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Power in the Highest Degree: Professionals and the Rise of a New Mandarin Order

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quality that accounts for the aforementioned distractions in a style of writing not uncommon to this particular genre.

In writing for clinicians, the author acknowledges the many competing voices in the field of anger management, but asserts that each, in its own way, lacks a needed comprehensiveness of approach, particularly with regard to addressing the more sociological dimensions of the emotion. The author's stated contribution is to integrate these various perspectives and approaches to bring about this comprehensiveness, thereby offering greater potential for success in managing anger. Within the book, the author does not indicate if I.A.M. either has undergone or is undergoing any controlled or comparative clinical study.

Finally, this reviewer recommends that the author consider developing a clinical manual for I.A.M. This can elaborate upon concepts and interventions proposed and can reduce the amount of reading time for practitioners who presumably hold much of the contents within their clinical domain of knowledge and practice, although as the author asserts, not yet in holistic form.

Power in the Highest Degree: Professionals and the Rise of a New Mandarin Order, by Charles Derber, William A. Schwartz and Yale Magrass. New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 1990. 275 pp. \$12.95. ISBN 0-19-503778-2

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In the light of fundamental socio-political changes in Eastern Europe and the former USSR since the 1989 revolution, new social orders have emerged around the world. It is a period that one can easily label a post-cold war era. With the unpredictability of the future, and the uncertainty of the present, nontraditional methods of analysis have become eminent to explain and understand the world's behavior. Such new methods of analysis must be able to probe into the past in the light of the dynamics of the present. The task of explaining fundamental socio-political issues such as power and class conflict as well as stability, freedom, and democracy, seem to preoccupy social scientists in general and sociologists in particular. The work of Derber, Schwartz and Magrass in their book, *Power in the Highest Degree*, offers a challenging perspective in explaining and studying the concept of power. Their work is profound to the sociological theory and methodology of power and authority in modern society. The authors are articulate in presenting a new

argument to the concept of power. Their empirical methodology has brought particular dynamics to their theorizing.

The authors analyze the concept of power in a new term, i.e., knowledge, which offers a vital understanding of professions in contemporary society. The authors contend that professional knowledge is as critical as capital to power. They provide an analysis that makes the traditional Marxist perspective on power sound reductionist. The authors argue that the merits of professionalism are increasingly enshrined in our language and that professionals now connote competence, expertise and impartial authority. Derber, Schwartz and Magrass warn of the dark side of professionalism where a new proletariat has emerged. This new proletariat is composed of a majority of uncredentialed professionals. Alongside the main capitalist command structure based on money, professionals have created a second hierarchy based on credentialed expertise. The authors point out two systems of authority to define the new social order that they refer to as "Mandarin Capitalism." These are capitalists and certified experts.

In their analysis, they point out that although professionals argue that power based on knowledge is natural and justifiable, unlike power based on wealth or violence, professionalism erodes the rights of those not certified as experts, bringing its own threats to democracy and equality. The authors insist that power based on knowledge is a basic form of class power.

Through their analysis from history and the present, the authors contend that while today's most powerful knowledge class—professionals—does not rule in any society, professionals have infused both capitalism and socialism with modern mandarin logic. Professionals have essentially turned modern knowledge into private property, as in Mandarin China; such intellectual property is becoming the coin of the realm convertible into class power, privilege and status.

The authors illustrate the case of the United States in which they see three, not two, major classes emerging: capitalists, workers, and professionals, each class vying with the others.

The authors provide case analysis on Eastern Europe, China, and the former USSR. In this work, professionals are viewed as a class which relies mainly on claims to knowledge rather than labor or capital as the basis of their quest for wealth and power. Examples are physicians and attorneys. The book also provides essential empirical data on the rise of professionals in Eastern and Western societies.

This work is divided into six parts and includes seventeen chapters. In the first part, the authors explore how knowledge, like capital, can

become private property, the basis of class power. In parts two and three, the authors tell the story of the birth and rise of modern experts and show how professionals have constituted themselves as a class by creating faith in their own version of objective knowledge and by helping to shape both education and the division of labor. In part four, the authors look at “Mandarin Capitalism”—today’s new social order and the professional’s privileged role in it. In part five, the authors explore the values and political ideology of professionals and ask whether they might unify to pursue a more politically ambitious mandarin agenda. In parts four and five, the authors report interviews in which professionals spoke about the just rewards of expertise, about their power over workers and clients, about their “professional culture” and about their ambivalent loyalties to their employers and to capitalism itself. In part six, the authors explore the possibilities of a “post-professional society” in which expertise is socialized. Prosperity and freedom, the authors suggest, depend increasingly on putting knowledge, as well as capital, at the disposal of the people and giving them the opportunity to develop skills and become productive thinkers.

This work is a synthesis in social and political theory. It is well written and clear, and presents a concise argument to the concept of power. I consider this work a fundamental—must be read—contribution in social science literature. For those who are interested in critical thinking, the authors offer a new explanatory tool for the power equation in modern society.

Power in the Highest Degree is recommended to scholars in social sciences and to all professionals.

Sociology, Anthropology, and Development: An Annotated Bibliography of World Bank Publications 1975-1993, by Michael M. Cernea. Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, 1994. 314 pp. \$29.95 paper. ISBN 0-8213-2781-X.

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