Chapter 1
'Becoming' a Professional

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1 Introduction

This is the foundational chapter of the book. It problematises professional becoming through an examination of the two principal concepts – 'becoming' and 'professional' – which underpin each of the chapters in this interdisciplinary work. To do this, I suggest ways we might answer the question posed in the introduction – what are professionals and how do we account for professional becoming? The chapter has three main sections which examine the nature of 'becoming' using different theoretical constructs, the search for an understanding of what is a professional and the role of lifelong learning in professional becoming.

I begin the chapter by locating, within the scholarly literature, the provenance of 'becoming' as an iterative and emergent concept of identity formation. Adopting 'becoming' implies a rejection of conventional novice-to-expert explanations of being a professional and accepting instead the 'ongoingness' of developing a professional self and all that this implies. I make use of Schutz's 'stranger', Wenger's 'trajectories' and Ibbara's 'possible selves' as theoretical frames to guide the discussion. Next, I draw extensively on the literature to consider the claimed cultural specificity of 'professional'; this is followed by a consideration of the long and still unresolved search for a satisfactory definition of professional, again with extensive reference to the literature. I then turn to what has traditionally been taken to constitute the essence of a professional by looking at the epistemological and ontological dimensions of this essence and at the same time consider contemporary challenges to these dimensions. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the ways in which 'becoming' is contiguous with lifelong learning.

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2 The Nature of 'Becoming'

The provenance of becoming is located in the work of scholars such as Cooley (1922), Mead (1934), Schutz (1964) and more recently the work of Wenger (1998), Ibarra (1999) and others. What emerges from these eclectic origins is a sense of becoming as an evolutionary, iterative process through which individuals develop a sense of a professional self, a professional identity. In this view, professional becoming cannot be reduced to the acquisition of knowledge and skills within formal educational environments which are then enacted in a professional workplace. Of course, knowledge and skills are significant and together with professional performance help constitute identity. This professional identity is multidimensional and includes not only individual and collective identity situated in specific professional practices but also provisional identity, a kind of rehearsal for a professional self. Moreover, this professional self is an ever changing phenomenon, never fully realised, always in the process of becoming other.

The book makes a distinction between 'becoming' and 'being' a professional. I argue that 'being' a professional denotes the notion of arriving at a static point of expertise. It is a concept frequently encountered, for example, in typologies of professional practice where the expert is the final stage in a lineal professional development beginning with the novice and suggested by scholars such as Berliner (1986), Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986) and Kagan (1992). On the other hand, when we conceptualise professional identity as 'becoming', we highlight the evolutionary, processural nature of developing a professional self. It is an iterative concept that eschews notions of arrival and end-point achievement of expertise. It is for this reason that 'becoming' is contiguous with notions of lifelong learning. In the context of the knowledge society of late modernity, where professionals must continually adapt to new knowledges and the new contexts in which these knowledges are actualised, final expertise is unachievable.

In 'looking back, looking forward', in the Introduction to the book, I used the word 'stranger' when describing my professional becoming through a series of transitions. I did this quite deliberately as a segue into Alfred Schutz's seminal paper *The Stranger* (Schutz 1964) which is a useful conceptual lens through which 'becoming' can be observed as an iterative process. Schutz defines the stranger as 'an applicant in a closed club' (Schutz 1964, p. 91). This is an effective way of viewing the fledgling professional as they approach their initial entry into professional practice. Pre-service professional preparation involves the budding professional in the acquisition of theoretical knowledge and workplace experience. Regardless of the degree of pre-professional workplace experience, the professional context when first encountered as a fully fledged professional is an unfamiliar cultural world, a 'field of adventure' (Schutz 1964, p. 104). This is a problematic situation for the stranger as well as for the old culture because the initiate is not bound to worship, as Schutz (1964, p. 104) puts it, 'the idols of the tribe'. The new professional may not even recognise the idols or the degrees of worship accorded

to them. Within the professional context, the idols may include sacred professional texts, experts as truth sayers, revered values and ritual practices, for example.

Why strangers face these difficulties is that they have what Schutz (1964, p. 93) calls, drawing on a distinction made by William James (1902), 'knowledge about' the new professional context rather than 'knowledge of' this context. This 'knowledge about' is naïve, decontextualised and untested knowledge not verified through actual engagement. This contrasts with 'knowledge of' which is contextually tested insider knowledge consisting of 'trustworthy recipes' which provide professionals with routine procedures and ways of interpreting the new situation (Schutz 1964, p. 94). The acquisition of this recipe knowledge is a critical step in becoming a professional within the context of practice. (I have used this conceptualisation of knowledge elsewhere [see Scanlon et al. 2007] to examine the transition and identity construction in first-year university students.)

Schutz explains, however, that this 'recipe knowledge' or what he calls 'thinking as usual' works only until a crisis situation occurs in which the tried-and-true recipes are no longer adequate. Within the ever-changing context of professional practice in the twenty-first century, with, for example, new medical knowledge and procedures and new curriculum structures constantly evolving, professionals face recurring crisis points where their knowledge-base and their established practices may cease to operate effectively. Practice thus becomes problematised leading the reflexive practitioner to locate new knowledges and practices. This new knowledge, once brought into the context of practice, changes not only the practitioner but also the practice. Thus, not only the professional but professional practice is in an iterative cycle of becoming other. Because of this ever changing world of practice, a professional might at any point be relegated to the role of a stranger within a professional context in which they were previously a member. Thus, the once explicit 'knowledge of' the context of professional practice becomes 'knowledge about' that practice.

This iterative element of professional becoming or identity construction can be seen in more recent works such as that of Wenger (1998, p. 56), who uses 'trajectory' to signify the continual motion that is identity formation. He suggests that 'identity is a becoming' and that the work of identity is ongoing and pervasive. He sees identity as negotiated experience in the sense of being a community member, as a learning trajectory, as a nexus of membership and as a relation between the local and the global (Wenger 1998, p. 149). The experience of identity in practice is a way of being in the world because it is produced as a lived experience of participation in specific communities (Wenger 1998, p. 151). What both Wenger and Schutz are examining is of course socialisation or acculturation into a cultural practice and this is fundamental to becoming a professional. Ibarra (1999, pp. 765–767) similarly argues that identity is a negotiated adaptation by which people strive to improve the fit between themselves and their work environment. I should like to emphasise that the use of 'fit' here does not imply a static, unchanging context which members must accommodate; the inclusion of a new member results in a change of context which itself is in a constant state of becoming with the arrival of new members.

'Crafting' a professional identity, a professional self (to use Ibarra's terminology), is always in the process of becoming as individuals actively choose, alter and modify their identities based on what will enable them to get along best in their professional context (Baumeister and Muraven 1996, p. 405). These professional identities are formulated and maintained over time in an ongoing negotiation of self, a process during which individuals are defined by others and in turn define and redefine themselves (Coover and Murphy 2000, p. 125). This is a view notably propounded by George Herbert Mead (1934, p. 158), in which the individual develops an identity grounded in the assimilation and acceptance of contextually specific shared beliefs, rules, values and expectations as a result of interaction with significant others and with the generalised other, that is, with the attitudes of the social group to which the individual belongs. A similar position is taken by Franzak (2002, p. 258), who argues that we live in a world of negotiated identity where we continually construct and revise visions of self. Britzman (in Weber and Mitchell 1995, p. 25) refers to the perpetual incompleteness of identity and suggests 'identity is a constant social negotiation that can never be permanently settled or fixed'.

All professional contexts offer both opportunities and constraints for becoming a professional for, as Berger (1966, p. 107) suggests, 'Every society contains a repertoire of identities that is part of the "objective knowledge" of its members'. As the individual is socialised, this objective reality is subjectively appropriated, that is, socialisation brings about symmetry between objective and subjective reality, and between objective and subjective identity. The individual recognises their identity in socially defined terms and these definitions become reality as the individual lives in society (Berger 1966, p. 108). Becoming a professional is not only about developing an individual identity but also about developing what Cerulo (1997) calls a collective identity, requiring lifelong negotiation and renegotiation. Collective identity is a social artefact, an entity moulded, refabricated and mobilised in accord with reigning cultural scripts and centres of power (Cerulo 1997, p. 387). These identities can be rehearsed as 'possible or provisional selves' (Ibarra 1999) or 'ideal identity' (De Ruyter and Conroy 2002).

'Possible or provisional selves' and 'ideal identity' are powerful tools in professional identity construction. Ibarra (1999, p. 765) argues that individuals adjust to new professional roles by experimenting with images that serve as trials for possible, but not yet fully elaborated professional identities. These provisional selves are temporary solutions that individuals use to bridge the gap between current capacities and self-conceptualisations, and the representations they hold of what attitudes and behaviours are expected in the new role (Ibarra 1999, p. 765). The idea of provisional selves builds on the idea of possible selves suggested by Marcus and Nurius (1986) and these not only serve in the initial formation of professional identity but may also provide a means of renegotiating identities during career passages. Ibarra (1999, p. 767) argues provisional selves are makeshift until they are rehearsed and refined with experience. When building a repertoire of possible selves, Ibarra (1999, p. 772) identifies the importance of role prototyping to determine what constitutes credible performance. This is achieved through observing successful role models and thus learning tacit rules and ways,

and important professional traits. It is, however, in the doing that the 'real' self is actualised.

These role models may be encountered during academic professional preparation particularly when authentic learning spaces are created where these possible selves can be rehearsed before formal entry into the 'real' professional world (Scanlon 2008a, b; 2009a, b). Other sources for possible selves include practicum experiences, working with mentors or the rich array of filmic representations in popular culture, all of which contain potential exemplars of desirable and, of course, undesirable possible selves.

3 What is a Professional?

'Professional' is the second key construct in the title of this book and there is an extensive literature on what constitutes a professional and the professions, their origin, distinctive characteristics and contemporary challenges. It is not my intention in the following section to provide a comprehensive review of this literature, but rather to selectively highlight from this vast resource some of the critical issues relevant to the discussion of becoming a professional. I begin with some general comments about the nature of the professions and the unsuccessful search for a definitive definition. This leads into a consideration of the epistemological and ontological dimensions traditionally seen to constitute the essence of the professions. Woven through this examination are the current challenges to many of these traditional claims made by professionals.

I have taken Evetts's (2006, p. 135) lead here and identify professionals as practitioners who work in knowledge-based service occupations. These occupations require tertiary education followed by formal credentialing, and have an agreed standard of ethical behaviour. These 'knowledge workers' service fundamental social needs such as health and education. This is a working definition only as there is no agreed definition of either a professional or a profession nor is the concept a universal one but rather like cricket, according to Burrage (1990, p. 4), an anomaly of which the English are proud and no one outside the old empire understands the rules. Friedson (in Dingwell and Lewis 1983, p. 26) agrees, calling the professions 'the English disease'.

Scuilli (2005, p. 915) supports 'the English disease' thesis and argues that the concept of profession does not exist in Europe because he says there is no linguistic equivalent in any European language. The closest European equivalent, Scuilli suggests, is *Burgertum* which is equivalent to the 'middle class', or *Bildungsburgertum*, the 'cultivated middle class'. Nonetheless, his work on the rise of the visual academies in Europe – Florence in the fifteenth century, Rome in the sixteenth century and Paris in the seventeenth century – firmly establishes the rise in Europe of the first practitioners to provide expert occupational services (Scuilli 2007, p. 38). An extensive study (Jarausch 1990, p. 4) of lawyers, teachers and engineers in Germany in the first half of the twentieth century notes that the lack of the term

in German has rendered studying the professions in central Europe difficult. He argues that in the nineteenth century, the word *Beruf* (a Lutheran notion of 'calling') when combined with *Stand* and rendered as *akademischer Berufsstand* was used to indicate a profession. However, Malatesta (1995, p. 5) points out that *akademischer Berufsstand* does not, unlike the modern *professinalizierung*, carry any connotation of self-organised closure of a profession but rather refers to class-based distinctions between intellectual and manual work.

Collins (in Torstendahl and Burrage 1990, p. 15) acknowledges the existence of professions in Europe and identifies the difference between the English and 'continental' professional models. The continental model, he says, emphasises elite administrators who hold office through academic credentials while the English model stresses freedom of employment and control of working conditions. Collins locates this difference in the origin of the professions which in Europe developed alongside the growth of the nation state. Jones (1991, p. ix), in his study of professions in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, supports Collin's claim and argues that in one-party states, unlike liberal democracies, there were no 'free' professionals, but employees of the state. The state was not only the employer, but also shaped the general environment in which all occupations operated. He argues that the knowledge-base of professionals, the source of their power in liberal democracies, poses a danger to state control in socialist societies. He cites the infamous doctors' case in the Soviet Union which effectively 'tamed' doctors and made them servants of the state. In liberal democracies such as Britain, the professions became high-status precisely because they separated themselves from the state by forming monopolies of service (Collins in Torstendahl and Burrage 1990). Whatever their origin, Cheetham and Chivers (2005, p. 35) argue that professionals are the most influential group in society, although they are not an homogenous group, but a varied collection of occupations in different sections of the economy with different vested interests (Brint cited in Freidson 2001, p. 3).

The three principal professions examined in this work have been selected because they represent different kinds of professional profiles. The most widely recognised of all professionals are doctors. Nurses and teachers still struggle for professional acknowledgement; however, their professional status is widely questioned amongst the clients they serve and amongst scholars. The status of doctors remains largely intact although there is growing public critique and scepticism.

3.1 In Search of a Definition

That the professions and the individuals who work in them have played a significant role in the English speaking world is evidenced by the fact that they have been well worked over by English and American sociologists, according to Bennett and Hokenstad (in Halmos 1973, p. 21). During the 100 years of sociological scrutiny, each decade of the twentieth century and the first decade of the twenty-first century has seen significant studies on the nature of professions. I cite only a few of

these: Abraham Flexner (1910), Carr-Saunder and Wilson (1933), Parsons (1939), Lieberman (1956), Greenwood (1957), Etzioni (1969), Halmos (1973), Dingwell and Lewis (1983), Freidson (1983), Perkins (1989), Eraut (1994), Freidson (1994), Hoyle and John (1995), Sachs (2003), Cheetham and Chivers (2005), Scuilli (2005) and Dingwell (2008).

This prodigious sociological outpouring has, however, not produced a satisfactory definition of what constitutes professional work and what, therefore, distinguishes a profession from other occupations. Dingwell (2008, p. 12) says that the logical outcome has been that 'a profession is nothing more or less than what some sociologists say it is'. Freidson (in Macdonald 1995, p. 7) in 1980 even suggested that 'profession' was a lay or folk term and that assessing the professional status of any one profession is what the folk do and it is not the real task of sociologists. Freidson (in Dingwell and Lewis 1983, p. 22) also argued in his early work that 'profession' is not a generic concept, but rather a changing historical one. Twenty years later he commented (2001, p. 4) on the continued search for definitional clarity insisting that 'instead of building a sturdy tower of knowledge, this activity has created a number of scattered huts . . . ' Nonetheless, Freidson (2001, p. 180) at this time offered an ideal type model of a professional as having a body of knowledge based on abstract concepts and theories and requiring the exercise of considerable discretion, an occupationally controlled division of labour, credentialing procedures, training programmes and an ethic which emphasises doing good rather than economic gain.

Much of the literature on the professions from the early 1900s to the 1950s is found in the social sciences and philosophy (Cruess, Johnston and Cruess 2002, p. 11). However, one of the first systematic studies was undertaken not by a sociologist, but by a researcher with the Carnegie Institute in the United States, a former secondary teacher and school principal Abraham Flexner. His report in 1910 for the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching resulted in the closure of 50% of the medical schools in the United States and Canada and introduced improved admission qualifications and education for physicians through the establishment of a specific model of professional training. Flexner based this model on the Johns Hopkins' scientific rather than practice-based approach and it is the Flexner model which still dominates medical education today. This has also been adopted by other professions; for example, Shulman (1998, pp. 522–523) argues that this educational model harmonises with Dewey's vision for teacher preparation in which pre-service teachers are first immersed in theory and it is in practice that this theory is verified.

In Britain, the first study of the professions was undertaken by Richard Tawney (1921), an economic historian and member of the Fabian Society who placed the professions at the forefront of the struggle against entrepreneurial values. Tawney argued that the professions were a cure for the 'acquisitive society', saying that they 'lifted men [sic] out of their baser selves', enabling them unselfishly to serve others. This and other comments by Tawney, according to Haskell (1984, p. 181), are 'the friendliest things' said by a serious scholar about the professions (p. 186).

From the 1930s to the 1970s scholars such as Talcott Parsons (1939), Carr-Saunder and Wilson (1933) and Goode (1969) adopted a functionalist approach which saw professionals emerging as experts and the development of the professions as the product of a division of labour which helped maintain the social order. This approach focused on identifying key professional attributes or traits that distinguished the professions from other occupations. Carr-Saunder and Wilson (1933) regarded the professions as one of the most stable elements in society because they 'inherit, preserve and pass on tradition' (cited in Macdonald 1995, p. 2) and, along with other functionalist like Goode (1969), identified the chief professional attributes as specialised intellectual study and training as the basis for providing skilled services. Talcott Parsons emphasised the social value of the professions and included such attributes as a 'scientific approach' and universalism. This attributive approach, Scuilli (2007, p. 36) and Eraut (1994) argue, emphasised the knowledge-base as the key defining attribute of professional practice. This approach suggests that professions institutionalised universalistic rather than particularistic standards of behaviour and at the same time contributed to the social order. This functionalist approach Roth (1974, p. 7) regards as 'misdirected zeal' in search of a definition.

Beginning in the 1960s, the literature shifted; physicians in particular were accused of exploiting their monopoly position and failures in self-regulation and protection of unethical practitioners were also identified. For the next 20 years, Scuilli (2007, p. 36) says, a different approach to the study of the professions was adopted with what he called the age of the revisionists whom, he argues, accord more with George Bernard Shaw's comment that the professions are 'a conspiracy against the laity' (Hoyle and John 1995), than with the previous more 'friendly' approach of the functionalists. This was a period in which there was a widespread backlash against the professions in which sociologists such as Larson (1977, 1990), Johnson (1972), Collins (1979) and Abbott (1988), to name a few, highlighted the elitist and monopolistic tendencies of the professions. Subsequently, the professions became a 'malevolent force' making no contribution to the social order (Scuilli 2007, p. 916).

The sociological debate about what it means to be a professional was reinvigorated by Scuilli (2005) when he argued for a constitutive definition of professions to be used independently of context. He suggested that this definition must include: first, high social esteem based on the provision of expert service provided by professionals from a position of power, trust and discretion; second, the recognition that professionals have two fiduciary responsibilities – to advance client well-being and to take responsibility for the governance and regulation of activities of their particular profession and third, engagement in lifelong learning to better serve client needs; and finally, professionals should provide services within existing regimes of truth (Scuilli 2005, p. 936).

Evetts (2006, p. 134), in response to Scuilli, considers definitional searches a time-wasting diversion. Similarly, Atkinson (in Dingwell and Lewis 1983, p. 227) considers 'profession' to have no specific denotation, arguing rather that it is a title claimed by certain occupations under certain conditions at specific times. Downie (1990, p. 148) warns against a definition of professions that becomes solidified

around law and medicine, arguing that new knowledge areas are developed and so there will always be new contenders for the status of professional. If the professions are a transient phenomenon, one already passed its zenith as Stichweh (cited in Pfadenhauer 2006, p. 566) suggests, why bother with a definition?

4 The Professional Essence

In this section, I use epistemology and ontology as lenses to analyse the essential, interlocking ways that the literature identifies in becoming a professional. These ways of becoming have been separated for the purposes of discussion, but also because they represent, though controversially, the way in which becoming a professional is still largely perceived and reflected in the still extant Flexner and Dewey model of professional education. Epistemology and ontology, as well as being lenses for exploration, are also contexts. Epistemology is the intellectual, knowledge-based context of professional preparation; ontology is a way of professional being in this world of knowledge as well as in the world of practice.

In exploring these ways of ‘becoming’, I consider the conventional notion of epistemological and ontological professional becoming, along with the challenges currently encountered by professionals. The result of these challenges is a new kind of reflexive professional (Giddens 1991) who must constantly question and restructure their professional self as a lifelong project, addressing the changing nature of professional knowledge and the socio-economic conditions in which professionals practise, and acknowledging the impact of the recent assault on their professions (Freidson cited in Beck and Young 2005, p. 184).

4.1 Epistemological Dimensions

A traditional claim of the professions is that what distinguishes them from other occupations is their cognitively superior knowledge-base defined not only by its theoretical and esoteric nature (Bennett and Hokenstad in Halmos 1973, p. 24) but also by being positioned within the scientific disciplines which further enhances its aura of certainty (Hoyle and John 1995, p. 14). Knowledge thus constructed must be sufficiently erudite to require long training rewarded by formal credentials which confer professional status. It is through the production and reproduction of this esoteric and scientific knowledge that professionals, according to Popkewitz (1987, p. 6), exercise power.

It is this theoretical, abstract knowledge component that is controversial and provides a challenge to the newer professionals such as nurses and teachers in claiming professional status. That the cognitive nature of the knowledge-base is significant in determining professional status is illustrated by Etzione’s (1969) claim that teachers and nurses are ‘semi-professionals’ because their knowledge-base is

intuitive, emotional and interpersonal, thin and underdeveloped. Below, I focus on teachers' knowledge which Hoyle and John (1995, p. 52) suggest is an example of still fragmented and peripheral knowledge. The parlous state of teachers' knowledge has been exacerbated by the fact that theoretical knowledge has largely been excluded from teacher education programmes and replaced by school-based or practical knowledge (Beck 2008, p. 136). Moreover, 'standards frameworks' which have also replaced theoretical knowledge exclude pre-service teachers from 'elaborated forms of academic study' which, Beck continues, would equip them to become critically reflective about the way their professional training has been structured.

However, there are scholars working in the area of teacher education who mount a strong claim for the recognition of a substantial teachers' knowledge-base. Shulman (1987, p. 8) identifies a teachers' knowledge-base which consists of content knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge, curriculum knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, knowledge of learners, knowledge of educational contexts and knowledge of educational ends and purposes. The key to the knowledge-base proposed by Shulman is pedagogical content knowledge which represents the core of teaching because of its blend of content and pedagogy, that is, of theory and practice. It is this knowledge that entitles teaching to be called 'a learned profession' and the teacher a member of a 'scholarly community' (Shulman 1987, p. 9). Other scholars such as Hiebert et al. (2002, pp. 3–7) have also mounted a defence of teachers as professionals; their argument is also grounded in the knowledge-base of teachers which they suggest can be constructed from teachers' craft knowledge, that is, knowledge which is detailed, concrete and specific, integrated, public, storable and shareable and with mechanisms for verification and improvement. At the heart of the discussion of a professional knowledge-base is the acceptance of the division of knowledge into theory and practice with the former being more highly valued than the latter. Examples of the integration of theory and practice in pre-service teacher education are examined elsewhere (Scanlon 2008a, b; 2009a, b).

The relationship between theory and practice, Shulman (1998, p. 517) suggests, is the essential pedagogical challenge for professional education. Freidson (2001, p. 95) illustrates this by pointing out that preparation for the professions involves initial acquisition of theoretical knowledge in an educational institution where frequently the pre-service professionals are insulated from the immediate practical demands of everyday work. The argument for this approach, he says, is that for professionals to be able to make the discretionary decisions required in practice, they must first have an adequate theoretical grounding upon which to base these decisions. However, in the context of this theoretical education, there are tensions; for example, the research practices of professional faculties frequently focus on esoteric procedures and techniques and this, according to Freidson (2001, pp. 99–100), separates the faculty from practitioners. This encourages the creation of ideal type standards of performance, which demean the improvisations required in the 'confusion and impurity' of practice. One of the teacher participants in Jensen's research (2007, pp. 495–96) described the fragile nature of theory and how it is

essential that the teacher work intensively with everything connected with that theory to make it fit with practice.

Discussions of professional knowledge highlight not only the distinction between theory and practice but also a distinction that is often made between the art and science of the profession – as pertinent in teacher education as it is in medicine. In medicine, the science is seen (Patel et al. 1999, p. 75) to reside in the biomedical sciences of anatomy, biochemistry, physiology and applied science such as pathology, radiology and medical physics. The science is in clinical practice in which the physician employs deductive reasoning to reach a diagnosis; the art is in patient care which engages the physician's intuition, experience and holistic perceptions. Similarly, the science of teaching resides in discipline content knowledge and foundational pedagogical principles; the art of teaching is in classroom practice and engagement with students.

4.1.1 Challenges to the Knowledge-Base

The first challenge questions the very foundation of what it has traditionally meant to be a professional, that is, the nature of abstract knowledge. Schon (cited in Curry et al. 1993, p. 28), for example, argues that scientific knowledge grounded in technical rationality is not sufficient to tackle the complexity, uncertainty, instability, uniqueness and value conflict that characterise real practice. What is required is not scientific certainty but professional practice, that is, wise action in complex, unique and uncertain situations with conflicting values and ethical stances (Schon in Curry et al. 1993, p. 17). The second and related challenge acknowledges that professional knowledge is no longer defined by rationality but by relativity (Pfadenhauer 2006, p. 571). This means that education, the ritual core of professional preparation, is being challenged in terms of confidence and subjective legitimacy as the intellectual content has become specialised, relativistic and reflexive. As Collins (in Burrage and Torstendahl 1990, p. 41) poignantly comments, 'The magicians, in the privacy of their classroom, are becoming self-conscious of their own tricks'.

The third challenge focuses not only on the relativity but also on the 'temporalisation' of what are recognised to be rapidly ageing stocks of professional knowledge (Pfadenhauer 2006, p. 570). This strikes education at the ritual core of becoming a professional because it is no longer sufficient for professionals to acquire the necessary knowledge and training prior to practice. There is increasing pressure for individual professionals to continually adapt their stocks of knowledge and to introduce effective monitoring in respect of continuing professional learning – to engage in 'becoming' as a lifelong learning project. Fournier (1999, p. 303), using a Foucauldian analysis, argues that it is not regimes of truth that constitute professions, but rather it is the construction of truth and legitimacy in the eyes of others. For example, academic knowledge, according to Abbott (1988, pp. 53–54), functions more symbolically than practically. Herein, he says, lies a difficulty and he signals that the maintenance of professional jurisdiction lies in part in the power and prestige of its academic, abstract knowledge which the public mistakenly believe

implies effective professional work. It is of course not simply that the professional must acquire new knowledge because, as Abbot (1988, p. 179) rightly points out, change in knowledge incorporates both growth and replacement as new knowledge replaces the old and the professional must not only learn the new but also must unlearn the old. As I discussed previously, the old may be conceptualised as recipe knowledge (Schutz 1964) and it is when this is challenged that the professional may again feel a stranger within a profession in which earlier they were a confident member, and it is this challenge which necessitates iterative becoming and lifelong learning.

A fourth epistemological challenge is to the exclusivity of the professional's knowledge-base. This exclusivity is challenged on two fronts: the first results from the massification of university education and the subsequent inflation of formal educational degrees resulting in a falling rate of return on education (Pfadenhauer 2006, p. 570). Second, and closely related to the massification of education, is the changing technologies which render the previously exclusive and scarce knowledge of the professions available to a better educated and more critical client base. These technologies not only enable physical access to professional knowledge but also provide that knowledge in both professional and everyday discourse. In this way, the lay person is more aware of the limitations, for example, of modern medicine and is more willing to question professional advice (Kenny and Adamson 1992, p. 3). The lay public is also better educated and while, as Wirt (1981) argues, more education does not make everyone a critic, it does increase the chances that the myth of professional omnipotence will be questioned.

Not only is professional knowledge no longer exclusive, but also it is no longer scarce. This is particularly true of teachers' knowledge. It is not only that almost everyone in liberal democracies has been to school and the educational levels have improved amongst the general population, but there is also a growing sector of the population whose knowledge far exceeds that of teachers (Jones 1991, p. 155). This is significant, for, as Perkins (1989, p. 378) argues, one of the defining features of the professional concept was the scarcity of the supply of expertise. This was not a natural but an artificial scarcity which required protection and seemingly that protection is no longer effective.

4.2 Ontological Dimensions

The ontological dimension is about practice *in situ*, requiring 'strong doses of socialisation' (Fournier 1999, p. 287), where the professionals, as traditionally perceived, are expected to display altruism, trust, autonomy and knowledge of their client base. This dimension requires professionals to develop a sense of who they are in terms of professional practice, how they inhabit the professional world and on what terms and how they interact with others in that world. Professionals must learn to 'become' in the context of the twenty-first century, where the spaces in which professionals develop their identity include not only 'real world' domains such as

hospitals, clinics and classrooms, but also 'authentic' professional learning within formal educational institutions (Scanlon 2009b). Within the context of practice, challenges to professionals, according to Downie (1990, pp. 148–149), come from those who argue that professions are elitist, class-biased and profiteering as well as monopolistic and restrictive. The general public, Downie argues, remains mildly sceptical of the mysteries behind the professional façade.

4.2.1 Altruism

It can be argued that the professional service ideal arose because the traditional professional services such as caring for the sick and teaching were public services provided by the Churches. This altruistic attribute privileges the collective above the individual both in the sense of serving society and in the sense of professional cohesiveness. Early work by Tawney (1921) suggested that the professions were a check to destructive individualism. However, the twenty-first century has seen the resurgence of individualisation and this must be factored into any account of professionals. Beginning in the 1970s, there was a backlash against the perceived power, privileges and pretensions of professionals (Perkins 1989, p. 472). This, according to Halmos (1973, p. 6), arose from the laity's view that the service claims of professionals were a myth which they used to cling to a monopoly of power and privilege. In Australia at that time, Boreham et al. (1976) asserted that the professions did not live up to the service ethic, claiming that professionals made care decisions based not on altruism but on gender, race and class.

4.2.2 Trust

Another traditional attribute of the professions has been what Hughes (cited in Halmos 1973, p. 26) called 'institutionalised trust', that is, a mandate from the client public to the professionals. Pragmatically, it can be said that this trust, particularly in the medical profession, resulted from the inability of the general public, until recently, to evaluate the physician's esoteric activities. This trust, however, is no longer unconditional; the lay person can now evaluate these esoteric activities through easier access to knowledge, as discussed above. There is also greater public accountability resulting, for example, from the publication of hospital mortality rates, school league tables and extensive media coverage of professional malpractice.

Another challenge has been a withdrawal of the public's mandate, a 'rebellion of the public' (Gerhards cited in Pfadenhauer 2006, p. 568) or, as Haug and Sussman (cited in Boreham et al. 1976, p. 27) claim, a 'revolt of the clients'. The 'sovereign consumer' (Svensson 2006, p. 581) now shops around for 'second opinions' or embraces alternative therapies in medicine, and 'parental choice' has become a significant element in education. There are a number of dimensions to this rebellion, the first of which is epistemological and which, as Pfadenhauer (2006, p. 568)

points out, undermines notions of the exclusivity of the professionals' knowledge-base, which I examined above. Second, the public rebellion has questioned the existence of a previously viewed social consensus which surrendered to professionals problems that were collectively viewed as significant. A consequence of this is that professional solutions are no longer accepted without question (Pfadenhauer 2006, p. 569).

What has developed is a distrust of expert systems (Giddens 1991), that is, a general distrust of the exclusive competence of the professional and this is yet another challenge to trust. The provision of expert services is now dependent on the cooperation of the client, as Pfadenhauer (2006, p. 567) argues using an example from Kurtz, who instances the teacher who provides a positive learning environment, but is dependent on students' cooperation as the learning must be done by them.

4.2.3 Autonomy

The trust traditionally given to professsionals enabled them to practise large degrees of professional autonomy, itself a critical attribute of traditional professions (Bennett and Hokenstad in Halmos 1973, p. 24). If we take autonomy to mean self-employment, then there are few professionals in the twenty-first century who can own to this degree of autonomy experienced by earlier professionals in the English context. This kind of self-employed autonomy is now an illusion (Murphy in Torstendahl and Burrage 1990, p. 72). The current situation more closely mirrors the earlier European model where professionals were more restricted by the state. Even physicians who remain the most privileged in their ability to self-employ are increasingly either working within bureaucratic structures as public professionals or as private professionals within franchised 'for profit medical centres'. Moreover, Hoyle and Wallace (cited in Evans 2008, p. 21) argue that autonomy has given way to accountability to outside agencies including government bodies.

Autonomy also extends to licensing arrangements and to self-regulation, for example, where the traditional professions have fared better than teachers and nurses in retaining control of the licence to practice (Evetts 2006, p. 136). The restructuring of teachers' work in Britain, it is argued, has been 'an official state reworking and redefinition of the concept of teacher professionalism' (Troman 1996, p. 473). This is also found elsewhere, for instance, in the creation of statutory authorities, such as the NSW Institute of Teachers in Australia. This institute oversees undergraduate requirements for admission to initial teacher education programmes, much of the content of these university programmes, the discourse employed in textual renderings of these, the accreditation of all teacher education programmes and the licensing of graduate teachers through a complex, bureaucratic system of registration. This has effectively not only limited the professional autonomy of teachers in schools but also in my view has finally eroded the autonomy of pre-service teacher educators in universities. This is what Fournier (1999) refers to as 'organisational professionalism' in which standardisation, accountability,

target-setting and performance review are adopted as mechanisms of control. The result of this bureaucratic organisation of work has, as Freidson (cited in Evetts 2006, p. 136) predicated, resulted in the demotivation of practitioners and an ‘occupation identity crisis’ (Evetts 2006, p. 139). The result has been what might be called the advent of differently constructed new professionals.

5 A New Kind of Professional?

The new professional has taken different forms, for example, a ‘new’ kind of teacher professional has emerged, though, like the ‘old’ professional, there is little definitional agreement. Hatcher (cited in Troman 1996, p. 474) identifies a new kind of technicist professional whose interests and values articulate with those of the central government. This sounds frighteningly like the professional in the one-party states examined by Collins (in Torstendahl and Burrage 1990, p. 15). However, Riseborough (cited in Troman 1996, p. 485) found that teachers were still able to create a ‘rich unofficial underlife to official policy intention’.

Another kind of new professional has been described as ‘unsettled’ – the post-modern professional (Pfadenhauer 2006, p. 573) who has doubts about professional claims to superiority having in the course of individualisation and pluralisation lost ‘faith’ in the completeness and exclusiveness of, and lack of alternatives to, the pool of solutions managed by the profession and available to the professional. Postmodern professionals distance themselves from traditional professionals with their claims to cognitive and normative superiority as propagated by professional associations and their functionaries (p. 576). These practitioners develop individual strategies for overcoming crises and prefer to sort out unsettledness for themselves. This new professional, because of the doubts they experience, may seek support from counter-experts because they themselves no longer exclude other problem perceptions or problem-solving strategies.

The appearance of the so-called postmodern professional is consistent with Ibarra’s (1999, p. 765) position that when individuals find themselves in new situations, these situations demand that the individuals produce ‘new repertoires of possibilities’. These new situations may arise, for example, in practice when practitioners are confronted with competing knowledges and where recipe knowledge proves inadequate in the new situation. It can be argued from this that the twenty-first century knowledge society is a new situation in which professionals more than ever before must produce new repertoires as they engage in learning. The central feature of the self in modern society is its reflexivity, a constant questioning and reconstruction of the self in a lifetime project. We are constantly reconstructing and revising our personal stories and so reconstructing ourselves (Craib 1998, p. 3). It is this which links becoming a professional to lifelong learning.

6 Lifelong Learning

I have argued that the concept of 'becoming' is contiguous with that of lifelong learning because the iterative cycle of 'becoming other' examined in this chapter encompasses the notion of learning throughout one's professional life. It might therefore seem redundant to have a separate, albeit short, section on lifelong learning. However, I wish to make other observations related to lifelong learning and the professionals.

In the current neo-liberal discourse, lifelong learning has been harnessed to the economic needs of the state (Scanlon 2006), and projects a deficit model of learning – 'a kind of life sentence of schooling endless schooling' (Ohlinger cited by Boshier in Holford et al. 1998). This is a vocationalised version of lifelong learning and is in contrast to the integrated continuous learning involved in becoming a professional. The iterative cycle of identity formation formulated here is not about being bound to a 'Catherine wheel' of continuous course attendance and certification; it is about professionals continually constructing and reconstructing their identities as they engage with and critique new knowledges, skills and practices; it is about new ways of relating to more informed, questioning and often demanding clients; it is about dealing with emerging government bureaucracies bent on increased surveillance and it is about a continuous 'becoming other' in ever-changing contexts. Jarvis (2007) takes a similar position and argues that the individual is always becoming through continuous learning experiences which are incorporated into their individual biography. In this way, identities are always shaped by the external world in which we live (Jarvis 2007, pp. 153–154). If we do not continue to learn, we are destined to live in ignorance (Jarvis 2007, p. 39) or in Schutzian (1964) terms to remain 'a stranger' in changing contexts.

The Dewey Flexner model of professional preparation is in question because, as Jarvis (2007, p. 172) argues, knowledge, particularly in some professional areas, changes with such rapidity that the research is out of date when published and the situations reported in the research have also changed. Following this line of argument it is logical that any theory taught *before* practice will be outdated *in* practice. This then leads to the privileging of what Gibbons et al. (1994) have called 'Mode 2 knowledge' – knowledge generated in and for the workplace. It is not only that some forms of knowledge have a limited use-by date but also that there is a strong sense of 'antiscientism' in which science, now only one of many 'language games', is no longer unique (Leicester 2000, p. 75).

Learning becomes the condition of flexibility and flexibility is seen as the condition of learning (Edwards and Usher 2001, p. 279). In a risk society, one cannot stop learning, not only in relation to work but also to life in general. I commented elsewhere (Scanlon 2006) that scholars and government departments have linked lifelong learning to both individual and national economic survival. However, Sheehan (2001, p. 4) notes that the OECD recognises that lifelong learning is not only about employability, it is also about social inclusiveness, democratic

engagement and personal fulfilment. It is this view of lifelong learning which infuses professional becoming – being prepared to learn and do differently.

This view of lifelong learning signals the end of notions of 'mastery' in all spheres of human activity. This resonates with my argument advanced earlier in this chapter for the end to notions of the 'expert'. We only ever become lifelong apprentices, Rikowski (1999, p. 69) contends. Mastery is a momentary illusion because what we are attempting continually changes. There are therefore no experts, only some are more expert than others ... for now.

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