally defined roles, the primacy of extrinsic rewards, and workaholism. These characteristics form a baseline from which new roles might emerge.

Let me return to my thesis: we can reimagine faculty work if we use legitimate new languages to talk about our roles. It is time to move beyond the language of counting and accountability and consider describing faculty work in new languages. I should post a disclaimer here. Many people in many fields may already use these ideas in defining their work. If so, bravo.

The first language I'd like to consider is that of play. By this I do not mean the language of games, which are both rule based and competitive and drive us toward a win-lose mentality (Huizinga, 1949). The language of play includes such words as transformation, creativity, risk taking, suspending judgment, avoiding rigidity, testing new roles and ideas in safety, and building trust and community (Schwartzman, 1978). Rather than trivial and inconsequential, Gadamer, a hermeneutical philosopher, suggests that "our capacity for play is an expression of the highest seriousness" (Neill &Ridley, 1995, p. 75).

It is the creativity of play that may be most important in a transitional period. The importance of creativity in organizational success is perhaps the central theme of The Tom Peter's Seminar (Peters, 1994). Bureaucratic rules, control, accountability, and assessment create an environment where risk-taking is dangerous and creativity itself is at risk. The preconditions for play may be difficult to achieve, but failing to achieve them, the opportunity to use creativity in teaching and research is lost. If we do not teach creatively, it is unlikely our students will learn to act creatively.

The second language to be considered in reimagining faculty roles is that of mysticism. In mysticism, the unnameable is most important. Wonder, surprise, and the profound effects from simplicity influence teaching and scholarship. In research, a mystic confronts the limitations of analytical systems. Good meditation is preferable to sophistry. In the classroom, students learn what it is to be human from teachers who are more than their subject matter specialties; more than the number of entries on their resumes. James P. Carse (1994) in Breakfast at the Victory relates a story of medical students who attend a lecture en masse the first day and form study groups. At the next class ten student arrive with tape recorders. Once the instructor is out of town and an assistant brings in a taped lecture, which is played for the ten tape recorders. And we wonder why our doctors sound like tape recorders, and we long for someone who cares about our health, not our pathologies.

Carse continues, talking about the mystical in teaching: "We know we have met . . . a teacher when we come away amazed not at what the teacher was thinking but at what we are thinking.... Those around whom surprising thinking emerges are teachers" (1994, p. 70). The human presence becomes the essence of teaching, the opposite of what distance education provides. Technology may advance the distribution of knowledge, but what of wisdom? Can a machine teach humanity and ethical responsibility to the possessors of knowledge? Mystics think not.

The third language comes from work about the soul, archetypes, and mythology. Thomas Moore (1992), in Care of the Soul, alerts us to the language of soulful caring, which is not heroic or muscular, but means attention, devotion,

husbandry, adorning the body, healing, and being anxious for. The soul relates to depth, value, relatedness, heart, and personal substance. Soul here does not refer to a religious belief, nor is it related to immortality (p. 5). Robert Sardello (1992), in Facing the World with Soul, speaks of education as guidance of the soul into the world. He finds that materialism, which reduces the world to abstract processes, is the antithesis of the invisible-soulfulness. To be soulful means to have psychological, spiritual, relational, and emotional integrity. As Moore writes, "Care of the soul is not solving the puzzle of life; quite the opposite, it is an appreciation of the paradoxical mysteries that blend light and darkness into the grandeur of what human life and culture can be" (1992, p. xix). Descartes's gift to us was empiricism, and the shadow of that gift was loss of body and soul (see Berman, 1981).

The archetype, an idea borrowed from Jungian psychology, involves the world of images. Elie Humbert's book C. G. Jung, (1984) describes archetypes as unconscious predispositions to see the world in particular ways, which, when given cultural input, result in archetypal images (motifs, typical figures, primordial images). Examples include the shadow, sun, moon, and mandala as nonhuman archetypes, whereas mother, fool, and lover are human archetypes. Faculty can find images of their selves in a larger context, in the soul of the world, not only as teachers, but as healers, great mothers, warriors, visionaries, tricksters, and so on. Each archetypal image offers possibilities for playing, living, scholarship, and teaching.

Mythology: Myth provides meaning to what we do, and as Joseph Campbell (1988) writes, it anchors our lives in a broader context. One function of myth is to transform consciousness, that is, to provide explanations and therefore guides for behavior. In mythology one can see how archetypical figures relate to each other and see parallels in our own universes. Myth, similar to other forms of art, invites contemplation, something sorely lacking in the frenzied lives of faculty members. Campbell, in The Power of Myth, wrote:

People say that what we're all seeking is a meaning for life. I don't think that's what we're really seeking. I think that what we're seeking is an experience of being alive, so that our life experiences on the purely physical plane will have resonances within our own innermost being and reality, so that we actually feel the rapture of being alive. That's what it's all finally about, and that's what these clues [myths] help us to find within ourselves. (1988, p. 5) I take this human condition as the need to experience life emotionally, cognitively, aesthetically, spiritually, and imagistically. Faculty should attend to the quest for meaning, especially in their disciplines, but not to the exclusion of experiencing life as fully as possible.

Other languages for faculty to consider concern passion, eros, and madness. Connecting passion and learning is at least as old as Socrates. James Hillman writes:

Art, mission, and transference make eros manifest; so does education. For Socrates, all true teaching. . . was possible only through the daimon of eros. . . . We know that, for Socrates, love and teaching go together, that love is teaching itself, and that "there was no philosophy without friendship or love:" (1972, p. 78)

Here is the language of passion, eros, attachment, love, and identification. This eros is not to be confused with the power-eros of sexual harassment, because the aim of the former is not possession or dominance. To quote from Robert Sardello in Facing the World with Soul:

Every true teacher knows there is a secret erotic life to teaching; and every true learner is in love with the teacher.... True learning makes one vulnerable to the intoxication of love; when one is in love one is learning, the two conditions cannot be separated. The love between teacher and learner is directed not toward possessing each other, but toward caring for the world. It is precisely here that teaching becomes an art, the art of enlarging love to encompass the soul of the world. (1992, p. 54)

The sentiment is shared by Paul Tillich, for whom "an authentic learning community capable of pursuing wisdom in its highest forms can only be founded upon the basis of this shared erotic passion. Thus, eros is the `first foundation' of the academic and intellectual life" (Irwin, 1991). I cannot stress too strongly that I believe we should teach and learn about the world because we love it, not because we're afraid of it and want to control it. When we teach criticism instead of literature, is it because we want to control interpretation? Is the purpose of science dominance over the world or understanding the world? As our academic work shifts away from experiencing the world and toward abstraction, we fail to experience the world and to share that experience with students we should love, not

savage.
In a poetry class I had with Marvin Bell at the Iowa Writers Workshop thirty years ago he complained that the class would take a poem, build a structure around the poem, and talk about the structure. This approach to the study of literature pertains today, when more time is spent on literary criticism than on literature. Or when educators bicker over methodology rather than over substantive issues. Discussions of methodology empower methodologists-other academics-but not those whom the profession is supposed to serve. In trying to make ourselves more legitimate by using the most sophisticated methodology we may only be drying up, becoming more obtuse, and our ability to love either subject matter or student is diminished. In reimagining faculty work, love needs to be taken seriously, not run from in fear.

Love can be considered a kind of madness, and other forms of madness offer other opportunities for change. Raphael Sassower in an essay called "On Madness in the Academy," would encourage us to "include the outrageousness of experimenting, committing blatant mistakes and trespassing all boundaries, deliberately upsetting norms, and challenging everything from tradition to belief, from thought to actions" (1994, p. 476) to create a world of transformed reality. He, while referencing the OED, conceives of madness as "out-of-the-ordinariness," "passing all rational bounds in demeanor or conduct," "extravagant in gaiety, wild," "carried away by enthusiasm or desire, wildly excited, infatuated" (p. 475). He contrasts that with what I consider the dry rot of scholarship: "The silver platter of respectable scholarship demands incestuous relations within ongoing debates to which each participant contributes yet another footnote to a footnote" (p. 476). A role for faculty that includes madness allows for substantial change rather than just "making changes." Most important, the frames we take for granted are made clear in the face of madness and, like a fish discovering water, the familiar frames that constrain us can be discovered, and new frames we can grow into become new possibilities.

Another language of possibilities for changing faculty roles is that of emotions and includes such feelings as joy, fear, greed, grief, anger, pain, shame, guilt, happiness, empathy, caring, and so on. Bureaucracies were designed to promote rationality and eliminate irrationality (Weber, 1947), and human feelings were an early casualty. Feelings are made invisible in most organizations and studies of colleges and universities. We work in a sea of unacknowledged emotions, and any new role that reflects "logic-in-use," needs to access and acknowledge emotions. In Stephen Fineman's book, Emotion in Organizations (1993), there are numerous examples of how we engage in emotional labor, showing emotions we don't feel at work, while failing to acknowledge our feelings, such as love or grief, that influence our work.

That emotions exert great power in our lives-which shouldn't be news to us-was brought to national attention through a cover story in Time Magazine (1995). The centerpiece of the article was Daniel Goleman's book, Emotional Intelligence (1995) in which he emphasizes the important fact that understanding and responding appropriately to our emotions may be the best predictor of success in our lives. "Remedial emotional education" may apply to faculty as well as children. Time writes, "If there is a cornerstone to emotional intelligence on which most other emotional skills depend, it is a sense of self-awareness, of being smart about what we feel" (p. 63). This sentence resonates with Shakespeare's admonition - to be true to the self we must know what we feel. We must acknowledge feelings in new faculty roles. If our emotional quotient is more important than our intelligence quotient for success in our lives, then a faculty role including emotions could improve not only our own lives but the lives of our students and the values underlying our research.

Yet another language that can be used in reassessing faculty roles is the language of art. This language includes the ideas of beauty, harmony, balance, composition, rhythm, perspective, proportion, space, form, volume, color, movement, and so on in work. It also includes the idea of gestalt, of the emotional and rational response to work as a whole. What makes our jobs beautiful, or balanced, or rhythmic, or composed? If we are in the business of truth, and as Keats would have us believe, "truth is beauty," suddenly it may not seem so far afield to consider the aesthetic of working. We often refer to things as "more art than science," but in that sense we are often referring to more uncertainty than certainty, not that something is more full of beauty and less full of knowing.

Rumi, an 11th century mystic Sufi poet, addressed the issue of work:

Today, like every other day, we wake up empty
and frightened. Don't open the door to the study
and begin reading. Take down a musical instrument.
Let the beauty we love be what we do.
There are hundreds of ways to kneel and kiss the ground.
(Barks, 1995, p. 38)

If we are to let the beauty we love be what we do, we must incorporate beauty into our work.

The final language to consider in changing our roles is that of community. I grew up in an academic community hearing the university described as "a community of scholars." Karl Weick (1983), in an essay entitled "Contradictions in a Community of Scholars: The Cohesion-Accuracy Tradeoff," describes how becoming more specialized in our research (accuracy) has weakened the sense of community in higher education. If we cannot reimagine our work considering community, the chances of a meaningful transformation of our work are limited. The language of community is a language of relationships, mutual obligations, a place for making and sharing meaning, for avoiding loneliness and isolation. Real transformation takes place when it moves from the individual into the community. Community includes rights and responsibilities. If the academic community forms around the right to academic freedom, without which, it is claimed, no university could exist, what responsibilities does membership in this community entail? Here we must be true to ourselves, true to a broad conception of our work so that the full diversity of knowledge and the full range of human participants in the academic community are felt and heard, are studied, are taken to heart, are taken seriously, are not marginalized.

Obviously, other languages pertain to reimagining faculty roles. I have chosen these (play, mysticism, soul, mythology, archetype, passion, eros, madness, emotions, art, community) not as a definitive list, but because each represents a subject about which faculty members can legitimately concern themselves when thinking about their work. Although I consider these subjects legitimate, the list represents the anima, or feminine, and is the antithesis of most definitions of faculty roles. Because universities were designed by men, and I think it is accurate to say, for men, the other list, representing the animus, or masculine, bears repeating: efficiency, productivity, technology, credit hours generated, grants with overhead received, accountability, assessment, competition, costs, total quality management.

The summary of this article is presented in Table 1. Here two kinds of languages are laid out in stark contrast. We should acknowledge the value of the productive aspects of our roles but not limit our work to this narrow perspective. The talk of accountants should not have automatic ascendancy over the other lists I have generated here. To be creative, we must not be afraid of new possibilities.

As we approach the end of the millennia, the usual fin de sidcle reckonings may be magnified. Faculty roles are in transition. An assistant professor coming up for tenure confided in me that her publications and teaching record were fine, but she didn't have a "big grant" and might not get tenure. It may not be enough to be a scholar and teacher, one must also be an entrepreneur. If raising money is so important that a faculty member might lose her job because she had not raised enough, the opportunity to sell out (e.g., serve money as a master and not knowledge) may become a necessity for personal survival. I despair not just for her, but for the academic ethos.

Though many are not as directly affected as the assistant professor above, faculty are criticized, faculty are uncertain, and a malaise prevails. Now is a time to care for faculty, to encourage them to use a new language to talk about future possibilities for their work. The administration is not likely to abandon the system it controls, an extrinsic model based on hierarchy, materialism, and status, for a more human and humane model based on sustainability, self knowledge, the new possibilities for work provided in the language used here. It becomes each faculty member's responsibility to recreate faculty's role.

TABLE 1

The Language of Accountancy Compared to Other Languages that Could Describe Faculty Work

1. ACCOUNTANCY/BUSINESS: efficiency, productivity, technology, credit hours generated, grants with overhead received, accountability, assessment, competition, costs, total quality management.

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2. PLAY: transformation, creativity, risk taking, suspending judgment, avoiding rigidity, testing new roles and ideas in safety, and building trust and community.
3. MYSTICISM: wonder, surprise, simplicity, meditation, the meaning of being human, amazement, limitations of analytical systems.
4. SOULFULNESS: not heroic or muscular, giving attention, devotion, and husbandry, adorning the body, healing, being anxious for; connected with depth, value, relatedness, heart, personal substance, invisible psychological, spiritual, relational, and emotional integrity.
5. ARCHETYPAL IMAGES: mother, fool, lover, healer, great mother, warrior, visionary, trickster.
6. MYTHOLOGY: transforming consciousness, guiding behavior, finding parallels, contemplation, experiencing the rapture of being alive.
7. PASSION: passion, eros, attachment, love, identification.
8. MADNESS: being outrageous, making blatant mistakes, trespassing boundaries, upsetting norms, challenging everything, creating a world of transformed reality, out-of-the-ordinary, passing all rational bounds, extravagant in gaiety, wild, carried away by enthusiasm or desire, wildly excited, infatuated, creating new frames.
9. EMOTIONS: joy, fear, greed, grief, anger, pain, shame, guilt, happiness, empathy, caring, emotional intelligence.
10. ART: beauty, harmony, balance, composition, rhythm, perspective, proportion, space, form, volume, color, and movement in work.
11. COMMUNITY: relationships, mutual obligations, making and sharing meaning, avoiding loneliness and isolation, transformation, rights, responsibilities.

Enlarge this image.

It is interesting to speculate for a moment what an institution in which faculty defined their work in these languages

might be like. The answer seems clear but a little daunting: utopian. A place where the lines between work and play are blurred, because each student and faculty member is fully invested in learning and discovering, creating, taking risks; where wonder and surprise are valued; where each person is connected to the depth of their being, has emotional, spiritual and relational integrity; where myth and archetype are observed and enacted in such a way as to provide depth to the experience of life and an understanding of what that life is; where scholars are passionate about their love of knowledge; where turning the world upside down is not terrifying but edifying; where the irrational is not feared and the limits of rationality are recognized; where emotions are acknowledged to be part of academic life and not repressed; where beauty and harmony and artistic expression are valued; where each member of the community makes and shares meaning and responsibilities consistent with these ideals.

Utopian societies fail, but utopian ideals can be guides, reminders of our potential. It is not realistic in this society to ignore what accountants say, else your account becomes empty. Strategies for survival are important for colleges and universities, but when survival, growth, and status become more important than the quality and character of one's work, the purpose of an institution needs to be reassessed: Are we here to keep our jobs or to do scholarly work? When one's work is more influenced by the potential to increase income than by disciplinary needs, something is amiss.

Readers with accountability on the brain might be terrified by such a place, operating according to the laws of love of learning and passion for knowledge instead of budget, rule, and order. The Soviets were long terrified of letting market forces and not centralized planning operate their economy. Many are now flourishing. There is little doubt in my mind that if such a university existed, the best faculty and the best students would flock to it. As a result, it would likely become one of the wealthiest and most productive institutions.

Any language can be constraining. If a faculty member believes he or she has to behave a certain way because of the language in vogue, or if someone in an administrative role evaluates someone's work according to preset and rigid criteria, it shows that any approach can be misused. If a fundamentalist view is taken, one that is based on rigid adherence to prescribed activities, damage can be done no matter where one begins. In order to reimagine work, a faculty member must continually be open to possibilities. New languages give faculty members different ways of thinking about their work and thereby avoiding getting stuck in a nonacademic free-for-all for status, money, and things.

It is time that we take responsibility for our own work, define our role broadly, and contribute to the society that supports us. Although we are not likely to escape public scrutiny, only if we are accountable to ourselves can we be accountable to the public. Only if we reimagine our work, can we serve the soul of the world.

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