

EXPLORING

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The Observation

This note is written in an attempt to shine some light on the funding problem universally faced by individual explorers of scientific frontiers. This note is particularly appropriate for the subjects of “free energy machines”, “cold fusion” or nuclear waste remediation. The exploration referred to here is concerned only with scientific investigation on *new* frontiers where guidance from past records is not as much help as one is led to believe, and in fact, may be a hindrance to efficient progress.

This story has not been made up, as this subject has been a major part of the author’s life. Also, there is not a single note of bitterness in the author’s mind concerning the gulf between the inventor’s world and the academic methods to be discussed here. It is likely that this separation is the only way to preserve the much needed thought independence required for creative thinking and invention in truly new areas. The author does not advocate joining the explorer with institutions. Even though this union would initially provide funding for advanced exploration, it would likely become an insidious process for removing the freedom to roam into uncharted and unexplored areas.

Definition of an Explorer

An Explorer is the human tip of an arrow-like probe into the future where no teachers have gone before. They say explorers are easily recognized as one rides along the frontier in a comfortable Calistoga wagon. Explorers are the ones beside the trail whose face is in the mud and have an arrow in the back. That illusion is not too far from the truth as they are frequently attacked while crossing treacherous territory all alone.

For the scientific explorer, attacks most often come from the most benign looking sources—academic institutions. Explorers must be natural, self-motivated leaders and possibly those that cannot be taught, as they must learn new things for themselves instead of being taught. This characteristic alone is basis enough for an attack from the academic camp as it demonstrates nonconformity, an incorrigible act.

Definition of an Institution

The prime characteristic of an institution is stability and the appearance of this stability must be guarded at all costs. Associating with an unruly explorer jeopardizes stability, hence, lunch money. This cannot be allowed to happen and the explorer must be attacked. To maintain this stance, clubs are formed and rules of stability are generated. No one can enter the club without swearing allegiance to the code. Unfortunately, the rules cannot also encompass the unfettered behavior required of the explorer. Exploration is thus diminished in such an institution that acts only as the receptacle of both people and funds but where there is no intrinsic greatness in it nor is there any carryover from days of great and beneficial activity. An institution is just a tin cup fighting for its life by begging for alms.

Teaching is not consistent with exploration as exploration points up the future whereas teaching is bringing up the rear. Teaching is largely a standardization process that benefits society and not necessarily the individual. Different mentalities are required for these two functions and the result of combining them results in damping of future quests. One might ask how schools acquired the right to dictate the future courses of scientific endeavor through their confiscation of exploration?

Schools did this simply by having the largest clubs and using this base of power to usurp the position. Explorers are not organizers and either cannot or will not accrete sufficient power to be financed in a like manner from unskilled sources of funding. They must rely either on their own meager resources or on those of skilled resource managers who know how to look for viable frontiers and frontiersmen. This is not an easy job and such funding sources are rare. Under these conditions, the tin cup wins as it is easy to drop funds into it.

The above remarks about the apparent characteristics of academic institutions should not be taken as an overall condemnation of their behavior as they have a vital function in educating the mass of people that can be considered as learning disadvantaged and incapable of learning without being taught in an institution. Unfortunately, this behemoth of an institution has seized control over the mind and body of those perfectly capable of learning without assistance by forcing them to obey their club rules or face social exorcism. This universal slogan chants, "Join or die". With this concomitant reduction in rank, funding becomes unavailable from those who only contribute by the *tin cup* method used to fund institutions.

The Dividing Line

An arbitrary division line exists between the explorer being discussed here and the academic method. In this division, the explorer must choose a project or route of exploration that he can complete by himself. His only proof of having found a truly worthwhile trophy will be the proper functioning of the machine he designs and builds. This inventor does not need anything else for proof, let alone a theory for the machine. This is a wonderfully efficient system and the machine's very existence declares all that is needed. Leave the theory for those incapable of exploration.

In using the academic method, the imagined path to the future is first divided into as many parts as there are participants in the institution or collection of institutions. These parts will be parceled out in finely divided form because no single person is deemed capable of solving the entire problem. This is certainly the true and necessary case for many large ventures, but virtually every new task is treated in this same manner.

As the data flows in from participants, it is published through a tedious communication system that removes any hint of speculation, as this is the way to show the all-important stability needed for funding. Upon close inspection, it will turn out that the communication aspect alone absorbs far more energy and funding than doing the actual work. There is certainly a need for a document, but the overabundance of needless documentation usually generated by such a method often obscures much of the true data. The overemphasis on paper generation chokes real productivity. For the production of real human good, Publish or Perish becomes Publish *and* Perish.

The inefficiency of exploration using the academic system is incredibly large and we do pay excessively for it. The only justification the author can see for it is that the excessive funding is spread to many of the underprivileged being taught that would otherwise have no way to participate. This produces a massive underpinning for the work that, in turn, creates stability even for undesirable areas of activity. Viewing progress produced by this method reveals that the best notions often die at the expense of supporting the large and ungainly ones, but the latter produces an acceptable form of social welfare for scientists.

Conspiracy and Suppression

The overlapping of the two territories of academia and explorers becomes a battleground for funds and each accuses the other of some atrocious act. The explorer screams he is being exploited, or that there is a conspiracy to suppress him. The academic community says the explorer is incapable of producing work fit for their annals and will have no part of it. There is probably no overt conspiracy going on and it is far more likely that there is a simple boundary violation in dispute. Each has a place and should occupy it productively without rancor as each niche has been proven over time to be necessary.

Accord on this boundary matter still does not solve the funding problem for the explorer. Aside from finding sophisticated investors capable of seeing the efficient route to the future, there is probably no solution for the explorer. By electing to be an explorer, a way must also be found to survive in the paucity of the scientific wilderness.