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Praxis, Responsibility, and the Professions

Medicine and law have been proposed as the model for reforming teaching and teacher education by several of the prominent reports that aim to reconstruct the preparation of teachers. While such an idea is not universally shared (e.g., Jackson, 1987; Tom, 1987), our reservations are different from those of many writers. Although critical of prevailing explanations, descriptions, and justifications for professionalism, we do recognize that personal and social interests require the distinctly qualified practice of specially educated professionals who have the kind of competence, autonomy, and authority needed to serve those human interests. We affirm the social value of appropriate professional privilege, and we find that teaching does in fact share the qualities that justify professional status for law and medicine.

The problem with prevailing models for reforming teacher education, however, is that they misconstrue the promise of professionalism. Suggestions of imitating law and medicine have been unconvincing partly because they have reflected a false image of the praxis that we should be able to expect from doctors and lawyers as well as teachers—an image that fails to demonstrate the competence required for the professional responsibilities of serving diverse personal and social interests.

To learn from studying other professions such as law and medicine, we must first see how they have been obscured by the images they have fashioned for themselves. As Metzger (1987) reports, sociologists in recent decades have argued that those

self-images "are not objective descriptions, but ideological commercials, designed to promote the interests of their members" (p. 12). Although Metzger himself criticizes the excesses of this revisionist sociology, its major thrust is supported by the careful and elegant analysis that leads Rueschemeyer (1964) to conclude that:

> The core of the theoretical model is identical with the assertions used by the professions to legitimize their claims for maintaining old and acquiring new privileges. . . . The advantages of a recognized professional position seem attractive enough to mobilize all means of power, prestige, and ideology for the acquisition or maintenance of that position, whether legitimate or not. The differential access of these means, however, is strongly influenced by factors other than specialized expertise and importance for core values of a society. One should avoid being misled by the collectivity-oriented self-definition of the professions into separating their analysis from the analysis of social stratification. (p. 30)

The very attributes of professionalism in what are usually considered the "major professions" may be merely incidental, spurious, or otherwise extraneous to the real conditions of their actual existence.

MEANINGS AND VALUES OF PROFESSIONALISM

A common assumption among social scientists is that some system of technical knowledge is a defining feature of the genuine professions. Concern for a scientifically grounded technical knowledge base as the mark of professional status is at least implicitly responsive to the logic of Nathan Glazer's (1974) explanation for why education has been regarded as a "minor profession" (like social work, town planning, and divinity), lacking the essential characteristics needed for the kind of policy treatment that is afforded to the two "major professions" of law and medicine. Glazer suggests that diverse manifestations of lower status for schools of education and the other "minor professions"

> might be reduced to the fact that in some sense these are not "true" professions, that they aspire to a status higher than they possess, and that the base of knowledge and competence with which students enter practice is not really serious, specialized knowledge. (p. 349)

Glazer does indicate what counts as "really serious, specialized knowledge":

> Practitioners of the minor professions do not possess knowledge at the same level of technical complexity and of the same importance to an individual's life as that possessed by the classic major professions, and their claim to professional status and the privilege of maintaining secrecy concerning their professional services does not possess the same authority as we grant to physicians and lawyers. (p. 348)

For obvious reasons, Glazer's article is often dismissed or ignored by those promoting a fully professionalized model of teaching. But while such advocates may be displeased by the conclusions Glazer reaches, their respect for the logic of his analysis can be seen in their concentrated efforts to secure for teaching the possession and recognition of precisely those attributes that Glazer identifies as crucial for attainment of full status as professionals.

For example, according to deans Case, Lanier, and Miskel (1986) of the Holmes Group:

> Profession is a term used to designate occupations that require specialized knowledge and a commitment to continuing inquiry to advance knowledge that may be relevant to the practice and service of the occupation. A profession is altruistic in that its first ethical imperative is service to others. (p. 36)

According to the Holmes report (1986) itself:

> The established professions have, over time, developed a body of specialized knowledge, codified and transmitted through professional education and clinical practice. *Their claim to professional status rests on this.* For the occupation of teaching, a defensible claim for such special knowledge has emerged only recently. Efforts to reform the preparation of teachers and the profession of teaching must begin, therefore, with the serious work of articulating the knowledge base of the profession and developing the means by which it can be imparted. (pp. 62–63; emphasis added)

The report claims that "the promise of science of education is about to be fulfilled," referring specifically to "the science of education promised by Dewey, Thorndike, and others at the turn of the century," which, they claim, has "become more tangible" within the last 20 years, as "the behavioral sciences have been turned on the schools themselves, and not just in laboratory simulations" (p. 52).

The assumption that other attributes of professionalism derive from the claim to an advanced, specialized, arcane, technical knowledge base pervades otherwise divergent variations of the mainstream theoretical positions in the social sciences. As Donald Schön (1987) relates, the influential Everett Hughes "once observed that the professions have struck a bargain with society":

> In return for access to their extraordinary knowledge in matters of great human importance, society has granted them a mandate for social control in their fields of specialization, a high degree of autonomy in their practice, and a license to determine who shall assume the mantle of professional authority (Hughes, 1959). But in the current climate of criticism, controversy, and dissatisfaction, the bargain is coming unstuck. When the professions' claim to extraordinary knowledge is so much in question, why should we continue to grant them extraordinary rights and privileges? (p. 7).

In his contribution to an important book that uses teaching, nursing, and social work as examples of "the semiprofessions," Lortie (1969) explains the less privileged position of elementary school teachers in terms of the standard observation that "the knowledge and skill possessed by those practicing established professions are recognized both as vital to individual and social welfare and as esoteric in nature." By contrast, he tells us:

> "No one ever died of a split infinitive" is a quip which throws the less-than-vital nature of teaching knowledge into relief. Nor can elementary teachers point to an arcane body of substantive or technical knowledge to assert professional status vis-à-vis the school board or the public-at-large. That which is taught in elementary school is presumed to be known by almost all adults, and teachers have not been able to convince many critics—and more importantly, legislatures—that "methods courses" constitute a truly distinct and impressive body of knowledge. (pp. 23–25)

Lortie's (1975) subsequent analysis has emphasized the need for a knowledge base that is not only technical in nature but also consists of "growing, arcane knowledge possessed by teachers alone" (p. 228). He sees this knowledge as important not only for its instrumental value as technique but also for teachers' ability "to see themselves as sharing in a common 'memory' or technical subculture":

> Teachers' doubts about possessing a common technical culture affect their collective status in two ways: they make them less ready to assert their authority on educational matters and less able to respond to demands from society. An occupation is recognized as a profession in part because people believe that its members jointly possess arcane knowledge on matters of vital public concern; when that belief is held by key decision-makers like legislators, judges, and state officials, they take action to avoid whatever dangers may lie in permitting noninitiates to practice the trade. (Lortie, 1975, p. 70)

Still other perspectives on the presumed knowledge base for teaching undermine the professional status of teachers. Lortie (1975) recognizes that teachers individually acquire shares in the formidable and enduring tradition of pedagogical techniques, observing that these are passed down over generations of teachers.

The theorists have invariably distinguished such "tricks of the trade," "rules of thumb," or "bags of tricks," as "merely 'empirical' knowledge" (e.g., Goode, 1962; Parsons, 1968), or a kind of "craft" knowledge. Such knowledge, these theorists argue, falls short of the more systematic and scientific knowledge of generative principles—including the principles of scientific inquiry itself—that qualifies the distinctive knowledge base of true professionals. Talcott Parsons (1937) explains that the distinctive competence of professionals "has not consisted exclusively in practical skills." Rather, the skills included in such competence are based on "a form of knowledge" which

> transcends the immediate practical exigencies of the particular professional function; it has been knowledge of a generalized character, not only of certain applications of a group of sciences, but of the sciences themselves, their theoretical structures and principles. . . . The ideal professional man [is] a technical expert in the sense transcending special skills. (pp. 365–366)

As recounted by Clifford and Guthrie (1988), this distinction was quite salient at the turn of the century, when education programs were being established in the universities, shortly after the development of the kind of law schools that we have today. Christopher Columbus Langdell, the Harvard Law School dean credited as the originator of the "case method" in legal education, cautioned that "if law be not a science . . . it is a species of handicraft, and may best be learned by serving an apprenticeship to one who practices" (cited in Clifford & Guthrie, 1988, p. 74). As for education, Clifford and Guthrie recount that:

> The eagerly made decision to offer graduate education put pressure on the small store of scholarly or technical literature on the ancient practice of education. A corpus of knowledge had to be attained quickly—to have something to teach and justify the new place of education in the universities. (p. 75)

By 1910, when education schools were producing dissertations on "scientific topics" using "psychological experimentation" and "statistical studies of the organization and problems of schooling," President Lowell of Harvard could write to Edward L. Thorndike that "here was no dabbling with the tricks of the trade that had been the earmarks of the normal school; here was *Wissenschaft* with a vengeance" (cited in Clifford & Guthrie, 1988, p. 76).

Parsons (1968) speaks of "the requirement of formal technical training" (p. 536) as the first among the core criteria differentiating the professions from other occupations. But with this knowledge base construed in terms of broad and even "transcendent" inquiry, the significance of calling it a specifically "technical" knowledge base demands clarification. Otherwise, it could be thought that everything professionals need from any sort of nontechnical education (including liberal studies) would be included in this broad understanding of the knowledge base. If this were the case, critiques of "technically" oriented models for professional education would simply have misunderstood the language that they criticize. It is important to note Parsons's own discrimination between "technical" and "nontechnical" matters and the singular importance of the distinctly "technical" in his account of the professions. Then we can turn to a more general survey of the value that "nontechnical" elements are seen to contribute in the education of professionals.

According to Parsons (1968), for the "applied" professions, the "problem in defining the limits of the professional pattern . . . concerns the importance . . . of competence in culturally defined technical subject matter. However," he adds,

> No social system is only, or even primarily, a field for the implementation of the kind of technically specific goal-interests that can ignore complex interrelations with nontechnical concerns. Hence, the question emerges as to *whether the nontechnical concerns that impinge on the professional function can be more or less neutralized so that the professional expert need not concern himself too seriously with them.* (p. 537; emphasis added)

The ability to "neutralize" nontechnical concerns is used by Parsons (and others following him) as the basis for differentiating among occupations as to their relative degrees of professionalism. He notes, for example, that "the sense in which the clergy continues to be a profession . . . is at least partly equivocal;" and "the central clerical role must be regarded as marginal to the professional system because the 'application' of technical competence is only one part of the complex of its role components" (1968, p. 537). He goes on to state that this same criterion disqualifies those he calls the "intellectuals":

> In the modern world, concern with the expression of moral commitments and with their application to practical problems, social and otherwise, has to a considerable degree become differentiated in the function of ideology and institutionalized as a primary concern of the groups rather loosely called intellectuals. . . . This concern is perhaps even more difficult to professionalize than the traditional clerical role. (1968, p. 537)

Just as Parsons sees the nontechnical moral and political orientation of intellectuals as disqualifying them from full professionalization, so too he sees "artists" as disqualified by virtue of their orientation to "expressive symbolization," which he opposes to "the professional application of disciplined knowledge" in those fields where "the primacy of the values of cognitive rationality is presumed" (p. 539). We can see here how the mainstream functionalist theory of professions is in fact founded on the dichotomy of "instrumental" versus "expressive" role orientations. This dichotomy is also (and *not* accidentally) fundamental to the functionalist explanation of the gender-differentiated roles of men

and women in both schooling and the nuclear family (see, e.g., Parsons, 1951, 1959; Parsons & Bales, 1955; Parsons, Bales, & Shils, 1953).

To condense a long and much more complex story: Within the nuclear family, the infant starts out with an orientation to the mother's "expressive" role as the provider of *unconditional* and *undifferentiating* but *particularistic* love. Socialization and personality development are both seen as occurring through an institutionally mediated process of learning how to interact with the father, and then others, all of whom provide gratification in the form of *conditional* and *differentiating* rewards for the *universalistically* evaluated performance of "instrumental" tasks. Schooling plays a pivotal role in the transition from the *consummatory* and expressive female regime of preschool years at home to the *productive* and instrumental male regime of the postgraduation working world, epitomized especially by the technically advanced professional fields. This transition is further characterized by the initial predominance of female teachers in kindergarten and the early grades, gradually giving way to a predominance of male teachers in high school and college.

This model clearly locates the professions in a distinctly masculine sphere of instrumental technique. Moreover, it suggests that even the most awesome technical knowledge base would not qualify teaching as a profession like the others. The pedagogical role is necessarily transitional, requiring teacher–student relations that are always somewhere in between the instrumental and expressive poles, since their very function is to engage students who are not yet ready for the full instrumentalism of relations in the workplace and to gradually socialize them for their eventual involvement in such relations as adults.

"Technical" knowledge and skills are virtually defined as such by their instrumentality; that is, by the fact that they are merely instrumental means for producing desired outcomes. The more "expressive" role of teachers (and especially female teachers in the early grades), however, depends on qualities distinct from the kind of *technical* knowledge and skill that have been seen as the basis for professionalism. The same expressive (noninstrumental and nontechnical) orientation that precludes artists from full status as "professionals" would disqualify teachers as well, especially those in elementary school.

Our complaint is not only against the gender-related inequalities that result from this model, including gender- and class-related biases against teachers, nurses, and so forth, as compared with physicians and engineers. These injustices result from misrepresentations that are more fundamental to the basic functionalist theory itself. It is not just teaching that is misconceived in this account, but the professions generally. In contrast to the account of functionalists, our view is that professionalism *in general* is characterized by the need for a distinctly noninstrumental competence; that is, by phronesis rather than *technē*. This is the competence required for praxis, or the symbolically mediated social interaction that defies analytical bifurcation along "instrumental" and "expressive" lines. Functionalist accounts based on such conceptual bifurcations have misrepresented not only the specialized education and socialization required for the actual praxis of diverse professionals, but also the general public education that those professionals have in common with their clients as a shared basis for their interactive praxis. Just as diverse professional practices depend upon a general education that cannot be reduced to a matter of functionally determined socialization, so does general education itself depend, in turn, on the special professional competence of teachers: competence that cannot be reduced to any graded blending of expressive dispositions mixed with instrumental or technical skills.

Parsons uses the "technical" as his criterion for excluding intellectuals, artists, and the clergy (and, implicitly, schoolteachers as well) from full status as professionals. Even his broadened understanding of the technical does not span the entire breadth of "arts and sciences," or the breadth of the humanistic "liberal arts" disciplines that he and other theorists recognize as an essential part of education for professionals:

> The ideal professional man is not only a technical expert in the sense transcending special skills; by virtue of his mastery of a great tradition he is a liberally educated man. . . . In the great European tradition . . . professional men have been humanistically educated men, men of liberal culture. It goes without saying that the liberal spirit, the love of knowledge for its own sake, which should permeate the special learning of each profession is inseparable from that permeating those liberal studies which have no direct professional application except in their own perpetuation, transmission, and advancement. (Parsons, 1937, p. 366)

Maybe that does "go without saying"; but would it still "go" as plausibly if somebody tried to say precisely what that means, or why anybody should believe it? Of course, it also goes without saying that, in this passage, Parsons's theory reveals its masculine bias; and Chapter 5 shows that this is not merely an anachronistic quibble over personal pronouns.

A central question for us here is how we can identify the value that nontechnical education has for professionals. Until such value is articulated, advocacy of liberal education for professionals resonates with the notion of knowledge that is good in itself but, curiously, *good-for-nothing*. Such a view, along with its corollary that knowledge that is good-for-something is worthless in itself, characterizes the common-sense thinking about knowledge and education discussed in Chapter 1. Such confusion lies near the center of the mainstream account of professionalism and corrodes recent attempts, such as that of the Holmes Group (1986), to restructure the professional education of teachers.

LIBERAL EDUCATION: WHAT GOOD IS IT SUPPOSED TO BE?

Consider, for example, this nostalgic refrain in Sol Linowitz's (1988, p. A52) plea for law schools to "help make the practice of law the learned and humane profession it once was." Linowitz reminisces on his life "as a young lawyer," when "the law for me was truly a human profession" and "also a learned profession. . . . The leaders of the bar were men who read the classics for pleasure, who quoted the Bible and Shakespeare in their briefs as a matter of course." Although we do know that those leaders were in fact "men," it remains unclear what good they ever did, for themselves or anyone, by stuffing Shakespeare and the Bible in their briefs. Linowitz assures us: "They agreed with Thomas Jefferson that 'history, politics, ethics, physics, oratory, poetry, criticism, etc. [are] as necessary as law to form an accomplished lawyer.' They understood what Felix Frankfurter had in mind when he wrote: 'No one can be a truly competent lawyer unless he is a cultivated man.'"

Although their understandings of Jefferson and Frankfurter, and the value of liberal education for their practice, again seem to "go without saying," Linowitz affirms that "those of us who have spent long years in the practice of law know very well . . . that a lawyer's need for a broad education is as great today as it was in Jefferson's time." Assuming such a common understanding among lawyers, he recommends changing the law school admissions test to reward liberal arts mastery; he also recommends that law schools require students to take courses in legal history and courses from the arts-and-sciences catalogue.

In recent years, such calls for enhanced liberal arts preparation have become increasingly common for the range of occupations that might be regarded as "professional," including even such a technical field as engineering (see, e.g., DeLoughry, 1988a, 1988b; Johnston, Zemsky, & Shaman, 1988; Vild, 1984). A great deal of this literature, however, resembles the Linowitz appeal in its eloquent stammering on behalf of nontechnical values that are supposed to be patently obvious, although they are never clearly identified, described, or otherwise accounted for.

Writing for the Professional Preparation Network,[1] Stark and Lowther (1988, p. 1) note that "the education of most college students traditionally has included both liberal study to help develop appropriate values and attitudes and professional preparation to provide technical knowledge and skill." They criticize "most suggested reforms" of college education for tolerating this "schism between liberal and professional education;" but, for now, they have aptly described the most common understanding of that split. Values and attitudes from liberal education are supposed to provide guidance in the proper use of technical knowledge and skills. In education, we recognize this as the ubiquitous distinction between "cognitive" and "affective" domains, which can be easily dismissed as a pernicious repercussion of the positivist dichotomy between "facts" and "values." But the pervasive influence of such thinking requires that we take time to show the difficulties that result for theories that have been proposed as bases for the liberal education of professionals.

Benveniste (1987) uses teachers as a prototypical example of the "altruistic" orientation that is said to characterize professionals:

> The notion that professionals do good to individuals and society differentiates these vocations from other work. It gives

[1]The Professional Preparation Network is "a group of educators teaching in the liberal arts and in eight undergraduate professional fields at four-year colleges and universities" (Stark & Lowther, 1988, p. 2).

> the professions an appeal of a quasireligious character that has much to do with making some of the professions far more attractive than they might be otherwise. (pp. 42–44)

Benveniste's characterization of professions as altruistic "callings" is surpassed by the authors in Eigo (1986), who describe the professions severally, and together, as more fundamentally religious "vocations to justice and love." While emphasizing biblical and other theological sources, Schaffer (1987) stresses the importance of such influences as they permeate the literature and general culture within which the commitments, consciousness, and character of professionals are formed. Moral philosophers, such as Alan Goldman (1980), continue toiling at more secular formulations of the basis for the exceptional value orientations that are supposed to characterize "professionals."

Instead of claims that the professions are exceptional by virtue of their altruism, however, we now hear more modest pleas for recognition that altruism still motivates exceptional professionals within those occupations. While altruism remains a central theme in the *ideology* of professionalism (Kultgen, 1988), it has become impossible to maintain that altruistic value orientations represent prevailing norms within the professions. It has become easy to dismiss the claim that "professions govern themselves for the common good" as a self-serving myth (p. 135), along with claims that there is some kind of "distinctive professional conscience" (p. 143) and that "professional schools inculcate the professional conscience" (pp. 149–150).

In direct response to Parsons's description (1937) quoted above, Kultgen (1988) comments:

> The notion that a professional education is a liberal one is astonishing. The traditional professions have recognized otherwise. They have been aware of the narrow focus of the training for which they are willing to take responsibility and have encouraged a liberal education prior to entrance into professional training, though critics charge that this is designed [to prepare the professional] for social intercourse with genteel patrons rather than to provide the wisdom necessary for moral leadership. (pp. 150–151)

Bledstein's (1976) historical study and Rueschemeyer's (1964) sociological analysis lend support to the criticism that

liberal education might be more important as a means of providing the professional with a distinctive place in the social and economic class structure rather than as a distinctive moral or ethical orientation. Although this undermines the rationale for liberal education as a basis for professional altruism, it does not necessarily pose a problem for the mainstream functionalist rationale. In that rationale, the value orientation of professionals is expressly *not* altruistic (Goode, 1962; Parsons, 1954). Rather, the ethic (according to Parsons) is one in which the nonaltruistic interests of the professional have been "fused" with the functional requirements of society in such a way that no conflict will arise between egoistic and altruistic inclinations.

The functional requirement to reinforce this happy fusion appears to prejudice the liberality of liberal education by restricting the range of values that might be considered, if not reducing "values" altogether to the factual domain of functionality. Instead of a more heterogeneous liberal education in moral values, we now see "liberal education" as a support for the functional ethics that are presumably part of the same ethos into which the student is supposed to be socialized in the professional school. But just as Parsons recognizes the fatuousness of claims to professional altruism, so do the perennial calls for renewed emphasis on ethics in the professional schools bear witness to how slightly the ethics of their students have been developed, either in those schools or in the preprofessional liberal education programs. Examples were provided a decade ago by the law schools and Watergate; now we look to the more recent Wall Street scandals. As reported in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (20 July 1988, p. A3), for example, after "several graduates of the Harvard business school were prominently involved in Wall Street insider-trading scandals," the school responded by requiring all of its students to take a three-week course on ethics before graduation.

Whether viewed as moral altruism or as nonaltruistic ethics, the value orientation is seen in either of these accounts as something extrinsic to the professional's basic competence in getting the job done. Values enter only as they impose boundaries on the technical means that may be used for the accomplishment of assigned ends, or as they provide direction and guidance for assigning ends that may be technically pursued. They do not, in either case, figure as a part of the competence professionals need to perform their services. The question persists, therefore, as to why liberal education should be thought to have any *particular*

importance in the preparation of professionals. If not part of their special know-how, why would either ethics or morality have a greater role to play in the professions than in any other occupation?

The mainstream functionalist answer is that unlike others, who can be controlled by direct supervision and bureaucratic rules, the professional makes most effective use of his or her technical competence when given considerable autonomy in exercising technically qualified discretionary judgment (see, e.g., Benveniste, 1987). Questions about the scope of that autonomy, or the propriety of practices within that scope, are decided by the profession itself as a group, not by clients, supervisors, or employers outside the profession.

But such autonomy is only rational when there is a basis for trusting the professionals individually and as a group. Thus, in his classic formulation of the basis for distinguishing professional occupations, Everett Hughes (1963) declares:

> Professionals *profess*. They profess to know better than their clients what ails them or their affairs. This is the essence of the professional idea and the professional claim. From it flow many consequences. . . .
>
> Since the professional does profess, he asks that he be trusted. The client is not a true judge of the value of the service he receives; furthermore, the problems and affairs of men are such that the best of professional advice and action will not always solve them. A central feature, then, of all professions, is the motto . . . *credat emptor*. Thus is the professional relation distinguished from that of those markets in which the rule is *caveat emptor* (pp. 656–657).

Hughes neglects to observe, however, that relations with professionals involve different kinds of trust, some of which cannot be based entirely on their professions of superior technical knowledge. As Sykes (1987) observes, our "expectation of technically competent role performance" is one, but only one, form of trust:

> The second form of trust is the expectation of fiduciary responsibility, the expectation that service providers demonstrate a special concern for others' interests above their own. Trust as a fiduciary responsibility extends beyond technically competent performance to the moral dimension of interaction. (p. 19)

Sykes regards this as a matter of trusting the professionals to use their technical competence justly and morally, thus distinguishing it from trust in their professional competence itself. Although we agree on the centrality of what Sykes is calling fiduciary trust, we insist that it essentially involves a trust in the nontechnical competence for professional praxis. This is not something extrinsic to professional competence, as it must seem to be when competence is understood in a more limited technical sense.

We recognize liberal education as an essential factor in developing the *practical* competence required of professionals. If it were needed only to inform the moral use of *technical* competence, then it is hard to see why liberal education for professionals would deserve treatment as a special problem. All workers in the labor force have some specialized technical skills, after all, and it is socially desirable for all of them to use their skills ethically and morally. Liberal education should make the same contribution in preparing both professionals and other workers. The *special* claim that the professionals profess as the basis for their autonomy, according to Hughes (1963), is "the claim to know better than their clients what ails them or their affairs" (p. 656). But for Parsons (1954), this superior knowledge is confined to a sphere of "functional specificity," which is itself determined as a function of the professional's specifically *technical* knowledge and skill. Given this perspective, it is unclear why professionals have any special need for liberal education.

One common functionalist response is that the ethical reliability of professionals is more important because their failings do us more serious harm than the failings of other workers upon whom we might also need to rely. Some occupations are thought ineligible for full professional status, no matter how technically skilled, because they are regarded as "harmless." For example, Goode uses this argument in pointing out that "the public sees no way by which the librarian might exploit the reader or the organization. . . . The reader does not feel he can be saved or harmed by the librarian" (1962, p. 20). The harmlessness of teachers has likewise been cited as a limitation on their eligibility, as we have noted in Lortie's (1969) reference to the quip that "no one ever died of a split infinitive."

We regard liberal education as more than a supplemental source of values, norms, or rules of ethics. We see it as essential to the practical competence used in human praxis, a competence

that includes more than the technically skilled performance of instrumental tasks. A brief comparative analysis of the professions will show the need for reconceptualizing their practice as instances of praxis that require phronesis, not merely technique.

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE AND COMPETENCE RECONSIDERED

A variety of occupations have recently been seizing on "professionalization" as a strategy for upward mobility. When activists address members of their occupation, it often sounds as if monetary and status rewards are the very essence of what it means to be a professional. Addressing legislative bodies, however, the same advocates plead that such rewards are merely consequences of the distinctive character of practice in those fields that deserve recognition as professions. Like the social scientists reviewed above, these advocates generally base their pleas on claims about the social need to protect consumers against the quackery of unprofessional competitors who lack the advanced, specialized, technical knowledge base that qualifies the real "professionalized" cosmetologists, mortuary scientists, and so forth.

Since the general tide of deregulation that began in the mid-1970s, however, legislators have increasingly turned a deaf ear to such pleas. Even medicine and law have lost some of their special privileges, following economic analyses documenting unwarranted social costs from policies seen as the anticompetitive practices of self-serving monopolies. In addition, these major professions lost some of their status when judicial analyses concluded that there is no technical justification for their long-standing prohibitions against advertising and other competitive practices, which the courts have now found to be protected by the First Amendment rights of consumers and providers.

In conjunction with the critical analyses by social scientists such as Collins (1979) and Larson (1977) and other social critics such as Illich (e.g., 1980), such public policy developments seem to reinforce the conclusion that, even in law and medicine, "professionalism" is more a matter of special rewards for politically established monopoly power than any special technical requirements for the distinctive practice of those occupations.

This conclusion is further reinforced by the kind of comparative analysis suggested by Nelson (1988) when he asked about the

difference between lawyers and computer specialists. It is not clear that the lawyer can claim any greater technical knowledge base, or a technical knowledge base of any greater social importance, than the computer specialist. Such a comparison is at least equally dramatic when lawyers are compared with engineers, who lack many of the most important privileges that distinguish the professions. Some of those privileges, moreover, are retained in full measure by the clergy, even though this is not clearly based on a distinctive clerical knowledge base and even though whatever knowledge base the clergy might claim as their own would clearly not be especially "technical."

We recall that Parsons noted these same circumstances, leading him to conclude that the clergy must have dropped to marginal status, at best. But notice what weird science this is! Attempting to explain professions as a social phenomenon, the social scientist starts with the prototypical examples (clergy, law, and medicine), discovers a defining criterion (technical knowledge) in one of the examples (medicine), and then changes the examples to fit the new "scientific" definition!

The fact is that engineers do not enjoy the kinds of autonomy and authority that have always been regarded as essential characteristics of the professions; and the clergy, at least in comparison with engineers, do have these privileges. Of course, engineers might earn more money and even enjoy a higher social status in many circles. But to go by these criteria would be to define professions in terms of the rewards they have secured, instead of the character of their work; and such an outcome from comparative analysis would simply reinforce the conclusion that nothing really qualifies some occupations for professional privileges not enjoyed by others in the general market for goods and services.

In fact, a more thorough analysis will show that there is a functional basis for professions in the distinct character of their practices, but that this basis is something other than their technical knowledge, which is not actually a distinctive qualification of professionals in any case.

First, we must substantiate a claim that was simply asserted above: that engineers lack the essential privileges recognized for the professional occupations, including clergy. The most obvious example is the professional's privilege against being forced to disclose information learned in confidential communication with a client. This exceptional protection, which shields the practices of doctors, lawyers, and the clergy, is a privilege derived from the

rightful needs of patients, penitents, and other clients. It is the client, not the professional, who is entitled to waive this protection. Thus the protection derives not from the professional's technical capabilities but from the client's need for a protected, confidential relationship with a professional whose expertise might not be "technical" in any significant respect.

It could be thought that this is an isolated example of professional privilege, since it specifically concerns protection against exceptional demands, such as a subpoena to testify in court. In fact, the interest at stake receives much broader protection in professional relationships. For example, in circumstances wherein a doctor serves as the personal physician for an individual patient, privileged communication is protected from disclosure to others, including even a bureaucracy that employs both patient and physician. If a company provides a physician to treat work-related injuries, then the injured patient must be able to speak freely about his or her medical history, for example, without fear that the doctor might communicate the information to the employer, who might use it for other purposes outside the patient's control.

Professional autonomy enables the employed professional to refuse even direct orders from an employer, which is surely a distinctive privilege in our private-enterprise economy. In the case of doctor–patient relations, even legislative, executive, and military commands in the public sector can be refused on such professional grounds, and the professional can be vindicated by the courts and by the profession. Of all public-sector bureaucracies, the military is the least restricted in its internal affairs, so the protection of communication between military chaplains or lawyers and their clients provides a strong example of this principle.

Such exceptional privileges are not based on exceptional knowledge as such, as we can clearly see by comparison with engineers. An engineer is answerable to higher management, and to military or civilian employers in the public sector, without the special protection afforded doctors, lawyers, and the clergy. As we can see in such instances as the space shuttle *Challenger* disaster or the defective Pinto design, engineers often lack the established channels or the means available to other professionals for carrying out their responsibilities even, if necessary, against the wishes of their usual superiors. Engineers do sometimes blow the whistle publicly on unsafe product designs or other management-

dictated abrogations of proper engineering standards. But when those whistle-blowing engineers are fired for insubordination, the employer's right to fire them is not generally defeated in court, and finding another job in the same engineering field may turn out to be impossible. The responsible but insubordinate engineer might even be celebrated in the press and elsewhere (see, e.g., Boisjoly, 1988) but does not enjoy the kind of established protection that a doctor, lawyer, or accountant would receive not only on the job, but also in court and in the job market as well.

The comparison with accountants is again revealing. The accounting knowledge base is not thought to be more technical, or more advanced, than the engineering knowledge base. Yet when a certified public accountant is hired by a corporation to prepare an audit or financial statement, the accountant's career could be destroyed for *not* refusing improper directions from the employing corporation. In this case, the professional privilege against market and political demands is based on responsibilities extending beyond both the client company and the accountant's own CPA firm. Again, the privilege is based on the nature of the need to rely on uncompromised communication, not on the accountant's specifically *technical* expertise as such.

This point is nicely illustrated by comparisons within the pharmaceutical industry. There could hardly be a more highly advanced, specialized, and technical knowledge base than that required for the manufacture of prescription drugs, which also involves the kind of life-and-death stakes that would seem to meet the functionalist standard of potential harmfulness. Yet drug manufacturing is perhaps the most completely subject to a bureaucratic, rather than professional, form of regulation and responsibility. Like engineers, drug manufacturers can be held responsible for satisfying fully specified technical criteria. In fact, it is their technical character that makes it possible for such criteria to be ascertained and implemented by authorities outside the field of drug manufacturing itself. The pharmacist, or drug retailer, on the other hand, must be relied upon to serve nontechnical needs of the consuming public. The pharmacist must be technically reliable as well, of course, but that in itself would not justify special professional privileges for pharmacists. We also need technically reliable drug manufacturers, but this is a need that can be met through the technical processes of a regulatory bureaucracy such as the Food and Drug Administration.

For the sake of illustrating this distinction, we have drawn the line too sharply and must now acknowledge certain qualifications. Surely, for example, it is not the case that technical procedures are so completely capable of guaranteeing the trustworthiness of drug manufacturers that we would have no need for anything like the special responsibilities of professionals. On the other hand, this qualification itself suggests that professionalism is required precisely at that point where the need for trust is no longer just a technical matter.

More important is the qualification that our comparative *description* of the situation that obtains in different fields does not presume that those different situations are optimal, or even satisfactory, as they exist. We would argue, in fact, that engineers should have the same whistle-blowing privileges as accountants and other professionals. But this follows from the analogous need for reliable communication, not from the type of knowledge and skill needed for the engineer's technical tasks. Engineers have in fact been engaged in protracted struggles over whether their responsibilities, and their corresponding rights and competencies, should be recognized as more fully professional, or as merely technical services subject to the bidding of management and nonprofessional employers.

Our comparative analysis has been presented as a heuristic for illustrating principles elaborated more adequately below; it must not be allowed to obstruct our vision of ongoing struggles, which include not only efforts to establish greater professional responsibility and competence in previously subordinated occupations like engineering, but also struggles to preserve responsibility and competence even in established professions, such as medicine, where they may be threatened. For our comparative purposes, we have so far ignored the potential for erosion of professional reliability arising from more bureaucratic responses to problems of cost control in the public and quasi-public insurance sectors, and from the continuing development of medical services within corporations (Walsh, 1987), the organization of legal services on an unprecedented corporate scale (Nelson, 1988), and other processes responding to political and market forces rather than professional commitments as such.

We are not denying the more cynical historical accounts of the professions as self-serving monopolies, nor do we deny the importance of specialized technical knowledge for the success of those historical mobility projects. Our critique, however, in-

volves more than a prescriptive policy alternative. We see as a descriptive matter the erosion of professionalism accelerated by the inadequate representation of practice as a process that is purely technical, responsible for meeting merely technical specifications. We are also making descriptive claims about the distinctive professional relations that are threatened by these technical conceptions. The quality of such relations in practice provides a basis for professional autonomy and other privileges, no matter how important stories about greed, corruption, and the monopolization of technical knowledge might be for a complete description of the professions as they have in fact developed.

Of course, we still need to make good on the promise to demonstrate both the nontechnical nature of such relations in the praxis of professionals and the nontechnical competence required. To do this, we will begin by observing how prevailing models of practice deviate from actual relationships between professionals and their clients. Those observations will then provide a basis for elaborating an alternative model based on the centrality of phronesis as the competence for praxis.

Models of Professional Practice

It is interesting to note that both the functionalists and their critics have discussed professionalism in terms of the same models of professional–client relationships.[2] On the one hand, there is the "hired gun" model, in which the client employs a professional solely for the technical expertise needed to accomplish the client's purposes. The professional is expected to be concerned not with the client's purposes but only with the technical means for accomplishing them. While the professional may exercise autonomy and authority in the deployment of instrumental means that the client might not have chosen, the client defers to such autonomy and authority on the basis of the professional's claim to specialized technical expertise.

Some see this model as representing a socially functional norm that is more or less approximated in actual practice. Some

[2]These models and criticisms are discussed with reference to the general range of professions in Kultgen (1988). For a more thorough discussion, with respect to law in particular, see Nelson (1988). A more finely analyzed typology of functionalist models for relationships between clients and professionals is critically discussed in Bayles (1981).

critics, on the other hand, see it as a false ideological cover for exploitation by professionals who feel free to disregard their clients' wishes. Still other critics, while accepting the descriptive validity of this model, reject it as a lame rationalization for the unethical and socially irresponsible conduct of professionals acting as "hired guns" for their clients.

The same conflict of perspectives can be seen among those who have discussed professional-client relations in terms of another model, one more concerned with "social control." In this model, the professional again provides an instrumental service based on technical expertise; but the professional does so to accomplish only those client purposes deemed consistent with a broader social good. Lawyers, for example, have been depicted as a profession that serves the general social welfare partly by curbing the less scrupulous tendencies of profit-oriented business clients (see, e.g., Parsons, 1962; Smigel, 1969; cf. Nelson, 1988).

Superficially, these models might seem diametrically opposed to each other: One has the professional refusing to serve private purposes that would detract from the general social welfare, while the "hired gun" model eschews interference by professionals in the client's choice of ends. Both, however, share a view of the professional as a *personally disinterested* technical expert, that is, someone who can be trusted to use instrumental knowledge and skill without interposing his or her own conflicting personal interests (cf. Kultgen, 1988). "Professional ethics" are largely concerned with avoiding any such "conflict of interest." The "social control" model also emphasizes ethical constraints on the range of client purposes to be served through use of a professional's technical expertise. The "hired gun" model observes limitations on the range of instrumental *means* that might be ethically employed, but leaves the client more free to choose the *ends*, relying more on an "invisible hand" (such as the free enterprise market, or the advocacy system in law) to derive social welfare from the pursuit of private interests.

In both models, clients rely upon professionals for a disinterested deployment of the technical expertise acquired in specialized professional training. Liberal education seems relevant only as it might contribute to thinking about ethical constraints on the uses of technical knowledge and skill. Such ethical considerations, and the liberal education that supports them, are seen as extrinsic to the special *competence* of professionals, which is the basis for a

client's need to trust them in the first place. We have seen that liberal education has also been regarded by the critics as providing upwardly mobile professionals with the cultural capital to mix smoothly with an already higher-class clientele, but this is not seen as a functional contribution either to the performance of specifically professional responsibilities or to more general social interests supposedly served by the professionals.

Liberal education is also understood to provide general communication skills, which are recognized as important in both "hired gun" and "social control" models of professional-client relationships. First, it is important for professionals to understand the purposes that even the most inarticulate of clients might want to communicate. Second, the professional must be able to communicate successfully to clients what they must do to benefit from professional expertise; for example, when a lawyer coaches a client on how to dress and conduct himself or herself as a witness or in a negotiating session, or when a physician prescribes treatment that requires what is known in medical and nursing schools as "patient compliance."

The ability to understand and to be understood and the role of liberal education in developing that ability are undeniably essential. What we deny, however, is that such ability can be reduced to instrumental communication skills or to techniques for deciphering information about the client's ends and for informing the client on how to cooperate with the professional's technical means for accomplishing those ends. The reduction of professional competence to mere technical skill results from such disjunctions between ends and means, which are construed as separate matters only instrumentally related to each other. Such disjunctions permit the division of labor in which an employee or contractor is responsible for selecting the best techniques available to meet specifications that represent ends independently determined by the employer. If the choice of techniques available is constrained by ethical responsibilities to third parties or the general social welfare, this does not change the essentially instrumental means/ends relationship from which these models are derived.

We have noted above that the instrumentalist model does not logically justify the special autonomy and authority claimed by professionals. This model is not to be rejected, however, on the basis of an a priori commitment to defend special privileges; we reject it, rather, because it fails to recognize the essential aspects

of professional practice from which those privileges derive. Empirical research on relations between clients and professionals has begun to illustrate the kind of interactive praxis involved in those relations, with reported observations that reflect some of the differences between practical and merely technical or instrumental activity. A brief look at some examples drawn from this research will illustrate the importance of praxis for practicing professionals.

Lawyers and Doctors

Hosticka (1979), for example, has inquired into the "power relations" betwen clients and professionals, negotiated in their dialogical construction of the client's situation and what they should try to do about that situation. Although the professional typically begins this dialogue by asking "What happened to you?" or "What is happening with you?" the ensuing conversation is not just an exchange of information and further questions to ascertain objective information:

> Description of "what happened" or "the facts of the case" can take many forms, more than one of which may have equivalent *a priori* claims to validity. . . . In the case of professional-client interaction, the primary issue may not be what happened to the client, nor what kind of trouble the client is in, but who has the power to say what happened and to define the kind of trouble. (p. 599)

In analyzing conferences between legal-services lawyers and their indigent clients, Hosticka found that the lawyers interpreted their clients' situations in terms that fit them into both the legal system and the lawyers' overburdened caseloads—even though independent analysis of those situations revealed client interests and possible legal strategies that were neglected as a result of those interpretations.

This research might be interpreted as revealing a subordination of the client's interests to conflicting interests of lawyers and of the system. Yet, considering that legal-services lawyers have generally passed up opportunities to practice in more lucrative and prestigious situations, it is not plausible to explain their practice as a self-serving exploitation of their clients. It seems more likely, rather, that inadequate interpretations of the clients' interests are at least partly the result of limitations on the well-meaning lawyers' competence for such interpretive activity. Such limitations on practical competence do not result from personal deficiencies of lawyers choosing to do legal services or public interest work, who regularly include some of the brightest and most talented members of any law school class. Instead, as noted below, these limitations (i.e., limitations on competence for the dialogical praxis of interpreting personal and social interests) have been actively imposed and maintained by political and institutional arrangements that define "poverty law" and "public interest law" as services that call for instrumental or technical skill, rather than interpretive practical competence.

Sarat and Felstiner (1986) observed the interactions between divorce lawyers and their clients, who did not have the disadvantage of forced dependence on legal-services lawyers. Although the interactions were apparently more symmetrical, Sarat and Felstiner also report extensive dialogical interpretation of the case and of the client's general situation. These researchers report that the dialogue also includes interpretation of the legal system and the range of options offered by the legal process. Perhaps more important, they describe what they call the "legal construction of the client," which depends on interpretations of "what the legal process values in human character and what it wishes to ignore, what the process validates and what it leaves for others to reinforce" (p. 96).

In the lawyer-client interactions observed in these and similar studies (see, e.g., Cain, 1983), the professionals are not merely selecting and executing technical means for attaining ends previously specified by clients; and the lawyer's role in the formulation of ends is not confined to refusing work regarded as unethical because of conflicts with some broader social interest. The idea of ethically constrained technical work appears to provide a better model of the practice of elite and highly paid lawyers such as those observed in research at the American Bar Foundation (see, e.g., Heinz, 1983; Heinz & Laumann, 1982; Nelson, 1988); in such situations, corporate clients with more options and more knowledge of the law are seen to have more control over the work of the lawyers they retain from large and prestigious independent firms.

Nelson and Heinz have convincingly shown that elite lawyers lack the kind of autonomy and authority with respect to their corporate clients that had been posited by Parsons and by Smigel.

Their professional services do not seem to include an important role in modifying their clients' objectives, and their practice hardly causes any deviation in the distribution of wealth or power from the general interests of their corporate clients. Yet their professional status rests not on their technical expertise but on their competence in important interpretive and ideological functions that are distinctly nontechnical in nature. The nontechnical competence for professional interpretation of individual and group interests, in diverse and historically changing social and political circumstances, clearly draws at least as much from liberal education as from any more specialized professional training. Moreover, such contributions of liberal education to the competence of lawyers for the interpretive and ideological functions of their profession are clearly part of the "social reproduction" process, identified in Chapter 2 as the scope and subject of "educational studies" as a field within the liberal arts.

The research on lawyers supports our argument that professional autonomy and authority are based on nontechnical competence for practice in interpretive and ideologically significant roles. That research could tempt us to conclude, however, that instead of generalizing a model of liberally educated professionals, it would be better for society to eliminate those privileges and the professional roles themselves. For, as we have seen, it is sometimes the case that the legal profession has helped itself by helping rich and powerful clients transform the system in their interest, while translating the interests of less favored clients into claims already recognized within the system—claims that pose no threat to the status quo. Such tendencies are inconsistent with the universally benign and public-spirited professionalism celebrated by Parsons and, before him, by Durkheim, Weber, Tawney, and Peirce (Haskell, 1984). It seems closer to Ivan Illich's (1980) vision of professionals as parasites who exploit society and dominate their victims by mystifying and manipulating distinctions between real and artificial needs.

The temptation to eliminate nontechnical functions because of their potential for mystification and abuse, however, is itself grounded in the mystifying ideology that claims technical expertise as the sole basis for professional privilege. It denies the more essential role of phronesis, or the competence for praxis—that is, practice that requires accountability on moral, political, and otherwise nontechnical grounds. Ideological denials do not eliminate the need for such practical competence and most certainly do not

reduce elite lawyers to performing strictly technical services for their clienteles. Instead, by denying the nontechnical character of their actual praxis, that ideology has freed elite lawyers from public accountability for the politics of their professional practices (Foster, 1986).

The work of Simon demonstrates why legal practice necessarily transcends any limitation to a purely technical pursuit of assigned ends. In "The Ideology of Advocacy" (1978), he demonstrates how variations of the mainstream technical approach (including legal positivism, proceduralism, purposivism, game theory, etc.) have all failed, in various ways, to provide for legal representation of the genuine interests of clients. In a later article, Simon (1980) details how more "therapeutic" counseling and friendship approaches also serve to provide substitutes for the kind of legal practice that would be more effective in addressing clients' real interests. What all of these inadequate models have in common is the promotion of some form of instrumental expertise as the key to "success," instead of reflective critical engagement between attorneys and clients, which might reveal genuine interests that are not addressed by the technical resources of legal process.

The need for such reflective critical engagement results from the client's need for assistance in interpreting his or her own interests and in weighing alternative courses of action. This need should be recognized as a basic feature of relations between clients and professionals in medicine and other fields as well. Davis (1981), in a discussion of legal aspects of doctor-patient relations, notes how the same unrealistic ideology of client autonomy in the unassisted free choice of ends is reinforced, in both medicine and law, by the corresponding models of doctors and attorneys as providing essentially technical service to their clients.

The relationships observed by Davis (1981) are important for our purposes, since they anticipate the possible objection that law is really different from medicine and other more technically oriented professions. Jackson (1987) was drawing such a distinction when he asked:

> Is teaching more like medicine or like law? Do teachers more closely resemble engineers or ministers? More important, to which model of a profession (if either) should they aspire? The Holmes report . . . wants teachers to be like doctors (no mention is made of engineers!) and the sooner the better. (p. 387)

A great deal of criticism has been directed against the established view of medicine as an essentially technical process. In his award-winning study, Starr (1982) shows the historical contingency of the model that has developed in the United States. Reiser (1978) shows how the "reign of technology" in medicine has come to interfere with effective diagnosis and treatment. We would not deny, however, that technical expertise plays a larger role in the work of some professionals than in others. We deny, rather, that their professional privileges are based on the technical need for such expertise. In medicine, technology itself has produced such an unprecedented proliferation of treatment options that the course of action simply cannot be determined as a technical matter; it requires choices that a patient cannot evaluate without engaging in a dialogue with the physician (see, e.g., Bursztajn, Feinbloom, Hamm, & Brodsky, 1981; Cassell, 1976; Israel, 1982). A cancer victim may have several treatment courses to choose from, each involving different trade-offs among such factors as prospects for recovery, time at home instead of in institutions, and avoidance or treatment of pain. The problem of choosing one course of treatment from among such alternatives is essentially a nontechnical one. The patient does need to rely on a professional who can give expert advice on technical factors in the deliberation of alternatives; but the deliberative process itself depends more fundamentally on the physician's nontechnical competence in asking the right questions about the patient's personal and family circumstances, preferences, and values.

Donald Schön (1983) provides a simpler example:

> [In] the reflective practitioner's relationship with his client . . . the professional recognizes that his technical expertise is embedded in a context of meanings. . . . If he is a physician, to take one example, he may urge his patient to stop smoking, but he may also be alert to discover whether, in *this* patient's life, smoking is a way of handling a level of stress that might have other serious consequences if it were given up. . . . In this sort of example . . . there is the recognition that one's expertise is a way of looking at something which was once constructed and may be reconstructed; and there is both readiness and competence to explore its meaning in the experience of the client. . . .
>
> Although the reflective practitioner should be credentialled and technically competent, his claim to authority is substantially based on his ability to manifest his special knowledge in his interactions with his clients (pp. 295–296)

Such nontechnical ability, we would add, is itself part of the practitioner's competence as a professional. What the patient needs is not merely a skilled communicator to help translate technical information. The professional is also needed for the practical competence that comes with years of experience as a specialist, one who has engaged in praxis with many other clients with comparable problems, problems of a kind that each patient might face perhaps no more than once in a lifetime. It is this kind of specialized competence that enables the oncologist to know what questions to ask about a patient's values and family circumstances, to interpret the initial answers, and to follow up with further questions to help the patient formulate his or her own wishes. The patient relies on the praxis of a competent professional for a dialogical interpretation of all the interrelated practical and technical considerations he or she might want to take into account.

Like other professions, law and medicine are engaged in the broader institutional, political, and cultural processes through which diverse practical interests must be interpreted and pursued. This may be most obviously seen in law. Simon (1984) reports the development of "a broader notion of practice than that of the [conventional] professional vision" (p. 500). For lawyers, this reconceptualization "starts with a conventional notion of law practice and develops it in ways that cut across the conventional distinctions between legal and political" (p. 500). Simon refers to the examples of Gary Bellow's "focused case pressure" approach, which "repudiates the conventional distinction between service" (individual case work without cumulative significance) and "law reform" (class actions aimed at rule change) in efforts to encourage small-scale popular mobilization through the coordination of small individual claims focused on local problems (cf. Bellow & Kettleson, 1978), and to "the efforts associated with Edward Sparer to combine law reform efforts in welfare with recipient mobilization" (p. 501; Simon cites Piven & Cloward, 1971, pp. 208, 248–340).

Such reconceptualized modes of poverty law often led to class action suits against government agencies, which produced an especially hostile response from California Governor Ronald Reagan and his close aide Edwin Meese. Among their very first actions in the White House were efforts to kill federal support for legal services or, failing that, to ensure their depoliticization. Again, the Meese position is that lawyers should confine them-

selves to providing technical expertise in pursuing ends identified by individual clients. Critics such as Simon, Bellow, and Sparer can easily show that this puts clients with fewer resources at a disadvantage, since the lawyers serving wealthy clients practice without such constraints. Beyond their involvement in political conflicts over specific rights and interests, and in the political institutionalization of procedures, routines, and role expectations for the ongoing practices through which diverse rights and interests are interpreted and realized, lawyers also participate professionally in more extensive cultural processes. These processes generate broadly shared cultural interpretations of practical interests, obligations, and our rightful expectations of each other (see, e.g., Macaulay, 1987).

The institutional, political, and cultural dimensions of medical practice may not be so obvious, but they are no less real or important. In hospitals, for example, patients need to rely not only on their own personal physicians; they must also rely on the professionalism of the medical staff, a staff that should operate independently of hospital management to maintain an institutional regime in which patient interests are protected against competing interests, even including economic interests of the hospital itself (see, e.g., Harris, 1977). This is not to claim that such conditions are generally fulfilled in hospitals as a matter of course, but only that the professional responsibilities of doctors, and the required practical competence, do extend to such institutional functions. Patient involvement in medical research presents extraordinary ethical problems, for which technical conceptions of ethical decision making provide no substitute for competent ethical praxis (cf. Veatch, 1987).

The ethical responsibility of physicians can be undermined by limitations on their autonomy within institutions. This tension gives rise to problems in the roles developing for physicians within corporations (Walsh, 1987), as well as other practice settings in which bureaucratic measures are being adopted to expand access to and/or control the costs of medical care. In their opposition to proposals for national health insurance or a national health service, as in their earlier opposition to Medicare (Marmor, 1973), medical societies have claimed to represent the interests of patients and the general public in defending the traditional autonomy and authority of physicians, invoking the sacred doctor/patient relationship and decrying the impending evils of "bureaucratic medicine." Although more cynical interpretations of such political activity by organized medicine seem irresistible, the public interests that the medical societies have claimed to represent are not so easily dismissed. Such public interest advocacy is more clearly exemplified by the work of specialists in occupational and environmental medicine and by societies of pediatric specialists who have lobbied actively on children's issues ranging from child-resistant packaging for drugs and other hazardous substances, to safety restraints for young children in automobiles, to restrictions on television advertising and programming during children's viewing hours.

After reviewing earlier calls for physicians to recognize a professional responsibility to serve as "the natural attorney for the poor" and to be "healers of social as well as individual pathology," Jonsen and Jameton (1977) continue:

> Physicians should be concerned about war, racism, and poverty, but so should all citizens. Is there some special feature of being a physician which gives rise to a set of social and political responsibilities of physicians as such? If there are, do they create any peculiar problems of ethical conflicts and priorities of value for those who bear them? (p. 376)

Jonsen and Jameton explain how they would answer these questions on the basis of a judgment that "there must remain persons whose primary responsibility is diagnosis and therapy":

> We have thus chosen to view physicians as technicians of diagnosis and therapy whose ethical task is to find humanitarian ways to practice their work, rather than to see them as humanitarians in search of a technique. . . .
>
> We assume that they have the same sorts of political and social responsibilities everyone has. . . . The task for physicians is to find ways to integrate general and professional responsibilities. If there is anything special about physicians' responsibilities for general welfare, it grows out of the symbolic power given their acts by the nature of their patient responsibilities. (p. 398)

This approach does follow understandably from the modern bifurcation between ethics and skill, which underlies the mainstream functionalist view of professions shared by Parsons and others but which is undermined through a recovery of the older understanding of phronesis as the competence for praxis in

which ethical and technical considerations are not actually divisible. The mainstream modern view of the medical profession fails to account for the special role of pediatricians lobbying on the issues mentioned above. It is simply not true that their position on such political matters is just another subjective value preference, with only a "symbolic power" enhanced by their responsibility for technical diagnosis and treatment. Instead, we see these pediatricians, like other doctors and lawyers observed above, as having special responsibilities based on a political and ethical competence that is inseparable from the phronesis, or the fully practical competence, required for their actions as professionals responding to the special needs of their individual patients and clients.

Advances in medical technology do increase the need for technical skill; but they enhance the need for broader practical competence even more, as an increasing range and variety of technically available options shifts the decision on a course of medical treatment more and more from mere technical judgments about how to postpone and minimize the risk of a patient's death to practical judgments about the quality of life in different treatment regimes (Mason, 1988). These are choices to be made by patients and their families, not by physicians choosing in their place; but the doctor is not merely an advanced technician choosing means to accomplish ends that have been independently chosen by the patient. Instead, the doctor's technical expertise makes him or her the person that a patient depends on for the broader, nontechnical competence needed for the dialogical praxis of formulating choices and assessing them within a practical, or action-oriented, interpretation of diverse and competing interests.

Public deliberation on policies affecting health and health care services involves interpretation of the same kinds of practical interests, though on the social rather than the individual level. In their capacity as specially qualified professionals, physicians have the same kind of special role to play in such policy deliberation as they do in their conversations with individual patients. The practical interpretation of competing human interests involves representation of unpriced "use values" that tend to be obscured by the monetary "exchange values" of the marketplace. It would be naive, of course, to forget that providers do have special interests of their own at stake in such deliberations. Regular providers also have, however, special knowledge of public and consumer interests. These include needs and interests that a provider cannot satisfy by serving clients individually—common or shared interests that can be pursued effectively only through collective action informed by public discourse on political and social responses to the public recognition of such needs and interests. Such policy-related discourse often depends upon the competence of specialized professionals for an interpretation of the interests at stake in the recurring problems they encounter in their practice, which would not be visible, as common interests, to clients or members of the public individually, outside of that public discourse. Such interests can be adequately represented only by those with specially qualified knowledge of the values at stake. Both the freedom and the competence of professionals for such roles in public discourse are protected by the special privileges that differentiate their practice from the more prevalent capitalist forms of operation, controlled by employers and stockholders constrained only by the terms of contracts that have been negotiated in the marketplace of monetary exchange values.

CONCLUSIONS

Parsons (1968) was not wrong in claiming an importance for the privileges that distinguish norms within professional practice from those that would prevail in an undifferentiated capitalist system. His mistake was in characterizing the difference as one epitomized by the technical rationality of engineers, rather than the politically and ethically informed practical competence, or phronesis, that engineers may share with doctors, lawyers, and members of the clergy. The essential and distinctive characteristic of professionals is their involvement in the kind of social and interpretive praxis that requires phronesis, or a practical competence beyond mere technical skill. This view differs not only from Parsons's theory, based on the functional importance he imputes to the professionals' technical expertise and values; it also departs from the even more widespread empiricist and nominalist approach, which devotes itself to cataloging discrete "traits" found in occupations conventionally recognized as the professions. John Kultgen (1988), who also faults both functionalist and empiricist accounts for misrepresenting the true nature and importance of

professionalism, concludes his recent study with a chapter calling for "professionalism without professions."

The reformulation that this calls for is advanced considerably, we believe, by an ability to recognize the kind of practical situation that calls for professional praxis and competence, even from those who would not be conventionally regarded as professionals. This implies a correlative ability to recognize situations in which there is no reason for granting special privileges even to members of the established professions, that is, when they are called on to perform more strictly technical tasks for which they can be held accountable without reference to the conditions required for social praxis. The differences between professional praxis and the performance of technically specifiable tasks proves to be the basis for an understanding of "professionalism" and the competence that it requires, without accepting either functionalist or empiricist accounts of current conduct in specific occupations as the measure of the full potential value of truly professional education.

The perpetuation of special privileges for professionals cannot be justified without the development of praxis that actually delivers on the true promise of professionalism: the promotion of values and interests that would not be realized by the arguably more efficient general market for technical skills. Since the promised benefits of that praxis cannot be delivered without the necessary practical competence, an understanding of the nature of such competence must be a first priority in thinking about the significance of liberal education in the preparation of professionals.

Professional Praxis and Education

The examples discussed in the previous chapter illustrate the need for professionals with the practical competence for diverse forms of specialized praxis. The specialized practical competence that they need, however, must be distinguished categorically from their specialized technical knowledge and skill. Despite their familiar pretenses, the essential praxis of professionals is not the kind of unilateral service that experts can accomplish on their own, for the benefit of passively compliant and receptive (to wit, "patient") clients. Although professionals also need the technical skill to perform such services for clients (as when a surgeon operates on an unconscious patient), it is not their skilled performance of those technical tasks that distinguishes professionals from equally skilled high-tech mechanics, whose work might also have life-or-death consequences for the consumer.

Professionals are distinguished, rather, by the kind of praxis in which specialized practitioners and their clients must be actively involved in a dialogical determination of the course of action to be followed by both. Whatever technical skill may be required to carry out the chosen course of action, the choice itself requires a process of deliberation in which the alternative possible courses of action, and the client's practical interests, can be interpreted and assessed in relation to each other. For this, the lay client requires more than technical skill from the professional. Phronesis also is required: the competence for praxis based on sound dialogical interpretation of the personal and social interests that may be involved.

Clients must depend on the professionals to competently formulate choices and pose questions based on specialized expertise in practical deliberation over matters previously unfamiliar to the client. Professional authority does not preempt the clients' opportunity to choose; rather, it enhances the clients' competence to make choices that are meaningfully their own.

Ultimately, this praxis is a joint enterprise. Not only does the client depend on the professional's competence; the professional depends on the client's practical competence in realizing the potential value of the expert's more specialized competence. The competence of a lay client is largely developed prior to the first meeting with any particular professional, having developed over the lay person's entire life of social praxis, including prior praxis with professionals. The specific competence a client brings to bear in praxis with a particular professional, however, will eventually take its specific form within the dialogue of their joint praxis.

The relation is reciprocal but not symmetrical: Each depends on the other's phronesis, but both require competence for a specific praxis, a praxis in which only the professional has specialized expertise. Kultgen (1988) notes that "the complexity of modern life reduces everyone to lay status in every field but one. The physician is an amateur psychologist, lawyer, engineer, accountant, personnel manager, marketeer, etc. and each of the others is in a similar position" (p. 323). The capacity for special forms of practical competence does depend on the more general phronesis of both clients and professionals; in this situation, however, it is the specialist who bears a particular responsibility for teaching and counseling.

Kultgen (1988) observes that "much can be done to prepare people to take part in professional decisions and it is the obligation of the professions to see that this is done" (p. 307). Kultgen develops this theme "under the metaphor of the professional as teacher" and devotes the penultimate chapter of his study to what he calls "the pedagogical imperative" for all professionals. This includes the imperative for professionals to learn from their clients: "Since good teachers are also good students (of the needs and circumstances of their students as well as the latest developments in their discipline), the pedagogic model also represents professionals as learners and those whom they serve as teachers" (p. 308; cf. Schön, 1983, pp. 299–302).

Kultgen (1988) reminds us that in Plato's *Laws* we find questions about the nature of law explained through analogy with the different treatment free men and slaves receive when they are sick:

> The slaves are for the most part treated by slaves. . . . None of these latter doctors gives or receives any account of each malady afflicting each domestic slave. . . . Claiming to know with precision, he gives his commands just like a headstrong tyrant and hurries off to some other sick domestic slave. . . .
>
> The free doctor mostly cares for and looks after the maladies of free men. He investigates these from their beginning and according to their nature, communing with the patient himself and his friends, and he both learns something himself from the invalids and, as much as he can, teaches the one who is sick. (Plato, 1980, p. 107)

As Kultgen (1988) notes:

> Too many professionals treat clients in the manner of slaves or, in the modern equivalent, as machinery in need of service. . . . We must explore the implications of the conception that professional service is an interchange among equals and how it follows that the role of the professional is that of teacher as well as partner and agent. (pp. 307–308)

Kultgen (1988) thus sees the teacher as a paradigm for all professionals. Not only are professionals obliged to serve individually as educators vis-à-vis individual clients; the professions, collectively, must also serve as educators of the general public.

Kultgen notes in particular the "heavy burden of promoting communicative integrity" that is imposed on the professions by their position in contemporary society, observing that this burden "gives the professional ideal the power to contribute mightily to the transformation of society if only it can take hold and first transform professions and professionals" (1988, p. 344). He agrees with us insofar as he proposes an ideal of professional practice based on communication that not only educates the client, but also pedagogically transforms professionals, professions, institutions, and political societies as well. He derives his conclusions from an analytical survey of problems and examples in a broad range of professions; but without the theoretical tradi-

tion of phronesis and praxis, Kultgen does not articulate the basic principles for understanding the relationships that he has observed or inferred. Since those principles reveal the nature of the competence to be promoted in the education of professionals, we discuss them briefly in the next section, before drawing implications for the interrelationship of professionalism, educational studies, and the liberal arts.

PRAXIS, PHRONESIS, AND *BILDUNGSPROZESS*

We have departed from prevailing accounts of the professions in our claim that special treatment for professionals is not a functional requirement of advanced technical knowledge and skill. Rather, we have argued that it is a social response to the need for privileged spheres of dialogical praxis that are protected against pressures from the commercial market, which is more than ready to reduce personal and social interests to commodified exchange values. Our approach also identifies phronesis, rather than technique, as the competence required for the kind of specialized practice that merits recognition as the praxis of professionals. Liberal education can now be understood as indispensable for the development of such phronesis, or the practical competence needed by professionals to do their jobs. Liberal education should not be seen solely as a source of extrinsic "values" for imposing ethical boundaries on how professionals use their technical powers or as a source of cultural credentials for their upward social mobility.

The recent upsurge of interest in how the liberal arts can contribute to the education of professionals has produced a number of discussions in which liberal education is recognized as providing subtle and complex thinking and communication skills that are needed for successful job performance, in addition to providing the moral values to help direct how those abilities are to be used (see, e.g., Marsh, 1988; Petrie, 1987; Stark & Lowther, 1988). In these formulations, the proficiencies developed through an education in the liberal arts are still portrayed as cognitive and social skills, or techniques, rather than as elements of practical competence. As we understand these formulations, however, they do not actually reflect a considered judgment that the liberal arts in fact provide merely instrumental or technical skills rather than practical competence. Instead, they reflect the condition of

contemporary Anglo-American discourse, from which the distinction between practical and instrumental abilities has all but disappeared (cf. MacIntyre, 1984, 1988).

The fundamental importance of this distinction is, however, recognized by Grundy (1987) as the basis for professionalism in teaching:

> When the work of teachers is informed by a technical interest, the work is recognizable as a manifestation of craftsmanship (or perhaps workmanship). When the practices which foster learning are engaged in a way which is dependent upon the exercising of the practitioner's practical judgments, then that work may be deemed to be characterized by professionalism. Professionalism has its outcome in 'practical action'. (p. 180)

Grundy provides a good introduction to the tradition of understanding that Habermas and Gadamer both share, despite their differences, as an inheritance from Aristotle (see, e.g., Gadamer, 1987; cf. Beiner, 1983). Although, in following Habermas, she might be guilty of neglecting tensions among classical and modern elements within this tradition, such difficulties should not distract us from the more general need to recover meanings and distinctions that have been lost or suppressed in English analytical thought. This obviously requires a project that we can do no more than point to in this book. Yet we do need to indicate briefly the principles within this tradition for understanding those features of actual practice that were noted in our review of the professions, as well as the practical competence that they require. Without some understanding of those principles, it would be possible to misunderstand "praxis" and "phronesis" as nothing more than novel and obscure terminology that can be obviated by more adequate accounts of practice, based on a more complex and subtle analysis of advanced technical proficiency.

The positivist analytical tradition of Hobbes, Hume, and their modern descendants insists upon the separation of "facts" and "values," which prevents an adequate appreciation of the nature of praxis and practical competence. Reflecting the Cartesian separation of body and soul, this dichotomy is replicated in the separation of a professional's technical skill and ethics, of the client's subjective values and purposes, and of the professional's objective command of instrumental means for pursuing ends chosen by the client.

Without understanding the principles that distinguish praxis from the instrumental pursuit of prespecified ends, even modern critics such as Schön, who has clearly observed that nontechnical ability is essential for professionals, are unable to articulate how practical competence differs from instrumental technique. Schön (1983, 1987) falls back on a concept of "artistry," which is supposed to differ by virtue of the more tacit character of its judgments. Even the most tacit knowledge and ability are still technical, however, if they involve no more than the instrumental know-how to accomplish ends that can be specified in advance. There is nothing in the concept of "artistry" that accounts for the competence that professionals need for the kind of practices Schön has illustrated with examples of clients and professionals engaged in the dialogical interpretation of interests and outcomes that only become visible in the course of their joint praxis. The word *artistry* itself can even be used as a translation of *technē*, the Greek word for the kind of ability required for *poiēsis* (or "making"; cf. "artifact"), which was distinguished from *praxis* (or "doing") on the basis of its instrumental use for producing outcomes specifiable in advance.

Of course Schön and others (e.g., Floden & Clark, 1988; Fox, 1957; Light, 1979) recognize that professionals must be trained to deal with clients' problems under conditions of uncertainty. Uncertainty in this sense is seen as an important basis for professional discretion in making judgments on the spot, instead of being bound to follow predetermined algorithms. Such uncertainty is seen to call for tacit artistry and judgment for achieving outcomes that in some sense are not knowable in advance; but, in that sense, these are still being described only as tacit technical abilities. Although uncertainty precludes knowing in advance the outcome of a professional's efforts to deal with a client's problems, these efforts are still technical in nature so long as they are directed to technically conceived problems and solutions. When the professional cannot technically specify the problem, or what would count as a solution, without returning to a dialogue in which those questions are considered as posing new questions for a reinterpretation of the client's interests, then the professional becomes engaged in praxis with the client, calling for a fully practical competence.

Phronesis is the kind of competence required for the practical judgment involved in the interpretation of personal and social interests to guide practical action. This is distinct from the umpire's judgment in calling strikes and balls, which, no matter how tacit in its exercise, is based in principle on fully specifiable criteria. Technical criteria can be specified for judging technical aspects of work by professionals, as Berliner (1986) suggested in his presidential address to the American Educational Research Association:

> Education would be lucky if it could become 10% as rigorous as the judging of livestock, potatoes, poultry, and figure skating. Currently, with annual turnover of untrained, inexperienced judges . . . we can expect an image of teaching that is . . . inadequate to judge contemporary classroom teachers. (p. 9)

Aspects of the teacher's work that could be judged on technical criteria, as in the judging of livestock, poultry, and potatoes, however, clearly do not encompass all important aspects of the teacher's work—especially those that warrant recognizing and preparing teachers as professionals.

Beiner (1983) has explained phronesis as the competence for judgment in political praxis, drawing from the work of Aristotle, Gadamer, Arendt, and Habermas. He explores the continuity of nontechnical competence required for interpretive judgments in politics, in professional and other interpersonal praxis, and even in the hermeneutical and aesthetic practices of persons within interpretive communities. Gadamar (1987) is also very helpful in explaining the Aristotelian notion that a distinct kind of competence would be required both for political action and for the personal interpretation of social and verbal meanings. This notion, that the same kind of competence is needed both for politics and for linguistic or interpretive activity in general, is especially alien to English analytical thinking; but it is presupposed in the vocabularies of Greek and Latin. The Greek *phronimos*, like the Roman *pragmaticus*, is an active, competent participant in deliberation by the *polis* of actions reflecting interpretive judgments of personal and social interests. A citizen without the phronesis for such participation was called, instead, an *idiōtēs*.

Other crucial differences in understanding are reflected in linguistic usage. Noddings (1984), for example, has called for "deprofessionalization" to redress the uncaring ethos she has observed pervading our institutional and social lives. Her plea for caring is articulated in the English vocabulary of "empathy" and "sympathy." As Beiner (1983) notes, however, this is a vocabu-

lary of "pathos" rather than "praxis," of people passively affected by the feelings that they share with others, instead of people engaged with others in the praxis of actively feeling things and acting together. Beiner explains how Aristotle understood phronesis, or practical competence, to include *suggnōmē, eugnōmōn*, and related aspects of the capacity for feeling with other people, but in an active way, interpreting those feelings with a view to judging among possible actions that those feelings might inform. If this can be revitalized in our conception of the competence required by professionals, and developed in their education, then a fully practical model of professionalism might qualify as part of the solution to the problem Noddings is addressing, rather than being part of that problem itself.

The continuity of phronesis as the competence for both the political and personal, for moral action and for interpretive understanding in general, as well as for professional practice, should be more comprehensible in light of the examples noted earlier of the need for referring back to an interpretive dialogue, in which client interests and alternative courses for professional praxis are explored in application to each other (in the hermeneutical, rather than the technical, sense of "application"; see Gadamer, 1982). What makes this so difficult to grasp for modern analytical thinking is the Cartesian prejudice, according to which language is a technical device for expressing, in the external material world, thoughts in the mind of an individual whose interests and preferences originate in the autonomous identity of a nonmaterial soul. This prejudice supports the idea that human behavior is either instrumental (as with objective, technical knowledge and skill) or expressive (as with subjective, ethical values); and in the "affective" domain of values, it supports the idea that behavior is either egotistic or altruistic.

We have seen how both these implications of the analytical prejudice are implicated in the prevailing ideologies, which portray professionals as experts instrumentally applying their advanced, specialized technical skills in serving purposes unproblematically ascribed to the client, subject to ethical constraints construed either as functional norms or altruistic moral values. What these ideologies deny is the process in which individual and social identities are formed within social practices, through which the individuals also come to interpret their own personal and social interests. Understandings of interest take form through the interpretive practices of their signification; they are not intrinsic features of prefabricated and fixed personal identities, to be "expressed" or "instrumentally" achieved. The competence for such interpretive understandings is continuous with competence for moral action informed by *suggnōmē*, or the active "feeling and judging with others." This is not altruism as opposed to egotism; it is, rather, a competence demanded by the *process* in which people all *take form* through social praxis.

This "process of taking form" is yet another clumsy translation for a word that has no satisfactory counterpart in English: this time, the word *Bildungsprozess*, which has a rich tradition in German thought (Smith, 1988; Gadamer, 1982; Weinsheimer, 1985), although we know it only in our borrowing of *Bildungsroman* for literary narratives of education. As Smith (1988) explains:

> *Bildung* has as its primary meaning "education." . . . Its root, *bilden* (to form, give form to, to make) connects *Bildung* to a very special kind of educational process . . . which . . . can be considered the backbone of the Western pedagogical tradition. (p. 51)

And, as Shapiro translates (Habermas, 1971):

> *Bildung* means both formation or shaping and the (humanistic) education, cultivation, and acculturation of a self-conscious subject. *Bildungsprozess* has been translated as "self-formative process" in the sense of a personal or cultural process of growth and development. "Self-formative" does not imply the realization of a plan chosen in advance by the self, but a process in which the self nevertheless participates. (p. 320, translator's note 6)

With an understanding of *Bildungsprozess*, we can grasp the underlying continuity of praxis as transformative interpretation and moral social action, in teaching and in all professional practice, and in the liberal and professional education that plays a central role in developing phronesis, or the practical competence for praxis in all these domains. We can begin with the relationship between *Mündigkeit* and *Bildungsprozess*, on both individual and sociohistorical levels, that Habermas (esp. 1979) has been especially concerned with demonstrating. As McCarthy (1978) explains:

> *Mündigkeit*, literally "majority" (from *mündig*: "of age"), is a central concept of classical German philosophy. . . . The *Mündigkeit* of an individual or group is conceived as the telos of a developmental or formative process (*Bildungsprozess*). (p. 396, note 5)

Progressively advancing levels of *Mündigkeit* can be attained not only in the *Bildungsprozess* of individuals and of comprehensive national societies but also in that of more specialized interpretive communities, such as the professions, the academic disciplines, and the larger professional, educational, and cultural communities within which they are embedded. Linguistic dimensions of the competence required for the interpretive practices involved are variously discussed in Taylor (1985), Gadamer (1982, 1987), and Habermas (1979, 1984).

Gadamer (1982) explains why this is not a technical process, while indicating its significance for education:

> The result of Bildung is not achieved in the manner of a technical construction. . . . Bildung as such cannot be a goal, it cannot as such be sought, except in the reflective thematic of the educator. . . . The concept of Bildung transcends that of the mere cultivation of given talents. . . . The cultivation of a talent is the development of something that is given, so that the practice and cultivation of it is a mere means to an end. (p. 12)

As Weinsheimer (1985) explains: "Bildung means the specifically human way of coming into one's own (*ausbilden*) through enculturation. Bildung is distinct from cultivation in that it is more the acquisition of potencies than the development of latencies" (p. 69). The interests being interpreted in professional or other social praxis include interests in such potencies, which are not given in advance as ends desired by clients with previously fixed personal and social identities. Professional praxis is overtly or covertly involved in the interpretation of such real, but not previously articulated, practical interests. On the one hand, praxis is not reducible to technical production of prespecified ends; on the other hand, truly professional praxis will not interpose the interests of professionals or others (see Simon, 1978) but will assist in the client's interpretation of his or her own real interests. As Weinsheimer (1985) explains:

> What the interpreter is—not just what he thinks and does—changes in interpreting; it is an event of being that occurs. But this event changes what he is in such a way that he becomes not something different but rather himself. (p. 71)

Professional practice, in itself, is viewed as an example of this process in the professional's own life. As Gadamer (1982) relates: "Practical Bildung is seen in one's filling one's profession wholly, in all its aspects. But this includes overcoming the element in it that is alien to the particularity which is oneself, and making it wholly one's own" (p. 14). This Hegelian formulation (of the insight that we are destined to become what we do in life) suggests that, like it or not, professionals themselves are formed by their own practice. Since their practice involves continual transformation of clients, larger societies, and the professionals themselves, we are confronted with the necessary project of developing modes of practice worthy of all those implicated interests and providing formal and informal education for professionals to qualify for those modes of practice.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

We can now see how a broad, liberal education is required for the practical competence of professionals, and not just for high-level technical knowledge and skill, or for an ethical value orientation seen as something extraneous to practical ability. Also, we now see that the praxis of professionals is personally and socially transformative as *Bildung* and, in that sense, is always educational. This supports the argument in Chapter 2 that educational studies must be comprehensive of the social reproduction process in general. It also indicates why educational studies cannot be limited to studies of technique but must engage in open inquiry as a field of liberal study. Finally, it shows the importance of such educational studies, along with other liberal studies, in the preparation of professionals.

This suggests a broader role for schools and departments of education than training future teachers to perform instrumental tasks. In *Ed School: A Brief for Professional Education*, Clifford and Guthrie (1988) seem to challenge this broader role when they argue as follows:

> Imagine, if you can, a medical or law school that consciously eschewed preparing practitioners for their own mundane duties; that decided to alter its charter so as to deemphasize its practical mission. . . . There may well be research institutes that indulge in such cleavages . . . but these are not *professional schools.* (p. 329)

In fact, we can consider this possibility without straining our imaginations, as we can see from this statement in the catalogue of the University of Michigan (1986), which boasts one of the top-rated law schools in the United States:

> The Law School is very much a professional school. But it is distinctly not a vocational school. Students are not trained to perform many, or even most, of the tasks that its graduates may be called upon to perform as lawyers. (p. 15)

The University of Michigan is not describing any revolutionary innovation here,[1] but simply the ideal of liberal professional education for practitioners that has traditionally been demanded by the wealthy and powerful firms that employ graduates from Michigan, Chicago, Stanford, and the Ivy League. Those firms expect to train their new associates in technical procedures and

[1]Here is a more complete quotation from the catalogue section on "Goals of Instruction" (pp. 14–15):

> In order to assess the benefits of the School's instructional program, it is advisable for the applicant to take account of its goals. They are not necessarily the same as those of the students. Some conflicts between the goals of students and faculty may be a mark of a healthful and constructive program, provided the conflict does not cause one to defeat the other.
>
> Most students come to the Law School aspiring to be useful, rich, and/or powerful. The Law School is not opposed to the attainment of any of these objectives. . . . But applicants should understand that assuring such attainments is not the primary end of the School.
>
> By reason of its origin, location, tradition, and present sense of purpose, the School is deeply committed to the idea of the university. It aspires to link the quest for truth and understanding to the practical affairs of goverment. Its goal is to bring the whole of human insight to bear on the study of the law and its institutions. Thus, it seeks to share with its students a knowledge of the past and present forms and functions of law, and a sense of wonder about the law's evolution and future development. It seeks also to provide students an opportunity to learn more of themselves by measurement against the sternest challenges posed by the problems of law in our society. . . .
>
> It is believed that the range of intellectual experience which the School provides is intensely useful to persons engaged in careers in law. At one level, it is necessary to learn quite a bit about law in order to participate successfully in the School's program. . . . At another level, these experiences enable the successful students to gain a perspective on their field of endeavor which will contribute substantially to their ability to plan creatively, to counsel wisely, and to learn more when more learning is needed. . . .
>
> In these senses, the Law School is very much a professional school. But it is distinctly not a vocational school. Students are not trained to perform many, or even most, of the tasks that its graduates may be called upon to perform as lawyers, and should not expect to be fully prepared to deliver a wide range of legal services on the day of graduation. . . . Our practice-oriented courses and clinics provide . . . only an introduction to skills and a framework for practice which can only be refined through years of experience. . . . Michigan . . . seeks to provide students with the intellectual and theoretical background with which an attorney can undertake a more reflective and rewarding practice. It is felt that too much haste or emphasis on vocational skills, without a broader and more critical view of the framework in which lawyering occurs, runs the risks of training technicians instead of professionals.

tasks that they can teach at least as effectively in the course of actually doing legal work. They understand, however, that they can provide no inhouse substitute for the fully practical liberal education that is provided for future professionals in the "first-tier" law schools at elite universities.

Of course, the wealthy and powerful firms will continue to interpret their interests as they have in the past. However, if the preparation of professionals who serve less privileged clients is limited to training them in techniques, those clients will be deprived of the freedom enjoyed by those who receive the counsel of professionals with fully practical competence. Different patterns are possible for the distribution of opportunities to develop practical competence among professionals, with consequences for social reproduction that can only be assessed through the kind of inquiry described in Chapter 2 as the domain of educational studies. Educational studies, in this sense, would contribute to the practical professional education of teachers as well as lawyers and other professionals, although it would not focus on techniques for performing classroom tasks.

Owen Fiss (1985), a Yale Law School professor, has written:

> Law schools are professional schools, insomuch as they train people for a profession. But they are also academic institutions, and by that I mean they seek to discover the truth. . . . (p. 24)

> Law professors are not paid to train lawyers, but to study the law and to teach their students what they happen to discover. The law school . . . is an integral part of the university, and by virtue of that membership and all the commitments it entails must be pure in its academic obligations. (p. 26)

Although legal studies described in this way can be seen as analogous to our conception of educational studies, we agree with Levinson's (1988) objection to "Fiss's somewhat blithe rejection of defining the social meaning of professing law as including the training of lawyers" (p. 165). In seeking and professing the truth that we discover in the study of education, we are making the university's appropriate and necessary contribution to the practical competence of teachers.

Although our discussion has now come to focus on teaching in particular, this is not only because we ourselves are professors of education. Our inquiry has led, rather, to the recognition of how education is involved in the praxis of all professions, as Kultgen (1988) observed in his use of the teacher as a paradigm for all professionals and in the affirmation that "every professional should be an educator." Our understanding of praxis as *Bildung* reveals that professional practice is always an educational process, even if only in the sense of miseducation through restrictive distortion of potential opportunities. Insofar as professional practice always teaches, it follows that professional education is always teacher education. There is a need for professional schools of all kinds, therefore, to promote development of the teaching competence that their graduates will need in their praxis as professionals. Also, insofar as the praxis of professionals is always a joint practice with their clients, it requires the practical competence for both professional and client participation in that praxis; thus even general education in elementary and secondary schools has a role in teaching practical competence for the joint praxis of professionals and clients.

On these grounds, teaching might claim recognition as the paradigm profession rather than a "semi-profession" (Etzioni, 1969) or a "minor profession" (Glazer, 1974). Such claims are premature, however, as Kultgen (1988) observes:

> Unfortunately and shamefully, our educational system falls far short of the ideal. The teaching of skills for ends that are uncriticized, to be used in conformity to community mores, is the rule. The public, sensing the debasement of the professional ideal in this form of pedagogy, meet the clamor of teachers for professional identity with polite scepticism. (p. 310)

Since the Holmes (1986) and Carnegie (1986) programs are clearly intended to redress this situation, we might be tempted to applaud their designs prematurely. It seems, however, that the Holmes and Carnegie analyses are deeply rooted in the mainstream functionalist understanding of professionalism. This is not to say that members of those organizations would necessarily be committed to the functionalist approach, as opposed to an alternative understanding that might be proposed. Insofar as our investigation might contribute such an alternate understanding of professionalism, it could itself be seen as an example of the interpretive and dialogical praxis we have been describing.

The Holmes Group (1986) recognizes that "creating and sustaining a communal setting respectful of individual differences and group membership, where learning is valued, engagement is nurtured, and interests are encouraged require more than a set of identifiable skills" (p. 54). Their report proposes that the required "dispositions, values and ethical responsibilities" should be integrated with the knowledge and skill components of a "comprehensive plan for teacher preparation" (pp. 50–51), but the differentiation of knowledge, skill, and value has already precluded recognition of phronesis, or the practical competence in which such elements cannot be analytically distinguished.

The "comprehensive plan" also includes, as one of its components, "the study of teaching and schooling as an academic field with its own integrity":

> Studies of education as a discipline provide a description and explanation of the phenomenon of schooling itself—its development, its purpose, and the micro and macro mechanisms that make schooling possible and sustain it. A sound study of education . . . would provide a way of understanding schooling in the same way that the study of any discipline illuminates a set of phenomena. In this sense, education is one of the arts and sciences since it applies tested modes of inquiry to a phenomenon of universal scope and significance. (p. 51)

Paradoxically, this formulation restricts educational studies to the limited domain of "schooling," as opposed to the more univer-

sal scope and significance of education, or *Bildung*, as it operates throughout processes of social reproduction (cf. Chapter 2, this volume; Feinberg, 1987); at the same time, it provides no indication of how this component of professional education would contribute to the teacher's competence for practice within "schooling" itself. In the report's own vague equivocation, "while the determination of the origins, purposes, and mechanisms of schooling is vital, the heart of the matter is the structure of knowledge and what knowledge is of most worth" (Holmes Group, 1986, p. 51).

Competence for "imparting subject matter" would be developed, rather, in two other components, which recapitulate the analytical separation between curriculum and instruction: first (curriculum), the "knowledge of the pedagogy of subject matter—the capacity to translate personal knowledge into interpersonal knowledge, used for teaching," and second (instruction), "the skills and understandings implicit in classroom teaching—creating a communal setting where various groups of students can develop and learn." The use of these abilities is oriented, not surprisingly, by an additional component, which "consists of the dispositions, values and ethical responsibilities that distinguish teaching from the other professions" (Holmes Group, 1986, pp. 51–54).

Although the description of these components reveals an interest in pedagogy as praxis, their analytical articulation binds them to a functionalist understanding of expertise and responsibility. This can be seen, especially, in the separation between curriculum and instruction, and in the division of responsibility for knowledge of the subject matter itself (which is identified as knowledge of extant arts and science disciplines) and pedagogical knowledge of how that content matter can be translated in teaching it to students. The functionalist understanding is also reflected in the analytical separation of "dispositions, values and ethical responsibilities" from instrumentally effective "knowledge" and "skills."

As acknowledged in the Holmes Group (1986) report:

> The unique educational matter, not in the domain of any affiliated discipline (namely, the behavioral sciences, history, and philosophy) is curriculum; yet this is one area about which we have little compelling information and theory. Education is the discipline of the disciplines. (p. 51)

Yet the report would preempt teachers' professional curriculum responsibilities by presumptively defining subject-matter content for the schools, as when future teachers are described as majoring in academic disciplines that are supposed to constitute "the subjects they will teach" in school (see, e.g., pp. 16–17).

This suggests, for example, that courses on "political science" would be taught in the high schools—instead of courses on politics and government, which would be informed by several sources, including political science, without being defined by any one of them. Clifford and Guthrie (1988, p. 349) report John Best's observation that the academic political scientist is "concerned with building the discipline" rather than preparing students for participation in politics or government (cf. Levinson, 1970; McWilliams, 1970). Clifford, Guthrie, and Best were careful to distinguish academic from professional school functions, but these are both distinguished by the functionalists from general education as well (Parsons & Platt, 1973).

For another example, we can look to the field of history, where Hamerow (1987) has reported cultural consequences of constricting historical thought and writing within limitations of the academic discipline. Educational consequences are reported by Kozol (1986), who was told by twelfth-grade students that history is a study of past events and inevitable processes that could never be affected by anything that anyone like them would ever do in their own lives. Is this what the school subject of "history" is supposed to teach? Apparently so, according to a poster in the corridor that described history as a field of interest for future historians, archaeologists, and curators, but did not suggest that students might be interested as potentially knowledgeable participants in history.

The Holmes Group (1986) report blithely reiterates the venerable Sputnik-era diagnosis that the problem for curriculum and teachers' subject-matter knowledge is one of fidelity to the academic disciplines. It idealistically identifies the disciplines as constituted by our most authentic knowledge of the domains that they address and views the role of professional teachers as one of pedagogically translating that authenticated knowledge for the students. It thus ignores the more realistic understanding that the academic disciplines themselves function as professions, with

all the attendant limitations and qualifications on their practice (Clark, 1987; Toulmin, 1972).[2]

In their responsibility for curriculum, teachers need to be more than flexibly skilled pedagogical translators. For the joint dialogical praxis of interpreting the subject matter in relation to their students' personal and social interests, teachers need the competence for praxis as active, critical clients of the professionals in academic disciplines. How well they serve their students' interests, in relation to the subject matter, will depend on their competence in both client and professional roles. Thus the teacher's pedagogical praxis also provides a more general model, one in which students can see possibilities for critical praxis by professionals and clients in relation to specialized knowledge and expertise of all kinds. This is one more way that all teachers are involved in education for professional practice of all kinds; and, in this case, it is especially through their own professional responsibility for liberal education.

Thus we see how professional and liberal education depend on educational studies for an understanding of the complex and subtle ways that they are dependent on each other. We have also seen how the kind of praxis that is required in education should fully qualify teachers as professionals, not because of how they score on functionalist or empiricist checklists of the "traits" shared by other occupations, but because of the critically interpretive social competence that should be epitomized in teaching and that is necessary, moreover, for real praxis in any profession.

In his defense of the professional ideal, Metzger (1987) affirms his belief "that every desire to enoble [*sic*] work should be

[2]Hence, a distinct field of educational studies is important partly to preserve possibilities for understanding education in ways that might not be supported by any of the other liberal arts disciplines for reasons of their own internal definitions of scope, method, and so forth. Scholars involved in the Holmes and Carnegie movement, for example, actively use findings and insights on schooling and on the professions derived from the work of researchers who have lost academic jobs, not because anyone doubted the quality of their work or its importance and validity for understanding the domains under study, but for reasons pertaining to the self-definition of the disciplines constituted as academic professions. Examples include Paul Starr (sociology) as well as Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis (economics). If the propriety of self-constitution by the academic disciplines is recognized, it does not follow that the universe of scholarly inquiry, policy discourse, and general education in the school subjects should be confined within the limits they impose on themselves.

encouraged" and that it is only "when workers no longer give a damn whether they are or are not part of a profession, that there is cause to take alarm" (p. 18). After observing that those who defend professionalism are seen by most sociologists as "guardians of an empty shrine," Metzger (1987) notes that some sociologists of education are now going against that tide of disbelief in their support for current efforts to improve education through the professionalization of teaching (pp. 12; 18, note 1). Metzger cautions us, however:

> It is still too early to tell whether their affirmation of the redemptive power of professionalism presages a wide attack on the true unbelievers or . . . a limited resurgence of faith in an occupation particularly susceptible to paradisiac promises of higher status, or just another pendulum swing in the unending debate over how a mass education system may be brought to a qualitative state of grace. In any event, these sociologists confront the irony of seeking admission to a church at a time when the weight of its theology says that God is dead. (1987, pp. 12; 18, note 1)

We do not mourn the passing of the functionalist's god; nor do we share Metzger's nostalgia for the ineffable nobility of a self-aggrandizing professionalist mystique. Our understanding of the requirements for praxis leads us to affirm a professional ideal for teachers. With that understanding, however, we can reject the view of teachers as the kind of livestock or poultry that some would have us learn how to judge, but without acquiescing, as Metzger ends up doing, in the angelic pretenses of professionalist ideologies. In the tradition of *Bildung*, praxis, and phronesis, we see the need for teachers and other professionals to be engaged in actions that serve our personal and social interests in becoming fully human beings.