

Health and Social Theory

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I declare that this thesis has been composed by myself

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Abstract

This thesis examines the relationship between the theory and practice of health. While health has become a major concern in our society, there continues to be debate about what exactly health is. This thesis engages with this debate in examining various historical and modern definitions of health. Beginning with the Greeks and continuing through to modern and postmodern theories of health, this thesis evaluates these definitions in terms of their implications for the kind of practice they articulate. Chapter 1 examines the work of three prominent modern theorists; Parsons, Garfinkel and Foucault. While these theorists have been influential in defining modern versions of health, we find that their theories are difficult to practice. Chapter 1 concludes with a crisis in that we seem to have no version of health that we can practice. The search for a theory of health which we can live with is taken up in Chapter 2, in an examination of the work of Martha Nussbaum. Nussbaum wants to define health as a flexible life, but we find that this proposal, though admirable in many respects, falls short in terms of practice. In Chapter 3, we examine the work of Alan Blum and Peter McHugh, two analysts, in their definition of health as 'principled action'. This definition of health is found to not only allow us to live healthy lives but also to realize the significance of this healthy life. The work of Charles Taylor and his definition of health as engagement is examined in Chapter 4. Taylor's work is found to provide, like Blum & McHugh, a version of health that can enhance our practice. We conclude with the notion that these two versions of health could allow us to develop ourselves in healthy ways.

Introduction

In this chapter, we will examine some modern conceptions of health and illness. We will examine some recent theorists both in terms of their theory and their notions of health and illness. Dubos (1959) speaks of ideal notions of health, Arcadias and Utopias, where individuals and communities lived in harmony with nature enabling members to develop to their full potential. Perhaps these versions of health, as an ideal, are simply a mirage; something that we really want to believe in and something that is not really possible. Whatever version of health that has historically been articulated, there has always been some notion of a relationship between individuals and their communities. In earlier times, we can imagine how individuals found it necessary to form groups to protect the group from the worst ravages of nature. Health, as Dubos says, would have been seen as some kind of harmonious relationship between nature, the community and the individual. Historically, when health was formulated as service to gods or spirits, the community was oriented to providing the necessary means for the continuation of members' health. As Michael Waltzer (1995) points out, in ancient Athens, health was formulated as the political life. Communal resources were directed to making this version of health available to all citizens. Of course the question of who was a citizen was a more problematic issue for modern sensibilities, but the community took its responsibilities seriously and did what was necessary to ensure that all its citizens could develop their political life. There was an explicit recognition that there was an essential relationship between the community and its members and their mutual need for each other. There are, in modern or as some would have it, post-modern times, more individualistic definitions of health. Health today, is often

articulated as a personal, individual matter that is, in some way, something that we are all capable of possessing, if we make the appropriate lifestyle choices. Much of modern health education is focused on giving us the information to enable or 'empower' us to make the correct, healthy choice. Again, with these more individualistic definitions of health, has come a shrinking of communal provision and concern. Much of this communal concern has become technological in outlook, relying more and more on developments in science and the scientific professions such as medicine. From Athens to modern times, we can see how health has become more narrowly defined, resulting in a narrowing in the kind of help that a community offers its members.

While there has been a narrowing in definitions of health, there has also been an increase in our interest in our health. Perhaps the two are linked in the sense that health has become a matter of personal responsibility. While some people have become obsessed about their health as an individual concern, others have complained of health 'fascism' where the state has been castigated for interfering too much in people's lives. Health, then, has always been caught in a tension between the care of one's self and a concern for others. It is clear however that the way health has been defined has influenced how we line up in the political debate. Health, narrowly defined, seems like a matter of individual responsibility; health, more broadly defined, as the preservation of the common life, has seemed like a communal concern. In this chapter we will look at three of the most influential writers on health in modern times. At first glance, these three writers, Talcott Parsons, Harold Garfinkel and Michel Foucault, look like opponents of each other. Parsons seems optimistic about our health and the kind of help that a community can offer its members, particularly modern medicine. Garfinkel is awed by the work that ordinary members do in sustaining their own everyday health while Foucault, on the other hand,

is skeptical about modern definitions of health and medicine. In our examination of these writers' theories about health, we can, by examining the kind of practices that the theories articulate, begin to see their similarities. We will begin with a brief examination of the work of Talcott Parsons.

i. ***The Healthy Individual***

"What is essential to the concept of action is that there should be a normative orientation, not that this should be of any particular type" (Parsons, 1968, : 45)

"The Teleonomic capacity that we wish to call health, is the capacity to maintain a favorable, self-regulated state that is a prerequisite of the effective performance of an indefinitely wide range of functions both within the system and in relation to its environments. (Parsons, 1978, : 69)

In sociology, the work of Talcott Parsons has had an influence that is still present today. If some of his 'grand theory' has seemed to some to be not so grand (Wright Mills, 1959), nevertheless there have been various attempts to update his work so that its essence has been preserved. Theorists such as Alexander (1983) and schools of sociology such as neo-functionalism have sought to sustain in a more 'sophisticated' form the central core of Parsonian ideas. Parsons, in Jeffrey Alexander's view, aspired to develop a sociological theory 'to end all theories' (Alexander, 1987). In developing his 'grand theory', Parson tried to unite the various schools of American sociology by a synthesis of, primarily, European sociology into a single theoretical scheme: his theory of action. As Levine (1990) indicates, both the empiricism of Parks and Burgess and the theoretical pluralism of Sorokin, lacked, for Parsons, a respectable, intellectual theory with which to pursue its activities and inquiries. In 1937, with the publication of 'The Structure of Social Action', Parsons sought to reconcile the diverse activities of American sociology. In this work, "an empirical study in the analysis of social thought" (Parsons, 1968. :

vii), Parsons sought to re-cast sociology as a respectable, scientific discipline. Parsons wanted to re-formulate the work of such diverse thinkers as Marshall, Pareto, Weber and Durkheim as a major 'movement in the structure of theoretical thinking'. Parsons' 'grand theory', as a synthesis of these new thinkers, attempted to place sociology on a stronger foundation than it had previously enjoyed. Parsons' single theoretical system, his grand theory, was formulated as his theory of action which he hoped would provide a general theory for analytical purposes, irrespective of circumstances.

Parsons' conceptual scheme, his theory of action, consists of a 'basic conceptual pattern' which remains 'essentially unchanged' throughout different contexts. In his later writings, Parsons sought to integrate his theory of action within a more general systems theory. Parsons' work was the development of a 'theoretical scheme' as opposed to a 'systematic account of our empirical knowledge'; it is a "*theory of systems rather than a system of theory*" (1970:537). Parsons larger conceptual scheme, his theory of action, contains three 'differentiated sub-systems', the social system, personality and culture. Parsons wants to show the inter-dependence and independence of each of these sub-systems: he wants to show that:

"This fundamental relationship between need-dispositions of the personality, role-expectations of the social system and the internalized-institutionalized value-patterns of the culture, is the fundamental nodal point of the organization of systems of action" (1970:540).

His theory of action unifies these sub-systems and shows us the relationship between the sub-systems to enable him to be more 'theoretically precise' about the whole theory of action.

Parsons shows us that the individual actor must organize his/her action around all the elements within the theory of action. Parsons rational actor is the actor who acts with this normative pattern in mind. This normative pattern or orientation contains various possibilities and choices

that the actor is free to decide on. It is not that there is necessarily only one way for the actor to act, although sometimes, particularly with the sick-role, it seems like it. While different actors may choose to act in different ways in situations that seem similar, they all must act within this normative framework or orientation. Different actions are accounted for, in his theory of action, by the individual actor choosing the limits of value-orientation patterns and by 'a certain mode of integration of motivational elements'. Social order, for Parsons, is produced by the actor organizing all the elements of action to produce action that is rational, i. e. in accordance with this normative orientation. Both the observer and the actor are assumed to share this ability to organize these sub-systems to produce rational behaviour. Sociology, as observer, is then able to judge the rationality of any actor's actions, sharing as they do this normative consensus. Sociology is different from the ordinary actor because of its theoretical precision and its ability to more precisely and scientifically judge action. The clear independence of the social system allowed Parsons to more clearly demarcate sociology as an independent discipline, from psychology or anthropology. While agreeing that personality was a psychological issue, Parsons wanted to show the 'transformation formula' that allowed the actor as personality to participate in the social system. The actor, institutionalized in patterns of culture, value-patterns, participates in action using role-expectations of the social system. Parsons formulates an action frame of reference to analyze the behaviour of actors in situations.

For Parsons:

" The situation is defined as consisting of objects of orientation, so that the orientations of a given actor are differentiated relative to the different objects and classes of them of which his situation is composed. It is convenient in action terms to classify the object world as composed of the three classes of "social, " "physical, " and "cultural" objects. " (Parsons, 1967:4).

Here, situations are defined as consisting of objects of orientation which differentiate one situation from another. For Parsons action is a process 'in the actor-situation system' which has 'motivational significance' for individuals or a collection of individuals. In any situation, the actor comes with a system of expectations and culturally structured meanings so that he can assess whether a situation can fulfill his/her needs. The 'attainment of gratifications or the avoidance of deprivations' is assumed to be the end that the normative actor would choose. The 'means' are those parts of the situation that the actor has control over and the 'conditions' are those aspects of a situation that the actor has no control over. Faced with a choice of alternatives that are within his/her control, Parsons' actor must choose one of the 'possible modes' of normative orientation. For analytical purposes, the actor, in any situation, must choose his/her course of action 'subject to the influence of an independent, determinate selective factor'. The subjective, motivational processes that differentiate individual action in situations can either be ignored or relegated to a pre-cultural level or, as Parsons prefers, can be more clearly interpreted if the actor is questioned about his/her motivation. In making his/her choice, the actor could make a mistake, failing to attain the correct ends or failing to choose the right means.

Parsons wants to distinguish between the situation, as it appears to the actor, and the situation, as it appears to an observer. From the point of view of the actor, action is normatively oriented on the basis of the facts of the situation as the actor sees them; the actor chooses within a subjective frame of reference. If asked to account for his/her action, Parsons' actor can only articulate, at a descriptive level, the concrete facts of the situation as they appear to him/her. For the observer, however, Parsons social scientist, the facts of the situation are external, objective to him/her. While the actor is solely concerned with the concrete facts of the situation so that s/he can respond normatively, the social scientist begins with the concrete course of action and attempts

to bring out, at an analytically abstract level, the functional relationship between the concrete facts already described. The descriptive facts of a situation, articulated by the actor, are only relevant to Parsons theorist as a part of other normative orientations or possibilities within his general theory of action and are mainly useful for ordering the facts so that they can be further subjected to analysis and explanation. One of the main functions of analysis as opposed to description is to distinguish between the normative and non-normative elements of action. Normative courses of action are limited to the means and ends that the actor could have had control over, not those aspects of the situation that he/she has no control over.

For Parsons, the theorist can see further than his actor in situations, but the theorist must carefully preserve and analyse the situation as it appears to the actor. Parsons actor, faced with a situation, chooses to act within a normative orientation in response to the facts presented. The actor chooses a particular orientation, a rule, to guide his/her action in this particular situation. The actor is responsible for choosing the correct rule that applies in this particular situation. The actor can make an error and choose the wrong rule. The theorist can articulate other rules that would have better fitted the situation if the actor could have better seen the situation. The theorist must be careful that he does not impose rules or orientations that were not a possibility for this particular actor. The theorist must limit himself to possibilities or orientations that were legitimately available to this actor in this situation; legitimation is provided by reference⁴ to this normative orientation. We can examine this normative orientation and Parsons' theory of action , if we examine Parsons' formulation of the healthy and the sick individual.

Parsons defines health as the ability of the organism to maintain 'a favourable self-regulated state' so that it is able to carry out a wide range of functions (Parsons 1978). Health is a

functional concept which can be distinguished from other concepts such as ignorance or morality in 'so far as health is outwith the voluntary control of the individual'. While health ensures that the individual is able to function, Parsons does not see health as something that the actor could be fully responsible for and something that the actor could necessarily control. Since disease is something outside of the actor's control, a natural phenomena, Parsons actor can only do his/her best in acting normatively and hoping for the best; Parsons talks of this optimistic bias shared by both layperson and expert. Parsons version of health is situated at the junction of the organic and the social, where the individual, the organic, should act normatively in the face of the randomness of disease. Health as normality is seen as an individual endowment which is only available for the use of the individual as he engages the world. Health is rational action in so far as it is within the control of the actor although illness presents motivational factors that are more accessible to analysis, such as the psycho-somatic type of illness. Illness, in Parsons formulation, is a technical impediment which restricts the individual's ability to function effectively in the community; it is dysfunctional. Illness is defined by technical criteria enumerated by experts. The individual, a behaving system, is seen as the location of illness which the individual is unable to act upon in any meaningful way. Although acknowledging the possibility of 'lay' involvement in illness, it is consigned a minor role in its treatment.

In health and illness, Parsons outlines certain mechanisms that are provided to meet individual and societal needs and expectations. The first of these mechanisms is the institutionalization of the sick role; a concept which mediates between the needs of the community and the ill. Parsons outlines the three main criteria which circumscribe this role. The first of these is a recognition by the community that health and illness are outwith the voluntary control of members. The community does not expect, due to their lack of technical knowledge, the

members to help themselves to get well again. Although acknowledging that members may wish to get better, this is not enough by itself. The community also allows its members who are sick to be allowed time out from their normal daily life, from their obligations. Because they are technically disqualified in helping themselves, the community provides expertise through health service agencies. The provision of these health services by the community is the other mechanism which assists the citizens to regain their health. The community provides the health services, since it has a functional interest in controlling illness because of the cost to the community of the loss of these members. As well as the health services, the community employs other mechanisms to enable members to regain their health. These mechanisms, health services being the largest, include magic, religion and other alternative therapies. However, it is with medicine and the medical encounter that we can see a pivotal point where individual desires and obligations interact with societal expectations.

For Parsons, medicine, orientated to the values of the community, represents the cultural tradition of the community as science. Medicine stands outside of the community and its afflicted members, using its own value orientation of 'cognitive rationality'. Medicine's relationship with the sick member is one of detached concern, any stronger relationship being seen to weaken the therapeutic efficacy of the treatment. The member's relationship to medicine is one of passive submission to its pronouncements as s/he is unable to judge whether s/he is ill or well by him/herself. The cost to a member of a fee or tax is a reminder of where the responsibility for getting well lies. Medicine's relationship with the community lies principally in the administration of the sick role. Society, seeing its members as weak and possibly motivationally inclined to desire to be free of their functional obligations, requires the sick role to be policed by medicine. Medicine acts to decide who will and who will not be

considered sick and therefore eligible for the sick role. For Parsons, one of medicine's main functions is to separate the genuinely sick from the malingerers. Because of the possibility of abuse by its members the sick role, is monitored by the community's principal agent, medicine; although occasionally the community is prepared to tolerate a certain relaxation of its criteria, especially if the member is orientated to more extreme forms of deviance such as political or criminal roles.

Medical practice is, for Parsons, an interesting and significant example of a social structure that can open a 'window' into the balancing processes which have :

“generalized significance far beyond the “room” within the larger edifice of society into which this particular window opens” (1970:479).

Medical practice is, for Parsons, a good example of a discrete sub-system within the social system. It shows “some of the interrelations of the principal elements of the social system” (1970:429) and their location in the functional context of health. In providing an adequate analysis of the motivational processes involved in the medical encounter, Parsons hopes to show the mechanisms at work in society at large. For Parsons, illness ‘incapacitates for the effective performance of social roles’ and so there is functional interest in its social control. As well as the part that natural happenings play in the production of illness, there are, for Parsons, a variety of motivational factors “accessible to analysis in action terms” (1970:430). Because of the medical interest in these motivational factors, medicine, has for Parsons, extended well beyond the conceptual scheme of biological science. In terms of costs and benefits to society, illness is not merely an ‘external’ danger but an integral part of the ‘social equilibrium’. Since the sick role allows people to avoid their responsibilities and obligations, these motivational factors become a crucial resource in separating the genuinely sick from the malingerer.

The medical encounter is, for Parsons, institutionally organized “relative to distinctive role patterns and value-orientations in our society” (1970:429). Health as normality is, for Parsons a technical matter that ensures normal functioning; medicine, a mechanism for coping with the illnesses of its members. The relevant social structures, in the medical encounter are the role pattern of the doctor and ‘though to common sense it may seem superfluous to analyse it’, the sick person. The role of the doctor is, for him, the structural arbitrator of health and illness, normality and deviance. In the medical encounter, the doctor constrains the application of deviance (illness) to the patient. The situation, for both doctor and patient is one where both consult the rules or role-expectations, determined by the facts of the situation, in order to determine their future action. Parsons sees the doctor-patient encounter as one of ‘doing everything possible’ to help the patient. The medical encounter is a situation that has a series of socially prescribed roles that assume certain obligations and desires on the part of the participants. Roles and functions of both patient and doctor are collectively-oriented and institutionally defined. The patient, emotionally involved, and the expert, affectively neutral, constitute this situation as ‘seeking help’. The rigid separation and definition of roles can minimize the role strain that can occur in the situation. The separation from other contexts allows the professional to carry out procedures and obtain intimate information that would not normally be permitted. The definition of the patient as ‘helpless’ can minimize any potential exploitation of the patient by the doctor. The sick role has, as we have seen, two main functions; to isolate the the genuinely sick and to re-integrate them into society after they have been treated by the expert. The patient consults the expert to determine what is wrong since s/he doesn’t know; the doctor, the technical expert, is assumed to be in a position to help by virtue of his/her training and experience. The collectivity orientation ensures, for Parsons, that common understandings or a normative orientation between patient and expert, help to limit and define

the situation. The collectivity-orientation ensures, for Parsons, that the doctor's own interests are secondary to the interests of his patients. The scope, in these situations for private, individual motivation, financial, sexual or otherwise, is circumscribed by this collectivity-orientation. The situation, for Parsons, is one of mutual obligations and desires. The patient wants to get well and this desire is manifested in his/her obligation to co-operate with the doctor. The doctor wants to help the patient and his obligation to 'be guided by the welfare of the patient' means, for Parsons, that trust is at the centre of this situation.

For Parsons, while it is the case that there is power in these situations, it is limited to the technical difference between doctors and lay persons; the doctor knows and the patient does not. Professional knowledge, in this context, makes the difference. While the lay-person might define the situation as seeking help, the expert might define it as applied science. In certain socially defined contexts such as the medical encounter, the expert, by virtue of his/her socially recognized expert knowledge is allowed to dominate the patient. This context produces the expert definition of help as applied science and Parsons assumes that both patient and doctor agree to this definition of the situation. While Parsons sees the expert definition of the context as being the correct one, he sees that this definition is grounded in agreement between patient and doctor, science and ordinary life. These contexts are socially circumscribed by our common understandings, our agreement, of the rules that pertain in these situations. While expert knowledge might dominate the situation, the doctor is not free to do just anything. Medical knowledge, as the difference between doctor and patient, is the ground for the doctor's actions, but this knowledge is still situated within the normative order. Parsons does not have a problem in saying that it is the professional who dictates the situation since the professional is guided by the patient's welfare and the patient believes that the doctor will do him/her no harm. The

principle of benevolence, which Parsons thinks circumscribes the doctor-patient encounter is the common grounds (agreement) that both professional and patient are committed to. Parsons' social system, exemplified in the example of medical practice, is a consensual model of society with agreement as its foundations. Specialized, discrete contexts are provided in the social system to ensure the normal functioning of individuals (ordinary life). Mechanisms (rules) are provided to restore the equilibrium of normal functioning and to limit the spillage from one context to another.

The problems of health and illness and the mechanisms provided by society to solve these problems can certainly give us a window through which we can clearly see how individuals and society relate to each other in Parsons' theory of action. We can see, in Parsons' formulation of health and illness, how choices that are within the actor's voluntary control are oriented normatively. Non-normative facts such as the notion that health and illness are natural facts that are outside the actor's control are separated from normative issues that the actor seems to be able to do something about. The ordinary actor, in acting normatively, can seem to do little in the face of disease. Disease, can only be tackled, according to Parsons, by the expert, the doctor. Normatively, the actor or patient, must co-operate with the expert and this will, thinks Parsons, help the actor to retain his/her health. Society, for Parsons, provides mechanisms such as the doctor who can tackle those non-normative elements that the individual cannot effect directly. There is then, in Parsons' theory, a consensus between the individual and society, that both will do their best in sustaining health and avoiding illness. This, of course, is limited since sickness is a random, natural event that carries very little responsibility for the actor other than complying with the doctor and the obligations of the sick role. The individual will, in acting normatively, do his/her part in sustaining his/her health and society will provide mechanisms for returning the

sick to a more healthy status. For Parsons, the relationship between an individual and society can be characterized in terms of desires and obligations. Parsons actor acts to achieve a consensus between his/her obligations and desires and society's expectations. However, health and illness are, for Parsons, a good example where these normative orientations become muddled with individual's desires and obligations. Because he thinks that there might be advantages in being sick, medicine has to carefully police the boundaries between society's expectations and individual desires. By remaining within a normative framework, Parsons thinks that social order can be maintained and that both the individual and society can maximize their respective functionings.

We can see, in Parsons theory of health, all the essential parts of his grand conceptual scheme. Health for Parsons, is a 'ubiquitous practical problem in all societies' (Parsons, 1951:429). Presumably there is no theoretical difficulty in defining it, only a practical problem in maintaining it. Health as normality is the responsibility of the individual as Parson's society only intervenes to assist its members when they are ill. Health, as capacity, is defined as the ability of the actor to function within normative limits for the effective performance of social roles. Healthy action is action that is rational or normatively oriented. In any situation the healthy actor *must* assess the situation from a normative point of view so that his/her actions can conform to this normative view. There is individual choice, differentiated by individual motivation, but the choice is limited by this normative framework. This framework provides us with our desires and obligations; it is not just optional but enforceable. When the Parsonian actor finds him/herself in situations, the normative framework provides a measure for the actor's desires as well as an articulation of responsibilities and obligations. We saw this in the interaction between doctor and layperson, between sick role and disease. Individual obligations and responsibilities

as well as normal desires are formulated within this normative framework. There is, within this normative framework, an economic trade-off between the duties that the individual is obliged to carry out and the help that the individual can get. Help, in the form of medicine, is conditional on the actor's readiness to conform. The healthy actor must then volunteer to carry out his/her obligations as part of their normal social role. To fail to volunteer is to be ill and this failure must be validated by the doctor. Illness is still defined as acting normally if the ill conform to the sick role and the prescriptions of the doctor. Health and illness, for Parsons are circumscribed roles where deviance is formulated as a failure to conform. These versions of health do not allow for the idea of development; all Parsons healthy actor can do is to conform and act normally. Development can only be technical, limited to the development of technical knowledge that can allow the actor to see the situation as it really is. We see this with Parsons discussion of the expert (sociologist, doctor) who knows more about the situation than the ordinary actor due to greater technical knowledge. The actor, motivationally compliant, can bring his/her subjective point of view but this threatens the 'precision and care that the scientist attempts to attain'. Health and illness are always seen by Parsons as the normative action of individuals.

The idea of the social evokes the notion of a community although Parsons does not acknowledge that there can be such a thing as a healthy or sick society. Health as an expendable resource which can be used by the actor to carry out his/her daily tasks leaves unanswered the question of the origins of this resource other than as a natural attribute. Health and illness, as formulated by Parsons, are natural matters of objective reality or fact. Faced with this fact, the sick or healthy individual's sole responsibility is to take up the obligations of the role as prescribed by society. The healthy individual must respond normatively if s/he is to function normally. Equally the

sick individual is obliged to conform to the prescriptions formulated by society, adoption of the sick role and consultation with the expert. Health then remains at the level of the individual.

Illness, as technical limit, requires a technological answer to itself as a problem.

Illness, for Parsons, is the failure to act within this normative framework of desires and obligations. It seems, from Parsons, that illness allows us not to volunteer for these obligations that only the well are obligated to. Illness looks, in Parsons' formulation as something we might desire, a holiday from our normal functioning. Medicine, as a form of social control, looks even more necessary than as a form of technical assistance; the weeding out of malingerers even more necessary than the cure of illness. Illness must be defined by the technico-rational criteria adopted by health care agencies and this definition must be as precise and refined as possible so that only the genuinely ill are exempted. . Illness, in Parsons' terms, as a pathological state is unconcerned and detached from the human condition. Illness renders the afflicted powerless to act against it as the ordinary member has not developed a response to its demands. Illness has a value-orientation of affective neutrality; it accepts no responsibility for the consequences of its visitation on the afflicted. Human motivation must be ruled out, as anything other than natural illness must be a form of deviance. Parsons' notion of health and illness are partially realized in the modern conception of health as 'lifestyle'. Measurements of health include pathological parameters e. g. blood cholesterol levels, as a method of individualizing health. Failure to stay within the parameters can be attributed to the individual's faulty lifestyle and deviant behaviour corrected through health education. In this version, health is within the body and subject to ready inspection by the physician. The reward for this healthy lifestyle is a longer life. In modern times, Parsons thinks that health and illness have become more precise and more complex concepts which requires expert solutions. Parsons welcomes the expert as the person

most competent to speak in matters of health and illness. Health, as defined on Parsons' consensual model, was something that all actors, laypersons and experts, could agree was an objective fact. The question, then, for Parsons was posed in organizational terms as the best method for managing this objective reality. Parsons sees the expert's knowledge and the patient's co-operation as essential methods in managing this problem. Health, which links the individual to society is formulated by Parsons as an economic problem that encapsulates the economic relationship between society and the individual members of that society. Desires and obligations characterize this economic relationship: Parsons actor want to function, to fulfill his/her obligations and the expert wants to restore the individual to normal functioning. While the individual may try a variety of methods for getting well, Parsons recognizes that the expert is better equipped to manage health problems.

Health and illness, in Parsons theory, was an objective fact that the actor simply had to react normatively to. The actor, in Parsons' theory of health seemed nothing more than a location for disease who was obliged to get well to function-in the community and carry out his/her obligations for the community. In situations, both the healthy and the ill actor must use their normative orientation to locate a rule that allows both the situation to be seen correctly and the appropriate action undertaken. The actor is obliged to conform to the normative expectations that the situation prescribes. In health, the situation is both a natural and a normative fact while the actor's responsibility is to the normative demands of the situation. Failure to choose normatively can result in the actors behaviour being classed as deviant. Deviance, then, for Parsons is a failure to volunteer for our obligations. Genuine sickness, certified by the doctor, can limit the charge of deviance but it introduces new obligations to volunteer for. Illness limits

the members' choices of getting well to the technical means provided by the community. The actor must behave according to his normative orientation or s/he must be classed as deviant. This normative orientation is a moral as well as a social order. Parsons actor is limited to conforming to this normative orientation which provides the rules which he must comply with.

Parsons attempts to reconcile the action of individuals with the functioning of the social system seemed to produce a social actor who was too passive and had simply internalized an external normative order. Action was explained, within this 'normative paradigm' (Wilson, 1971), by reference to a rule to which the actors were assumed to be subject. In any situation, the Parsonian actor seemed only able to consult a series of rules which applied in this 'type' of situation. As Parsons indicates:

"The essential point is that for for most men"woman in the same room undressing"usually means potential sexual relations, for the physician"woman on the examining table" means a professional job to do. " (1970:457)

We can see, in this example, how Parsons' notion of correctly searching for and applying the rules works. In Parsons' example, the observer (most men) when faced with a situation of 'woman in the same room undressing' use the normative rule to give 'potential sexual relations' as the meaning of the woman's behaviour. While for the physician (observer) 'woman on the examining table' means, applying a normative rule, 'a professional job to do'. Parsons' point is that different contexts can be kept apart if the observer uses the correct rules to apply to the context. A mistake here would be considered deviant behaviour if, for example, the doctor failed to see the context correctly and applied the rule that allowed 'woman on the examining table' to mean 'potential sexual relations'. In any situation, as we have indicated, the actor must search for the rule that correctly applies in this situation. This normative orientation allows the action to conform to what would be expected in *that* situation. A rule allows the situation to be clearly

defined and the actor must then conform to the requirements of the situation as articulated by the rule. The application of different rules allows the situation to be differentially viewed so that the actor can respond according to which view of the situation that the rule provided for. Both doctor and layperson are assumed to be able to distinguish one situation from another as they share a normative consensus about what is in front of their eyes. The meaning of any situation, for Parsons, was supplied by the application of the correct rule which this situation seemed to require. Parsons characterizes, in his example, the 'same' situation subject to the application of different rules which affect the meaning of the action. The actor, in the situation, was subject to this normative order which supplied him/her with the correct rules for each and every situation. This seemed to produce an actor whose function was limited to correctly perceiving the situation and correctly selecting the rule that applied. Any actor, whether doctor or layperson, by seeing the facts before their eyes, would, thinks Parsons, choose the correct rule that normatively applied. The actor who chose to apply a different rule must be a deviant, for Parsons, since we would all subscribe to this normative view. There was some leeway for choices of action for the actor in the situation, but any freedom was still confined to normative choices. The doctor, in the above example can still make choices but only if they conform to the view of the situation as a 'professional job'. The layperson can still make choices but the situation is still 'woman undressing'. Deviance, for Parsons, is a wilful disregard of the facts, a seeing of the situation, that wilfully ignores the obvious; obvious, that is, to any normal actor.

Situations, then, are objective facts for both Parsons' actor and his observer (theorist).

Description and analysis were seen as essentially different..His theory or analysis was dependent on a view of description as nothing more than a report on the facts.Analysis or theory, for Parsons, came after a neutral report on the facts in organizing these facts into a larger conceptual

scheme. This normative orientation ensures that both actor and observer have a 'cognitive consensus' about what they see in front of them. Yet woman in the same room undressing is not the same as woman on the examining table. Parsons does not reflect on the theory that constitutes the difference between 'woman on the examining table', which seems to be linked more to medical theory, than 'woman in the same room undressing', which seems more akin to lay theory. For Schutz (1967) it is clear that Parsons has already provided a meaning when he characterizes the 'same' action in two different ways. Parsons seems to think that it is the context that allows us to decide how we will characterise the action or behaviour. In his descriptions of the same actions in different contexts, Parsons' language has already produced the context. Parsons seems to think that both actions are only differentiated by context rather than see that these actions are differentiated by theory. Theory, for Parsons is a neutral activity that describes the facts of the situation, as they appear to both actor and theorist. Theory can locate these differing contexts in a grand scheme. Although Parsons' actor attends to the context, Parsons (the theorist) can arrange these discrete contexts in a larger conceptual scheme. Parsons, as theorist, can see further than his actor who is limited to the context. While both actor and theorist are able to neutrally describe the situation, Parsons (theorist) can analyse these descriptions in the light of his greater theoretical knowledge. The description of both actions, woman undressing and woman on the examining table, are not the same although Parsons' theory wants to unify them as self-evidently and objectively real. Parsons theory is a method for bringing order to social life by imposing a conformity on action and the choice of action available to actors. He produces a mechanical actor who can do nothing other than comply or fail to comply with the situation or facts. His failure to note the constitutive function of language means that theory and practice would be at a distance from each other; theory only ever able to

do a corrective on practice. Parsons thinks theory has enough distance from contexts and our practices so that we lose sight of its constitutive function.

The observers rules, in Parsons' scientific theory, were seen to determine what the action or situation 'really' was. The explanatory power of the rules that the observer (science, sociology, medicine) formulated were generally seen as a more accurate analysis of the situation. In the medical encounter, while the client might formulate the situation as 'seeking help', the professional was seen as being better able to characterize the situation as applying science to scientific problems. This meant that only scientists could properly evaluate the situation and the patient was ignorant of the real situation. Again, as with the medical encounter, the scientific, professional view was seen as being more accurate, based on the superior knowledge of the professional. Parsons' theory, then, seemed to blind to the constitutive relationship between action and theory. As a more precise and general account than the one supplied by ordinary laymen, theory was applied to situations to determine appropriate actions. Parsons actor seemed limited to correctly reading the situation and acting on the rules that the situation prescribed. Theory, for Parsons, was formulated as better able to give an account of the 'real' situation than the actor. Knowledge, as the difference between the theorist and the ordinary actor, allowed the theorist to really see the situation.

Parsons' theory was grounded in a consensual model of society where differences between individuals were dependent for their articulation on a normative framework that Parsons assumed all actors oriented to. However this consensual model where the ordinary lay person acceded to the superior expert knowledge was seen, by some, in sociology, as being too coercive. Parsons work, while impressive in its own logical consistency seemed to produce a limited version of

health and illness. He formulates a selfish community and a solitary individual. The sick or healthy actor finds him/herself in situations that call for the correct form of behaviour as action oriented to rule. The main responsibility for Parsons' actor was firstly to identify those elements of the situation that were outwith his/her control and those that were not; then, to search for a rule to guide his/her behaviour. Parsons' actor, obliged to conform to these rules, was limited in his/her freedom of action. The expert was formulated by Parsons as being better able to define the rules that applied in situations by virtue of his/her greater knowledge and more objective view of the situation. However the two main consequences of Parsons' theory; that actors were no more than puppets following rules articulated by others and that the actor's point of view was secondary to expert analysis, led, sociology in new directions. With these new directions in sociology, came new definitions of health and illness.

ii. Health as Common sense

Interactionism (Rose, 1962) and the 'interpretive paradigm' wanted to formulate the actor as being a more active participant in the production of the situation. This paradigm emphasised the tentative nature of social interaction. Participants in any interaction are seen to construct the situation as an ongoing, negotiated activity. Meanings of action and situations are interpretations of actors as they jointly produce a context through attending to each other. Meaning is, in interactionism a joint responsibility of actors as they engage with each other. The meaning of events, because of their situated nature, cannot be settled by applying pre-existing theories or

explanations in a literal way. Literal, in this case, means having a stable meaning which is independent of the circumstances of its use. Meanings, in interactionism were circumstantial productions that could not be decided in advance. The meaning that the powerful or the expert tried to impose on the situation was resisted by interactionism in its attempt to show that the ordinary actor or the 'underdog' could participate in the production of the situation.

Interactionism often focused on the role of the underdog and their production of situations. The accounts of situations produced by interactionism formulated action as being essentially the production of contexts. Unlike Parsons, who was inclined to allow the expert to define the situation on the basis of his/her professional knowledge, interactionism wanted to 'democratize' the situation by allowing all participants to participate in the production of the situation. The 'reality' produced by actors in situations was seen as more accurate than the external reality imposed on situations by the 'grand theory' of scientific and sociological observers. Melia's study (1987) of the socialization of student nurses and Becker et al's (1961) study of student doctors both claimed to more accurately tell it 'how it is'. Sociology (the observer) now took into account the actor's point of view, the role of sociology being to provide respect and theoretical accuracy for the actor's point of view. However both the interpretive and normative tradition implicitly accepted that there was a reality out there that could be more accurately described by sociologists. Lay accounts were still being seen as incorrect or partial. Differences between observer and actor were still accounted for in terms of a greater theoretical sophistication in professional accounts; professional knowledge was still seen as more capable of explaining situations and action. It was concerns with the discrepancy between lay and sociological accounts of action which led to a focus on the accounts themselves.

Ethnomethodologists start by taking both lay and sociological accounts as the topic for study, (Zimmerman & Pollner, 1971). They want to explicate the methods used by both laymen and sociologists in constructing these accounts. Rather than adjudicating between these competing versions of reality, ethnomethodology wants to examine the means whereby these realities have been constructed. Rather than, as with interactionism, simply describing the meaningfulness of action from the actor's point of view, ethnomethodologists would want to explicate:

“ . . . the sense-assembly procedures through which (accounts of) and meaningfulness are produced and recognized” (Halpenny, 1979:804)

Two assumptions inform ethnomethodology: firstly, that all actions are dependent for their meaningfulness on the contexts in which they occur (indexicality), and secondly, that the relationship between action and context is mutually constitutive (reflexivity).

Ethnomethodology, then, focuses on the way actors succeed in relating contexts to action to create a sense of social order.

While Parsons sees order as an external source of orientation for actors to measure their action against, Garfinkel (1967), the leading exponent of ethnomethodology, sees order as a socially organized activity which is not independent of the context in which it is produced. Rather than see actor's processes, whether lay or professional, as resources, Garfinkel wants to examine these processes as a topic. Garfinkel wants to uncover, *”without thought for correctives or irony”* (1967:9), the methods used by ordinary members or scientists to produce social order.

Differences between lay and professional accounts, for Garfinkel, are only technical and both produce, for the practical purposes at hand, their own version of rationality, inextricably linked to the context in which these accounts are situated. While ordinary members are ‘uninterested’ in how they produce practical action, sociologists are ‘interested’ in making the practices, whereby

ordinary members produce reality, visible and observable. The method used by ethnomethodology for making practical rationality 'observable-and-reportable' is to:

"...treat the rational properties of practical activities as "anthropologically strange." (1967:9.).

While the ordinary member relies on and produces practical rationality, the methods of doing this remain unknown to the member. Garfinkel hopes that by treating every situation as 'another first time', that the methods, whereby practical rationality is produced, will be more clearly seen. This method of estrangement will, he hopes, allow us to become more aware of background relevances which are there but taken for granted by the ordinary member. The ordinary member uses these background relevances to accomplish a stable social order. In any situation, the ordinary member cannot say everything about the situation but must take it on trust that every other member understands, without further explanation, what s/he is talking about or doing. A phrase such as "I am going to the doctor" is assumed by the person who uttered the phrase to be a perfectly understandable statement. Garfinkel wants to show that even to understand a phrase such as this requires a great deal of background knowledge for this phrase to be heard and understood. The ordinary member, for Garfinkel, glosses over these background relevances, in everyday interactions. These glossing practices are, for Garfinkel, an essential part of any situation which the ordinary member uses to accomplish interactions that appear to all participants as orderly situations. As a method, Garfinkel prefers:

"...to start with familiar scenes and ask what can be done to make trouble" (167:37).

The phrase, 'I am going to the doctor', requires from any competent member a series of background relevances such as: we know what a doctor is, we know why you might want to see him/her and so on. Garfinkel wants to show that if he makes trouble, such as asking what a doctor is, then ordinary interaction becomes impossible. In a series of demonstrations, he shows

that treating every situation as ‘another first time’, both allows us to see the background knowledge that is an invisible but essential part of any interaction and also to see the work that ordinary members need to do to gloss over this background. It is essential, for Garfinkel, that we do gloss over these background relevances to produce a stable social order and this means that we must be essentially ‘uninterested’ in them. His estrangement conditions allow us to be ‘interested’ so that we can resist these glossing practices and we can do this by seeing every situation as another first time. Ethnomethodology, then, wanted to report on the glossing practices and background relevances that ordinary members use, unknowingly, in the production of social order. The phenomena, that we all experience ordinary life as an ordered life while we unconsciously produced that life was awesome, for Garfinkel.

Ethnomethodology, then, wanted to uncover this taken for granted background knowledge by showing the methods whereby ordinary members ‘somehow’ produce and recognize practical common sense. The practical rationality, or common sense, produced and recognized by ordinary members, is, for ethnomethodology, an ongoing accomplishment that depends on ‘the nature of actual circumstances’. This means that the ordinary member both relies upon and produces the context for action. While background knowledge allows the ordinary member to see any situation as one of a type, it also allows the ordinary member to respond to his/her situation in a typical way. This means that the ordinary member, with this background knowledge as a resource, is able to be confident that, in any typical situation, they will be able to respond appropriately. This background knowledge, seen but unnoticed, is an essential resource, for the ordinary member, in accomplishing any action. Theory, as ethnomethodology, wants to make this resource a topic, not to correct it or to make ironical comments about it, but to show how this background knowledge forms an essential feature of any situation. Data, for Parsons,

would consist in the subjective responses to situations. These data, in the Parsonian model, would then be subjected to further analysis and explanation. Garfinkel and ethnomethodology wanted to show that the data, that Parsons might begin with, was the already constituted work of the interpretative procedures of the ordinary member. Garfinkel wanted to look at the methods whereby these data was originally produced. The reasoning that Parsons used in analysing already constituted meanings was seen, by Garfinkel, as the same kind of reasoning process that ordinary members used in producing the original data. In examining the so called objective methods of reasoning used to determine cases of suicide in a coroner's office, or students coding data scientifically, Garfinkel was able to show that these objective methods needed to be relaxed sufficiently and interpreted in a way that allowed any problem to be glossed over and the situation to be normalised. While science regards these indexical features as a 'nuisance' that it wishes to rigorously exclude, Garfinkel wants to show that these 'irremedial' features can never be excluded except under conditions where rigour is 'relaxed' sufficiently to allow the scientific method to be judged adequate. For Garfinkel, adequacy for both scientific and everyday reasoning was only accomplished for the practical purposes at hand and could not be practiced in a literal or universal way. Garfinkel wants to show the similarity of the glossing practices that both scientific analysts and ordinary members use to sustain and produce a reality that makes sense to the participants, irrespective of their status.

Participants, whether scientific or ordinary members, experience social reality as an ordered phenomena. The situation and the appropriate action are, for ethnomethodology, productions which the ordinary member takes for granted as a matter of course. However Garfinkel wants to show the rules that the ordinary member uses in producing both the situation and the appropriate action. It is not that the actor or member can just say anything about the situation or do anything.

Making sense of any situation or action requires that the member confine him/herself to those situations and actions that any other member could subscribe to. The social order that the member produces is also, for Garfinkel, a moral order. For Garfinkel:

“...the moral order consists in the rule governed activities of everyday life” (1967:35)

The member, in making sense of any situation or action, must select from a collection of rules that typify the situation and action. Ethnomethodology explicitly rejects the Parsonian notion that it is empirically possible to ‘detect and elaborate a set of rules of correct usage’ that have a ‘stable sense on all occasions’, (Weider 1971:109). Parsons wanted to say that there was a better, more universal rule that governed both situations and action; theory, here, was better able to articulate this rule. Garfinkel, on the other hand, wanted to show that rules were more open to interpretation by participants both in terms of producing the situation and the action. Rules, as formulated by Parsonian theory, were seen, by Garfinkel, as an external imposition, that ordinary members loosely interpreted to meet their immediate needs. The rules of the scientific method were seen, not only as too oppressive, but also impossible to practice without bringing social life to a stop: Practices such as ‘ad-hocing’ or improvising and re-interpreting of the rules were seen, by Garfinkel, as necessary to sustain our sense of social order. This improvisation, in different situations, was limited by the actors need to make sense in a way that any other member could understand. Rules, for Garfinkel, needed our common understanding that it was legitimate, here, to use this particular rule to articulate the situation and the action. In our example above, we can see how rules must be applied in a way that makes sense to us. If I stated that I was going to see the doctor because I did not feel very well, it is reasonable to assume that the statement makes sense. This is because we can test the legitimacy of the statement (rule) on the basis of our understanding that this is what any member might say. However if I stated that I was going to see the doctor because my car needed repair, then a problem arises. In the first case, the situation,

feeling ill, corresponds to the action, consulting the doctor. In the second case, faulty car, does not seem to correspond to the action. As it is, the second statement doesn't make any sense. If I elaborated further and explained that my car was a vintage car and that the doctor was also an enthusiast, then my actions would make sense. We see, in these examples, the constitutive function of rules. Rules, and their selection, are circumscribed by our common understanding which allows us to evaluate anyone's action in terms of making sense; rules produce intelligible behaviour. The ordinary member, for Garfinkel, is motivated to comply with these rules so that s/he can make sense of any situation or action. These rules were not, as Parsons imagined, an external imposition but an internal choice, within circumscribed limits, for the ordinary member. Garfinkel wanted to resist the Parsonian formulation of rules in favour of a version of rules that were more open to individual choice. Situations are, then, for ethnomethodologists, a result of the rules that members produce. Actors may select outcomes first and then orient their action to meet these outcomes (Garfinkel, 1967:114) thus justifying their action. Practical rationality, for Garfinkel, is being able to give good reasons, reasons that make sense, for any action undertaken. In producing accounts of action, rationality, for the member is being able to point to the rule that could apply in this situation. Rational action, then, for Garfinkel, is action that can be related to a normative, what anyone in *that* situation would do, rule.

Health, for Garfinkel, is this common sense rationality where members act according to rules that they have decided apply in each situation. In accounting for their action, the healthy member can cite a rule that could reasonably be said to apply in this type of situation. If I visited the doctor to have my car fixed, other reasons would need to be cited before my actions could be judged as rational. This appeal to common sense imposed limits on what health, for Garfinkel, could be. He resists the Parsonian version of health as being too coercive since it seemed to

formulate an actor who was nothing more than a puppet who responded automatically to a theoretical puppet-master. Action was seen, by Garfinkel, as more than just a response but was also a choice. Parsons' mistake, for Garfinkel, was in believing too literally in an objective reality that existed independently of any contextual work. Garfinkel wants to say that there is such a thing as health but that health is meaningful within the particular context in which it is produced. While Parsons would favour the professional definition of health and illness by showing its superiority over the layman's definition in terms of superior knowledge, Garfinkel would refuse to judge between professional and everyday knowledge. Knowledge, as formulated by Garfinkel, is inextricably tied to the context and he sees no reason to value expert over lay knowledge. Indeed one could argue that Garfinkel's democratic ideals give us a method for resisting the medical domination of the situation. While Parsons formulates health and illness as facts of nature and objectively there, he formulates the healthy actor as one who conforms to the expectations that the situation demands. Garfinkel wants to say that health is more open for the ordinary member to articulate. How to act healthily will depend, for Garfinkel, on each situation and how the actor sees the situation. While the ordinary member thinks that s/he is acting on the basis of an objective reality, Garfinkel wants to show that this objective version of health is subjectively produced. Health, for Garfinkel, was an ongoing accomplishment, that was produced when members lined up their actions and their definition of the situation. Healthy action, for ethnomethodology, was still defined as acting normally, when the members actions were seen to correspond with the situation but this situation was much more, a responsibility of the member. While Parsons saw the situation as objectively there, Garfinkel saw the situation as produced by the member. The difference between Garfinkel and Parsons was a difference in practice rather than a difference in theory. Both formulate health as acting normally but, with Garfinkel, acting normally or healthily was more the responsibility of the member. We can

examine the difference between Parsons and Garfinkel if we take an example from Garfinkel's book *'Studies in Ethnomethodology'* (1967).

In *'Passing and the managed achievement of sex status in an "intersexed" person part I'* Garfinkel (1967), reports on a study he had carried out with a person whom he refers to as Agnes. In this study, Garfinkel interviewed, on a number of occasions, a person who wished to be thought of and considered herself to be 'a natural female' who had been classified at birth as a male. In this study, Garfinkel wanted to show some of the methods that ordinary members use in producing normal sexuality. While we might consider sexuality to be a natural, objective fact, Garfinkel wants to show us, in his example of a 'marginal' case, the work that ordinary members undertake in producing this natural situation. To the ordinary member, sexuality seems like something that is just objectively there and cannot be changed by the mere will of an individual. While it is possible to pretend to be of the opposite sex, ordinary members, for Garfinkel, assume that ultimately one is either a male or a female. While the only legal remedy to a desired change of sex is the changing of a birth certificate, advances in medical science have allowed certain people who have been originally 'wrongly' classified as either male or female to be surgically restored to whatever sex they think they 'really are'. In this sense, medicine acts to restore one to what one was, naturally, all along. In Agnes' case, she sought medical intervention to remedy a mistaken classification at birth, that she was a boy, so that she could be what she was all along, a girl. While Agnes subscribed to the normative view that people were naturally either male or female, she considered herself, according to Garfinkel, to be suffering from this mistaken classification that she hoped to have remedied by surgery. Agnes had been born with male genitalia which caused her to be originally categorised at birth as a male. In adolescence, Agnes had developed breasts which had only confirmed what she had known all

along; that she was in fact a female. Medicine took the view that it could only intervene to correct natural errors and could not provide surgery, amputation of the male genitalia and fashioning of a vagina, simply at the whim of anyone who wanted to change their sex. She was interviewed by several doctors as well as Garfinkel in an effort to verify her story by ruling out any other explanations, such as ingestion of female hormones, to account for her breasts and her claim to be a female. When and if the doctors were satisfied that she was entitled to her claim to be a female, they would consent to operate. After extensive interviews and examinations, Agnes was finally given corrective surgery.

Garfinkel interviewed her on a number of occasions where she told him of her problems in presenting herself as a female while not being completely, that is physically, a female. Agnes lived with the constant danger of being exposed as less than a normal female. She told Garfinkel how she took great pains, when younger, to avoid detection in awkward situations such as medicals and gym in school. When she was older, she related to Garfinkel some of the situations that were problematic for her. Agnes sought, in all situations, to sustain the notion that she was a normal female. She did this by matching her actions to what she imagined a normal female would do. She closely monitored the responses of other females, roommates and female relatives, so that she could respond appropriately when required. Garfinkel outlines the strategies and management devices that Agnes produces to sustain her appearance as a natural normal female. While not being clear what any situation would eventually come to look like, Agnes had, at all times, to sustain her identity as a normal, natural female. Agnes was concerned, in every situation, no matter how it turned out; to be able to explain or 'give good reasons' for her conduct in terms of what would be expected of a natural, normal female. Garfinkel, in his study, wants to show that something so basic as one's identity as a male or female is something that

while taken for granted by ordinary members is something that has to be achieved and produced on every occasion. Agnes, someone whose sexual identity is 'problematic', has to work to convince other members that she was a bona fide example of the real thing. Agnes, then, has to make sure that her actions conform to what would be expected of any normal female.

In this study, Garfinkel wants to show the constitutive function of rules. Agnes wants to be seen as a normal female (rule) and so she has to orient her action to the requirements of the rule.

Garfinkel wants to show, with Agnes, that while all interaction is tentative and never exactly clear, Agnes measured her actions in terms of this rule. She had formulated her actions such as dating in accordance with her perceived view of what a normal female would do. In Garfinkel's terms she was motivated to comply with the rule because she wanted to be considered normal.

Before proceeding any further, it may be useful to say something about the difference between Agnes and Garfinkel that he presents in his study. Agnes, the ordinary member, acted *as if* there was an objective reality called normal sexuality. She subscribed to the view that sexuality was not a matter of choice and that her responsibility, given the fact that she believed that she was female, was to confirm this fact in her actions. Garfinkel, on the other hand, wants to show that this objective fact, normal sexuality, depends, on every occasion, on Agnes producing it.

While the ordinary member, Agnes, acted on the basis that there was such a thing as an objective reality, Garfinkel, the theorist, could see that it was a circumstantial production. The member, who was disinterested in the production of the facts, simply, for Garfinkel, attended or lined up their actions to correspond to this perceived objective reality. The work that the ordinary member undertook in producing this objective reality was taken for granted by the member. Agnes saw her work, in situations, as being a matter of simply conforming to this objective reality while remaining unaware that she had also produced it. On every occasion, as Garfinkel

states, she sought to produce action that could be evaluated in terms of the actions of a normal, natural female. Agnes thinks that she is merely conforming to an objective fact, while Garfinkel sees that she is constituting it. Garfinkel, as theorist, wants to resist, in part, the Parsonian version of objective reality as something that is just there outside of our work in producing it. With the story of Agnes, Garfinkel wanted to show that this reality is circumstantially produced.

While Parsons would formulate health and illness as universally applicable concepts, Garfinkel would want to resist this by showing how these concepts are situational productions. While interactionism might want to say that actors can manage or manipulate situations, ethnomethodology wants to show that they do more, they actually produce situations. A difference that Garfinkel makes between interactionism and ethnomethodology is that of routine. For Garfinkel, interactionism, which focuses on the negotiation of an objective reality between participants in interactions, takes routine, the nine-tenths of any interaction, for granted. In contrast, Garfinkel wants to focus on the production of this routine or the normal background relevances that ordinary members need but are unaware of. Ethnomethodology focuses on this background that allows participants to 'normalise' any situation. While the member is unaware that this normalising background is an essential part of the production of a stable social order, Garfinkel and ethnomethodology want to examine the ongoing production of this unnoticed routine. In the case of Agnes, Garfinkel shows how she produced, in all circumstances, a routine that allows the people she interacts with to take it on trust that they are always dealing with a natural, normal female. Ethnomethodology, then, focuses on the way that routine is produced in all interactions as a necessary pre-requisite for the stability of any social order. Routine, for Garfinkel, is the way that ordinary members match their actions to situations as a taken for granted feature of the situation.

While Parsons might want to formulate health as an objective fact, Garfinkel resisted this by showing that health was a contingent production that anyone, any competent member, could produce. For Garfinkel, who reports without thought for corrections or irony, Agnes was wrong in thinking that she was just conforming to the facts, as she was also producing them. It was not, in his story of Agnes, that Garfinkel completely resisted a version of health as an objective fact, it was that he wanted to show that this objective fact, health, was differentially produced in different situations. The truth or otherwise of any topic such as health was contingently related to the conditions for its production. Agnes sought to produce her sexuality as an objective fact because this is what she needed; to ensure that she had corrective surgery which she hoped would decrease any uncertainty about her objective status. She acted on the basis that her actions should conform to the objective reality of normally sexed persons. It was important that Agnes not be suspected of anything other than what her actions showed her to be; a normal healthy female. Health, as a contingent production, was still formulated, by the ordinary member, as an objective fact. Garfinkel did not want to say that Parsons was completely wrong in his assertion of the facts, that theory was formulated to explain. Instead he wanted to show that theory was not, as Parsons insisted, an analysis and explanation of the facts but a constitutive part of the facts. Of course, Agnes' work, for her, was a matter of escaping detection as a marginal or abnormal case but the 'background relevances' of their being such a fact as 'normal sexuality' was always taken for granted by her. While the ordinary member, in this case Agnes, subscribed to the notion of there being the fact that there were only males and females, Garfinkel shows that this depended on the ordinary member producing it.

While Parsons would want to say that theoretical statements can more clearly correspond to the facts as objective reality, Garfinkel, with indexicality and reflexivity, wants to show that all members theorize and that this theorizing is not a matter of accurately corresponding to objective reality (the facts) but is a matter of producing, or constituting this reality. Parsons' theory, which he hoped could more accurately correspond to the facts than the ordinary member was able to do, was seen, with reflexivity, to be no more nor less than ordinary members did every day. The notion that theory could validate the ordinary member was shown, with reflexivity, to be incorrect. The constitutive relationship between statements (theory) and the facts ensured that theory was self-validating; it produced what it needed. This ensured that theory **always** corresponded with the facts since it produced them. Any theory, whether produced by experts or ordinary members, was seen, by ethnomethodology, as being reflexive. Garfinkel could not evaluate the truth or otherwise of any theory since all theory was seen to be relatively true, a reflexive production. Truth, for Garfinkel, was a question of making sense or being coherent. While Parsons might have formulated the truth of a theory in terms of its correspondence with the facts, Garfinkel wanted to show that truth was a subjective production that was established as true when any member could recognize it as true. While Parsons wanted statements to be measured against the facts, Garfinkel measured statements in terms of their coherence; that the statement made sense to any ordinary person. While Parsons saw the expert as being in a better position to validate the truth of a statement since the expert was nearer to the facts, Garfinkel equalized the relationship between the ordinary member and the expert so that both were equally capable of stating the facts. A statement is true, for Garfinkel, when it makes sense. This version of truth, a contextual production, is true if it makes sense of the practical circumstances at hand. Truth, here, is an appeal, in the same circumstances, any ordinary member would do the same thing. We see this with Agnes where she constitutes herself as a natural normal female

by appealing to our sense of what she is doing as what any normal natural female would do.

Agnes seeks, in each situation, to get our agreement that her speech and actions conform to what we could expect of any normal female.

The work of Garfinkel and other ethnomethodologists had a mixed reception in sociology. The distinction between a discipline such as sociology and the subjects it studied seemed to collapse since no 'real' distinction seemed possible. The difference between sociological knowledge and the everyday knowledge of ordinary members was put into doubt. While Parsons would say that expert knowledge, whether sociological or medical, was better than lay knowledge on the basis of its closer correspondence with the facts, Garfinkel would want to doubt this since knowledge was always circumstantially produced. The resource that the expert seemed to rely on, that there was an objective reality, was seen, in Garfinkel's work, to be dependent on the member, whether theorist or ordinary member, producing it. Garfinkel resists the so called 'objectivity' that the expert relied on to justify his/her theory. While Parsons' expert could correct the ordinary member's perception in matters of health or normality, Garfinkel wanted to show that both the expert and the ordinary member relied on an objective reality that was not there outside of their methods for producing it. His theory, unlike Parsons, deliberately eschewed any corrective since there were no grounds such as an objective reality for measuring any production, whether lay or expert. While resisting health or normality as an external, objective reality, he wanted to show that health or normality were circumstantial productions which both experts and ordinary members could produce when required.

While Garfinkel wanted to resist the Parsonian notion of an external, objective reality by showing that this reality depended on ordinary members producing it, he seemed to do so by

retaining much of work of Parsons. An explicit criticism that he makes of Parsons is that all members, lay and scientific, formulate theory by glossing certain features and ad hocing to accomplish their perceived tasks. With this assertion, Garfinkel, wants to doubt that the so called objectivity of scientific methods, as advocated by Parsons, can be practiced without a certain loosening in rigour. His examples, including coding procedures and coroner's decision-making, show us the contingent nature of scientific methods. A strong criticism, then, from Garfinkel, is that we cannot do science without allowing indexical features to slip into our actions. In terms of Parsons' theory of health, then, Garfinkel would want to say that this is not what we do when we act healthily. It would be reasonable, then, since we need a version of health that we can practice, to examine Garfinkel's theory of health as a contingent production. We can do this by examining his practice, his writing, in terms of his theory. Two principles inform his theory; he wants his theory to do without corrections or irony.

Parsons explicitly saw theory as being able to correct what the ordinary member saw while Garfinkel explicitly rejects the function of theory as being able to do correctives. However, in his study of Agnes, we see how he wants us to see how mistaken the ordinary member really is. While the ordinary member, in the case of Agnes, acts on the basis that there is an external reality, normal sexuality, Garfinkel shows that this is not the case. Agnes, in her interviews, tells him of the occasions when she had to work to sustain her identity as a normal female in the mistaken, for Garfinkel, belief that there was a 'real' version of sexuality that she had to conform to. The whole study is permeated with the notion that Garfinkel knows that normal sexuality is not an objective fact but is produced, unknowingly, by Agnes, on each occasion. Garfinkel doesn't correct her, it's against his principles, but his writing certainly shows us her mistake. The irony in the study, and there are numerous examples, seemed to be based on the

fact that she thought she was doing one thing whereas, in fact, Garfinkel knew that she was doing another. Agnes really believed in an objective reality, while Garfinkel, on the basis, of his greater knowledge, knows better. Knowledge makes the study ironical; it gives Garfinkel sufficient distance from Agnes, the ordinary member who acts on the basis of a false premise. Implicit in the whole study is the notion that the expert sociologist is more aware than the ordinary member of what is really going on. However the irony of the postscript, when she confesses to being a male who, since adolescence, has been taking female hormones, seems to be lost on him. While Garfinkel found Agnes's methods for producing normal sexuality interesting, he was not able to think that she was producing another reality for him, the expert. Here, the situations were reversed and it was Agnes's turn to be ironic on the basis that she knew that she was really, all along, a male who had ingested female hormones over a long period of time. Garfinkel doesn't seem to see that her definition of herself as normal female needing corrective surgery could influence her interactions with him. It was important that she present her story as a mistake of nature, since the experts were unlikely to operate on someone who just wanted to be another sex.

We see here, in the three 'different situations' how Garfinkel theory works in practice. The first situation reported on, in his study of Agnes, is when Agnes relates her story and the problems she was faced with when interacting with friends and relatives. In the first situation, Agnes knows that she is not dealing with an objective reality but has to work to convince her friends that they are; she does this by conforming to what she thinks a 'real' female would do. Despite knowing this, this knowledge is not observable in her actions as she still has to comply with this normative demand. The second situation is where Agnes is interviewed by Garfinkel. In this situation, Garfinkel knows that there is no objective reality but has to act, in his interviews with Agnes, as

if there really was something objectively there. In the third situation, the postscript Agnes reveals that she had known all along that she was really a man but had to act as if she was really a female who needed corrective surgery. We can see, in these situations, how Garfinkel wants to differentiate the theorist from the ordinary member. Garfinkel formulates this difference as knowledge. For Garfinkel, the theorist is the one who 'really' knows the true facts of the situation. In the first situation, Agnes, the theorist, interacts with her relatives and friends, knowing that she is not really a normal female, while her friends remain unaware. In the second situation Garfinkel, the theorist, interacts with Agnes, knowing that there really is not an objective fact which Agnes subscribes to. In the third situation, the roles are reversed and Agnes is revealed as the one who knows the real facts while Garfinkel remained unaware. In each situation, knowledge seemed to differentiate the theorist from the member but this difference was a 'technical' difference since it did not make any difference to their actions; both theorist and member *had* to comply with the normative requirement that there really was something objectively there. In the postscript, new knowledge also changes our perception of each of the two previous situations. While Garfinkel thought he was the theorist in the second situation, the postscript revealed that he was dealing with an illusion. Each situation, in the light of new knowledge, is seen differently but this does seem to matter because both theorist and member have to act as if there is something really there. When Garfinkel interviewed Agnes, he assumed that he was the theorist on the grounds that he knew that normality was an ongoing production that wasn't really there outside of its situational production. With the postscript and new knowledge, the 'same' situation is seen differently. Now the roles of Garfinkel and Agnes are reversed and Agnes is now the theorist who knew all along that 'normal case for corrective surgery' was an ongoing production that wasn't really there. In any situation, in Garfinkel's theory we are never clear who we are since we always await new knowledge which can get us to

see whether we are the theorist or the member and thus see the 'same' situation differently.

Whether the situation is real or an illusion awaits future developments. Garfinkel does not give us a method for distinguishing the situation as real or an illusion. In a real sense, this is only a technical problem as the actor, whether theorist or member, still has to act as if there was something really there.

Garfinkel's writing as a practice, did not conform to his explicit theoretical principles. While it might be the case that the ordinary member is coerced by Parsonian grand theory, Garfinkel, as a principle, doesn't want to relieve them by showing that this objective reality is an illusion. The ordinary member, in Garfinkel's work, acts on the basis that there really is an objective reality out there while the theorist imagines s/he knows better. While Garfinkel as theorist would want to say that he knows that reality is just produced, he has no way of knowing if what is produced is real. All that the theorist, in Garfinkel's work, can commit himself to is the present situation, since this situation may be seen differently later. In the second situation Garfinkel saw himself as the theorist; he knew that Agnes was producing a reality and Agnes thought that she was conforming, or so Garfinkel thought. The postscript reveals that Garfinkel thought he was dealing with a case of the real thing when he was dealing with an illusion. In the study, Garfinkel was both the theorist and the ordinary member, depending on the development of new knowledge; sometimes Agnes was the theorist and sometimes she was the member. Both were dealing with realities that were all along illusions. At this stage, it looks as though Garfinkel's theory can never tell us what the situation really is or who we are. Garfinkel's theory cannot help us to decide if there is something really there or whether we are dealing with an illusion. If we knew who we really were, this might help us, but Garfinkel doesn't give us a method for deciding this. All that we seem to be able to do is to act on the basis of what we think we have in

front of us and await future developments. Reality, for Garfinkel, is whatever we say it is. Equally health is whatever we want it to be. The question of what it really is will depend on the development of new knowledge. The one kind of knowledge that Garfinkel's theory cannot help us with seems to be the knowledge that we need to know the difference between reality and illusion.

At a more general level, we can see the similarities between Parsons and Garfinkel. Both characterize their actor in terms of desires and obligations that can be validated as normal and , in this sense, both orient to a normative framework. While Parsons would want to say that this normative orientation is something that the actor must orient to, Garfinkel agrees with him. Both see this normative orientation as a moral order, in the sense that their actor must orient to it. In Parsons case, we saw how crucial it was, in acting normatively, to conform to this normative framework. Failure to do so could result in the actor mistaking one situation for another, as in our example of the actor possibly mistaking a clinical encounter for a sexual opportunity. In the clinical encounter, the desire on the part of the actor (doctor) to see it, instead, as a sexual opportunity are constrained by this normative orientation. This normative orientation provided the rules for Parsons actor so that s/he could act normatively. Garfinkel's difference from Parsons seemed to be allowing the actor more of a choice in which rules to choose than Parsons. Agnes' problems are in correctly choosing the rules that she imagines a normal female would choose in any particular situation. This normative order is in both cases a moral order that Parsons and Garfinkel think the actor must choose if they wish to be normal. Garfinkel's criticism of Parsons' actor as a judgemental dope is based on the narrow conception of the actor that Parsons allowed. Garfinkel wants to agree with Parsons that the actor is a rule-follower but he wants to give the actor more freedom in deciding which particular rule to follow. While

Parsons might want to say that rules apply in all circumstances, Garfinkel wants to say that circumstances, as perceived by the actor, determine which rules the actor will follow. While Parsons would want to say that the actor chose the wrong rule because s/he did not see the situation correctly, Garfinkel would say that the situation is always correct, from the actor's point of view. Of course this correctness depends upon future knowledge which can allow the actor to see that s/he was wrong. Health, for Parsons, would be a matter of choosing the correct rule while, for Garfinkel, health would be an individual question of choice. In both cases, to be healthy would be to act within this normative orientation. Both Parsons and Garfinkel see the theorist as being outside of the situation that the ordinary member finds him/herself in. While Parsons wants to see this detachment as a principle, Garfinkel sees it as an accident.

In trying to decide what version of health to choose, Garfinkel leaves us with no method for choosing between his version and Parsons. Garfinkel's version of health, like his theory, depends on circumstances and knowledge. While we sometimes, for Garfinkel, act on the basis of an illusory definition of health, there is nothing to be done about it. Time will tell, hopefully, whether we were right in the choices we made. All we can do, in Garfinkel's theory, is hope for the best even though we are not sure what the best would be. If, by chance, we are correct, and Garfinkel thinks we always are, in the present situation, it is because we happened to have the correct knowledge at the time. Knowledge, for Garfinkel, can validate our actions but this validation can change with circumstances. The actor, for Garfinkel, acts healthily on the basis of his/her articulation of health in different situations. In each situation, at that time, the actor always acts healthily. Of course, this all might be completely wrong and illusory, but the actor must just allow the future to judge his/her present actions. Garfinkel's actor is coerced by the fact that he can never know, in any situation, whether was s/he is doing is right. There is a

certain bad faith in Garfinkel's portrayal of the theorist who can only act indecisively since it all could be an illusion. In choosing a version of health, the ordinary member and the theorist must just act or comply with what s/he originally formulated health as. Garfinkel doesn't provide us with a method for evaluating any version of health. While explicitly rejecting the Parsonian definition of health, he remains coy about what health is, leaving his member to define health as anything s/he wants.

The work of Parsons and Garfinkel has had an enormous influence on sociology. While Garfinkel showed the limitations of science and its similarity to everyday theorizing, sociology has continued to use both the scientific and ethnomethodological methods for re-producing itself as a theory of action. While some social theorists wanted to do more, others were content "*to get along with common sense and social science*" (Rorty, 1995:379). Rorty wants to stop at the agreement or consensus model of society and the individual formulated by Garfinkel and Parsons. A clear picture of human agency is not essential for Parsons nor Garfinkel. For Parsons, human agency was a matter of correctly organizing the relevant characteristics of the situation (rules) and acting accordingly. For Garfinkel, human agency consisted in reproducing the rules that were relevant, for the actor, in any particular context. In neither case, as we have seen, is the picture of the human agent more than a rule-follower. Rules, formulated collectively, provide standards for human behaviour which, for Rorty, work for the greatest benefit for all. This collective or normative orientation limits our behaviour to what others are able to tolerate. Rorty sees this as the ideal of democracy where we as individuals are only limited by the negative effects that our actions may have on other actors. These others, the collective or normative order give us "*settled social habits that give us much latitude for choice*" (1995:375). For Rorty, the balance between the individual and the collective is all that we now need. Rorty's

appeal is to the pluralism, inherent in Garfinkel's work, and to the detachment of the world, inherent in Parsonian science. One of the costs of this acceptance of this pluralism has been our dis-enchantment with the world. For Rorty, both scientific and everyday rationality have emerged from the Enlightenment version of rationality as the link, or glue, between the individual and others. While the cost has been a certain detachment or disenchantment, the gain, for Rorty, in personal individual freedom has outweighed the loss. Rorty advocates a limiting of speculative philosophy to the individual search for perfection rather than to the production of metaphysico-epistemological facts of the matter. Judgement of an actor's behaviour should, for Rorty, be made by others; rational action being action that can be justified by the others in a democracy. If we insist, as Rorty wants for himself, on a model for human agency, the model preferred is that of a 'centerless and contingent web'. For Rorty any philosophical speculation beyond this is nothing more than a method for social theorists 'to deal with their aloneness', a kind of therapy.

Rorty's picture of human agency as a contingent production that depends on the willingness of the actor leans more to Garfinkel than Parsons. However, as we saw, both see the actor as acting within a normative orientation. While Garfinkel doubts the objectivity of health in favour of health as a subjective production he sees health as both producing and acting normatively. If asked to justify action within a normative framework, Parsons might argue that it was a necessary condition for the maintenance of social order. Likewise, Garfinkel might justify normative action as necessary to sustain membership of the community. In both cases this normative orientation is never evaluated as the right thing to do. Instead the best that both actors can do is simply conform to this normative orientation. As we saw in our discussion of Garfinkel, while there might be some latitude for choice, he never gives us a method for

evaluating this choice other than the choice being limited by having to conform to this normative orientation. In matters of health, this could mean that we would be basing our choices on an illusion. When it comes to a choice between common sense and social science for our versions of health, we have no method of judging between them. While Garfinkel might want to say that Parson's version of health is an illusion, he is never sure enough to validate his own. Future circumstances and new knowledge might help Garfinkel's actor to decide, but he cannot be decisive enough in his present circumstances. Health, for Garfinkel, is always an accident. However before proceeding any further, we must now turn to a theorist who wants to say that both social science and common sense are illusions. For Michael Foucault, the normative order that circumscribes both science and common sense is a form of oppression and imperialism. While Garfinkel might see lay or common sense knowledge as an antidote to medical imperialism, an opportunity to equalize science and everyday life, Foucault thinks that lay knowledge is simply another form of domination. The normative orientation, our settled social habits is, for Foucault, a prison that holds us and deprives us of freedom.

iii. Health as Illusion

The work of Michel Foucault has greatly influenced modern approaches to the analysis of various current issues. While sociology seemed content to gravitate between the objective theories of Parsons and the more subjective theories of Garfinkel, Foucault's work seemed to move beyond both in its critique both of science and hermeneutics. For Foucault, the normative framework that disciplines such as sociology worked in were seen as restrictive in terms of what one could possibly think and do. While Parsons saw health as something that was really there

and Garfinkel couldn't decide, Foucault wants to show that a notion such as health is an illusion. It is not simply that Foucault thinks that some versions of health are better than others; he wants to say that the very idea of there being something like health is a form of imperialism that enslaves us. It is not just that we think that there is such an idea as health, that Foucault objects to; he also wants to say that this notion conditions our actions. To a greater or lesser extent we have all bought into the idea of a healthy lifestyle. Low-cholesterol foods, aerobics, marathons and many other lifestyle choices feature in our lives. These lifestyle choices are supposed to enhance our lives, help us to remain healthy. We debate among ourselves about what exactly is healthy; how 'serious' we should be about our health; are we obsessive about our weight, health and so on?. We even argue about how much health should be an individual responsibility and how much should be the responsibility of the state. At the back of these debates is an implicit and sometimes explicit assumption that there is such a thing as health. Foucault wants to challenge the assumption that there is such a thing as health by showing both its recent invention and the methods it has used to condition our actions.

Foucault wants to show that critiques of various versions of health or anything else are irrelevant since they take place within a normative context that circumscribes what we can and cannot think. Issues such as the quality of our life, both in terms of caring for ourselves and caring for others, figure largely in modern debates. This increased focus on quality of life take place around notions such as the balance between individual freedom and the needs of a common life; both Parsons and Garfinkel are situated here. While we imagine that we are more civilized and freer than previous generations, we are, for Foucault, suffering from an illusion. While we might see ourselves as the products of a history articulated in terms of linear progress, Foucault wants to show us that we are the products instead, of a discontinuous history of which, the modern age

is the latest. For Foucault, different periods in history, he calls them 'epistemes, have produced different orders of being. These orders provide the foundations in which relationships between individuals, society, nature and so on are structured. For instance the cosmic order, formulated by Christianity, structured the debates concerning man's relationship to other men. Foucault shows that the order that grounded the historical period that allowed the public torture and execution of criminals made sense, then, in a way that we moderns can barely understand. Part of the reason for this, according to Foucault, is that the order that structured and conditioned what we would consider as savage behaviour, has been lost to modernity. While we might see this treatment of criminals as grotesque, Foucault wants to show that our modern treatment of criminals can seem equally grotesque. Foucault refuses to evaluate one historical episteme over another, being content to expose both as solutions to the perceived problems of their age. By refusing to evaluate the past in terms of the present, Foucault wants to expose the modern age as nothing more than particular solutions which are constitutively related to the problems that we have invented for ourselves. By far the biggest problem that the modern age has constructed for itself is, for Foucault, the problem of humanity itself. The modern individual, according to Foucault, has only recently been articulated in the discourses of the human sciences. This modern individual, thinks of him/herself as being essentially free. Foucault wants to resist this notion by showing that this individual has been produced within 'normative' limits that confine both his/her view of him/herself to narrowly prescribed limits and make, through discipline, the individual conform to this normative production. Foucault's work, then, rejects the version of the historical method that is subject "to a theory of the knowing subject" but rather wants to base his work on "a theory of discursive practices" (Foucault, 1970:xiv). For Foucault it is these practices that have produced the so-called knowing subject, the modern individual.

In his work, Foucault wants to show the production of the modern individual with normality as the standard. The historical discourses in the Human Sciences are examined or excavated by Foucault in their articulation of 'modern' problems such as the madman, the criminal and the pervert. These discourses are shown to focus on the margins of normality which has become more narrowly and negatively defined. The historical production of the modern individual has been constituted in degrees of normality, since:

"It is easy to understand how the power of the norm functions within a system of formal equality, since within a homogeneity that is the rule, the norm introduces, as a useful imperative and as a result of measurement, all the shading of individual differences" (Discipline and Punish, 1977:184).

Differences between individuals were now articulated in terms of this norm. Foucault shows the emergence of the norm in a negative way by examining the articulation of its limits in the historical emergence of the deviant or the abnormal. The discourses and treatments that followed, on the 'problem' of the criminal, the madman and the pervert used this norm as their condition for articulation. By showing that the problems, articulated in the new human sciences, of the deviant, were problems with their inner workings, their mind, Foucault wants to show the construction of the modern individual as one whose mind could work 'normally'. The notion that the individual had inner workings or depth was a necessary part in the production of the modern, normal individual. While we might have inner depth, and Foucault thinks that this is an illusion, Foucault wants to show how these depths were narrowly constituted. The normal individual, for Foucault, is caught in the illusion that s/he is somehow incomplete, and an enigma that needs to understand his/herself. Foucault lays the responsibility on Christianity for the articulation of this incompleteness in the idea of original sin. The modern agent, for Foucault, thinks of him/herself as an agent with 'depth' whose inner workings or mind needs to be understood if the agent is to reach any kind of fulfilment. While the modern individual aspires to

this kind of self-fulfilment through various techniques, 'technologies of the self', Foucault wants to show that this whole idea, that we have a self with 'inner depths' that we must explore if we are to understand ourselves, is a sham and illusion. The modern normative order, for Foucault, deludes us into thinking of ourselves as beings with depth; it also, narrowly limits what we can be. Like any other modern notion such as health, the modern individual, is, for Foucault, an illusion which controls our life and determines our actions.

For Foucault, the imperialism and domination of this new normative order do not coerce us in the old, visible ways when we were subject to the sovereign power of the king; this was a visible power that was made manifest in public spectacles such as executions. A new form of power, more strategic and dangerous than the old visible power of the king is part of this normative order; Foucault calls it power/knowledge (*savoir/pouvoir*). Foucault traces the growth of power/knowledge as the new human sciences began to articulate this modern individual in more 'enlightened' terms than the previous episteme. In his *'History of Sexuality'* (1981), Foucault wants to show us how this power/knowledge inscribed itself on life itself. In this work, Foucault examines the change when:

"The old power of death that symbolized sovereign power was now carefully supplanted by the administration of bodies and the calculated management of life" (Foucault, 1978:139-140).

This work brings together Foucault's historical excavations in the changes in our self-formulations in the Classical Age, the Age of Enlightenment. Before, the agent had been defined in terms of the larger order where the sovereign exercised power over his/her subjects. Foucault formulates this version of power as 'the right of seizure', where the sovereign acted to defend his/her life. Both internal and external threats to the life of the sovereign could be met with the appropriate response including the right to seize the life of the persons who threatened the life of

the sovereign. The sovereign was empowered to call upon his/her subjects to defend the monarch and to inflict punishment on all threats to the king's peace. For Foucault, this model of power is the version of power that we still think of today. Instead, Foucault wants to show us that this version of power has been supplanted by a disciplinary/regulatory version of power characterized by '*an anatomo-politics of the human body*' and '*a bio-politics of the population*'. This newer version of power, since the Classical Age, has, for Foucault, been concerned with the organization of life itself, its biological and survival processes. For Foucault, the discourses on sexuality since the Classical Age can show us this focus on the organization of life and the survival of the species.

In '*History of Sexuality*' Foucault wants to examine the way that sex is 'put into discourse' so that he can :

"define the regime of power-knowledge-pleasure that sustains the discourse" (1978:11)

Through these discourses, Foucault wants to show the 'polymorphous techniques' of this power that discipline and regulate human life, our obligations, and desires. The Christian notion of confession and its methods of self-examination and observation were the familiar way, in the Middle Ages, of talking about matters of the flesh. The link between body and soul was, for Foucault, constituted in the confession where not just acts but secret thoughts and dreams had to be revealed. The confession, where everything must be told, was a moral imperative for the saving of souls. Foucault examines the change in self-examination from a spiritual necessity to an essentially administrative and secular matter. In the Classical Age, the age of reason, self-examination is made to follow the new principles of rationality and utility; sexuality was seen to be in need of regulation for the common good and the common welfare of all. Whereas the confession, in its spiritual sense, was concerned with sin and error, the new rational, scientific



version of confession was codified as a therapeutic encounter. Psychoanalysis and its ‘talking cure’ are the new methods where the truth is produced since:

“Spoken in time, to the proper party, and by the person who was both the bearer of it and the one responsible for it, the truth healed” (1978:67)

The acts and thoughts that related the sins of the flesh in confession became, for Foucault, a pathology that required interpretation. With the Classical Age, a new technology of health was produced with the formulation of norms of behaviour centered around the notion of the family. A biology of reproduction and a medicine of sex were articulated around the family. These new technologies, focusing on women’s bodies, children’s sex, procreative behaviour and pleasure formed four strategic unities in the power/knowledge discourse on sex. The deployment of alliances between families which had sustained the state was gradually replaced with the deployment of sexuality. While alliances are concerned with appropriate partners in a juridical sense, the distribution of titles and wealth, sexuality is concerned with body sensations and pleasures, with the exploitation of the body as an *“object of knowledge and an element in relations of power” (1978:107)*. Focusing on the family, these discourses began to articulate the hysterical mother, the misguided child, birth control and the sexual pervert. By defining the abnormal, the normal family became constituted within a web of power/knowledge relations and the economic regulation of pleasure. Although the newly developing Capitalism had a need for productive, healthy workers, Foucault, contrary to Marxists, does not see this as necessarily the most important reason for the adoption of these new technologies of human life and sexuality. The aristocracy were anxious to prevent their family lines from dying out and they adopted the new scientific techniques to preserve their lineage before they were applied to the workers. It was within the new ‘bourgeois’ and aristocratic families that sexual problems were first articulated and corrective measures applied. It was only at the end of the nineteenth century with

discourses on perversions as a threat to society that the ordinary workers were enmeshed in this new codification of sexuality. The modern individual is constituted from these discourses on human sexuality which, in Foucault's interpretation, instead of giving us more and more freedom to do 'our own thing' have gradually enmeshed us in more controlled and disciplined forms of behaviour. For Foucault, while the Enlightenment promised us freedom, it also "...invented the disciplines" (Foucault, 1977:222).

In *'Discipline and Punish'* (1977), Foucault shows how the changes in the notion of punishment articulated both a new version of the agent and a new method for re-habilitating or normalizing this agent. In the figure of the criminal and more recently, the delinquent, Foucault wants to show the articulation of both the normative order and its methods, discipline. Whereas in the 18th. century, torture and mutilation were the punishments routinely available for the correction of serious wrong-doing. by the end of the 19th. century, rehabilitation of the criminal became the norm of punishment. This change in the articulation and treatment of the criminal was exemplified, for Foucault, by Bentham's Panopticon, which:

" functions as a kind of laboratory of power. Thanks to its mechanisms of observation, it gains in efficiency and in the ability to penetrate into men's behaviour; knowledge follows the advances of power, discovering new objects of knowledge over all surfaces on which power is exercised " (*Discipline and Punish*, 1977:204).

For Foucault, the design of the Panopticon makes it possible to observe without being observed. At the centre, a supervisor or observer is situated in a central tower; around the periphery are a building with individual cells that only have windows looking in to the centre or outward. The observer can see into each cell, observing the movements of each individual in the cell. The individual, the observed, in the cell cannot see into the next cell or into the central tower but is aware that s/he is being observed. Here, in the Panopticon, the individual is "*caught up in a power situation of which they are themselves the bearer*" (1977:201). The observed, knowing

that they can be seen, will adjust their actions to conform to the rules. Whether the individual is being watched or not is immaterial, s/he knows that they might be. It is the possibility of surveillance, that obliges the individual to function normatively. As well as a method of observation, the Panopticon can function as a laboratory where different techniques of normalizing individuals can be tried out. New methods of schooling children or curing the sick as well as rehabilitating criminals or madmen could be assessed. The techniques, developed in the new disciplines, exemplified in the architecture of the Panopticon, spread quickly to encompass the whole population in a disciplinary gaze. In terms of its original purpose as a prison, the Panopticon produces, in the population at large, the delinquent. The delinquent, produced by these new disciplinary methods, is located on the margins of the prison and everyday life, the life of the population at large. The delinquent, the potential criminal among us, must be identified by the law and observed throughout their life as a potential threat but, for Foucault, a necessary corollary to the criminal and the method whereby power/knowledge penetrates everyday life. Delinquency, as a constant threat emerging from everyday life, was used as a method for the surveillance of the lower classes who harboured the delinquent. While it was alternatively formulated as a legal and later as a political category, the delinquent, for Foucault, operates on the margins of ordinary life, neither free nor confined. The main purpose of the delinquent, for Foucault, was in defining normality and its limits. The delinquent, at the margins of normality, allowed the notion of normality to seep into the population at large and justified the observation of the at-risk groups in the population. Since the delinquent linked the normal with the abnormal, it allowed for both the recovery to normality and the slump into abnormality for the individual. Both hope and fear, circumscribed within a normative order, constituted the delinquent; the hope for rehabilitation and the fear of recidivism.

In the formulation of madness and its cure, Foucault, again wants to show the relationship between normality and rationality as a constitutive one. In *'Madness and Civilization'* (1971), Foucault traces the historical origins of the modern formulation of madness, from its visible formulation as folly in Renaissance times to its modern formulation as one *"among the problems of the city"* (1971: 64). In this work, Foucault shows us the functional purpose of knowledge in separating the normal and the abnormal. Madness or folly, in the Renaissance, was variously formulated as an imaginary transcendent state, nearer to wisdom or death, that allowed an unfettered freedom to 'flounder about in daylight'. In the figures of King Lear and Don Quixote, Foucault, shows the visibility of Renaissance madness. If the mad did prove an unbearable nuisance to the citizens, embarkation was the method of disposal. Whether simply cast out of the city walls or made to wander the seas in their 'Ship of fools', madness was still formulated as the limit of the human. With the rise of Capitalism and The Classical age, 'the age of reason', madness as folly is re-formulated. For Foucault, :

"The new meanings assigned to poverty, the importance given to the obligation to work, and all the ethical values that are linked to labour, ultimately determined the experience of madness and inflected its course" (1971 : 64)

Madness, now reformulated as both an individual and collective danger, needed to be closed off from the everyday life of work and controlled; confinement was the method for achieving this. For Foucault, the Age of Reason was negatively formulated by the articulation of Unreason. It is, as Unreason, that the new classical version of madness is situated among the other social disorders such as vagrancy and poverty. In an age where the redemptive powers of work were still being articulated, only the unreasonable, the idle, the mad or vagabond would refuse to work. Work and its power of redemption, our penance for Original Sin, was seen as a necessary condition for eternal life. As a bad example, as a scandal to the honour of families or as moral and religious failing, unreason was confined, closed off from ordinary life. In the new

institutions of confinement, all inmates were forced to work, partly to finance the upkeep of the institutions but also to provide this moral correction. Through such Acts as the Poor Law legislation and the creation of workhouses, the moral obligation to work became enshrined in the civil law. Confinement was seen as an opportunity for moral correction where disorder (unreason) could be modified. Madness, as 'unreason's empirical form' was not allowed to remain in the dark, at the limits of humanity, for very long.

Breaking from its location at man's limits, madness was now articulated, by the eighteenth century as beyond human life in the image of madness as the beast. No longer human, the madman could "be mastered only by *disciplining* and *brutalizing*" (1971:75). Foucault asserts that it is in this version of madness as animality that a mechanistic psychology originates. It is confinement, for Foucault, that first structures the modern notions of madness. Confinement alone was later supplemented by a corrective function which was developed through trial and error. Madness, as animality, was formulated as a threat to the integrity of the human, body and soul. Passions and their excessive power could lead to madness through hallucinations, illusions, dreams and delirium. Crucial for the definition of madness is that as well as manifesting signs of a loss of this integrity in speech or act, one is not able to see that these speeches or acts are irrational. Madness, at this time, confined to the institutions, was articulated as a kind of contagion, a natural calamity, that could infect anybody. For Foucault, the moral and the physical possibility of contagion, in the notion of the leper, are reconstituted in the notion of madness as disease and it was as a:

“. . . result of this reactivation of images, more than by an improvement of knowledge, that unreason was eventually confronted by medical thought. ”
(1971:206).

While other forms of unreason such as poverty were being re-defined economically, madness and crime were more clearly implicated in confinement. The problem of what sort of confinement was appropriate to the mad rather than confinement itself assumed critical importance. Should the mad be confined to hospital or to prison? , characterised the indecision of the time. It was out of these debates, for Foucault, that the Asylum was born.

The Asylum 'where the heart's passions and the mind's disorders slowly subside', is, for Foucault, not born from any philanthropic impulse but from a belief in the curative powers of religion. From this belief developed a moral education that Quakers such as Tuke felt could cure the insane. For Foucault, these attempts to 'humanize' confinement are justifications for the Asylum's primary function of making the mad conscious of themselves and their madness. Rather than freeing the mad from the tyranny of chains and whips, the philanthropists substituted, for the mad, "*the stifling anguish of responsibility*" (1971:247). Self-restraint, where the mad are forced to see the extent of their guilt, where they must confront themselves, is now the goal of treatment. For the madman, confined in the asylum, self-observance and the observation by others constitute mental disease. Self observation as the insight that sees its madness and also surveillance that searches for this disease are the two methods of the asylum. The insane are re-defined as non-competent, as children or minors. The image of the family, present in the asylum, would assume greater significance in the years through to Freud and up till now. The asylum was structured to re-educate or reform the mad. This family which structured the life of the mad was a fictitious one which was used when structuring any social problem. Later it was used as a measure of the moral worth of the poor when they re-emerge in more modern times as a social problem to be solved. While originating in a religious orientation, the secular values of work and the family still dominate the asylum. At the head of the asylum structure is the physician.

Originally the doctor was a figure of moral authority who could subject the mad to conformity through punishment as a father figure. This moral function became displaced when the physician *"enclosed his knowledge in the norms of positivism"* (1971:274). The new medicine of the mind became distinguished from medicine per se. The moral authority of the doctor was re-enforced with the development of this new esoteric knowledge of the mind. Freud, the creator of the psychoanalytical situation, made the the essential structures of the asylum manifest in the doctor-patient relationship. While freeing the mad from the physical structures of the asylum, he maintained the knowledge/power structures in the hands of the physician. While, for Foucault, the doctor may be able to unravel some of 'the forms of madness', s/he will always be a stranger 'to the sovereign enterprise of unreason'. In this modern articulation of madness as abnormality, Foucault wants to show us the way our inner nature has become disciplined and normalized.

In these various works, Foucault wants to show that modern rationality has been articulated within narrow, normative limits. The Classical Age heralded, for Foucault, a discontinuity with the older order and the insertion of man, that 'strange figure of knowledge' in the order of things. The 'normalizing gaze' of this rationality has resulted, for Foucault, in the production of modern individuality within the limits of normal/abnormal. The growth in the new knowledges of man has led, thinks Foucault, to not only the domination and control of nature but the domination and control of humanity. For Foucault, the human sciences: biology, sociology, psychology and the law, have their foundations in the notion that the truth is within us. These sciences, in the Modern Age have, for Foucault, been continuously refining their procedures, their technologies, in the hope of discovering the truth that lies within us. Truth is now formulated as relative to the system from which it originates; each system formulates its own truth and debate focuses not on the validity of its truth but rather on the methods, the stethoscope and the interview, for

discovering this truth. What is common to all these truths is that they are all located within this normative order. While we focus on our methods, whether science or hermeneutics, we fail, to see, for Foucault, how this normative gaze has already defined what we *will* see. All differences collapse for Foucault into the conformity of this normalizing power.

Foucault wants to resist the imperialism of the norm that he thinks grounds both the work of Parsons and Garfinkel. Parsons and Garfinkel are, for Foucault, working within the constraints of problems that were invented fairly recently. These problems, the so-called objective or subjective reality of Parsons and Garfinkel, are, for Foucault, illusions that keep us from imagining any other way of thinking about them. All that the modern theories of people like Garfinkel and Parsons seem to do, according to Foucault, is to measure and regulate these problems. Although the actor produced by Garfinkel and Parsons seem to act differently, they both, for Foucault, conform to this normative definition of the problem. Foucault wants to show that both Parsons and Garfinkel are trapped within this normative orientation and unable to see their predicament. This situation is particularly dangerous for Garfinkel as he seems to see his definition of the situation as less constraining than Parsons. Parsons, at least, seems aware of constraints and justifies it as necessary for social order. Garfinkel's actor, according to Foucault, thinks that the only constraint that limits his/her freedom is in terms of making sense. Foucault wants to show that the criteria for making sense has been narrowed in a way that allows the actor no real choice other than a variety of ways of doing the same thing. His work wants to expose any version of health as being a mirage that we imagine is really there. Like a mirage, health holds our gaze as we try various ways of getting nearer it. But, like a mirage, health is not really there. Foucault wants us to see this and to resist the mirage of health.

A notion such as health, as formulated by Parsons or Garfinkel, is, for Foucault a method for normalizing and disciplining human agents. For Foucault, the idea of there being such a thing as health is nothing more than the manifestation of invisible power. We saw with Garfinkel and with Parsons how health was defined as something that could be achieved. In Parsons case, we saw how health was something that the expert could help us with. With Garfinkel, health was something that we all could produce. Both formulate health as a fact, differentially produced. Health, for both, was defined as acting normally although different justifications for acting normally are given. While Parsons wanted us to act normally so that social order could be sustained, Garfinkel wanted us to act normally to re-enforce our membership: For Foucault, both these justifications are spurious as they imprison us in a social order that restricts our freedom. For Foucault, this social order and its productions such as health, are nothing less than a more subtle form of imperialism than the older sovereign forms. While the old imperialisms were visibly enacted in public spaces, the new forms are invisible but at least as coercive, for Foucault, as the earlier forms. The history of the struggle of humanity which shows us escaping from earlier forms of repression to a modern pursuit of individual freedom is, for Foucault, a mirage. The new forms of imperialism with its regimes of power and its disciplinary and normalizing gaze have, according to Foucault, trapped us into believing that we really are freer and more civilized than previous eras. Foucault wants to show us how we have welcomed and colluded in our own imprisonment.

While Parsons saw health as something that was really there and Garfinkel couldn't decide, Foucault wants us to see that it is an illusion. Foucault wants us to resist the idea of health as something that is neither really there nor as something we should want to achieve. Foucault's work seemed to promise to liberate us from the tyranny of the norm that we detected in the work

of Parsons and Garfinkel. Both versions of health seemed to suggest that the only choice for the actor, in any situation, was to conform to this normative order. While Foucault's work described the way that this normative order produced the normal, modern individual, unaware that s/he was duped into subscribing to it; it showed us also how we oriented our actions to its requirements. While we thought that we were freeing ourselves from 'old hang-ups', Foucault shows, in many cases, that we were narrowing our own possibilities. Foucault wants us to resist this normative order by showing us that it is an illusion that was invented very recently.

However, it is difficult to accept that modern life, as Foucault would have us believe, is all bad, and that there are no good, redeeming features in modernity. We can see ways that our quality of life has improved, in real ways, from the past, where life often was 'nasty, brutish and short'.

However, perhaps this is also an illusion. Health would have to be, for us, a good, while, for Foucault it would be an illusion. If Foucault is right, we might think it would be better to do as he thinks we should, and resist the idea of health itself. We can go on to examine Foucault's work as a practice to see if resistance would be the right thing to do. In exploring this, we can use Foucault's principle, power, to guide our way.

It is power that Foucault thinks constitutes the modern individual. He thinks that power works by constituting illusions that are bad for us as they get us to subscribe to a reality that isn't really there. For Foucault:

"..... . power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society. " (Foucault, 1981:93)

The modern agent, for Foucault, is trapped in a complex, strategical situation where both the agent and the situation are dominated. Foucault wants to say that both the agent and the situation are productions of a normative power that dupe us into seeing both ourselves and the situation as

something that is really there, whereas they are, in fact, products of power. Both Parsons and Garfinkel want to say that the agent can be dealing with illusion while Foucault wants to say that they always are. For Garfinkel and Parsons knowledge can constitute the difference between the ordinary member and the theorist. Foucault too wants to say that his knowledge, that everything is an illusion, can make the difference. For Foucault, the theorist is the one who knows that all is an illusion. For the ordinary member, in Foucault's terms, all situations are real while he, the theorist, can see that they're illusions. What makes this situation particularly dangerous, for Foucault, is that the agent doesn't realize that the situation is an illusion. This looks like the situation for Garfinkel's member as he thought that the situation was real. Foucault's agent thinks that s/he is dealing with reality and Foucault urges the agent to resist it. However, Foucault doesn't want his agent to resist the situation in favour of a more 'real' situation. Instead Foucault wants the member to resist any situation.

Foucault, too, wants to distinguish between the theorist and the ordinary member in the same way as both Garfinkel and Parsons. As a theorist, Foucault acts more like Parsons. Parsons wanted to correct what the ordinary agent saw since he wanted to say that the theorist, and he was always one, could see better in all situations. Foucault, too, wants to say that the theorist can correct the ordinary agent on the same basis. Foucault, too, can see better in all situations, on the basis of his knowledge; Foucault knows that all situations are illusions. This is the kind of universal law that Parsons would want to claim for the theorist. In each situation, Foucault can see, while the ordinary agent is duped. Both Foucault and Parsons want to formulate context-free rules that apply in all situations. Theory, for both, is outside the situation, evaluating the situation on the basis of universal laws. Both Parsons and Foucault want to differentiate themselves from the ordinary member on the grounds that they can be more certain about the situation. Parsons

thinks that knowledge of universals allows the theorist to see better and Foucault thinks that his universal law, everything is an illusion, can perform the same function. Parsons, at least, is clear that he is a theorist, he just consults the normative order which can tell him when he's a layman and when he's a doctor with a professional job to do. Garfinkel's theorist produced this normative order but he could only hope that he was right. For Foucault the situation looks more difficult.

All three agree that the theorist could differentiate between real situations and illusions. However all three seemed to depend on being able to distinguish the theorist from the ordinary member. This is a crucial test for them all. If Parsons was a member, in any situation, he could possibly subscribe to an illusion. Parsons avoided this fate by always staying a little detached from any situation so that he could get a better view. Garfinkel, who was always in a situation, could never decide who he was and always suffered from the knowledge that he might be wrong. Garfinkel seemed to want to just close his eyes and hope for the best. Foucault is caught up in the same dilemma. His solution, like Parsons, is to move away from the situation, which is an illusion, so that he can see better. By formulating universal laws, Foucault can remove himself from all situations so that he can see better than the ordinary member. A mistake, for Foucault, would be if he didn't know when he was the theorist and when he was the member. If he is the theorist, he is dealing with the reality that everything is an illusion and if he is a member, he is dealing with an illusion that he thinks is a reality, so one would think he would want to be clear about who he is. However, for Foucault:

"What difference does it make who is speaking?" (1984:120)"

Foucault seems, here, to be indifferent to whether he is a theorist or a member. This is in keeping with Foucault's notion that the modern notion of identity, an agent with inner-depths, is

an illusion. Who speaks or acts is not something that concerns Foucault since it is the 'modes of existence' that, for him, determine the agent's identity. These modes of existence or situations are illusions that have duped the modern agent into thinking that s/he has a self with depth. However since he claims that the theorist, himself, can distinguish between reality and illusion, it would seem that he would have a method for knowing when he was the theorist.

At this point, Foucault's theory seems incoherent. He wants to say that both the agent and the situation are illusions. Yet he could only know this if he were the theorist since the ordinary agent thinks that the situation is real. If the theorist is an illusion, he would be the ordinary member and thus be dealing with a real situation. If the theorist was real he would know that the situation was an illusion. Foucault seems to be saying that it doesn't matter who we are, theorist or member; both our identity and our situation are illusions and not essential. Again, Foucault seems to be taking up Parsons' project of a grand theory by saying that human identity is a matter of indifference since his universal laws apply to everyone or anyone. Parsons and his grand theory formulated the agent as being no different from any other agent; all subscribe to this normative orientation. Garfinkel, too, appealed for validation of the agent's action as action that anyone would, in these circumstances, do. Foucault makes the same universal appeal for validation on the grounds that everyone should, from his vantage point, resist. All three formulate rationality as a universal law; what the agent should do in any situation. Truth here has a universal value that applies in all contexts which again seems to contradict Foucault's assertion that truth is constituted within each regime. Is it true that everything is an illusion?. While Foucault would certainly want to formulate this as a universal truth, he also wants to say that all truth is relative to its own regime, but this looks like a truth that escapes his rule. The regime in which resistance flourishes is different from these 'other' regimes that Foucault

castigates in his work. This is a regime of truth that Foucault is situated in. This situation is outside of all other contexts and is able to see these situations as illusions. Truth, for Foucault, is located in an Archimedean point (Arendt, 1989), beyond any human situation. It is here that the scientist longs to be; outside of everyday life. It is here, outside of human contexts that theorists such as Parsons and Foucault can distance themselves from and so objectify their environment so that they can more clearly see reality. Foucault wants to get out of the situation but this seems to simply reproduce the scientific solution, which required the agent to step out of all situations. This seems ironical in that Foucault seems to end up replicating what he clearly wants to resist. By stepping out of all situations, Foucault hopes to avoid Garfinkel's problem where the theorist is a situational production. The idea that one could forego one's everyday experience of the world, has been an ideal of science. Here one need hardly point out that this principle is, in practice impossible; we are always in situations. Foucault, too, is in a situation outside of all other situations; it is here that universal truth lives. Is this situation a complex strategy?.

Foucault's notion of power seems, like truth, to be situated outside of all situations. Is this power, like truth, something inevitable that we have no choice about?. Foucault thinks that we do not and that this power, as a universal fact, gives us illusions both about who we are and what our situation is. While Parsons seemed to suggest that the situation could dominate us and Garfinkel that we could dominate the situation, Foucault wanted to say that both are dominated from somewhere outside. It is difficult to imagine where this power comes from. Power just seems to be something there, outside of situations, that dominates both the situation and the agent. Power, like Foucault's universal truth, is situated outside all situations. Foucault's situation is indeed dangerous as both power and truth, as universal laws, are situated here. Foucault must work to keep power and truth separated here, although everywhere else they

intertwine to produce illusions. Foucault has no method for keeping them separate so he always runs the risk that they can be integrated to produce illusions. So Foucault ends up, in a sense, like Garfinkel. Garfinkel wants to say that the ordinary member is dealing with illusions but the theorist is dealing with reality. Garfinkel's problem was that he could never tell when he was dealing with reality and when he was dealing with illusion. Foucault, too, has no method of knowing, in *his situation*, whether power has contaminated truth and produced another illusion. Foucault has no method for distinguishing his situation from any other. In a sense, Foucault the theorist sees no need for validation since he wants to formulate truth and power as facts, outside of the need for evaluation. These facts determine Foucault's universal method, resistance.

Power and truth, as universal facts, constitute modern human productions that Foucault thinks are all illusions. Foucault wants us to resist what anyone has made since he sees it as an illusion?. Reality for Foucault is the fact that everything is an illusion. We seem to be on the same grounds that Foucault criticized in Garfinkel and Parsons. Foucault wants all agents to conform to the reality that he has formulated and he gives us a universal method, resistance, for conforming. Can we say that resistance can be a form of domination?. We do not, with the universal law of resistance have to think or evaluate any situation; all we need to do is resist. Resistance becomes, in Foucault's world, the new normative order that we should conform to. We seem to be back with Garfinkel's criticism of Parson's actor as a judgemental dope. Foucault's agent just has to resist rather than to judge any situation. Like Parsons, resistance is outside of all situations, able to correct the ordinary agent's illusions. While he accuses the humanistic turn of producing narrowly conforming individuals, he seems to do the same thing himself. Foucault wants us all to conform to the notion of resistance as a kind of non-conformity. The normative order that Foucault wants to resist is, like Parsons and Garfinkel, something that Foucault really

needs; resistance needs something to resist. This kind of resistance is parasitical in that without this normative order, resistance would cease to exist. Resistance, in Foucault's terms, would see this normative order, as an essential need. This seemed to mean that Foucault really needs an illusion as an essential part of his theory. Without this illusion, Foucault would not have been able to formulate his reality. We seem to be back with the agent as formulated by Parsons and Garfinkel, one who really needs this normative order. For both Garfinkel and Parsons, action is validated by this normative order; for Foucault, this normative order validates his agents action as s/he resists any situation.

Conclusion

While Foucault provided insights into the production of the modern agent, he confines himself to a historical report on the production methods. For Foucault all production, whether it is the agent or the situation are productions that are really illusions. However, we saw that Foucault had to construct another universal reality to resist these illusions. He did not give us any method for judging whether his new reality was any more an illusion than the normative order.

Resistance seemed to be a notion without any positive content, we simply resisted. Again, For Foucault, we had to resist everything which just seemed to formulate the agent as a automaton who automatically, without any thinking, just resisted. Since this resistance was formulated as a universal method, Foucault was indifferent as to the identity of the agent. This was problematic since he had already formulated the ordinary agent as being duped by illusions. Foucault, like Parsons, hoped to escape this fate but as we saw, in Garfinkel's work, this was impossible since everything was a situational production. While Foucault wanted to resist the

idea of health as an illusion he was not able to clearly see when he himself was dealing with an illusion.

We seem, now, to be faced with a dilemma. While both Parsons and Garfinkel wanted to say that health was acting normally, Foucault wanted to resist this as an illusion. However we saw that his resistance was another version of acting normally, just resisting. As with Parsons and Garfinkel, Foucault did not provide any methods for evaluating this normative order, he thought it was bad while Garfinkel and Parsons saw it as good. All three wanted to ground their theories on universal prescriptions that escaped any validation. All three were working with facts rather than values but they had no method for separating facts from values. While we might all formulate health in different ways, we still have no method for knowing if health is, as Foucault suggests just an illusion. We must now turn to the work of someone who does not want to be restricted by the facts and who thinks that there really is a version of health that we could subscribe to.

Introduction

In the previous chapter, we examined certain versions of health that are currently used today. Parsons' version of health was seen as one that had a resonance in our ordinary way of seeing things, in that health and illness do often seem to be random, natural events that affect people, irrespective of their involvement in causing them. However, the best that an actor seemed to be able to do, in the face of this natural fact, was to co-operate with those agencies that seemed to have a better grasp of the facts. This, as we saw, seemed to articulate an actor who didn't have to think about the problem, inevitable or otherwise, that confronted him/her; all that the actor was expected to do was conform. While the ordinary actor could only conform to the prescriptions of the expert, Parsons saw the expert as being the one who could better see what the problem really was. Theory, here, as articulated by experts, seemed to want to get some distance from the problem so as to better see the facts. Garfinkel, by contrast, wanted to show that there was nothing inevitable about health or illness; they were, in fact, nothing more than situational productions, that both the expert and the ordinary actor could produce. Garfinkel wanted to show that while it seemed to the actor that s/he was dealing with the facts such as health, they were, in fact, producing them. While this seemed to relieve the ordinary actor from simply conforming to the expert, Garfinkel did not see the need for correcting the ordinary actor's belief that s/he was conforming rather than more actively producing health. Like Parsons, Garfinkel wanted to say that only the expert could see that the ordinary member was dealing with an illusion. Like Parsons, Garfinkel wanted to say that his theory also wanted to conform to the

normative order. In both cases, health was nothing more than being normal, conforming to a normative order. In neither case was this conformity evaluated so that both the theorist and the ordinary agent could never decide whether their version of health was real or an illusion. In a sense, Garfinkel does not formulate a version of health himself; he leaves that to the situational production of all members. Garfinkel did not want to evaluate these productions other than to be awed by their production. Since each production was real, for the ordinary member, the member was limited to getting as close to the facts as possible so that social membership could be sustained. While Garfinkel knew that the ordinary member was dealing with an illusion, he had no method of knowing whether he was, in any situation, a theorist or an ordinary member. Reality and illusion, then, were accidents over which no-one, theorist or member, had any control. Health, here, was an accident that had randomly affected us; this took us back to the Parsonian definition of health. Foucault, by contrast, wants to say that there is really no such thing as health; that health is an illusion that traps us all. What these three writers have in common is that none of them are able to provide a method for validating the truths of their theories, which seems to leave us wondering if there really is such a thing as health. While we would want to say that there is such a thing as health, we would need to be able to say that health was also a good thing rather than just a neutral fact that we could take or leave. If we are to formulate a version of health, we would want to recommend it as a course of action and this means that it must be something that we could practice in a decisive way, rather than awaiting an accident. It would be essential, for our version of health, that we could see whether it was an illusion or reality, otherwise we could find that our practices could actually be damaging our health. In any situation, we need to be able to see what health really is and use this to guide our actions. This means that health must be situated rather than abstracted from the situation. The previous theorists have situated themselves outside situations but we need a theory that remains

situated and allows us to evaluate both the situation and ourselves in the light of a version of health that can give us healthy actions.

In this chapter, we must turn to someone who has a positive version of health, a health that is always situated. Martha Nussbaum is a philosopher who, rather than aspire to formulate universal laws abstracted from the situation, wants us to become more involved in the situation. It is in situations, for Nussbaum, that we can articulate a richer and more particular version of health, a version of health that responds flexibly to situations so that we can lead fuller and richer lives.

i. Human Practical Rationality.

"Practical wisdom, then, uses rules only as summaries and guides; it must itself be flexible, ready for surprise, prepared to see, resourceful at improvisation.... . This sort of insight is altogether different from a deductive scientific knowledge, and is.....more akin to sense-perception". (Nussbaum 1986:305)

Martha Nussbaum wants to resist the notion that health is necessarily an objective reality that limits human action to simply conforming. However, she also wants to say that there is such a thing as health and that it is not a fixed idea but a flexible notion that gets articulated in particular situations. Nussbaum, then, defines health as flexibly and differentially articulated in each particular situation; in this, she resists any universal definition of health in favour of different, situated responses to situations. In seeking to define health in this flexible and particular way, her agent must respond to all that the situation has to offer rather than seeking to subsume some of the particulars of the situation behind a universal definition. For Parsons, health as rationality, defined by science, meant that health was, in all situations, the same. Irrational parts of the

situation such as the actor's subjective processes were subsumed under a definition of health that rendered these processes irrelevant. Parson's cognitive rationality was too prescriptive for Nussbaum, who wants to formulate human cognition as both an intellectual and emotional seeing and responding to each particular situation. While Parsons saw the lack of stability or indeterminacy in these subjective processes as something that only more technical knowledge could stabilise, Nussbaum, by contrast, thinks that this instability is something that has its own value. She sees instability or 'fragility' as more in accordance with how we really live rather than with any scientific aspiration to stabilise our lives. Rather than formulate human cognition in intellectual terms, Nussbaum wants these subjective processes to be more involved in situations so that her agent can get a clearer view of what is really going on in situations. Whereas science and some of its modern allies wanted to rule out these subjective processes, Nussbaum wants to show that the agent's motivations can also involve his/her emotions which are, for Nussbaum, an essentially valuable part of a good human life. Situations, for Nussbaum, are more complex than science can allow and she thinks that the agent's feelings can help to more clearly see what is good or bad about each situation. She does not, unlike Foucault, think that everything is bad or an illusion and she wants her agent to become more involved emotionally in situations so that her agent can see the good or bad in any situation. This emotional involvement will, she thinks, allow her agent to respond sensitively and emotionally to each particular situation. For Nussbaum, human life, as we live it, is constituted by a plurality of goods or values and these include our emotions. She does not want to say that any particular emotion such as pleasure or pain is always valuable. For Nussbaum, each particular situation has its own particular value which will sometimes be pleasure but might also be pain. She resists, then, any notion that any particular emotion or desire is always essential; this is determined by each particular situation. Her sensitive agent will see in the 'particulars' of each situation, what

is valuable in each situation and respond in an appropriately sensitive way. The agent, for Nussbaum, should be neither too intellectual and should always be prepared to be guided by his/her feelings in appropriate situations. Flexibility, for Nussbaum, is both a seeing and a responding in a flexible, sometimes intellectual or sometimes emotional, way.

In her work, Martha Nussbaum wants to resist the idea that we can, as human beings, get out of situations to a point where we can evaluate the situation more objectively. Even if we could do this, and Nussbaum thinks we should not, we would see the situation in a distorted way, a way in which the situation would lose its particular value. Instead, she wants to show that all valuable things for human beings are situated, including the richness and plurality of values that make human life a good life. These values or goods, which she calls her 'thick vague theory' (Nussbaum, 1992), are discovered by her agent in situations. While Nussbaum wants to say that all that is valuable in a human life are to be found in situations, she also wants to understand the impetus that makes people like Parsons and Foucault want to extricate themselves from situations. Situations, for Nussbaum, can be dangerous and difficult but she also thinks that these dangers and difficulties are part of our lives as human beings. While Foucault wanted to say that all situations are dangerous, Nussbaum wants to say that some are, but that even these difficult situations contain valuable lessons for us. Her work, then, is an attempt to bring out the richness and diversity of human life, always lived in human situations.

In *'The Fragility of Goodness'* (1986), Nussbaum articulates the rich and diverse context in which Plato's and Aristotle's work was situated. While we might read and think about the Platonic Dialogues, abstracted from their historical context, Nussbaum wants to fill in the contextual features, politics, war and strife, that she thinks are a necessary background for a real

appreciation of these dialogues. She wants to show that the unstable political background against which the Platonic dialogues are set, led Plato to formulate a universal value, the Good, as an attempt to free his countrymen from a life of strife and conflict. While Nussbaum wants to disagree with the, for her, Platonic aspiration for a single measure of value, she also wants to say that it is something that she can understand and sympathise with. At the time in which most of the dialogues are situated, Nussbaum shows the political background that any contemporary of Plato would have used to situate and understand the dialogues. In this way, she thinks that even a contemporary of hers would see the urgency for a universal value which all could subscribe to as a way of lessening the confusion and complexity of modern life. While she can see the reasons why Plato might want to stabilise our lives, she also thinks that Plato is essentially misguided in thinking that a universal measure is what we most need. It is not that Plato was wrong to search for a single yardstick in which to evaluate all situations, that Nussbaum really wants to say, although she can't imagine what this yardstick could be. It is more, for Nussbaum, that she thinks that even if we could have a single yardstick, it would lead to a flattening of each situation so that all situations would come to look the same. The sameness of vision, imposed on us by the adoption of a single universal value, would, for Nussbaum, lead to a distortion of the situation and would ultimately lead to a loss of what is essentially human about us. Nussbaum, then, wants to say that although we might be able to adopt a universal science of measurement, we should not be deluded into thinking that we could have this without it distorting human life as we understand it. This science of life would, for Nussbaum, eradicate all differences between both people and the values they hold. The differences between us are, for Nussbaum, what makes a human life worth living and she sees this potential narrowing and levelling of all situations as robbing us of the diversity that constitutes a recognisably human life. This narrowing of the situation will, thinks Nussbaum, reduce human deliberations to nothing more

than conforming to the situation as constituted by this universal value. The conformity that this universal value produces would, for Nussbaum, change us in a way that we could no longer recognise as human.

Nussbaum wants to resist the notion that theory can somehow be abstracted from the human condition. She wants to show, in her work, that the self-defining features of all theories have important implications, especially for any theory which attempts to extricate itself from any self-defining consequences of its formulation. Theory, formulated as abstract universal law, seemed, for Nussbaum, to want to do without any specific notion of human agency, formulating human agency and its differences as an indifferent feature of the situation. While these abstract theories were indifferent to human agency, Nussbaum wanted to say that these differences in human agency and human values were an integral feature of any theory that purported to explain our situation. For Nussbaum, any theory which sought to collapse these differences would necessarily distort both the situation and ourselves. Abstract theories, for Nussbaum, are blind to their self-defining features and thus are suffering from an illusion if they imagine that their theory does not have serious implications for how we live. For Nussbaum, part of our self-understandings are constituted by human differences, and a theory which sought to abolish our differences would distort how we understand ourselves. While these abstract theories sought to produce a universal rule which applied in all situations, they would, for Nussbaum, reduce human agency to nothing more than conformity. The sameness of conformity, imposed on us by these abstract theories, would, for Nussbaum, abolish any of the values that we need to sustain and nourish our essentially human life. Nussbaum, then, wants to resist the conformity that she imagines would result from our adoption of Plato's proposal in favour of a diversity and conflict of values that she sees as essentially constituting the human good life. Rather than look for an

abstract, universal theory, which Nussbaum thinks Plato aspires to, to guide us in situations, Nussbaum wants to formulate a thick, vague theory of a plurality of human goods or values. She formulates 'practical reasoning' as her method for responding to the diversity and richness of each particular situation. This will, thinks Nussbaum, help us nourish our lives while still allowing us to recognise this life as essentially human.

Nussbaum, then, wants to resist any theory that does not acknowledge its own self-defining features. These act, for Nussbaum, as if they could formulate theory simply as a method which would leave the agent essentially unchanged. While she sees Platonism as an originator of these universal theories, Nussbaum's more modern targets include the Utilitarianism of Bentham and Sidgwick. These theories, for Nussbaum, want to make a science out of human life while being blind to the kind of agents this theory would produce in practice. While seeking to unite conflict and choice behind one external principle, these theories seem, to Nussbaum, to remove what is most valuable about human life. Human life, for Nussbaum, is constituted by conflict and hard choices because we are, as humans, constantly exposed to accident and luck. Luck, for Nussbaum, is 'just whatever happens': she sees this as an essential part of a good human life. Luck, for Nussbaum, is something that we should welcome rather than something we should avoid. It is accidents and whatever just happens that, for Nussbaum, give us opportunities to develop a richer and more essentially human life. While she claims that Plato and his more modern proponents such as Utilitarianism want to formulate an external universal good that can, in theory, stabilise our situations and choices, she resists this in favour of a plurality of human goods which can be explored in situations and choices. Theory, then, for Nussbaum, is the development of a practical wisdom that comes from being exposed to situations that just happen

and our being able to evaluate these situations in terms of a good human life with its plurality of values.

Practical wisdom or rationality requires, for Nussbaum, paraphrasing Aristotle:

“...a long experience of life that yields an ability to understand and grasp the salient features, the practical meaning, of the concrete particulars”.
(1986:305)

We learn practical rationality, according to Nussbaum, as we progress through situations in life. While young, we deal with more simple situations and progress to more complex issues as we grow up. This practical rationality develops throughout our lives as we are confronted with difficulties and conflicts that are often never satisfactorily concluded. While abstract theory, for Nussbaum, wants to ‘solve’ problems that confront us in situations, they do so by reducing the problem to a quantitative measurement by rule which, although technically able to make the problem disappear, fails to retain the complexity of the situation itself. The practically wise person, for Nussbaum, will not seek to simplify or quantify the situation but will, instead, explore the initial appearances of the situation in a deeper way to bring out all the subtleties and nuances of each particular situation. In this way, practical rationality wants to save the ‘appearances’, the concrete particulars of each situation. It is, thinks Nussbaum, by articulating the appearances of any situation more fully that we can see the reality and richness of the situation and so develop a good human life that acknowledges what we are and what our appropriately human limits really are. Practical rationality or wisdom, for Nussbaum, is situated between the good and the possible. Since it is impossible or at least, for Nussbaum, not desirable to want to formulate external criteria that would make us lose sight of each situation, the practically wise person will develop the appropriate perception to evaluate each situation or choice. Her version of the good is grounded in Aristotle's view of the good human life. The

good human life, according to Nussbaum, recognises that there is no good or value common to all the activities; each activity having its own intrinsic value. Practical rationality, limited by the good and the possible, shows us our limits; what we are practically able to do. Since we are not able to remove ourselves from situations, practical rationality, for Nussbaum, must begin with a recognition of these limits.

As we grow older, we develop our own practical wisdom which gives us a foothold in each new situation that we find ourselves in. This ensures that we never see any situation as completely another first time. Some of the features of any situation will be familiar to us from our previous experience and some features may relate to this particular situation. Practical rationality, then, for Nussbaum, has two parts. The appearances of a situation are partially prepared by our previous knowledge and experience which can provide an initial grasp of the situation. This initial grasp can then be finely tuned by a sensitive perception of the situation. The initial rule, our previous knowledge and experience, allows us to make preliminary sense of the situation. Experience, the recognition that a certain rule might at least give us a preliminary grasp of the situation, is a part of practical rationality which lessens the surprise in each situation without completely removing the newness and particularity of *this* situation. Rules allow us to get a preliminary grasp on the situation but this rule is tempered by perception. Nussbaum uses Aristotle's example of the architect who would use a flexible ruler to get the measure of any curves or bends in the buildings he was working on. A straight measure, as the rigid application of a rule in a situation would, for Nussbaum, fail to get the particular measure of any situation. Rules, as the straight measure, partially engage the situation while at the same time failing to grasp the particular nuances and uneven edges of the situation. Perception can help us to judge whether we can simply use the original rule or whether something more particular is needed.

Nussbaum wants to say that perception can help us to fully explore situations and thus give us a clearer picture of which rules we should apply in each situation. The crude application of a universal rule does not, for Nussbaum, give the agent much choice in situations; s/he either conforms or does not. Perception, thinks Nussbaum, can give us a choice between rules and also can help us to discriminate between these choices. She thinks that perception, by getting us to really see the situation, can show us which choices are available and what these choices really amount to. By really seeing the situation, Nussbaum's agent can be flexible in his/her choice of rules. This allows the agent more freedom in determining which rules should apply rather than with a science of life which Nussbaum sees as limiting the agents choice to either conforming or not with the rule. For Nussbaum, we must be prepared to be flexible in our application of rules, as too rigid an application of rules can impede our view of the real situation and also the choices that are really available to the agent. Practical rationality, for Nussbaum, is situated between the stability of a rule and the particulars of perception; neither too stable nor too fragile. Practical rationality, for Nussbaum, needs both rules and perception; both the universal and the particular to really see and respond in any situation. Perception without rules would condemn us to always beginning again in each new situation. Rules without perception keep us from developing by showing us the sameness of each situation. Practical rationality, both rules and perception, help us to develop, for Nussbaum, in appropriately human ways.

Perception, then, can help us by uncovering what was only vaguely grasped initially, and to really see what our choices are. Nussbaum wants, then, to allow the human agent some flexibility rather than simply weighing choices on the basis of some external rationality. Rationality, for Nussbaum, is internal to each situation and is produced by the perceptive agent fully involved in the situation. Nussbaum's rationality and its method, perception, includes our

intellectual and emotional parts. She wants to restore the emotions to an essential place in human cognition. Nussbaum, here, wants to resist any view of perception as a cold, dispassionate review of the contents of any situation. This version of perception as an intellectualising of the situation is, for Nussbaum, a distortion of the situation. She wants to say that appropriately human perception does not only include our intellectual faculties but also our emotional ones. These two faculties are essential, for Nussbaum, so that the richness and value of the situation and the choices we make can be fully understood. In *'Love's Knowledge'* (1990:54-106), Nussbaum wants to concur with what she sees as Aristotle's definition of perception as not only an intellectual seeing but also an emotional feeling about the situation. Her example is where we might see that a friend of ours needs our help: It is not just that we can see, that is observe, that s/he is in need of our help from their overt behaviour. Nussbaum points out that it is often the case that we see that a friend needs help because we just feel it; in this way, feelings can show us a situation. Cognitively we might consult these feelings to get a true picture of the situation. Without these feelings, we might never come to see and feel the full force of such a situation. This applies equally when we are faced with a choice between playing music or helping a friend. Again, we might want to take a clear dispassionate view of the choice and choose on the basis of some intellectual criteria such as utility. For Nussbaum, this kind of choice would lose something, become distorted, if perceived in this way. Nussbaum's perception would, she thinks, by engaging both our intellectual and emotional cognition, be able to bring out the full force of the choice. For Nussbaum, an agent who acted without any passionate involvement would lack perception. If the choice was between playing music or helping a friend, perception would not want to unify these choices using some external criteria; this could only be done, thinks Nussbaum, by distorting both 'playing music' and 'helping a friend'. Instead, Nussbaum thinks perception can bring out the essential values that are

particular to both notions. In this way we can appreciate, become more aware of what both choices have intrinsically got going for them. Perception, then, for Nussbaum, is not only both an intellectual and emotional seeing of a situation; this seeing is constitutive of our responses, our choices and actions, to the situation.

While some theories (she includes Platonism) would want to say that passions interfere with correct judgement, Nussbaum wants to say that the passions are an essential part of any judgement. If we had to choose on the basis of intellectual argument alone, we would lose out on the richness and diversity of human life. While we might think it intellectually wrong to succumb to temptations and pleasures, we would never do it on the basis of a cold dispassionate choice. For Nussbaum, this is not, as human beings, how we do act. While we could know that a certain action is wrong we can be swayed by pleasure into performing a wrong action. We know that overeating is bad for us, but we are swayed by immediate pleasure. This knowledge is with us as we eat the cream cakes, but it doesn't stop us from doing it. Nussbaum here wants to refute the, she claims, Socratic maxim that one only does wrong through ignorance. Nussbaum wants to say that it is not ignorance but a need for something other than knowledge, understood as an objective value-neutral measurement, that allows us to act against what we know to be the correct intellectual choice. In this Nussbaum wants to say that while there can be a value in an unemotional choice, there is also value in pleasure itself. While she does not want to subscribe to pleasure as always a good, her version of rationality does allow us to do things, for pleasure, that if we reasoned purely objectively, we would not do. Nussbaum's point is that sometimes we do just give into a temptation that we would never even have seen if we had simply seen the situation as an intellectual problem. This would have resulted in us missing out on some pleasure or emotional satisfaction and thus out of some essential part of human life. This does

not mean that perception can necessarily show us which choice to make, but it can show us what is really involved in any choice. Theories which simply intellectualize the situation and want to reduce choice to an abstract, objective calculation fail, for Nussbaum, to really see the situation or the choice. It is perception, a complex seeing and response to the situation, that allows us to really see the situation and the choices that we can make. Perception, then, can more clearly articulate the values in our choices and a choice that we sometimes make is to choose on the basis of pleasure.

Of course, some situations are more concerned, not with the attainment of pleasure, but with the avoidance of pain. It is not always possible, thinks Nussbaum, to avoid pain and part of a human good life, for Nussbaum, will involve pain. Situations, particularly tragedy, can produce a conflict in values or commitments. Nussbaum develops the principle of non-contradiction, to guide her agent in these situations. Making a choice among commitments or values means, inevitably having to choose one commitment over another. The principle of non-contradiction demonstrates that while one can be committed to two contradictory values at the same time; one of them will have to 'quit the stage'. This does not mean that either commitment's value will necessarily be lost. In a situation where a choice between incommensurable values has to be made, Nussbaum recommends choosing the commitment that is nearest to what we could agree would be the conventional choice. While both commitments retain their intrinsic value, the difference that makes the choice would be the one that was nearest to our conventional way of choosing. What is crucial is that we try not to minimize any pain felt at the loss by simply pretending that the commitment lost had no real value. The practical, wise person will appreciate the real value of the commitment rejected so there can be a value in just appreciating this loss. While there will be a loss, and this is the tragedy, this loss can teach us something

about ourselves. Nussbaum wants to resist the idea that one solution to a conflict of values is to either try and hold on to both commitments or, in a way even worse, try and just shrug off the other commitment as something that wasn't really something valuable. Nussbaum wants to say that her perceptive agent will recognize and feel the force of the loss of commitment. She sees any theory which tried to dismiss our feelings as somehow inadequate would be cutting us off from human goods or values that are constitutive of a good human life. Her morally good agent will immerse herself fully in each particular situation so that any choice made is a moral choice.

For a choice to be moral it:

“..... must not only have the same content as as the virtuously disposed person's action, . it must be done “in the same manner” as the manner in which a person whose passions love the good would do it. ” (1990:79)

Nussbaum wants to show that ethical action is action that connects both form and content. It is not enough if the agent simply carried out a prescribed action; the agent must show his/her emotions in the action. This would mean that while one could lose something valuable in a situation, one should, in acting ethically, show this loss in one's actions. If I had to choose between two values, I could choose on a coldly intellectual basis but this would not absolve me from feeling the loss of something valuable. While I could see the loss as something necessary, I could not simply shrug it off as something that really had no value. The problem would be that we might try and avoid pain and always seek pleasure. However, some situations are painful and Nussbaum wants to say that we should not try to avoid them but should seek instead to see pain as something essential and valuable in human life. This means that her moral agent could not shrug the pain or grief off by pretending that the situation is somehow different from what we would ordinarily suppose it to be. She wants to say that morality includes an emotional evaluation of any situation as well as a more intellectual reasoning. Morality is both a seeing and

a responding to what could be expected of a sensitive and imaginative human agent. Her agent's responsibility in choosing a course of action will include a sensitive and imaginative response to the choice made. The choice that her agent makes in terms of moral responsibility is a virtuous choice if it does not try to avoid responsibility for responding to what is really there. The moral agent, formulated by Nussbaum, does have limits. These limits are, as we have indicated, our ordinary conventions, which can allow us to see that pleasure is not always the correct value.

Nussbaum wants to formulate human practical rationality as grounded in a plurality of human values including pleasure and pain. Human goods such as justice, generosity, love and friendship are all values that she thinks are an essential part of the good human life. Nussbaum thinks that a rationality that simply measures all human values in terms of a universal good, whether pleasure, utility or anything else, is simply distorting human life as we understand it. Sometimes we will choose on the basis of a cool rational appraisal of the situation and sometimes we will just act on our passions or emotions. Perception, if sensitively engaged, can, for Nussbaum, help to guide us in situations so that we can see what should be the appropriate response in any situation. On balance, she favours a less well-ordered and more chaotic life, one that she thinks is more appropriately human. Her practical rationality will, she thinks, help us to live more human lives 'on the razor's edge' between stability and disorder. Nussbaum wanted to resist any theory that purported to restrict human reasoning to measurement by any single yardstick, seeing this kind of rationality as both too coercive and as a diminution of what human agency really is. Nussbaum wanted to free the human agent from simply conforming to this coercion by formulating practical rationality as giving the agent more flexibility in his/her choice of rules. While we might make a choice in purely quantifiable terms, she wants to give the human agent more freedom to choose on the basis of a plurality of human goods which

perception can allow the agent to really see. However, Nussbaum also wants to resist the notion that the agent is free to see or do anything that s/he wants. While she does want to say that we do sometimes succumb to the desire for pleasure or the avoidance of pain, she also wants to limit our desires. Nussbaum wants to object to the radical subjectivity of someone like Garfinkel who would want to say that the agent was always correct, irrespective of the choice s/he made. Here the agent's production was, by implication, good since Garfinkel could not correct it. Garfinkel, here, seemed to equate goodness with production; what was good was what was produced. Nussbaum, in contrast, wants to say that not all that is produced is good. She wants to evaluate human perception and its productions by evaluating perception on the basis of her plurality of human goods that she thinks are an essential part of the human good life. It is not the case, thinks Nussbaum, that we can be neutral nor that we should come to any situation with a pre-determined criteria of judgement. For Nussbaum, the perceptive agent will see, in each situation, which values are appropriate. This choice will be evaluated and limited by her plurality of human goods which can make any human choice into a virtuous choice.

The healthy agent, for Nussbaum, is one who is flexible in his/her choices. Since values change from situation to situation, the healthy agent must be prepared to be flexible in each situation. To act unhealthily is, for Nussbaum, to be limited in choice either through the agent failing to see the real situation or the agent adopting criteria of choice that are not sensitive to the particulars of the situation. While the healthy agent can act out of his/her own pleasure, this pleasure must have a value among human values. This constrains flexibility in choices, to choices that are recognizably valued human choices. While some versions of health want to narrow its definition so that we are forced to conform to its austere regime and other versions want to say that whatever the agent desires is valuable, Nussbaum wants to chart a more flexible course. Parsons

wanted health to be more narrowly defined by experts who today pronounce on healthy lifestyles where temptations and pleasures are sometimes formulated as things that we should resist. Health as this universal value would want to say that the only things that we could do of value were things that conformed to this universal value. While we might all agree that smoking was bad for one's health, eating cream cakes is something more ambiguous that we might indulge in from time to time. Nussbaum, then wants to resist a universal definition of health as being something that could only produce a narrow conformity. Health as nothing more than what anyone wants it to be is also resisted by Nussbaum. An agent who always indulged his/her passion for cream cakes would be going to the other extreme. Her version of health is acting in moderation, flexibly responding to each situation. In some situations, the choice of pleasure would be the healthy choice, while in others, a different response would be needed. The healthy agent is free to be flexible in his/her choice as long as this choice is consistent with human agency as constituted by a plurality of goods. This flexibly free human agent is situated between Parsons and Garfinkel. While wanting to give the agent the flexibility and freedom to choose between these versions, Nussbaum also wants this flexibility to be consistent with our ordinary ways of life. In this, she is, perhaps, more sympathetic to Garfinkel. However, while she thinks that a purely intellectual or scientific approach to situations can distort them, she also thinks that our ordinary perceptions are not enough. Her version of perception can enhance, bring out, what is hidden in our ordinary ways of seeing things. This exploration in more depth will, she thinks, give us a flexibility in our response to these more deeply articulated choices. Equally a choice made on an intellectual or scientific basis would distort the choice while our ordinary freedom to make any choice needs to be constrained by what we can agree is a good human choice. Whatever choice the healthy agent makes, it must bring us back to our ordinary ways of life.

Health, like practical rationality, are situated, for Nussbaum, within our ordinary human ways of life. Practical rationality has to show:

" . . . us the way back to the ordinary and to make it an object of interest and pleasure, rather than contempt and evasion. " (1986:260)

Nussbaum sees this aspiration to get outside situations as resulting from a contempt for ordinary human life. She thinks that this search for an external or pre-determined criteria of judgement is caused by our shame at having to face the messiness and chaos of ordinary life. She notes that Aristotle wanted to show the connections between human beings and animals and that some of his pupils were ashamed of this connection. She thinks that the, for her, Socratic aspiration to develop a science of life was an attempt to help us distance ourselves from awkward and messy facts about ordinary human life. She thinks this aspiration to rise above ordinary life was a kind of 'hubris' or arrogance in the face of these awkward facts. Nussbaum, instead, wants to situate herself in our ordinary ways of doing and seeing. Part of this ordinary life is chance or luck. Rather than try to minimize our exposure to chance, which Nussbaum thinks is just part of our ordinary experience, Nussbaum wants to make a virtue out of this necessity. She thinks that any situation, whether as a result of chance or not, give us opportunities to develop in appropriately human ways. While she can acknowledge that accidents can cause us to experience terrible human conflicts, she thinks that they are valuable sources for returning us to our ordinary ways of life by appreciating the richness and diversity of values in this ordinary life. Freedom is, for Nussbaum, a necessary part of a good human life but this freedom, while allowing the agent more freedom than simple conformity, will still have its foundation and limits in our ordinary way of life. In this way, Nussbaum thinks that she can 'save the appearances' and preserve our ordinary way of life. By bringing all our choices back to the ordinary, Nussbaum wants to

formulate rationality as a form of reasoning that is situated within our ordinary conventions. She does not want to go beyond our conventions as she thinks it will change us in ways that we have not fully taken account of. If there are conflicts in our values, Nussbaum thinks that the standard that we should use is to stay as close as possible to our ordinary conventions. Practical rationality, then, wants to save the appearances in any situation by exploring and articulating the initial appearances in new and richer ways. Rather than looking for a way out of our ordinary ways of doing and seeing, Nussbaum wants to show us what we might fail to see but was really there all along. Nussbaum's theory of a plurality of human goods can, she thinks, by guiding our perceptions, develop our ordinary human practices. We can examine the relationship between Nussbaum's theory of the ordinary good life, with its plurality of human goods, and her practice, as practical rationality, in terms of its choices and actions. We can do this by taking one of her own examples from literature, Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*.

ii. ***Practical Rationality as Moral Responsibility.***

"Being responsibly committed to the world of value before her, the perceiving agent can be counted on to investigate and scrutinize the nature of each item and each situation, to respond to what is there before her with full sensitivity and imaginative vigor, not to fall short of what is there to be seen and felt because of evasiveness, scientific abstractness, or the love of simplification. " (Nussbaum, 1990:84.).

Aeschylus' play is one of a number of examples that Nussbaum uses to discuss her version of practical rationality. The play is situated at the beginning of the Trojan Wars, when the Greek army, led by their king, Agamemnon, set sail for Troy. A conflict among the gods leads to the Greek army being becalmed and in danger of perishing. After a ritual animal sacrifice, the prophet Calchas warns Agamemnon that if he wishes the expedition to proceed to Troy, he must

sacrifice his daughter, Iphigenia. This sacrifice, Agamemnon is informed, will settle the dispute among the gods and allow the expedition to proceed to Troy. As explained by Calchas, this situation presents Agamemnon with a conflict between his commitment to his army and his commitment to his daughter. Faced with this choice, Agamemnon's first response is one of anger and grief; he knows what's involved in either choice. The play shows Agamemnon's emotional turmoil when faced with this choice; he can see no way out other than sacrificing one of the things he most highly values; his army or his daughter. The choice, articulated by Agamemnon, is a choice between being a deserter, abandoning his army, or sacrificing his own flesh and blood. Either way, it seems that Agamemnon has to make a difficult choice that will result in some bad. Agamemnon chooses to sacrifice his daughter, the lesser of two evils, rather than lose his army; the Chorus in the play agree with this choice. They sympathize with his predicament, while still supporting his eventual choice to sacrifice his daughter. However, this understanding turns to blame in the second situation. Having decided to sacrifice his daughter, Agamemnon shows no emotional response as his daughter is killed. Here, when sacrificing his daughter, Agamemnon's grief and anger have given way to a harder and, for Nussbaum, less human response. The Chorus, in Nussbaum's interpretation, seem to concur in condemning Agamemnon's attitude to his daughter's death. Once Agamemnon had made the decision to sacrifice his daughter, he seemed, for Nussbaum, to want to shrug off any responsibility for what followed. Even as his daughter cries out for him at the sacrifice, Agamemnon does not weep or even seem to hear her cries. The criticism from both Chorus and Nussbaum is that Agamemnon wanted to hide his human feelings behind the fact that he was not directly responsible for the choice. Using external constraint as an excuse, Agamemnon seemed to want to distance himself from the tragic events, the consequences of his initial choice. Nussbaum's blame of Agamemnon's actions is that he was insensitive to the situation, his daughter's sacrifice, and in

so doing refused to be human. While she can agree that he was not directly responsible for the situation, he was responsible, as any human father should be, for weeping at his daughter's death.

In this example, Nussbaum wants to show how the perceptive agent can act rationally while still remaining sensitive to the particular situations. The two situations, in the example, reveal Nussbaum's commitment to a version of practical rationality that has, essentially, both intellectual and emotional parts. A rationality that tried to disconnect intellectual forms of reasoning from our emotional feelings would fail to see what was really there. This is what Nussbaum thinks has happened to Agamemnon at the death of his daughter. In the first situation, Agamemnon had a difficult choice forced upon him by the actions of the gods. Nussbaum cannot blame Agamemnon either for his response to the situation or the eventual choice he made. While he tragically had to choose, he fully realized what was involved in making the choice. The play has Agamemnon articulating the choice clearly between deserting his army or 'rending his own child'; he knows that he must do wrong and he feels the anger and grief of the conflict. While he was not responsible for the situation, it was the will of the gods, he feels the full emotional and intellectual force of the choice that the gods have forced on him. In the first situation, Agamemnon's choice, while it entailed the sacrifice of his daughter, was seen by Nussbaum as essentially human rationality. She does not criticize his choice and she praises his actions in feeling the pain intrinsic to the choice. While she thinks that the choice in the first situation was right, what made it good was Agamemnon's knowledge of what his initial choice really was; the loss of an army or the loss of his daughter. Here, Nussbaum would want to show the essential connection between our intellect and our emotions as both necessary for a fully human rationality.

Having made his choice, to sacrifice his daughter, Agamemnon replaces his grief and anger with an unemotional and, for Nussbaum, inhuman reaction. Agamemnon seems to willingly accede to the sacrifice, leaving behind his sorrow and anger as 'counting as nothing'. Rather than feel the grief and anguish that anyone, far less a parent, might feel at a human sacrifice, Agamemnon seemed to see this sacrifice as just another animal sacrifice. Agamemnon's initial emotional involvement had been replaced by a cold unemotional reasoning, that could no longer see his daughter but instead saw her sacrifice as another animal sacrifice. All the sorrow and struggle of the initial choice has been abandoned in favour of a willingness to carry through with his choice. Nussbaum criticizes Agamemnon for seeming to disconnect his emotional and intellectual sides and instead allowing his intellectual reasoning in the first situation to dominate his reasoning process in the second situation when his daughter was killed. Nussbaum's version of practical rationality wants to say that while we can make intellectual choices, we cannot then simply abandon or disconnect our emotions from that choice. Nussbaum wants to resist a reasoning that would always insist that our emotions should simply conform with our intellect. She thinks that Agamemnon was wrong in assuming that his initial right choice allowed him to assume no responsibility in the second. Agamemnon failed to act within the limits of human rationality by arrogantly shrugging off his commitment to his daughter, seeing the situation as nothing more than an animal sacrifice. While it might have been right to choose his army over his daughter, Nussbaum wants to say that this rationality cannot then be used as the criterion of judgement in the next situation. While his initial choice demonstrated both intellectual and emotional parts, his second choice lacked any emotional involvement and led to a distortion in the situation. By closing himself off from his emotions at the sacrifice of Iphigenia, Agamemnon failed to really see what the situation was. The rightness and goodness of Agamemnon's first situation where he chose to sacrifice his daughter and felt the grief and anger

of this choice seem to have been replaced, in the second situation, by a coldness and distance. In the first situation Agamemnon recognized the force of his conflicting commitments, while, in the second situation, Agamemnon, in Nussbaum's terms, had lost sight of any commitment to his daughter; it was as if this commitment had never existed. While this kind of intellectual reasoning is something that we could do, Nussbaum wants to resist the notion that reasoning like this represents a fully human version of rationality. Commitments, evaluated in this 'rational' way seem to leave our other commitments as not really there. Nussbaum wants to say that while one commitment can win out over another, the other commitment can still have a claim on us. She wants to resist the kind of calculative rationality that determines emotional responses and leaves no room for a rationality that while conceding the right of an action, could still see and feel the action itself as a bad or evil. Nussbaum's criticism of this intellectual reasoning is that Agamemnon acted too coldly and not sensitively enough. In the first situation, rationality was connected with the appropriate emotional responses, while in the second situation, rationality and emotions parted company; this justifies both her and the Chorus's criticism of Agamemnon's failure to weep:

We can see, in this example, how Nussbaum wants to show that a less emotional and a more intellectual theory of choice that tries to subsume incommensurate values can distort the situation. Agamemnon, by distancing himself from the situation, failed to see the real situation. It is not that she thinks that Agamemnon was wrong to choose the safety of his army over the life of his daughter, this seemed the right thing to do. However, the fact that this was the right thing to do, does not absolve the human agent from any responsibility. Agamemnon's responsibility was visible, in the first situation, in his anger and grief, while it was particularly lacking in the second. In the second situation, Nussbaum wants to criticize Agamemnon for failing to act

responsibly in weeping at his daughter's death. Agamemnon seemed to want to shrug off this responsibility since he assumed arrogantly that he was no longer involved in the situation. Nussbaum wants to say that it is immaterial whether we make the situation or not; what is essential is that we engage the situation both emotionally and intellectually. Nussbaum, here, wants to formulate human cognition as both a seeing and a feeling of each particular situation. Moral responsibility, for Nussbaum, is exercised when the agent engages his/her full cognitive faculties in each situation. Nussbaum's appeal, with Agamemnon, is that human beings are both intellectual and emotional agents. While we might sometimes make choices on a purely intellectual basis, we must still grasp the whole situation and not try to over-intellectualize the situation so that it looks narrower than it really is. Agamemnon acted, for Nussbaum, in a humanly practical way when he felt anger and grief at the choice thrust upon him. Here Agamemnon was aware that both choices involved pain. He did not retreat solely behind some version of calculative rationality that would distort what was really involved in these choices; this would have been to have shrugged off personal responsibility in this situation. Nussbaum, in this situation, wants to praise Agamemnon in that he acted as a responsible human agent should. Here, Agamemnon felt the pain of the conflict, knowing that either choice would result in some loss. In the second situation, at the death of his daughter, Agamemnon had cut himself off from the pain and so, for Nussbaum, had cut himself off from his humanity. Agamemnon suffers, in the second situation, a double loss; the loss of his daughter and the loss of his humanity. By seeing the situation in his distorted way, Agamemnon was not aware of these losses. Nussbaum wants to show, make us aware, of what we lose when we try to disconnect our feelings from our intellect. While we can choose intellectually, our emotions can show us what is really involved in our choices. Nussbaum wants to show, in this example, how a purely intellectual rationality can only succeed by distorting the human agent and the situation. For her, a responsible human

agent would have seen and felt this particular situation. While we might want to avoid pain and grief if we can, Nussbaum wants to say that even these feelings have a value. To lose out on them would be to lose out on a valuable part of human life.

Nussbaum, then, wants to assert that there are some values or goods that are an essential part of a good human life. Hers is a positive response to theorists such as Foucault who want to claim that everything is a sham, an illusion. Nussbaum wants to say that there is a plurality of goods in modern life including a richer and more fulfilling emotional life. She gives us a method, practical rationality, so that we can develop this good life. This good life is also an essentially human good life. She wants to show that we cannot, as humans, leave behind our emotions but that even if we could, it would lead to an impoverishment of our lives and rob us of something essentially human. Any theory that wants to do without an emotional component would make us into something other than the kind of human beings we already are. We could act like Agamemnon, but this would be to act against a way in which we have come to understand ourselves. Emotional values such as love and family are not something that Nussbaum thinks we could resist and still remain human beings as we understand ourselves. We also cannot choose to just have pleasurable emotions. Part of the price we must pay for a full emotional life must include pain and grief. Nussbaum's practical rationality includes all our human emotions; even pain and grief have value. Since the emotions are a part of a good human life, Nussbaum wants to formulate the human agent as being responsible for bringing these emotions to each situation rather than seeking to minimize pain by distorting the situation. This sometimes means that our emotions play a large part in human reasoning; sometimes human reasoning is all emotions. While she wants to say that intellect and emotion have a proportionate relationship in our cognition, she also wants to say that these proportions are flexible and will depend on each

situation. In the first situation of choice, Agamemnon's cognitive response assumed a more proportional relationship, where both intellect and emotions were involved; neither one dominating the other. For Nussbaum, this proportion was lost in the second situation when, at his daughter's death, Agamemnon's pain and grief should have dominated his cognition. Instead she claims that he wilfully allowed his intellect to dominate his emotions. Agamemnon is an example, in the second situation, of a disproportionate life which Nussbaum thinks is a not very human one. For her, human practical rationality can preserve and enhance our lives. In any situation the human agent should be prepared to be flexible about these proportions. While she does aim for the mean, a balance between intellect and emotion, she also allows that our emotions can assume a disproportionate part in some situations. In a tragedy such as Agamemnon, Nussbaum shows us just one such situation in which the emotions should assume a disproportionate part. This disproportion which we can experience in tragedy cannot help us to avoid the tragedy, but can let us see what values there are even in human tragedy.

Nussbaum, then wants to give us a method for achieving some stability in our lives but also giving us freedom to flexibly respond in each situation. Often our life is a balance between intellect and emotion where there is a harmony between the two. In situations such as tragedy this equilibrium is disturbed and we find ourselves in situations that call for a disproportionate response. This disproportionate response is situated within a plurality of human goods including an emotional life. Pleasure and pain are, for Nussbaum, essentially human values. In her example of Agamemnon, Nussbaum wants to show that practical rationality can provide a consistency in our lives while still allowing us the freedom to explore the particulars of each situation. She does not want to stop with just a preliminary view of the situation; such a superficial view might have produced Agamemnon's initial choice as quantifiable between 'one

person and many' rather than a choice of a daughter or an army. Here, Agamemnon, perceptively saw what his real choice was and felt the pain of the choice. In the second situation, while sacrificing his daughter might be the right thing to do, Agamemnon could still have appreciated what he was really doing, rather than trying to remove himself from the situation and in the process distorting the situation. This, for Nussbaum, is an arrogance or hubris, an attempt to act in a more than human way. Practical rationality, thinks Nussbaum, would have allowed Agamemnon to really see the situation in a human way rather than arrogantly trying to distance himself from what was happening before his eyes. Practical rationality, then, is a knowing of our limits and a keeping within those limits. Practical rationality, thinks Nussbaum, can help us to give a richer and more responsible meaning to our lives by showing us what we have already rather than looking for something that it would be unwise to aspire to. Practical rationality can bring out both the richness and diversity of situations and actions and allow us to really see what is involved in our practices. While Nussbaum wants to stop here, at what she insists are our human limits, we can perhaps examine her theory a little more, without being accused of arrogance. However, we will not transgress her universal commitment to our human way of life.

We see, in her example of Agamemnon, how Nussbaum wants to say that modern life has given us some goods which are essential in defining the modern human good life. This 'thick vague theory' of human goods is encompassed in the notion that there are a plurality of human goods that essentially constitute the modern human agent. Nussbaum here wanted to contrast her own 'essentialist' position with any 'relativist' view of her work, perhaps implied in the notion of a plurality of goods, or that she supports the notion of radical individualism. In both relativism and individualism, there is a sense that one should not criticize anyone else's view of any matter. This seemed to be Garfinkel's position, where the agent was always right. Nussbaum explicitly

rejects this view. She criticizes those people who want to say that everything is just relative, no judgement being any more right than any other. In a sense, we can see this in Nussbaum's story about Agamemnon, where she does want to say that Agamemnon does depart from essentially human ways of life. In a recent paper (Nussbaum, 1992) she explicitly criticized people, at a recent conference, who sought to defend old cultural practices such as praying to a deity, the goddess Sittala Devi, for the eradication of smallpox. Here, Nussbaum wanted to say that modern goods, such as medicine are better than keeping to an old tradition that is self-evidently less effective, in curing smallpox, than modern medicine. Equally, in her story of Agamemnon, Nussbaum wants to say that Agamemnon was wrong in refusing to cry at his daughter's death. Unlike Garfinkel, then, Nussbaum does want to correct the agent. Her theory, then, wants to articulate a plurality of human goods or values that we bring to each situation. Garfinkel, by contrast, saw the production of reality, by the agent, as the production of the facts and so no correction was required. As we saw, this meant that the agent had no way of knowing whether these facts were real or an illusion. Nussbaum, in contrast, wanted to evaluate these facts in terms of her thick, vague theory so that we could really see what the situation was.

Two situations of choice are presented to Agamemnon. In the first situation, Agamemnon has to choose between his army and his daughter; in the second, he has to choose whether to weep or not at his daughter's death. We see, here, Nussbaum's internal standard at work. Using this standard, Nussbaum can evaluate both choices and judges Agamemnon to be right about the first choice and wrong about the second. If Agamemnon had chosen to sacrifice his army but wept at their deaths, would this have made both choices the correct choices?. While she wants us to be flexible in our choices, she perhaps does not want us to be that flexible. However, rather than pursuing this, at this point, we can think about Nussbaum's standard as she thinks it should be

practiced by Agamemnon. We cannot excuse Agamemnon by citing Garfinkel's reasons such as non-competent membership: Agamemnon is the king and so we must suppose that he was in his right mind. Is it simply arrogance, a willed insensitivity to the situation that makes Agamemnon refuse to weep? Nussbaum seems to blame his greater allegiance to his public rather than his private duty as one of the reasons that cause Agamemnon to cut himself off from his daughter's death. In the first situation, his public duty as king has over-ridden his private duty as father and Nussbaum does not criticize this decision. In the second situation, Nussbaum wants to criticize Agamemnon for not giving priority to his private duty, as a father, to weep: In the first situation, Agamemnon's choice is not criticized by Nussbaum as she can see that a king might have to make this kind of choice; it is a choice that we, as humans, might make ourselves. This is consistent with Nussbaum's principle of validation when she says that good action must be consistent with what could be expected of similar persons. The second choice, when Agamemnon chooses not to weep, is criticized on the same basis; that any father would weep: Both judgements rest on what could be conventionally expected of first a king and then a father. Conventionally, we do have human identities such as fathers and kings and we can also accept that one could be both a father and a king. The difficulty that Nussbaum suggests for Agamemnon was that he could not see, in each situation, who he really was. For Nussbaum, each situation produces its own particular identity. If there is a conflict between identities, as there is in both situations, Nussbaum thinks that we should fall back on our conventions. This seems to mean that only if Agamemnon sees the situation as one where his 'daughter' is sacrificed, will he know that he is a father. If, however, he sees the situation as 'animal sacrifice', he might imagine that he is the king. Nussbaum thinks that since his daughter is the real sacrifice, Agamemnon should see this and react appropriately as a father. This situation ultimately depends on our conventional ways of seeing situations. Rather than simply accepting

this convention as our limit, as Nussbaum wishes, we could examine convention itself by contrasting Nussbaum's conventional situation with another possibility.

In keeping with Nussbaum's commitment to human imagination, we can imagine the following scenario. Faced with the prospect of choosing between his army and his daughter, Agamemnon is faced with an even greater problem than Nussbaum is able to see. While it is possible to say that the lesser of two evils is the sacrifice of his daughter, we might imagine that Agamemnon loses something even more valuable; his dignity as a human being. One could argue that the play implies that there really isn't a choice at all; Agamemnon is obliged, as king, to save his army. Nussbaum seems to agree as she never puts up a case for saving his daughter. Perhaps Agamemnon felt that this was not a *real* choice as his only option, as king, was to save his army and that the gods might know this. In effect, he might think that the gods have arranged for him to kill his own child. In Nussbaum's terms, part of being human is being responsible for our choices, but in a real sense, Agamemnon may think that this human responsibility has been denied him; by superficially giving him a 'choice' that really doesn't amount to a real choice. Agamemnon may have realized that the gods are cynically manipulating him and demeaning him by offering him a so-called choice that does not really exist. Perhaps Agamemnon sees this choice as an illusion by which the gods have acted to degrade him, rendering him as less than human. What human being, after all, would sacrifice his own child voluntarily except perhaps a king whose greater duty would be to his army?. While it might look as if he is making an active choice in deciding to save his army, Agamemnon might conclude that this was just an illusion, produced by the gods. Agamemnon might think that the personal responsibility, which it looks as if he is exercising, is really an illusion since the gods have decided that his daughter has to be sacrificed to settle their dispute. He might think that the gods have robbed him of any

responsibility and any real decision to make. Agamemnon's anger and grief are his reaction both to the duplicity of the gods and the appearance of choice it looks as though he has been given. By seeing beyond the appearances of the situation, Agamemnon can see that this situation of choice is really an illusion, a trick of the gods.

Faced with this illusion, Agamemnon, sees himself reduced to an instrument in the gods' dispute. If Agamemnon saw himself as nothing more than an instrument of the gods' dispute, he might decide to act in an instrumental way, not seeing himself as an essential part of the situation. But what can Agamemnon do, since his choice is seen by him as an illusion?. He sees the gods' decision that he must sacrifice his daughter as inevitable, not something he has a real choice about. If Agamemnon had reflected on his reduction, by the gods, to an instrument of their dispute, he may have decided to face up to the loss of his human dignity by re-asserting his dignity. Faced with the loss of humanity entailed in the gods decision, Agamemnon can still act decisively. His response is that if the gods want to reduce him to an instrumental means, then he will conform to this production; he will act in an instrumental way. He wants to show that this is what happens when we are stripped of our humanity, we do not even weep at our daughter's death. Rather than see Agamemnon's failure to weep as an omission, one could see it, instead, as a positive response to the gods' actions. Faced with the loss of decisiveness and responsibility, Agamemnon, at his daughter's sacrifice, acts decisively by acting in a way that he has decided on and for which he has assumed responsibility. If he is no longer human, why should he weep for a daughter?. Only in the context of a human life does it make sense to weep for a daughter. The gods, having deprived Agamemnon of his humanity, see the result in his refusal, not his failure, to weep: While Nussbaum might have accused Agamemnon of lacking sensitivity, we could argue that he shows us his sensitivity and his decisiveness in his refusal to weep: Everyone can

see, in his instrumental approach to his own daughter's death, what happens when the gods seek to remove an essential part of our humanity, our human dignity. Why blame Agamemnon?:the gods have reduced him to this. In acting in an instrumental manner, Agamemnon can still assert his human dignity. Are there grounds here for imagining that this is another possibility?. What looks, for Nussbaum, to be a failure, a lack, could be seen as a positive response to the inevitable. Here, Agamemnon transcends his limits, imposed on him by the gods, and still acts decisively. While we can articulate this situation as one that Agamemnon could have seen, we can begin to explore the differences between Nussbaum's interpretation and our own. The notion of responsibility can do some work for us here.

Nussbaum wants to say that, as human agents, we are responsible for seeing situations clearly and sensitively and for responding to these situations in an appropriately human way. One could say that she might say that this was responsibility within human limits. These limits include situations that just happen, such as Agamemnon's misfortune. No one, thinks Nussbaum, could attach any personal responsibility to Agamemnon, either for the first situation or the choice; both seem to have been forced on him. However, Nussbaum wants to say that he is responsible for his response but this depends on seeing the situation. According to Nussbaum, the situation should have shown Agamemnon that he was a father and consequently was obliged to weep: For Nussbaum, Agamemnon failed to live up to his responsibilities and obligations because he wilfully removed himself from the situation. This removal distorted his view of the situation and himself and so obscured his view of what his obligations and responsibilities were. Nussbaum, in her story of Agamemnon, seems to see responsibility in a causal way; situations create our responsibilities. While this may be the way that responsibility works (Parsons thinks so), there is another sense of responsibility articulated very well by Charles Taylor (1985).

Taylor wants to show that responsibility is not limited to responding to ends that are already there. Instead, he wants to show us that there is a ‘deeper’ sense of responsibility that we engage with when we find ourselves in situations. While Nussbaum thinks that we should look more perceptively at the situation to tease out some more of the particulars, Taylor wants us to look again at the situation. This looking again engages our personal responsibility in a way that Nussbaum’s wider look at the situation never does. Nussbaum formulates personal responsibility as bringing our full cognition to bear on the situation so that we can really see the particular situation; what is initially obscure is revealed in terms of human values. Nussbaum does not think that our responsibility extends to an articulation of the situation but consists in discovering or re-creating what was already there but was hidden from view. Taylor, in contrast, wants to show that we are always responsible for how we see and articulate the situation. One might say that responsibility, for Nussbaum, consists in producing a response to what is already there, while Taylor sees responsibility as being more active in producing what is there. With Agamemnon, Nussbaum assumed that the only thing that the situation lacked was a better cognitive response to the obvious. Here the agent’s responsibility was formulated as a sensitive response to the facts before Agamemnon’s eyes. Responsibility, as formulated by Nussbaum was a sensitive response to the facts; these facts are used to structure the response. This version of responsibility seems to begin too late, when the facts are no longer to be subject to any other interpretation. With our interpretation, responsibility for the articulation of the situation lies more actively with the agent. While Calchas, the prophet, presented Agamemnon with a situation of choice, Agamemnon was able to reformulate the situation in terms of his dignity as an agent. While there originally appeared to be a choice, Agamemnon was able to see that there

was no real choice. Agamemnon conformed to the wishes of the gods, gave them a ritual sacrifice. What looked like a choice to Nussbaum was re-articulated as no choice at all.

While the agent might be responsible for constituting a situation, Nussbaum might want to insist that both our interpretation and ours are both a matter of conforming, ours to the wishes of the gods while Nussbaum might want to claim that at least hers remains more faithfully human.

While Nussbaum might not be fully aware of her project, she might want to say that Agamemnon deserved blame because, after all, irrespective of interpretation, Agamemnon still behaved irresponsibly in not weeping at his daughter's death. However, even here we need to be careful. If Agamemnon saw himself in an instrumental way, he may have thought of Iphigenia that way; not as a daughter but as an instrument to settle the gods' dispute. By ordering her sacrifice, the gods had removed both Agamemnon's and his daughter's dignity as human agents. In looking at the situation, Agamemnon could have seen that his daughter's sacrifice was an illusion and that this situation was a ritual to settle a dispute among the gods. No human sacrifice was enacted here, just another ritual for the gods. This would be justice, what the gods deserved; an empty ritual. A ritual would be an action without our assent, something that we had failed to endorse. Agamemnon, unable to exercise his agency, would behave in a mechanical way out of a sense of degradation. The instrumental ritual would be a healthy response to the degradation that Agamemnon and his family had suffered at the behest of the gods. Rather than seeing Agamemnon's failure to weep as a lack, one could see as a positive reaction to his loss of dignity. In seeking to evaluate our interpretation and Nussbaum's, we can use Nussbaum's notion of essential human values.

With Agamemnon, Nussbaum wants to say that human agency is essentially constituted by a plurality of values that can come into conflict. She does not allow, as we have seen, these essential values to be used in an articulation of the situation. The human agent, then, for Nussbaum, has to wait till the situation has been filled out with these values, so they do influence the situation but not in an essential way. The subjective values that the agent brings to the situation are used to fill out the facts, what is objectively there. While they might be essential, they remain peripheral in an articulation of the situation. In the first situation of choice, Agamemnon responds with human values to the facts presented by Calchas. He is only able to add-on these values to the situation, not re-formulate it, in terms of these values. These are, in a sense, peripheral to the actual choice of saving his army. He makes the right choice because this situation, as Nussbaum suggests, calls for Agamemnon to be a king. What seems to validate this choice is less anything that Agamemnon thinks and more what Nussbaum and the Chorus think should be the conventional choice. In the second situation, Nussbaum thinks that Agamemnon was wrong in not weeping, while this seemed to also depend on Agamemnon arrogantly refuting the convention. Do the agent's essential values really make a difference in Nussbaum's formulation?. Even in choosing, an agent who had no values but could act conventionally, could still, for Nussbaum, act correctly. What Nussbaum's agent cannot do is to evaluate the convention and so see the convention as a rule to which their actions must conform. Whether an agent has values or not, they must, for Nussbaum, be situated within our conventions. Convention, as universal rule validates all human values; to be good, they must conform.

While Nussbaum wanted to say that we should resist a universal rule applicable in all situations, she formulates this resistance as the application of another rule, convention. All human values, for Nussbaum, must conform to convention, the external rule that is used to validate all human

values. While Nussbaum wanted to say that we should be flexible in our choices, she would not allow any flexibility in conformity to this rule. There are no essential values that can transcend our conventional ways of seeing or doing anything; the best that Nussbaum's agent can do is to conform. In each situation, Agamemnon is faced with a conflict of commitments. For Nussbaum, he makes one right choice and one wrong choice. His commitment as king wins out over his commitment as father, in the first situation. In the second situation, his commitment as king should have lost, according to Nussbaum, to his commitment as a father. Values or commitments are products of particular situations but this seems to contradict Nussbaum's assertion that these human goods or values are essential. However, we see, in our interpretation, that human dignity, is seen as an essential commitment. In Taylor's notion of responsibility, we are responsible for constituting the situation. While the situation may be something over which we have no control, we do have some influence in how the situation is articulated. In Agamemnon's case, while the gods gave him his situation of choice, we can see that he could be responsible for articulating the situation for himself. While Agamemnon could do nothing about the god's decision, he could reformulate both situations in terms of his essential commitment to the dignity of the human agent. In our formulation, one can see the part that a notion such as human dignity can play in an articulation of the situation. This is a major problem with Nussbaum's work. While she wants to attach a plurality of values to the human agent, she does not want the agent to use these values in an articulation of the situation. Part of the reason for this is that Nussbaum's agent does not know which values s/he has, the situation determines this. While she wants the agent to evaluate choices and to be flexible in her choices, she does not allow the agent to see the situation as anything other than a value-neutral fact. While Nussbaum's commitments were contingent, a notion such as human dignity does not await particular situations but is an essential part of both situations. This articulation changes

contingent commitments into essential commitments. While Nussbaum's thick, vague theory wants to define itself as essentialist, we can see, in her example of Agamemnon that there is nothing essential about it. While Nussbaum wanted to say that the human agent was constituted as a plurality of human goods or values, we saw in her example of Agamemnon, that she does not provide a method for seeing any of these goods as essential. Values, for Nussbaum, were always contingent values, awaiting situations that would determine appropriate contingent values. Nussbaum, in a sense, wanted us to be flexible about our values while hoping that this flexible choice would still leave us with the pain or pleasure which she thinks are adequate replacements. While we could point out that conflicts in values were accidental, we also showed that we could imagine a value, human dignity, that was not contingent but was an essential feature of both situations. While Nussbaum wanted to say that both pleasure and pain could be a part of any situation, we also showed that they were not necessarily our limit.

For Nussbaum, human values are limited by our conventions. Is Convention a value?; in Nussbaum's theory it is essential. Nussbaum, as we indicated, sees convention as a universal value that constitutes all situations. In Agamemnon's situation, convention allowed him to see real choices. However, our notion of human dignity showed these choices as really illusions; Agamemnon, for us, was offered no real choice. Nussbaum formulates the human agent as essentially conventional but does not want to examine this value in practice. Practice, for Nussbaum, remains blind to its essential need for convention and so always acts as if there was really something there such as a choice. Nussbaum's flexibility of choice seems only able to be sustained if the agent is content to leave the appearances as they are. As long as the agent believes that s/he is free, no further investigation seems warranted. However, we have shown that even this freedom is an illusion in that the situation obliges the agent to act in a certain way.

For Nussbaum, Agamemnon should have wept; she cannot see why he might not have. Even if Agamemnon had cried at his daughter's death, the best that he could do would be to go through the motions out of a sense of conformity rather than any conviction that it was the right thing to do. Our interpretation seems to allow for Agamemnon to act as he did out of a well developed sense of human dignity. In this way, we could say that he acted responsibly and decisively. Human deliberation, as formulated by Nussbaum, lacks any spirit and seemed more like mechanical action. It is not that she wants Agamemnon to really be flexible, he should have wept. Her universal human commitment acts like a science by restricting human action to conformity and this is something that Nussbaum cannot allow the human agent to be flexible about. While it even might be the case that we could agree with Nussbaum and her criticism of Agamemnon, we would have to see this conformity as something more than mechanical action. Nussbaum thinks that pleasure and pain are part of our human limits and they might be. However, even here, we would need an agent who would not simply agree about these limits but would instead examine these limits. Using human dignity as an essential commitment, we can see how Agamemnon could transcend even limits imposed on him by the gods.

By wanting to save the appearances, Nussbaum's agent has to forget who s/he is in any situation; the situation can remind him/her who they really are. Nussbaum's agent is supposed to discover or create an identity that is particular to each situation. Nussbaum's agent comes prepared to see each situation but not to influence it. Values, of which there are a plurality, are contingently produced so that the agent can choose the most relevant ones that apply in each situations. There is a distance between the agent and his/her values so that the agent can choose dispassionately. Having made the choice, the agent then refers this choice for validation to the meta-rule of convention. The convention is Nussbaum's version of a community, a common life. While she

wants her community to authorise human actions, she does not want an agent who could think about this authority. This is a community that does not allow its members to think about what it (community) prescribes. The community prescribes boundaries within which the human agent must live. This community is a fact that the human agent, as formulated by Nussbaum, must live with. The relationship between the individual and the community is mathematical, just the kind of relationship Nussbaum claims she wants to resist. The agent, as a varying combination of common values, is a part of the whole (community). The agent has only the limited responsibility of a superficial choice. The real choice is shared between the objective facts of the situation and human convention. The agent, in Nussbaum's formulation, must choose from what is given by convention. The convention is the only essential that Nussbaum's agent really needs and this is not a matter of choice. The individual must make a superficial choice from within a pool of communal values; occasionally the situation forces the agent to choose between two contradictory values. These values are not essentially connected with each other. If two values do conflict in a situation, it is always an accident, nothing that the agent has any responsibility for.

Nussbaum wants us to be flexible in our identity and our commitments, letting the situation determine both. In our interpretation, human dignity is used to articulate both situations; this commitment constitutes both situations. Commitment, here, is not a circumstantial or contingent production but is an essential part of the articulation of each situation. Nussbaum wants to say this as well, as she has a universal commitment to human life but she does not want to allow it to influence situations. Instead she wants to allow the situation to articulate a situational identity, first a king and then a father. Situations, for Nussbaum, determine our choice of identity; we seem to have no responsibility for who we are. Yet if we are to practice Nussbaum's

commitment to the human agent as an essential commitment, we need to see this essential commitment in our actions. Nussbaum's perception seems to obscure this essential commitment by giving priority to the situational production of our identity. Our identity, at any one time, seems, for Nussbaum to be nothing more than an accident or luck. This seems to be the deeper message of Nussbaum's work, that who we are is a matter of chance with our responsibility limited to responding to what the situation determines. No commitment seems to be essential, each particular commitment taken up and dropped as the situation demands. Nussbaum cannot see her essential commitment in her practice because she is passive, waiting on the situation. While Nussbaum recommends passivity as a course of action, this is perhaps going too far. It is not even like Garfinkel where the agent was more active in the choice of his commitments. Here, with Nussbaum, the agent just conformed to the commitments that the situation demanded.

Nussbaum's theory of human goods, then, seems to fall down in practice. While we might agree that these goods are sometimes in conflict, we can also see a way whereby they do not essentially need to be seen that way. While Nussbaum wanted to say that tragedy was a conflict of contingent commitments, we have shown that this version of tragedy is not a real tragedy but an illusion that depends on us not being able to see that it is an illusion. The real tragedy of Agamemnon is where an essential human commitment is removed from the human agent thus rendering him less than human. Tragedy, here, can show us what happens when an agent loses his dignity. Part of this tragedy is that the agent still has a choice but now the choice is reformulated as a choice of something essential rather than something accidental. It was an accident that brought Agamemnon's values into conflict; these values are not always in conflict. While Nussbaum wanted to give human agency enough freedom to choose, this choice, like her freedom, was really an illusion. In every situation, her agent had to choose conformity.

However, at this stage, we can examine pleasure as a more promising example of Nussbaum's theory in action. At first glance, love looks like something that we would all need.

iii. Health as Flexibility

"The difficulty then becomes: how in the midst of this confusion (and delight and pain) do we know what view of ourselves, what parts of ourselves, to trust" (1990:261).

In the previous section, we examined Nussbaum's version of practical rationality. This rationality seemed to lack a well-developed sense of responsibility in that Nussbaum wanted to clearly limit responsibility to the agent being able to see what was there and to respond in a sensitive way. While we saw, in her thick, vague theory, that the agent *had* to conform to her theory she did not seem to allow for an agent who would want to conform because s/he thought it was the right thing to do rather than out of necessity. Here Nussbaum's agent seemed to act in a way that Nussbaum had criticized Agamemnon for. Any values, in any situation, were incidental to the agent's only real requirement or value, conformity. Her theory tried to formulate freedom as acting within limits, but these limits seemed to be drawn very narrowly. In this section, we will examine her version of health as flexibility using a modern example that Nussbaum selects in her book, *'Love's Knowledge'* (1990).

In the chapter named after the book's title, Nussbaum contrasts various versions of love. Love, for Nussbaum, is a good that we should preserve despite the pains and anguish it causes us. Love also, for Nussbaum, gives us pleasure. She resists the notion that love should be something that we should necessarily want to control, something chaotic that we would want to master. As with her example of *Agamemnon*, where she criticizes Agamemnon for trying to diminish his pain,

she wants, in her example of falling in love, to show us that choosing pleasure can sometimes be a good. While she resists the notion that pleasure is always a good, she does think that pleasure should be an essential part of any human good life. Love, for Nussbaum, is not just an emotional feeling but also a bodily sensation. The pain and anguish of love does not only affect our deepest cognitive responses but is also constitutively related to our more bodily sensations. For Nussbaum, our emotions are embodied, so that we often feel physically elated or sick when we are in love. While Nussbaum would want to contrast her version of love with any notion that would see that the appetitive or more bodily desires were nothing more than brute desires that we should try to limit, Nussbaum would want to say that they too are part of a valuable, emotional life. In a related way, she wanted to contrast her version of love as love of others with the more Socratic, for her, notion that love could be a love of something intangible such as love of the Good. Nussbaum resists this aspiration to make all love both quantifiable and commensurable, not valuing any particular love as any more valuable than any other, except as measured against the intangibility of this universal value. Nussbaum wants to resist this universal definition of love in favour of a version of love that will be sensitive and particular to each situation. The, for her, Socratic notion that love could be commensurable, the love of others competing with the love of philosophy, seems to remove us from how we really see things. In the *Symposium* (1994), when Socrates resists the charms of Alcibiades in favour of the pursuit of knowledge, Nussbaum wants to say that these two pursuits, while admirable, are in no way commensurable with each other. While she might agree that love could be a kind of madness or intoxication, she wants to say that love of others is an essential human good that cannot be reduced in the way she thinks Socrates formulates it. Her modern opponents include Proust who she thinks want to formulate love as essentially self-love. These modern authors who want to say that love is nothing more than externalizing our own desires are, for Nussbaum, missing the point. While

self-love might be a part of love, Nussbaum wants to say that love, if it is properly human, must include a love for others. Love, minimally, for Nussbaum, should be a conversation. She attributes the narrowing of definitions of love to the fear and distrust that is often intrinsic to any human relationship and also to the need that we might have to always be in control. While we do lose control and are unsure of its end, Nussbaum wants us to trust ourselves and others and just let go. For Nussbaum, we must be prepared to fall.

In Ann Beattie's story, *Learning to Fall*, Nussbaum articulates an example of what is involved in human love. The story is narrated by a housewife who is married to a 'dry, professional man'. While she formerly had a lover, she gave him up because he seemed to have too much power over her. However, she does not fully trust herself, so when she goes shopping to New York, where her former lover lives, she takes the child of one of her friends so that she will not be tempted to make an assignation with him. This child of her friend is a slightly brain-damaged, lonely boy who has 'unusual capacities of perception'. Her friend, the boy's mother, is a warm, trusting woman who gets involved in whatever she is doing, whether teaching at a community college or making wine. The contrast here is between the narrator, locked in a sterile marriage, and her friend, warm and trusting. On this trip to New York, with the boy, she misses her train home and she suspects that she might have done so intentionally. She calls her former lover and they meet for coffee, after which the narrator decides to re-establish the relationship: While she has doubts and is unsure how it will all work out, she decides to just let go, to let the relationship lead her where it must. While she can acknowledge that this relationship might cause her pain and anguish, she decides that it is better than the life she has just now.

In this brief sketch of the story, we can see how Nussbaum wants to formulate love as something essentially human. While there are no certainties in love, we must, for Nussbaum, be prepared to just let go. The story uses the example of dancing when a particular move involves slowing sinking to the ground in a graceful way, rather than just falling down. Nussbaum likens this slow falling in dance, part control and part just letting go, to love. Both, for her, involve a letting go, allowing what will happen to just happen. Love, like dancing, is not an accident, not the same as just falling. Love, for Nussbaum, is a slow unfolding, a yielding to what will be. In this way, love is an uncovering, a revealing of what was there all along. Nussbaum wants to say that with human love, we can come to know ourselves better and this self-knowledge comes from trusting others. While the narrator wanted to shut herself off from her feelings for her former lover, she could only do so by deceiving herself. Even 'accidentally' missing the train was a failure to see herself, a self-duplicious action that she did not want to admit was intentional. When she meets her lover for coffee, after phoning him, she comes to realize that she has been denying an essential part of herself. Love, then, can get us to see ourselves more clearly, but a part of this is learning to trust oneself as well as others. This makes us vulnerable but this is also, for Nussbaum, a part of love. We do come to see ourselves as vulnerable but we should, thinks Nussbaum, allow the passionate, trusting and vulnerable parts of ourselves to flourish, be actualized.

In this story, Nussbaum wants to show that relationships are an essential part of the good human life. While we might want to protect ourselves, as in the narrator's initial situation, where self-sufficiency was more important to her, Nussbaum wants us to see that there is a cost to this aspiration. This cost can be measured in the narrowness, formality and coldness that the narrator finds herself in, initially. To live like this would be, for Nussbaum, to be cut off from an

essentially human life. Love and the joy that it brings show us how these relationships work.

Nussbaum wants to say that human relationships involve a certain letting go, a surrendering of control. In her story of love, Nussbaum also wants to show that the laughter of lovers is a part of this relationship: As her narrator laughs at one of her lover's jokes, she yields to the other.

Comedy, for Nussbaum, is this tension between control and yielding that takes place in a context of trust. Here two commitments are involved in a tension, our need for control and also our need for others. "I do better amusing you over the phone than in person", is her lover's response to her laughter at an earlier joke. This laughter, for Nussbaum, shows this yielding to another and the loss of complete control by the narrator. Love, like laughter, is, for Nussbaum, something social and relational and essentially different from suffering in that it requires another person. We can suffer alone in our room, thinks Nussbaum, but love just does not work that way. Love, like laughter, is something essentially human as it involves our relating to other people in this context of trust.

At first glance, this looks like the way love works. The story engages us, thinks Nussbaum, because we can recognize ourselves in the story. While we live in a complex world where different situations seem to bewilder us and at times make us yearn for a science of life that can help us to simplify things, Nussbaum wants us to see this bewilderment as something essentially human. Philosophy, for her, can get us to see this complexity and literature is an essential part of this philosophy. Nussbaum wants to resist the simplifying instincts of any philosophy which tries to produce this kind of science of life. Instead she thinks that literature and its narratives should be more closely constituted as a part of philosophy. Literature, by itself, can engage us with its narratives but philosophy can help to:

"...return us to the truths of the heart and to permit us to trust that multiplicity, that bewildering indefiniteness" (1990:283)

While stories such as Ann Beattie's are important sources for engaging our sympathies, philosophy can point to the appearances, what is actually there rather than what is beyond them, somewhere out there. The conversation between philosophy and literature is like love in that Nussbaum sees it less as philosophy always dominating literature and more as a reciprocal relationship where neither completely dominates the other. Philosophy and literature, for Nussbaum, need this kind of social relationship where there is both domination and letting go. We can imagine this relationship as being Nussbaum's version of health.

Health, for Nussbaum, is a flexible relationship between the agent and others. The agent does not seek, in this version of health, to dominate and control his/her environment. Health, instead, would be a reciprocal and flexible relationship between the agent and others. Nussbaum's healthy agent maintains this flexibility both internally and externally. Internally, the agent would develop a flexible relationship between both intellectual and emotional parts parts. Emotions, here, as with love, would include the more bodily, appetitive parts. It may be that sometimes the intellectual part would dominate the agent, but at other times, the emotional and appetitive parts would sweep the agent along. In these circumstances, the healthy agent should just let go, allowing his/her emotions to set the pace. As with her story, Nussbaum thinks that this letting go is often when we are at our healthiest. While this emotional part can allow us to be tempted, Nussbaum wants us not to always resist the temptation. While we might not know the way things will turn out, Nussbaum wants us to sometimes give in to temptation and just trust ourselves. Since we cannot be certain, Nussbaum thinks that we should just trust ourselves and just let things happen. Externally, Nussbaum's healthy agent should sometimes just trust other people, give in to desire or temptation. There are risks, Nussbaum admits, but she thinks that

these risks are just a part of the human good life. While things may not all turn out well, we cannot know this, Nussbaum wants to say that there are goods even in this failure. One good that she thinks that our exposure to others will bring, is an increase in self-knowledge. It is in our relationship with others, thinks Nussbaum, that we can get to know ourselves. The healthy relationship, for Nussbaum, is when the agent engages his/her whole self in situations so that s/he can learn about her/himself. To act unhealthily is, for Nussbaum, to cut ourselves off, internally from our emotional sides and, externally, from others. In each situation, Nussbaum's healthy agent must be prepared to be flexible about both themselves and others, always being prepared to be led by emotions or others.

Parsons saw health as inflexible, always dominating all situations in that it was a fact that never changed. Garfinkel, on the other hand, saw health as always a situational production, always another first time. Foucault thought that health was just an illusion, something whose domination we should resist. Nussbaum wants to say that health is more flexible than any of these versions. For Nussbaum, Parsons is wrong to want to make a science out of health since this science would not take account of the particulars of the situation. Foucault, too, would be wrong, for Nussbaum, in his assertion that it is always an illusion. While she could agree that it might be an illusion, she would want to say that it is not always so. Moreover, even it turned out to be an illusion, Nussbaum would want to say that it could be something worth pursuing since the pursuit itself has a value both in terms of pleasure and self-knowledge. While there may be many things in modernity, including praying to a diety, that are illusions, Nussbaum would want to insist that her plurality of human goods are not an illusion. Health as flexibility, thinks Nussbaum, could help us to see and realize these human goods. Like Garfinkel, Nussbaum, sees health as a situational production but unlike Garfinkel, she does not see health as necessarily the

agent's production. In a sense, Garfinkel's agent spoke in a monologue, confining his production to himself. Conversation, as formulated by Garfinkel, seemed to consist of two or more agents independently producing separate realities, each unaware of what others were producing.

Nussbaum wants us to be flexible; she thinks healthy conversation requires this.

For Nussbaum, love as conversation is a relationship where one person can dominate for a while and this domination can be turned round, the dominated now dominating. If we always wanted to be in control we would find ourselves alone, never knowing the pleasures to be found in loving others. While this might turn out to be an illusion, Nussbaum thinks that we should just let go and trust. Trust, then, has its own intrinsic value; irrespective of how things turn out.

What is good for Nussbaum is the conversation itself. It is in authentic, reciprocal conversation between two or more agents that Nussbaum wants to say that human goods can be found.

Garfinkel's agent never risks anything since he knows that he is always right whereas

Nussbaum's agent comes to situations prepared to take a risk, prepared to be wrong. If we were not prepared to take a risk, to be open to temptation, then we would close ourselves off from this healthy life. Nussbaum's healthy life is a fragile life, sometimes being exposed to what will turn out to be wrong or illusions. However, this risk and our exposure to it are essentially human features of the kind of life we really have. For Nussbaum, we should nourish this life and she thinks that flexibility can help us to preserve and nourish it. To be healthy is to be flexible, to allow ourselves sometimes to be swept along and to lose control. For Nussbaum, this flexible agent, in acting healthily, just lets go and trusts both herself and others.

For Nussbaum, human responsibility, as in our previous example of Agamemnon, is a sensitivity to others. With Agamemnon this human sensitivity brought pain which Nussbaum wants to say

is an essential human value. Love can bring pleasure, if we sometimes yield to temptation. Pleasure is also an essential human value but, as we noted with Agamemnon, not something we should necessarily pursue all the time. Pleasure is a human value that can be found in human differences. It is not just that Nussbaum thinks that there are essentially different, incommensurable values, she also wants to say that this incommensurability also applies to people. It is in the difference between people that Nussbaum wants to say that pleasures such as love can be found. This is the difference that Nussbaum wants to make with suffering. Suffering, unlike love, does not need an other in the way that she thinks love essentially does. If love was nothing more than an externalizing of our desires which took no account of the value in others, then Nussbaum would see this as a kind of suffering. Part of human pleasure is that one authentically desire an other. Authentic love, for Nussbaum, is when one acts out of a sense that this object of love is different from oneself. Any theory which attempted to reduce these differences between people or values, seeing all love as somehow commensurate, would fail to see how we really see things. In this version, according to Nussbaum, no sorrow or pleasure would be derived from acts of individual love since any loss could easily be compensated by an exact replacement. Any theory of universal value which reduced all persons to a value commensurate with its universal measurement would rob us of the essential differences in value between people. Love, for Nussbaum, is always a love of difference since she wants to say that even love is different each time, in each particular situation. While we might come to situations with some previous experience of love, the perceptive agent will see the essential difference between this particular situation and other situations. This is the agent's responsibility, in Nussbaum's example: to see and respond to the particulars of each situation.

The narrator and the story begin with a choice and situation already made and end with a new situation created by the narrator's choice. The situation that the heroine finds herself in at the beginning of the story resulted from an earlier choice when she had decided to resist her lover and stay with her husband. The reason advanced for this initial choice was that she felt a loss of control with her lover. This initial choice, then, was based on the heroine's need, at that time, to be more in control, to have a more ordered life. The story is the story of this initial choice being reversed and the heroine choosing disorder and just whatever happens. The initial choice was an intellectual choice while the second choice results from the heroine allowing her emotional needs to play a more dominant part in her choice. She comes to see that this purely intellectual choice does not represent her completely and that she can only sustain it by denying an essential part of herself. Nussbaum wants us to see the essential part that emotions play in our deliberations and choices. By allowing her emotions to influence her choice, the heroine chooses disorder and uncertainty. Choosing, here, might be too strong as the heroine does not so much choose, as just let go. She lets go of her need for control and allows her strong feelings for her lover to overwhelm her need for stability and order. This is what sometimes happens when we allow our desires to influence our deliberations. While her intellect had initially chosen order, her desire had allowed her to choose disorder. Nussbaum wants to say that this is how we should live, not always hiding ourselves behind some more objective judgement. Instead, thinks Nussbaum, we should just allow our emotions to sweep us along without being sure where we are going. This letting go will bring out more of our real selves and will help us to live a richer and more diverse life. This is Nussbaum's version of the healthy, human life where we are flexible in our choices. While the heroine had originally chosen a more austere self-sufficient life, she allowed herself the flexibility of opening to other parts of herself and other people. While she lived this more self-sufficient life, she began to feel that something was missing. By allowing her desire to

become more prominent, she began to see the warmth and attractiveness of disorder, as at her friend's house. While she allowed her intellectual part to constitute her initial situation as better, she now comes to see that this was an illusion. Now her desires are able to constitute both the second choice, to go with her lover, and the situation as more able to meet her real needs which include love and pleasure. Nussbaum wants to say that by allowing our desires to play a flexible, sometimes dominant part, in our choices, that we can live more real and fulfilling lives. The difference between the two situations, then, is that desire comes to play a larger part in the choice and gets us to see the first situation as an illusion. By actualizing her desires, the heroine comes to see her real self and the essential part that desire and our need for pleasure play in our lives.

Two values are formulated in this story, according to Nussbaum's essential human values or goods; our desires and human relationships. These two values are also essentially connected with each other. While there might be a kind of self-love in desire and pleasure, Nussbaum wants to say that her version of desire necessarily includes a desire for others. Solitary desires would be a kind of suffering, whereas authentic desires are always social. In the story, the heroine is suffering because she has chosen a more self-sufficient life, whereas, by opening herself emotionally, she comes to find both love and a clearer sense of who she is. While we have a plurality of human values, thinks Nussbaum, we should be flexible in our choice of values so that values such as pleasure and human relationships can have an essential place in our lives. This is part of coming to understand ourselves as human agents, essentially constituted by a plurality of human values. Sometimes we do value self-sufficiency, but we should sometimes choose other values as essential for a proportionate life; there is an intrinsic value in relationships themselves. It may not necessarily turn out right, but we must, at times, just allow our emotions and our need for others to take precedence in our choices and situations. The

difference between the situations can be seen by the agent allowing her emotions to play a more prominent part in situations and choices. By allowing our emotions to take part in our deliberations, we can, thinks Nussbaum, come to realize these essential human values such as love and pleasure. The responsible human agent will sometimes allow his/her emotions to make the choice and this can be a valuable part of human life. However, we can use Nussbaum's example to examine this theory in more depth than Nussbaum might allow.

At the beginning of the story, the narrator sees herself in a marriage to a 'dry, professional type'. In the second situation, the narrator falls in love with an exciting lover. We can see, in the first situation, that the narrator has already decided that she is suffering when she constitutes the situation as dry. Both situations, then, are constituted by her desire for her lover. While she initially decided to stay with her husband because of her need for more control, she now sees that this desire for control was an illusion. Here, her first desire to stay has been shown, by her second desire, to be an illusion. This second desire is also used to produce the illusion of choice. A choice between a dry professional type and an exciting lover might not seem like much choice at all. While it looks at first like a choice to be made, we can perhaps see that the choice has already been made in her articulation of the situation. As we noted with Agamemnon, Nussbaum does not allow the agent any responsibility for articulating the situation. Using her first desire to articulate the situation, she chose safety and control. Presumably, at that time, she thought that it was the correct choice but again this choice was a reflection of her desire for control, not a real choice. A choice between a dry marriage and an exciting lover looks like a choice already made. Desire as formulated by Nussbaum begins with the appearance of a situation with a choice still to be made, but, as with Agamemnon, both the situation and the choice look like illusions that can justify the agent acting on the basis solely of his/her desires.

The question of whether any desire is good or bad, real or illusion is not something that Nussbaum's agent can know till the next desire manifests itself. As we discussed with Agamemnon, the best that Nussbaum can say about any desire is that it conforms to what we could conventionally allow. Any desire can only be evaluated when another desire appears. The appearance of this new desire can show us that the previous desire was an illusion. In formulating a desire, Nussbaum does not allow the agent any responsibility for evaluating this new desire. While Taylor wanted to say that responsibility could involve seeing our desires or values in an articulation of the situation, he also wanted to say that this responsibility also included an evaluation of this articulation. His notion of looking again, his strong evaluation (Taylor, 1985), allows us to act responsibly by evaluating:

".... our desires, to regard some as desirable and others as undesirable. " (1985:16)

Here, Taylor wants to say that while we can simply evaluate choices in terms of our preferences or outcomes, we can also be responsible for assessing our desires in terms of the quality of our motivations. What is essentially involved in this kind of evaluation is myself as a human agent. Nussbaum, however, does not want this kind of evaluation. She wants to stop simply with the agent's desires which move about from situation to situation. We saw this with Agamemnon where he changed his identity from one situation to the next. In falling in love, the agent's identity is constituted by the newest desire. Initially, the narrator constitutes herself as wife on the basis of her desire for control. Her barely articulated, unconscious desire for temptation re-articulates this previously 'good' situation as now restricting her 'real' self. Then, she unconsciously gives in to temptation and comes to see herself as a lover. Nussbaum's agent does not see that her desires are constituting situations and so she does not think that there is anything there to really think about. While in the first situation, the narrator resolved the conflict between

her desire for order and her desire for disorder in favour of order she now sees that this choice was not representative of her real self. What has constituted each situation has been the narrator's changing desires which now constitute a real self. However this new real self like the previous real self may change with circumstances.

The limit for Nussbaum's agent was desires that one could agree were within conventional limits. Any desire, as long as it was the agent's, seemed to be good. The only real judge of good or bad desires was Nussbaum's agent and the only essential was that human desires conform with her standard of convention. While, in any situation, the agent's desires will be good if they conform to this standard, they may turn out to be illusions, depending on how the agent next feels. Judgements, for Nussbaum's agent, are always self-referential. The human agent is only wrong if they try and act unconventionally. The agent is the best judge of what and when a desire is essential. While Nussbaum wants to say that a desire for others was an essential difference between love and suffering, we see that the difference between her initial desire for order and her new desire for her lover was not something that could necessarily survive a new situation. She might become bored with her lover and go back to her husband. She might find a new lover or live alone. What decides, for Nussbaum's agent, is how she feels at any time. While she imagines that she is in love with her lover, she may later, on the basis of a new desire, see this 'love' as suffering. In this sense, Nussbaum cannot show us an essential difference between love and suffering.

Nussbaum's agent could really act in a way that s/he desired as long as it conformed to a broadly normative standard. Flexibility, for this agent, meant that no desire had an essential value. In one situation, the agent's strongest desire was seen as good, while later on this 'same' desire was

now seen as bad. The best person to judge the agent's desires was always the agent. Responsibility was formulated as the agent having a responsibility to no one other than him/herself. Here, the agent did not see his/her responsibility for articulating the situation. As with Agamemnon, Nussbaum does not see that the relationship between agent and situation is mutually constitutive. The human agent, for Nussbaum, has to see the situation and then find out who they are. Nussbaum, like the narrator, sees this revealing as less the responsibility of the agent and more a consequence of the situation. The narrator's desire allows her to constitute the initial situation as 'dry' and the new situation as 'exciting'. Again, Nussbaum does not see that allowing what 'just happens' to be at least partially the responsibility of the agent, involves a stronger notion of human agency than she allows. While she wants the human agent to be free to do whatever they want within limits, the agent does not really know whether they are in love or suffering. The human agent, for Nussbaum, just does what s/he wants with no real way of knowing whether what they are doing is right. None of her plurality of human values is essential, in any situation. The choice of which value will be the standard is an intrinsic part of the agent's desires; what the agent desires, here, is what is valuable. In the next situation that desire as value can change. While the agent thinks that they are in love, they may really be suffering. While Nussbaum was caught in a tension between a fear of science and a need to know, she wanted to resist the facts in favour of plurality of human values. However, we have seen, in our examination of her work, how her values are grounded in the facts. Nussbaum does not want her essential values to be responsible for allowing the human agent to see both him/herself and the situation in any way other than how we ordinarily might see the situation. The agent's responsibility, here, is to fill out these facts with a context of value. This is a sort of pragmatic position where facts and values form an uneasy alliance. The agent, for Nussbaum, does not bring anything essential to each new situation but consults his/her desires as to what to

do. Choices seem to begin after the facts, as the agent has no method for seeing how desires have constituted both the situation and choice. While Nussbaum wanted to say that whatever the agent wanted was good as long as it conformed to her list of goods, we saw that here again, the human agent had no responsibility for evaluating his/her desires. All desires, then, were self-validating; human responsibility limited to conformity. While Nussbaum favours living within what she thinks are human conventional limits, she could only formulate an agent who could conform.

Health, as flexible action, was any action that conformed to a normative standard. As long as the agent's desires conformed to this normative standard, they were good. Health, defined as flexibility, would mean that we could just do whatever we wanted and let whatever happens, just happen. However, we seem to be no better off than we were with our earlier work in that we would need to see health as essentially something good rather than something accidental. Nussbaum, in the end, does not give us a version of health that is anything more than a hit or miss. While it might be the case that we do want to conform, we need a method for even evaluating this desire for conformity. Nussbaum only allows the agent to conform or not; she does not give the human agent any responsibility for thinking about this conformity. Any desire is good, for Nussbaum, as long as it conforms. The healthy agent, for Nussbaum, acts morally when s/he acts out their desires. Desires are intrinsically valuable so the human agent does not have to think about them, as long as s/he has desires, they are valuable. Whether the desire is pleasurable or painful, the human agent values the situation. In one situation an agent can value order, while later this need for order can be an illusion. Desires and human needs become dependent on the situation that the agent is in. First the healthy agent sees the situation, unaware of his/her responsibility for influencing this seeing. Having discovered what was really there,

Nussbaum's agent reacts sensitively within normative limits by producing action that will show this sensitivity. Agamemnon should have wept and the narrator should have fallen in love. However, as we have shown, everything depends on assuming that the situation has to be seen objectively. This was Parsons' version of health. To this formulation of Parsons, Nussbaum adds Garfinkel's situational production. Whether it was Garfinkel's ordinary member who produced the facts or Nussbaum's agent who produced values, both seemed to see situations as a matter of conforming to something that was already there. While both saw health as a reaction to the facts, Nussbaum wanted to give her agent some flexibility in this reaction. However, as we saw with *Agamemnon* and *Falling in Love*, this flexibility was narrowly prescribed in that it had to conform with the facts as articulated by Nussbaum. While Nussbaum wanted to formulate human agency as being constituted by a plurality of goods, none of these goods were seen as essential since the agent could flexibly choose from among them. Sometimes the agent faced a conflict in goods but the agent simply had to choose on the facts before his eyes. While it looked, in *Agamemnon*, that his choice to weep was grounded in the notion that he was a father, Nussbaum can only sustain this view by allowing no values to articulate the situation. With each situation came a different identity, which the human agent had to grasp and then act on. In *Falling in Love*, the narrator had to see her old situation as dry to see that she was both an emotional and intellectual agent. The agent cannot evaluate any desires they have except on the basis of the facts. Health, for Nussbaum, would be an emotional and intellectual response to the facts. These facts, like emotions, might be illusions, but all that we can do is to respond as if they were real. Nussbaum wants to resist examining the emotions such as pain and pleasure. While our desires may be illusions, it is enough that we have them.

We would have to resist this version of health as it gives us no way of evaluating it and judging whether our actions are healthy or not. As long as actions conformed to a prescribed situation, Nussbaum's agent acted healthily. This could mean that we would often act in ways that could damage our health. While not wishing to achieve the certainty envisaged in Parsons' version of health, we would also need to resist the subjective conformity of Nussbaum. While Nussbaum provides some illuminating ideas on human cognition, she provided no means for helping the agent for knowing, in situations, how human cognition had constituted the situation. While her agent's desires constituted situations, Nussbaum could not see this and so she was never really able to see herself. While proposing flexibility as a possibility for individual choice, we could see that this choice was much less an individual choice than a matter of lining up one's choice with the facts. While acclaiming the democracy of perception, she confines this democracy within a conformity. In this sense, Nussbaum re-produces the problem that she thought she could solve, which was to resist the notion of a science of life. Her plurality of goods are a normative order that our desires orient to. Desires, as such, need no further investigation. This is the pragmatic view of someone like Rorty.

Human agency, for Nussbaum, was always a contextual production that awaited, anew, each situation. No trace of any essential values could influence the situation or the agent's actions. Health could be different every time. While in one situation, we could say or do something, this could completely change the next time. While an action could be healthy now, it could be unhealthy next week. While the agent came to each situation with some knowledge, s/he was not able to do anything other than see what was there to be seen. This seeing had to conform to a standard that prescribed what was possible to be seen. This standard was a universal standard, a science that itself was never evaluated. Nussbaum resists any examination of this standard as she

thinks that this is as far as we need go. If there is conflict between the various parts of this standard then Nussbaum thinks that we should just accept that there is no way of resolving this conflict. However, health, for us, would have to be able to evaluate conflicting values that were only contingent, so that we could really see which values were an essential part of human agency and therefore also, a version of health. Our example, from Charles Taylor, of an essential value such as human dignity, seemed to show us something essential for human agency. Values, for Nussbaum, were contingent rules that were applicable in particular situations. By really seeing the situation, the agent could see which rules could apply. By allowing the agent some flexibility in the choice of rules, Nussbaum hoped to free human agency of rules supplied by science. However, she simply replaced one set of scientific rules with another set of rules that were never evaluated other than in terms of their conformity with a universal rule. While she wanted to say that these rules were a matter of flexibility, she acted as if the choice, at best, was conformity.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we examined the work of Martha Nussbaum to begin to formulate our version of health. While Garfinkel and, to a greater extent, Foucault can be seen as resisting the idea that there can be an objective version of health, Nussbaum responds to this by formulating health as flexibility. However we saw that in practice, Nussbaum's agent was limited to conformity. While she wanted to free the human agent from the conformity of science, she produced an agent that could not develop a thoughtful response to this conformity; the agent could only conform or not. We also saw, in her examples of Agamemnon and Falling in Love, that while the agent appeared to be faced with a choice, this choice, on closer examination, turned out to be not

necessarily a real choice. Nussbaum's agent was a result of Nussbaum's resistance to the narrowness of the objective version of health that she perceives in someone like Parsons. However she was unable to produce a human agent who could do more than simply balance objective facts with subjective values. While she wanted us to react flexibly in situations, this flexibility did not extend to seeing how involved the agent and his/her values needed to be in constituting the situation. Nussbaum's flexibility, then, was conditioned by her being able to maintain enough distance from the situation. She needed this distance so that she could sustain the appearances of the situation. While she wants the human agent to be influenced by the situation, she does not trust the agent sufficiently to allow the agent to get close enough to influence the situation. While she wanted to give the agent some individual freedom, she fears that too much freedom may simply allow individual agents to dissolve any sense of common values. Her plurality of human goods was seen, by her, as a self-responsible freedom that could allow the agent to act within limits. However, we have shown, in this chapter, that this responsibility did not extend beyond the agent pleasing him/herself. Basically the agent could do whatever they wanted, leave their husbands or fall in love, as long as they conformed to our conventional ways of doing things. This, for Nussbaum, was the bottom line and this forms her main criticism of Agamemnon. However, this criticism was shown, by us, to be only valid if a conformity of vision was also applied. With our interpretation of Agamemnon's actions, we saw how Agamemnon could both think about whether the situation was real or an illusion and so whether the choices were, as Nussbaum thinks, real choices. While Nussbaum wanted the agent to be flexible about his/her choices, we saw that the agent had no real choice; the situation, for Nussbaum, was objectively there, the agent having no choice about *that*.

Our version of health, must be something that would be a real choice for our agent rather than the 'appearance' of a choice that Nussbaum leaves us with. While she thinks that we should be flexible in our choices, we saw that there was only one 'real' choice to make and that was whether one should conform or not. However, as we saw, Nussbaum did not allow her agent to even think about conformity, since this conformity was a resource for her agent but never a topic. This meant that her agent was only able to see any situation in a superficial way, never trying to go beyond these appearances. As we saw with Agamemnon, a thoughtful evaluation of his situation could allow him to act in a more decisive and responsible way than Nussbaum could allow if he simply conformed to the initial appearances of the situation. Again, with the heroine in love, we saw how Nussbaum wanted to free the individual agent to pursue their individual desires, formulating a situation but not taking any responsibility for this formulation. While some situations were objective facts that Nussbaum could not let her agent, Agamemnon, influence, other situations, falling in love, were influenced but Nussbaum did not want her agent to see that. While Nussbaum's theory was a balance of values and facts, she did not allow her agent to use these values in an essential and responsible way. Values, for Nussbaum, were circumstantial where the agent, unaware of his/her influence in seeing the situation in a certain way, hid this responsibility behind the so-called facts of the situation. This, then, was individual freedom that had its limits in conformity. This agent is never faced with any real choices, but exists, flitting from situation to situation, at a superficial level where no human values are essential. In our search for a version of health that would be essential, we turn, in the next chapter, to the work of two social theorists, Alan Blum & Peter McHugh, who have addressed this problem of health being something essential rather than accidental.

Introduction

The problem that we identified with Nussbaum's account of health in Chapter 2 was that it did not provide a strong enough guide for action. By limiting her articulation of the agent to circumstances, we saw that health as flexibility limited the agent to a choice of methods that were determined by the situation. This seemed to go against her main notion, her principle, that the agent could be flexible in practice and seemed to indicate that the agent could only be as flexible as the situation allowed. This posed a problem for any evaluation of an agent's actions if we wished to see if the action was healthy. We saw with her example of Agamemnon that his action in refusing to cry was judged unhealthy by Nussbaum. Yet we showed how his action could be judged as healthy given a different formulation of the (same) situation. In showing how a situation could always be re-formulated, we showed that previously judged unhealthy action could now be judged as healthy. Nussbaum's principle could only help us to act healthily if we had already agreed about what the situation 'really' was. This agreement was our grounds for our actions and for evaluating any other agent's actions. Yet this agreement, our convention, was never evaluated and so the best that Nussbaum's agent could do was to act within already established and not for examination, convention. Reality, then, for Nussbaum, was the facts that we saw in any situation. Her work helped to embroider these facts but the agent was never allowed to see beyond these facts or influence these facts. While we saw that these facts sometimes gave us the illusion of choices and situations, Nussbaum's agent could never know

this. In contrast Blum & McHugh want to say that their agent can evaluate both situations and him/herself, to see if what they are dealing with is real or an illusion.

i Self-Reflection

"In our terms, self-reflection reviews, reformulates and recollects the relationship between consciousness and life not by being 'conscious of this fact' (of this relationship) but by reconstructing or re-laying the grounds of this relationship in the life-world" (Blum & McHugh, 1984: 49).

Alan Blum and Peter McHugh situate their work within a concern for validating standards of social conduct. They want to not only formulate a standard, principles, for guiding the agent in situations; they also want to give this agent a method, self-reflection, for evaluating this or any other standard which an agent could use to guide his/her action. While Nussbaum's agent could choose from a plurality of rules, her standard, convention, limited that choice, so that the best that Nussbaum's agent was able to do, in any situation, was limited to conforming to this standard. This was because Nussbaum did not allow her agent to think about this standard as convention. While many situations may require a conventional solution to the problem of what is there to be seen, principles can allow the agent to ask for something more than just what is conventionally available. It is not that Blum & McHugh want to rebel or resist conformity in the way that perhaps Foucault does. Rather, they want to formulate an actor who could think about the difference between conformity and necessity; what was given and what was required. It may be that what was given does give us what we need but Blum & McHugh want an actor who could affirm this rather than one who just conformed unthinkingly. Rather than formulate the agent as a rule follower, Blum & McHugh want to formulate an agent who acts on the basis of principle. Although their actor might follow a rule, s/he does so out of a sense of moral necessity for the rule rather than just because it is expected. Blum and McHugh give us a method, self-reflection,

for evaluating the difference between what we are given and what we essentially need. What we essentially need are Blum & McHugh's principles. Self-reflection allows their agent to think about the difference between rule and principle. They formulate their method, self-reflection, as 'responsible resistance'.

Responsible resistance, for Blum & McHugh, includes both a resistance to our conventional ways of acting and a formulation of the principle that underlies any notion or action. Resistance, for Blum & McHugh, is not the limit for any social action. Any notion, whether health or freedom or social theory, is articulated in a variety of ways in any society. Our topic, here, is health, which we have been examining in its various articulations through Parsons to Nussbaum. Self-reflection begins by reviewing these various formulations of any notion. Reviewing, for Blum & McHugh, is not a method for getting some distance from the various articulations, so that they can be examined in a more objective way. The kind of review or synthesis that masked its own interest would not be reflective enough for Blum & McHugh. Rather, reviewing, for Blum & McHugh, is bringing out the excellence or value that any notion is assumed to aim for. Blum & McHugh make the assumption that each formulation of any notion makes a claim about itself; that it represents some good. Each version of health makes a claim that it is a good version of what it claims to be. This claim is often implicit, assumed rather than stated, within each version. Each claim for validity is reviewed in terms of its implication for practice. At this stage, all possible articulations are resisted; in Hegel's terms, 'all possibilities are fluid' (1970:428). The standard that each possible articulation is guided by is re-collected and examined in a conversation between what the articulation claims to be and what it is. Each claim is resisted until the grounds for its claim, its standard, is examined in conversation. Blum & McHugh want to show, in this re-collection or demonstration, that certain articulations are not

what they claim to be. Reflecting on all possible articulations, Blum & McHugh's dialectic allows an essential standard for any notion to be articulated. This essential standard, this principle, is what grounds the notion's claim to be what it is. Having resisted all claims for any notion until a principle has been articulated for the notion, Blum & McHugh re-formulate the notion in terms of this essential principle. Responsible resistance, for Blum & McHugh, includes showing, in their work, the principles that guide that work. They do not want to stop, simply resist, by 'practicing the arched eyebrow' or being coy or discrete about their principles. Instead they treat their writing on any topic as a decisive and responsible display of their principles. In their work, they want to show 'where they stand' on any matter. Self-reflection, then reviews the various claims of any notion and reformulates the essential principle or moral value that any notion must have to be what it claims to be. While the notion of principles can often be seen as dogmatic, Blum & McHugh, want their agent to think about his/her principles so that principles are not simply the correct judgement of any agent but are also validated as a moral imperative.

Their major work *'Self-Reflection in the Arts and Sciences'* (1984) is an example of their self-reflective theory in practice. Modelling their method, self-reflection, on the Socratic method of 'ironic questioning', Blum & McHugh examine the notion of theory itself. In the Socratic dialogues, we see how any notion such as courage or knowledge is assessed in terms of its claims to be what it is. The various usages of any notion are reviewed in a conversation between Socrates and various interlocutors (opinions) on any notion. Self-reflection, like the Socratic questioning, wants to find the essence or principle of any topic, what the topic needs to be what it claims to be. Plato, the inventor/producer of Socrates, shows, in the Dialogues, how Socrates questions his interlocutors about the definition of such notions as courage, piety or knowledge. We see how a dialectic develops between Socrates and the opinions of others. Although, we

never get to the absolute truth of the matter, we see that conventional answers (opinions) on the matter at hand are questioned by Socrates and shown to be lacking in the essential thing that would define them. In the *'Theaetetus'* (1994), for example, a definition of knowledge is sought. In this dialogue, three men, Socrates, Theodorus, a mathematician, and his young pupil, Theaetetus, discuss what knowledge is. The Socratic question, What is it (Ti-estin)? begins the dialogue. In a series of questions and answers, knowledge is alternately defined as firstly perception, then as a true opinion and finally as a true opinion with a rational account. With each answer Socratic questioning reveals knowledge to be none of those things. The dialogue, in common with other dialogues ends with the Aporia, where all participants come to see that they do not know what the notion, here knowledge, is. The dialogues, then, are demonstrations that conventional accounts of knowledge or health or anything are not able to resist questioning. The theory, propounded by Plato in the dialogues is that the knowledge that we don't know what any notion (knowledge, health) really is, is the beginning of wisdom. Philosophy, for Plato, should begin with the wonder that we don't know rather than with the conventional version that treats knowledge as secure and immune from validation. The Socratic dialogues exemplify, for Blum & McHugh, a method for questioning our opinions of any notion. The dialogues collect the various opinions of the notions of courage, piety or knowledge, and question the collective opinions of the notion. The dialogues show that while we all use the notion as if we understood what it really was, we only do so by glossing or suppressing the notion's essential meaning. Opinions on any notion are viewed by Plato and exemplified in his creation of Socrates as partial and always in need of something else which our glossing always hides. The dialogues, then, are an examination, a bringing out to the surface, of the notion and what it essentially needs to be what it is. The Socratic dialogues show that any notion whether health or theory needs to reflect on its claims to be what it is. This means that a theory, to be self-reflective, must become more

conscious, must know what it is proposing. The dialogues show the development of any notion in the various opinions proposed. The dialogues are both a coming to see what each opinion proposes and also an examination of what it is proposing. While each opinion proposes itself as courage or anything else, self-reflection, a conversation, can show that what it is proposing cannot guide practical action.

In *'Self-Reflection in the Arts and Sciences'*, Blum & McHugh engage in a conversation or dialectic with social theorists including Weber, Garfinkel, Habermas, Piaget and others. However they explicitly reject the notion that their work is an inventory or list of major social theorists and philosophers. Instead they want to examine these major theorists as examples of the notion of self-reflection itself. While it might seem as if their work on self-reflection was 'theoretical' in the sense that they write about their work, Blum & McHugh want to show that their writing is practical action rather than abstract theory. They explicitly acknowledge that their writing is their practice and so their writing, as self-reflective action, must show its principles in its practice. A self-reflective theory, for Blum & McHugh is a theory that is conscious of its own enterprise, that knows what it is doing. These recent theories are reviewed as examples of what they claim to be; theories of social action. The standard, usually implicit, that each theory is assumed to orient to is reviewed in terms of its prescriptions for action. Self-reflection, then, is a review of each theory's implicit standards where each standard is resisted, fluid, none being exempted from the conversation. A self-reflective theory, for Blum & McHugh, is a theory that has examined the grounds or standards in which its claims are founded. These other theories are shown to be versions of self-reflection in incomplete or partial form. While they show that each theory is oriented to an implicit standard, they go on to show how some of these theories, like Garfinkel's, remain uninterested in evaluating the standard that the

theory implicitly orients to. In the case of Habermas, they show that his work orients to sincerity and immunity from criticism. They also show that this theory fails to reflect on its standard and thus risks failing as a practice. They show that Habermas' text, as practical action, is action that wants to avoid any criticism and it can only do this by advocating a neutral procedure that can absolve the speaker or actor of any responsibility for his/her actions. As a critique of science, Habermas, in Blum & McHugh's terms, fails to offer anything other than another method for producing agreement concerning the facts in any situation. While he thought his theory could free us by giving us a democratic method for legitimating action, he just gives us another rule that remains unexamined; this was Habermas' problem with science. Habermas, then, fails to reflect on this standard and so simply replicates the problem that he thought his theory could solve. In this sense, Blum & McHugh show that Habermas does not reflect on the practice that his theory constitutes, he is not self-reflective.

Blum & McHugh show that these theories are not fully conscious of what they are proposing. While these theories seem to be proposing themselves explicitly as practical action, their failure to reflect on their implicit grounds or standard, means, for Blum & McHugh, that these theories do not really know what they are doing. While these theories intend to produce a version of practical action, their failure to reflect on these intentions means that the theory cannot do what it intends. Intention, as an explicit theoretical proposal, is not the limit for a self-reflective theory. To be self-reflective, a theory must be able to think or reflect on its intentions or proposals. Self-reflection, then, accepts:

"... the need and desirability to demonstrate the difference between what appears to be and what is, where that need is unshakeable by persuasion" (1984:174).

By taking each theory ‘through all the steps’ in its articulation or production, each theory can examine in its own intentions. The grammar or constitution of any theory is analysed in terms of what it is rather than what it intends. We saw this with Nussbaum in that while she intended to produce an agent who was flexible in choices and actions, she really produced an agent who could only conform. While her theory appeared to be about individual freedom, she produced the conformity of science. The self-reflective agent is moral in the sense that s/he knows that s/he needs and wants to demonstrate the difference between reality and appearance as a moral imperative. This agent knows that a failure to think about appearances can lead one to act contrary to what one thinks one is doing. By reflecting on intentions, the self-reflective agent wants to go through the steps in persuading him/her that what s/he is proposing is right rather than just conventional. By reflecting on the difference between what each theory appears to be about and what it is really about, the self-reflective agent acts on principles.

Reality, for Blum & McHugh, is not the absolute truth of any notion. While science might aspire to the absolute truth and a theorist like Garfinkel might settle for relativism, all truths being equally valid, Blum & McHugh want to be moderate in their claim for truth by resting their claim to articulate the truth on the unshakeability of their conviction. Truth, for them, rests on the authority of the one who is doing the speaking. Like Socrates, their method is ironic in that while they can acknowledge that they will never articulate the absolute truth, they also know that even the absolute truth needs to be articulated. While we struggle to articulate the absolute truth, this truth can only be grasped indirectly through the notion or situation. Even here as we try to grasp this absolute through the notion, our speech or action always falls short. While we essentially need the absolute truth, the principled actor is ironic about his/her essential limits. The irony implicit in the notion that we can never articulate the absolute truth of any notion,

whether health or theory or self-reflection, yet the absolute truth needs a formulation, is the beginning of the Socratic version of knowledge. However, Socrates, in the dialogues, sees each situation as another opportunity to grasp ironically for the answer to the question, 'what is it?'. In the dialogues, there is development while not articulating the absolute truth of any notion. Each dialogue represents an attempt to develop a relationship between each particular situation or articulation and the absolute truth. Ironic questioning and self-reflection begin with this knowledge that while our speech or action tries to say it all, to speak the absolute truth, it will, in principle, never succeed and so the absolute truth can never appear. Blum & McHugh live with this incompleteness of speech not as a reason for resignation into relativism as in Garfinkel or a more scientific, precise definition as in Parsons but as an opportunity to articulate their unshakeable conviction on any matter. In their acknowledgement of the essential incompleteness or uncertainty of speech or action, Blum & McHugh see the author or the agent as being able to make a difference. While science seeks solutions to the incompleteness of speech in methods that restrict any evaluation to technical criteria that it has articulated itself, authority for validation is invested in the panel of experts. Garfinkel's actor rests his/her claim for validation on a similar procedure, the panel now comprised of normal, everyday members. In contrast, Blum & McHugh point to themselves as the author(ity) for their speech (action). Self-reflective speech (theory), for Blum & McHugh, is practical action that shows the authorial principles in its doing as a demonstration of the values that are an essential part of the author's identity. In questioning the appearances of any situation or notion, self-reflection evaluates all possibilities in terms of its principles. Beginning with the assumption that the actor and situation are mutually constitutive, the actor can reflect on the possible articulations of the situation with the knowledge that these possibilities reflect who s/he is. What develops, then, in situations is

both how the actor can come to see both the situation and him/herself. In any situation, the principled actor can reflect on his/her principles in seeing or articulating a situation.

While Nussbaum wanted to formulate convention as a human limit, Blum & McHugh want to '*theorize this limit*' so that even conformity could be undertaken as a matter of principle rather than simply out of a sense of obligation. While obligations seemed, in many of our theories, to be the best that an actor could do, Blum & McHugh want to say that their principled actor would want to do some action or make some choice out of a sense that it was the right thing to do.

Obligations, as rules, seemed, for Blum & McHugh, to restrict action to what could be expected rather than what was really needed. Principles, then were formulated as essentially more reflective than rules (obligations). Principled action, for Blum & McHugh, is action that is oriented to principle in a strong sense. It is not just that the principled agent acts on principle, this would not be enough. What the principled agent acts with is the knowledge that s/he has reflected on the action and that the action is being carried out for principled reasons. Unlike Nussbaum, who wanted to let circumstances determine values, Blum & McHugh want to show their principles or values in an articulation of the situation. In any situation, their principled actor reflects on both the situation and the self in terms of essential rather than contingent values.

Blum & McHugh use the example of comedy to show the difference between essential and contingent values. In '*Falling in love*' (1990), Nussbaum wants to formulate comedy as a production of circumstances, when the narrator and her lover laugh at shared jokes. Her lover jokes that he can talk to her better on the telephone than he can in person. We can see that it is the particular circumstances that make this an instance of comedy. One could equally see this as a tragedy given different circumstances. There is nothing essential in Nussbaum's version of comedy. Her narrator could come to see this situation differently if their affair did not last. In

contrast, Blum & McHugh want to formulate comedy in terms of essential values. An example of comedy such as Charlie Chaplin or Tommy Cooper can show us that, irrespective of circumstances, they are always Charlie Chaplin or Tommy Cooper. While Tommy Cooper is an essential feature in each situation, we can still see the development of the character in each particular situation. While we ‘know’ Tommy Cooper, we still expect to laugh as new situations are articulated. The example of comedy shows that while an agent might bring essential principles to each situation, s/he must still work to articulate the situation. While Tommy Cooper might claim that the comedy is ‘in the way I say it’, we can see that his identity is a constituent part of any articulation. Who he is matters much more than what he says and what he says depends on us seeing who he is. What he brings to each situation is who he is which allows us to laugh at what he says. We want more of who he is because we know that we can still laugh at (develop) situations rather than be bored or disinterested once we have seen him once. Principles, as essential values, allows the agent to still develop in the situation rather than just impose these principles unthinkingly on each situation. While Nussbaum feared that principles could leave the agent with nothing to do other than conform, we can see that there is development, in each situation, in the way that Blum & McHugh formulate principles.

Principles, for Blum & McHugh, are an orientation to:

“... the determinant sense of value attached to different actions as their ends or respective excellences...” (1984:163).

While the notion of needs was used by Nussbaum as in our need for a plurality of human goods, we saw that her agent’s ‘deep’ need was for the convention; this is what Nussbaum’s agent ultimately needed. Similarly Blum & McHugh want to say that their agent has a deep need, not necessarily for convention but essentially for principles. While we saw that Nussbaum used

convention as a meta-rule to guide human action, Blum & McHugh want to say that principles are the guide for the principled actor's choices and actions. We saw this in our interpretation of Agamemnon when we formulated Agamemnon's actions in terms of human dignity. Principles, then, are the essential moral values that Blum & McHugh's actor brings to each situation. These moral values, then, guide the principled actor's conduct so that principles can give a moral significance to any actor's actions or choices. While convention was the best that Nussbaum's agent could achieve, she did not allow a value to be placed on convention itself. The aim or excellence that Nussbaum's actor oriented his/her action and choices to was convention as a value-neutral fact. Blum & McHugh, in contrast, want to formulate an actor who acts out of a sense of value, or principle, rather than one who follows a rule. It is not that principles are something that any agent could construct for him/herself. This would just mean that principles were a matter of individual choice. In contrast, Blum & McHugh, want to say that principles are already there, something that an agent could see but not something that an agent could very easily do without. Self-reflection helps the agent to see the principles that are already there. If this seems difficult to understand, Blum & McHugh give an example of the difference between *rule* and *principle* from Albert Camus' novel, *L'Etranger*.

In this example from Camus, Blum & McHugh want to show that principles are something that are already there and as such, a constituent part both of any situation and choice that an agent could be asked to make. They use the example of Camus' actor in 'L'Etranger' who cannot see the difference between pursuing one kind of life from any other since '*nothing had the least importance*' and '*it all came to the same thing in the end*'. Existentialism wanted to formulate human agency as essentially dis-connected from any grounds for making a choice since nothing had the least importance. No choice or action has any meaning for this actor since all choice or

action comes to the same thing in the end. While some have wanted to see this as the essential alienation of humanity, Blum & McHugh see it more as a dispirited version of humanity. While nothing had the least importance for this agent, choices being all the same in the end, Blum & McHugh show that it is not convention as rules that is missing but principles. While this agent has no method for attaching any importance to any choice, we see that he still understands that he must choose, he knows what choosing is. Since it all comes to the same thing in the end, he thinks that no rule or choice is better or worse than any other. Here, the existential actor, whose limits are convention, cannot see anything essentially different between any choices.

Differences, as different rules, are technical and nothing seems to matter. Later on, we see this conventional actor deciding whether to smoke or not in the presence of his mother's corpse (1986:187-188). He cannot find any good reason to justify smoking or not. For Existentialism, nothing does really matter, any choice being as good or bad as any other. The existentialist can only formulate the actor as choosing among rules without any way of infusing the rules with any significance. Even the choice seems oppressive and we can see how even the world that could produce this dilemma of whether to smoke or not seems an imposition, to the existential actor. For it is the world that makes smoking in the presence of a mother's body a dilemma. Situations are facts, for the existential actor, which oppress him/her, into acting and choosing. Action does not really matter as it is all the same in the end. Blum & McHugh see situations differently. They want to show, what was there all along, principles in the constitution of the situation.

They want to show that a situation like this requires a notion of moral values or principles. While the existentialist might want to say that all situations are the same, they also seem to want to retain a sense of moral differences between situations. For only by seeing this situation, smoking in front of his mother's dead body, as somehow different than choosing to smoke in a

restaurant or smoking outdoors does this original choice seem like a moral dilemma. The existential actor wants to resist the notion of any values or principle but cannot see that the situation is only a dilemma because of a principle. Camus wants to equate all situations as nothing more than rules that impose themselves on the actor. In our three contrastive situations we can see how all situations cannot be equated. These three different situations owe their difference to a moral value that differentiates smoking in front of his dead mother to either of the other two. To equate these situations would to rob the situation of smoking in front of his mother of any significance. It is not that there are no rules, there are; it is just the difference between our two examples and Camus' situation that show us the difference between rules and principles. Principles constitute Camus' situation as a moral dilemma; without a principle this choice would be equated with a choice such as whether to have soup or pate as a starter for a meal. Even Camus' actor suspects this, as the choice is formulated as a moral choice. Although it did not *seem* to matter, Camus' actor resists saying that it did not matter. What this actor is uneasily aware of is that it could matter. He suspects that there may be something there but he is too indolent to take the matter any further. As long as the existential actor stays with appearances, what seems to be the situation, then any choice is as good as any other. However Blum & McHugh want to show the principle that constitutes Camus' situation as a matter of principle rather than simply rules. This is not to say that principle now provides the solution to the choice. What principles do, in Blum & McHugh's terms, is to see the significance of any action or choice; that some choices are more significant than others. It is the significance that is inherent in the notion of dead mother that constitutes the situation as a dilemma. If the existential actor could formulate the situation as 'dead meat' rather than dead mother then he might have the situation that Camus imagines he has, with any choice being as good as any other. But dead meat does not come down, in the end, to dead mother. Nor is the difference here a

technical one, simply different ways to describe ‘the same thing’. There is a moral dimension here that Camus uses as a resource but which gets lost in his choice. This kind of theory, for Blum & McHugh, begins, like Nussbaum, too late. Here theory focuses on choice and the actor’s methods for choosing. Theory, here, fails to see the principle that it uses to constitute itself. While Existentialism wants to do away with any notion of principles, we see, in Camus’ example, how it more deeply needed principles to be the theory it wanted to be. The actor, formulated by this kind of theory, forgets what s/he essentially needs. What is essential about this situation is the notion of mother and thus the actor’s identity as a person and a son. With the notion of mother and son comes an articulation of human agency that is essentially committed to certain values including the notion of respect. Respect is the underlying principle that allows the situation to be what Camus’ actor suspects it is. However respect, as articulated by the existential actor is a choice of methods, to smoke or not to. He cannot see the essential value or principle that constitute both the agent and the situation.

The agent or self that is formulated by Blum & McHugh is:

“ . . . analytically understood as the necessities, limits and imperatives of the human ” (1984:192).

Blum and McHugh, then, want to formulate a principled actor who acts out of a sense of moral necessity. While Camus wanted to constitute human agency in terms of rules where no rule was more significant than any other, Blum & McHugh want to constitute human agency as principled. The limits for the existential actor were technical, any rule or choice being as good as any other while Blum & McHugh see principles as capable of seeing the good of the rule. This allows their agent, a moral actor, to act with moral authority, having thought about what they are doing. Their actor acts with a sense of rightness rather than, with Camus’ actor, out of a sense of indifference. While Existentialism wants to formulate the modern agent as free to

choose any rule, Blum & McHugh formulate the principled actor as an *ideal speaker*'. This principled agent is ideal in that it is not an individual agent as represented by Nussbaum but is instead an idealization of the social actor, a we. Any action or speech formulated by the principled agent is an instance in the exercise of moral authority. While convention allowed Nussbaum's actor to choose among conventional rules, this choice was at best a technical choice. In contrast, Blum & McHugh want to say that the principled actor's choice is authorized by the principled actor showing where s/he stands in any choice. While Nussbaum's actor could ultimately appeal to convention, Blum & McHugh want to say that their actor embodies in the text or action what their principle is. While Nussbaum's agent could deflect responsibility for his or her actions by sheltering behind convention, Blum & McHugh's principled actor acts as the agent of his/her own actions. This is not to relapse into radical subjectivity. Principles, as we discussed with Camus' actor, are not something individual that any agent can take up or let go easily. Principles, for Blum & McHugh, are universal values that we all subscribe to; they do not depend on the production skills of an actor. These principles are there in our practices awaiting our seeing of them. In Camus' example we saw how principles were already there in the situation, awaiting a principled articulation. Principles, then, show us the significance of the situation or practice, for example, whether to smoke or not. The principled actor, then, is an agent who is constituted by essential values or principles. Blum & McHugh's principled actor comes to each situation with these universal principles which can help in seeing the significance of any situation.

While the principled actor was formulated as an ideal speaker, Blum & McHugh formulate the situation as an ideal hearer. While Nussbaum wanted to formulate the situation as an objective fact that was impervious to human articulation outside of convention, Blum & McHugh want to

differentiate themselves in two particular ways. Firstly, they want to allow that a principled actor will orient to the best definition that the situation can bear. In any articulation of the situation, then, principles are a constitutive part of the situation. We saw this constitutive function in Camus' situation of dead mother. Principles show what is significant in any situation. While situations could be defined as what is conventionally there to see, Blum & McHugh want to say that principles can bring out more of what is there to be seen in any situation. In Camus' example, this allowed the principled actor to see smoking in front of his mother as more significant than smoking in a restaurant. Situations, for Blum & McHugh, were not limited to conventional ways of seeing but were more open to all the possibilities that were available in language. Language, for Blum & McHugh, is:

"...that complex configuration of practices—of human convention and agreements—in terms of which we speak, i. e. , signify. " (1994:46)

Language, then, is the grounds for all of speech's possibilities which includes our convention and human agreements. Our convention is one of the possibilities, a practice within language, but, as we have noted elsewhere, convention is not the limit of language. Language, for Blum & McHugh, is the source and grounds of both conventional speech and principled speech. In any situation the principled actor can reflect on the possibilities for speech or action. This means that any situation can be re-formulated in other ways. The principled actor brings to any situation his/her principles which can allow the actor to see the situation in ways that reflect his/her principles. The principled actor reviews the ways that the situation can be seen. What makes the principled actor's choice of situation decisive is his/her principles. It is principles that allow the situation to reflect the actor's values. Blum & McHugh's principled agent, the ideal speaker, engages each situation, an ideal hearer, as a conversation, a dialectic. While any situation or notion can be seen in a variety of ways, Blum & McHugh want to say that this dialectic with the

principled actor can evaluate all these possibilities. This is Blum & McHugh's method, self-reflection, which can allow the principled actor to live with what is right, rather than just with what is possible.

With Nussbaum, one either conformed or did not, whereas Blum & McHugh wanted to evaluate this conformity. We saw, with our example of Camus' stranger, that a resource that the principled actor brings to a situation is his identity as a principled actor. Self-reflection can allow the actor to evaluate these principles. Principles allow the situation to be re-formulated in ways other than conventional. As we indicated earlier, this does not mean that the principled actor is always unconventional. Self-reflection allows conventional action to be articulated but even conventional action is formulated as worth doing. In any situation, the principled actor must think about what is there to be seen which can include the appearances of any situation. To reflect on the situation, for Blum & McHugh, is to reflect on ourselves. The self, as formulated by Blum & McHugh, does not just mean a personal or individual self; they want to say that this reflection could be communal. They want to say that a community can reflect on what it really needs. In any situation, the principled actor, understood as both an individual or community, must theorize the situation or undertaking. For Blum & McHugh, to theorize the undertaking is to:

“. . . reflect upon the quality or value of the action by asking how its being done signifies what is worth doing” (1984:162).

To theorize the undertaking is, for Blum & McHugh, to become more rational, more conscious, of ourselves and what we are proposing. While, in principle, one can never know absolutely what is involved in all situations, the principled actor acts responsibly by articulating the situation as principled, an ideal hearer. Whereas action, for Nussbaum, is judged in terms of its

conformity, action, for Blum & McHugh, is judged in terms of its essential values. To theorize the undertaking is to decide whether the action needs to be done at all rather than, with Nussbaum, to decide on how best to do the action. The conventional actor has no choice, s/he just does the action out of a sense of obligation and desire. This version of desire is, for Blum & McHugh, a weak version of desire where desire is nothing stronger than a wish or preference. Self-reflection is an evaluation of these wishes or desires and self-reflective, principled, action is action that judges these desires good in themselves rather than simply because they lead to good outcomes or consequences. Not smoking in front of his dead mother, undertaken out of a principle of respect, gives the actor's practice its significance. The principled actor constitutes this action as good by showing the value of the action in his/her practices. Self-reflective action is action that has been authorised as good by our principled actor. The principled actor, in any situation, must orient to the possibilities inherent in language. These possibilities that our principled actor orients to are the possibilities available to an ideal auditor. This means that the principled actor's formulation of the situation is oriented to the best that language is able to provide. The principled speaker answers the demand that s/he imagines an ideal auditor would hear. Self-reflection is a dialogue between an ideal speaker, our principled actor and an ideal auditor, language, so that any action or speech produced by this actor is speech that orients to a critical standard. Self-reflective speech or action is speech that has been decided upon for good reasons rather than as any one of a number of interchangeable rules for accomplishing any speech or action.

While any situation was open to a variety of possible interpretations, self-reflection allows the principled actor to show his/her values in action. As we indicated previously, principles do not claim to be absolute but can acknowledge that there remains a degree of doubt about any

situation. While there was nothing much to doubt, for Parsons, since his theory aimed for the certainty of scientific rationality, there was still something indeterminate. For Parsons, the actor's capricious nature made:

"...a high level of rationality peculiarly difficult" (1970:446).

The problem, for Parsons, is that there unknown (irrational) factors that can:

". . . operate at any time to invalidate expectations built upon an analysis of the known" (1970:449)

The solution, for Parsons, is for the actor to act more rationally by subscribing to what is known, i. e. knowledge. For Parsons, knowledge can leave us with nothing to doubt and so we know, with certainty, what we could expect any actor in any situation to do. This does not surface as a problem for Garfinkel as he knows what to expect from his actor, production; Garfinkel, however, never doubts this production. For Blum & McHugh, this production is one of many possible articulations that an agent could make. They begin with a resistance to any production as one of many ambiguous formulations of the situation. For Blum & McHugh, to theorize the undertaking was to evaluate the limits that the open-ended nature of discourse and action seemed to produce. While Garfinkel left this ambiguity as an essential feature of action untouched, as a taken for granted resource, Blum & McHugh made ambiguity a topic for theory. This is not to try and reduce ambiguity, to strive for certainty like Parsons but to show, in the face of this 'incorrigible ambiguity', there 'they stand'. Theory, for Blum & McHugh, is oriented to a standard, principles, which authorizes their work, as a good. Blum & McHugh show in their work (speech, action) their good reasons for the work so that the reader can clearly see where they stand; identity is a constitutive feature of their work. For Parsons, theory was universal, the adequacy of a theory being its conformity to standards of rational discourse that could be universally evaluated. For Garfinkel, adequacy was achieved when the member's account was

intelligible to any other member, when it was accepted as an account of what the member was doing when s/he was doing it. Descriptive adequacy was the standard that the theorist oriented to and this is where s/he stopped. Both theorists use the rules of adequate discourse, universal or situational rationality, as the limits of theory. Principled discourse, by contrast, wants to show its authoritative decisions for its articulation, its principles, in the discourse so that the principles, the good reasons, which authored this choice among the essential ambiguities of discourse are clearly seen.

While Nussbaum wanted to say that situations were not the responsibility of the agent, Blum & McHugh want to allow their agent responsibility for articulating the situation. Blum & McHugh's responsible agent constitutes the situation in a principled way. They want to formulate an actor who, while not necessarily knowing all the parts that are involved in any situation, :

"..... is responsible for everything, for even what is beyond our control" (1984:195).

While Nussbaum could not see that she constituted the situation, Blum & McHugh want to articulate an agent who could constitute the situation in a principled way while still not wishing to control all parts of any situation. This is a problem for Nussbaum in that she imagines that Socrates wanted to control everything in each situation including luck. However Blum & McHugh want to say that acting on principles does not mean an aspiration to control everything but a reformulation of the situation in terms of principles. We saw this with Agamemnon where acting on the principle of human dignity did not include an aspiration to counter the wishes of the gods. While the gods' decision was not under his control, we showed that Agamemnon could still re-formulate the situation in a principled way. While Blum & McHugh want to formulate the agent as responsible for articulating the situation, they also want to say that this responsibility

includes not just a re-formulation of the situation but also an assessment of this re-formulation in terms of principles. While principles could allow Blum & McHugh's agent to see the situation in principled ways, self-reflection could allow their agent to act responsibly in evaluating this seeing. Self-reflection is Blum & McHugh's method for coming to see and assess their principles in choices and action. While Garfinkel might be aware that the relationship between an agent and the situation is a constitutive relationship, he thinks that this awareness can differentiate him from the ordinary member. However, as we saw, he thinks that this awareness is enough and that nothing more, in terms of corrections or irony, needs to be said. Self-reflection, in contrast, is not an awareness in the way that Garfinkel was 'aware' that objective facts were situational productions. Self-reflection, as formulated by Blum & McHugh, is a coming to see, becoming more conscious, of what our actions and choices really are. While Garfinkel formulates awareness as a difference between the theorist and the ordinary agent, we saw that this awareness could be an illusion. For Blum & McHugh, the knowledge that any situation could be an illusion gives them the opportunity to reflect on the appearances in any situation so that they can see what is real and what is illusory in any situation. Blum & McHugh's agent, then, is responsible for reviewing any situation and re-formulating it as something that s/he judges to be principled and real. Their method, then, includes the authorization by the agent in any situation that what s/he he chooses and acts with is principled and right; right being action or choices that have been undertaken for principled reasons. Self-reflection not only allows the agent to reflect on his/her standard in terms of articulating a real choice, it also allows the agent to evaluate this real choice. Principles, then, are not some external criteria that the agent uses to consult in matters of choice or action; this would be to replicate the scientific solution. Neither are principles simply whatever the agent decides upon; this is Garfinkel's problem. Blum & McHugh want to formulate a difference for their agent

from either the scientist or the ordinary member. Principles, for Blum & McHugh are really there and are not something that the agent simply produces. Principles are, for Blum & McHugh, essential values that their agent brings to each situation.

In theorizing the situation, Blum & McHugh give us a method for allowing us to see and to understand ourselves more clearly. In thinking about any situation or notion, the self-reflective agent develops as s/he develops the notion. Self-reflection is a conversation which is guided by what the notion essentially needs. As the principle or essential value that any notion needs (its identity) is articulated in conversation between the various claims, the agent also develops. The constitutive relationship between the agent and the situation allow both to develop as part of the whole. What is different (other) to what the notion (identity) is, is an essential part of any notion. Likewise, in any situation, the self-reflective actor, in theorizing the situation differentiates what is essentially a part of the situation and what is essentially a part of him/herself. What is not self then is an essential feature of the agent's identity. Self-reflection, then, is a conversation between identity and difference, between the agent and the situation so that the agent can come to see self in a more conscious way than the previous theories we have been examining. Responsibility, for Blum & McHugh includes a principled articulation of the situation as well as the reserve to resist all claims.

While theorists such as Foucault urge us to resist everything, they act irresponsibly by not thinking about what they are proposing; this resistance would at best be nihilistic or completely discretionary. Blum & McHugh, however, want to say that acting on principles allows the actor to assume responsibility for constituting both him/herself and the situation. The principled agent could go further and reflect on this responsibility, by evaluating this responsibility in terms of

principles. While the principled actor could acknowledge that s/he could not control all the parts of the situation, s/he could come to see, through reflection, which parts of any situation s/he could be responsible for. While the whole, the agent and the situation, were beyond the principled agent's ability to grasp, the principled agent saw this necessary limit as an impetus for reflection. In the face of absolute reality or truth, the principled actor questioned any situation with the knowledge that s/he could never know everything. Nevertheless, the principled agent, with this knowledge, could still act responsibly by seeing which part of any situation was essentially beyond the agent's control. Rules were not the opposite of principles. The whole, whether absolute reality or truth, contains both principles and what are not principles which includes rules. In reflecting on principles, everything that is not principles is an essential in defining what principles are. In reflecting on principles, the principled agent comes to see what is principled and what is not within his/her control. Blum & McHugh explicitly reject theories based, as Nussbaum's is, on the agent acting out of his/her immediate desires. While we have examined Nussbaum's theory in the previous chapter, we will, in the next section, examine a group of theories that are collected under the rubric of 'postmodernism'. These theories want to resist any reality that the agent has not sanctioned individually. Freedom or health are, for these theories, a matter of individual choice. While some might want to deny this description, Jean-Francois Lyotard explicitly attaches the notion of postmodernism to his theory.

ii. *Principled Action*

"A self does not amount to much, but no self is an island; each exists in a fabric of relations that is now more complex and mobile than ever before. " (Lyotard, 1984:15)

Principles, as formulated by Blum & McHugh, were an essentially constitutive part of any notion. In the next section, we will examine the principled notion of health, but in this section we will examine a modern notion that has close affinities with the idea of health, freedom. The notion of individual freedom has become a powerful aspiration in recent years. While science has been more and more concerned with defining and isolating the 'object', much of modern social theory has been concerned with defining and isolating the 'subject'. We saw this in the work of theorists such as Nussbaum and Foucault who argue over how much of the subject is real and how so much, or even all of it, is an illusion. While Foucault would want to say that there is no real self there, Nussbaum would want to say that there is something there, it's just that we cannot see all of it. While Nussbaum wanted to show that we could find ourselves in situations, Foucault wanted to say that situations were just as much an illusion as the notion that we had a self to find. In one way, Foucault at least has a certain scientific logic implicit in his position, in that if any notion or situation is an illusion then the notion that we have selves must also be an illusion. Nussbaum, by contrast, wants to develop a flexible notion of human agency while retaining a rigid notion of situations. Blum & McHugh, however, begin with the recognition of the constitutive relationship between the human agent and any notion or situation. Blum & McHugh want to formulate this constitutive relationship as principled and so as the principled agent works on and develops what any notion really needs, so s/he develops as well. In this section we will examine the notion of freedom and in the next section we will examine the notion of health. Both will be examined as examples of the development of the notion and of the human agent as principled. We will contrast Blum & McHugh's version of freedom and health as principled with the work of J. F. Lyotard, a leading exponent of 'postmodernism'. Health and freedom are notions that are a constituent part of postmodernism. We will begin with an examination of Lyotard's version of freedom.

Lyotard is situated somewhere between Foucault and Nussbaum in that he does not want the agent to really resist convention but still wants the agent to be free to act on the basis of his/her desires. While Nussbaum wanted her agent to live within conventional limits and be serious about these limits, Lyotard wants his agent to see these conventional limits in a strategic way. While Foucault saw convention as an obstacle to individual freedom, Lyotard sees convention as more like a staging-post than an end. The postmodern agent, unlike Foucault, does not resist convention but 'plays' along with it. This is Lyotard's definition of freedom, the freedom to play. By not being too serious about convention, Lyotard frees his agent to create or invent. One thing that Lyotard does think is an obstacle to freedom is any notion of a common life or society. The postmodern agent is free, for Lyotard, when s/he acts on the basis of his/her free will, free from the 'noise' of society. Mrs. Thatcher's famous remark, that 'there is no such thing as society', demonstrates the strength of this idea; that a notion such as society is just an impediment to individual freedom. Individual freedom, as a constituent part of postmodernism, is formulated as the agent acting on the basis of his/her individual desires without being coerced by a notion such as society. In contrast, Blum & McHugh want to say that the human agent is a we and that principles are something that are there in our common life. Their version of freedom is principled freedom where freedom begins, for their agent, with principles. Lyotard would want to say that principles are something that is an impediment to individual freedom and something that his agent could do without. Before examining these contrasting claims, we can briefly examine postmodernism as a theory.

The term 'postmodernism' became well known in the 1970s to refer to a new movement in art and architecture. Postmodernism in architecture rejected the ideals and aspirations of high

modern architecture and architects such as Le Corbusier who saw architecture as a means of giving humanity a better quality of life. With modernism, space and lighting were designed as central features of any building so that the inhabitants could experience a greater sense of belonging and a better quality of existence. However these modernist attempts, which embraced technology as a benevolent power, were seen to produce the opposite effects from the ones envisaged by the designers. The buildings and housing estates built on modernist lines were seen, too often, to be alienating and misguided. Postmodernism was a reaction against, what it saw to be the futile hopes of modern architecture to better human existence. Rather than aspire to this humanistic goal, postmodernism focused instead on amusing people of different cultures by designing 'eclectic' styles of building where different styles and themes were intermingled. Charles Moore's 'Piazza d'Italia' in New Orleans, mixes classical Greek and Roman styles in its construction as a shopping mall. In these kind of buildings, history and the 'street' meet, to, hopefully, give pleasure to shoppers and, of course, to encourage them to buy. Amusement is one of the key differences from modernism that postmodernists emphasise. They reject the notion that modernism or any other movement can save humanity directly and instead want to take the seriousness out of the modernist project by emphasising play and amusement. Postmodernism, as a social theory, follows the same path in its resistance to the modern theories that preceded it. One of its chief spokesman is Jean-Francois Lyotard. In his book *'The Post-Modern Condition: A Report on Knowledge'* (1992), Lyotard wants to resist modernity and what he thinks is its aspiration to save or at least free humanity.

For Lyotard, the modern designates:

"... any science that legitimates itself with reference to a metadiscourse of this kind making an explicit appeal to some grand narrative, such as the dialectics of the Spirit, the hermeneutics of meaning, the emancipation of the rational or working subject, or the creation of wealth" (1992:xxiii).

Lyotard wants to show that the grand narratives that structured much of modern theory are themselves in crisis, a crisis of legitimation. These metanarratives have, for Lyotard, given us a version of history as progress in terms of human freedom, autonomy and wealth. However these grand narratives have left many of us disenchanted with the world and fearful of what science and technology may do in fragmenting our world. According to Lyotard, the fragmentation of life that these grand narratives sought to unify could only be achieved by forcing a conformity, a commensurability on humanity. Rather than try and live with what he perceives as the forceful integration of incommensurables in grand narrative, Lyotard wants us 'tolerate the incommensurable'. The two grand narratives of society that were part of the modernist project are explicitly taken to task by Lyotard. The Parsonian narrative in which Parsons sought to integrate the needs of the individual with the functioning of society is, for Lyotard, a practical failure as well as being too coercive. However while Lyotard would want to resist Parsonian science as too coercive, he also thinks that direct opponents of science, such as Habermas with his Critical theory of emancipatory knowledge, are just as coercive. The objection to Parsons' version of order, which came in the form of critical theory, was that its original purpose, ostensibly the security and welfare of its members, has been supplanted by its secondary goal, 'the optimization of the global relationship between input and output' which Lyotard calls 'performativity'. Critical theories like Marxism were formulated as resistances to the threats that Capitalism was seen to offer to civil society especially its 'totalizing' effects which seemed to relegate the needs of individuals to the need of the system. While Marxism and other critical theories began as a critique of Capitalism, it ends up, for Lyotard, as either a token protest or another totalizing system or becomes simply aids in 'programming the system'. For Lyotard, the debate in social theory has, up till now, been centred around a choice among these two models. These two versions of social theory, the Parsonian, technical version and the Critical

model, are used as alternative models from which we are asked to choose. They seem on the surface to be incommensurable theories where we must choose one or the other.

Lyotard wants to show that this is a false choice and that both models are more deeply the same since they share the outmoded assumptions which still think of society as a whole that is able to fulfill the needs of individuals. Both versions are totalizing, for Lyotard, as they impose a consensus on us which Lyotard regards as terroristic. In any case, the metaphysical justification for these kind of societies is much harder to sustain in the light of the changing conception of knowledge which, in the postmodern world, Lyotard equates with information. We are still, thinks Lyotard, haunted by our vision of an organic society which glued together all the aspirations of individuals, a dream of 'the whole and the one'. For Lyotard, there is:

"...no reason to think that it would be possible to determine metaprescriptives common to all of these language games or that a revisable consensus like the one in force in a given scientific community could embrace the totality of metaprescriptions regulating the totality of statements circulating in the social collectivity. " (1992:65.).

Rather than think of society in this way, Lyotard wants us to see that both these theories are based on an illusion that still thinks of society as a whole in which individual aspirations can be realized. Lyotard wants to resist this organic whole as an illusion that terrorizes individuals into conformity. Lyotard is 'incredulous' in the face of these grand narratives that were, for him, grounded in a spurious unity. Terrorised, human action was judged on the basis of its conformity with these grand narratives. These grand narratives legitimated action, action was legitimated if it served the function of the system. These metadiscourses, for Lyotard, homogenize all action and speech to ensure that it meets the requirements of the system, even dysfunctions are assimilated so that the system, as a machine, can continue its relentless goal of maximizing performativity. These metadiscourses, or grand narratives, are methods, for

Lyotard, of imposing an artificial constraint on other discourses so that differences between discourses (persons) are suppressed in the interests of the greater functioning of the whole (metadiscourse, society).

Post-modernism, for Lyotard describes:

“ . . . the state of our culture following the transformations which, since the end of the nineteenth century, have altered the game rules for science, literature, and the arts. ” (1992:xxiii)

Rather than conform to the reality that grand narratives have tried to impose on us, including the notion of principles, Lyotard wants us to resist this in favour of seeing the postmodern world as an indefinite number of language games. He wants to resist the homogenising effects of the metadiscourse and instead wants to provide a method for sustaining and preserving the heterogeneity of local and particular discourse. He wants us to realize that the proliferation of knowledge as information has given us new questions to answer rather than the modern question of which kind of society can best serve our needs. As in postmodern architecture, Lyotard wants us to reject these totalizing theories as no longer relevant for the post-modern age when corporations are supplanting the role of states. These two models that saw society as the source for the production of knowledge are being reversed, according to Lyotard, in the post-modern age, where it is knowledge that will determine what kind of society we will have. The society that Lyotard thinks this new postmodern version of knowledge will produce is a social bond of flexible networks and local agreements. While some might become disenchanted with the failure of these grand narratives, Lyotard sees the growth in information as a potential power where individuals are more likely to achieve their individual wants and desires.

Whereas these grand narratives have sought to legitimate our actions by measuring them against the standard of conformity, Lyotard wants to show that the postmodern actor knows that legitimation, for postmodern agents:

“...can only spring from their own linguistic practice and communicational interaction” (1992:41)

Rather than be subjected or terrorised by the prescriptions of knowledge, Lyotard sees the postmodern actor as being essentially free to formulate his/her own choices and actions. Legitimation is an inherent part of any actor’s speech or action. Since the actor is free to agree or disagree with any action, any action is legitimate since it springs from a non-coerced motive that the actor has willed. In other words, since the postmodern actor can always say no, any action is a free choice and for that reason is legitimate. Recognizing the terrorism inherent in any grand narrative is the first step in this resistance but the postmodern actor must now live with the:

*“...principle that any consensus on the rules defining a game and the “moves” playable within it **must** be local, in other words, agreed on by its present players and subject to eventual cancellation” (1992:66).*

Whereas the grand narratives coerced us by grounding all our actions in some standard of agreement that legitimated our actions, Lyotard wants to say that if there is to be any agreement between postmodern agents, then it must be directly assented to by all participants. Each agent is free to terminate his/her agreement to play any game. The principles of local agreements and a freedom that is not situated guide Lyotard’s postmodern actor. This actor is free to take or leave any situation confronting him/her. It is not that the postmodern actor is passive but rather that s/he is indifferent. This actor acts without any expectation that anyone will listen or even agree with what s/he says or does. All each postmodern actor can do is to ‘do his/her own thing’. Lyotard wants to abandon any expectation that we can get or need agreement to speak. For

Lyotard, this agreement is a staging post but not the end of human discourse and action. He makes the point that 'to speak is to fight' in that dissension from agreement, a move away from agreement, is what his agent can aim for; this is his parology. If there is any agreement it is temporary and local and is subject to cancellation at any moment.

Lyotard, then, wants to resist any notion of a universal validation of actions and choices in terms of a grand narrative. While Lyotard sees science and technology as a grand narrative and its standard 'performativity' as a measure of scientific/technical production, he wants to resist this meta-prescription for the postmodern agent's actions. Lyotard looks at a rule of legitimation that science articulated for the other speeches or activities that wished to be considered scientific. For Lyotard, the meta-narrative of science prescribes rules for the conduct of all scientists in rules such as proof. Science, of course, also prescribes what this proof will look like. The linking of science and technology have led to the synthesis or sublimation of proof, now understood as performativity. Changes in science and technology must meet the new standard of performativity. Change as innovation uses performativity as a criteria of measurement, innovation must increase performativity. For Lyotard, however science is not everything, we also have narrative knowledge. However, for Lyotard, even narrative knowledge has, historically, come to seem more and more like science. While performativity became the criterion of success or failure in science, it also threatened to become the standard for judging all discourse. Performativity, used to legitimate all language games would be too coercive for Lyotard. While reality was judged in science in terms of performativity, narrative, as opposed to scientific or technical, knowledge, was seen as being an under-developed or immature version of knowledge. Lyotard formulates narrative knowledge as being concerned with 'know-how', as the knowledge required to live competently in the world. Individual narratives or language games

do not need, for Lyotard, validation by the standard of performativity. Because it has been unable to validate its own statements, narrative knowledge has always been considered by science as primitive or governed by caprice or opinion. The failure of narrative knowledge to develop procedures for legitimating itself has caused science to be skeptical of the value of narrative knowledge. This is ironic, for Lyotard, in that science has sought legitimation in a form of knowledge that it considers to be less than real knowledge. Lyotard points out that science looks for legitimation in the stories we tell; he uses Plato's story, in the Republic, of the cave as an illustration of how science has sought its legitimation in narrative. Even today, science has to come to terms with narrative knowledge in the explanations that scientists have to give the public about their work. Lyotard wants to point out the essential incommensurability between scientific and narrative knowledge; for him, they are different language games whose rules cannot be applied to the other. The difference between scientific knowledge and narrative knowledge can be seen, for Lyotard, in the difference between the institute and a conversation. The institute prescribes rules that apply to all members of the institute, while a conversation is constituted by two or more parties who 'move' around with different rules. Rather than be coerced by the external rules of the institute, Lyotard wants his agent to be free to participate or not in any conversation. Moves in the language game of conversation are controlled by the participants and this allows for the possibility of 'new' and unexpected moves. He sees no reason for any agent to need any further justification for his/her speech other than that they are persons. Speech or action, for Lyotard are self-justifying and do not need to appeal to any grand narrative. The post-modern agent leaves or joins any language game at will; s/he is mobile.

While science and narrative knowledge produce different modes of validity, narrative knowledge can validate itself only indirectly. For Lyotard:

“The mode of legitimation we are discussing, which reintroduces narrative as the validity of knowledge, can thus take two routes, depending on whether it represents the subject of the narrative as cognitive or practical, as a hero of knowledge or a hero of liberty. Because of this alternative, not only does the meaning of legitimation vary, but it is already apparent that narrative itself is incapable of describing that meaning adequately” (1992:31)

For Lyotard, there is a limit to the role that knowledge, as science, can play in practical action. In practical matters, he thinks that the only role that knowledge can play is to show the subject the context in which s/he is situated but not the possibilities for action (1992: 36). Knowledge, as information, can show the postmodern agent what games or situations are available but the postmodern agent must be free to choose. What course to choose or action to undertake is a matter for the actor and cannot be dictated by knowledge. What is essential, for Lyotard, is that the actor be free to decide among the possibilities that knowledge can provide. He wants to clearly differentiate between actions that are possible and actions that are just. Whereas before, as Lyotard sees it, knowledge dictated the course of action, Lyotard now wants the postmodern actor to be free to decide on the appropriate course of action. In this sense, postmodernism wants to restore the freedom of the individual over the terrorism and domination by knowledge to which Lyotard thinks it has historically been subject to. In social matters such as health and justice, Lyotard thinks that science has little to say.

‘New’, for Lyotard, does not mean simply innovation, as a better method or other rule, but springs more directly from our willingness to engage in a combative relationship with others in a conversation. The ‘agonistic’ feature of conversation can, for Lyotard, generate inventiveness and creativity in a way that the programmed rules of the institute never can. Unlike change as innovation which occurs within scientific knowledge, Lyotard sees conversation as able to lead to:

“...the invention of new rules, in other words, a change to a new game” (1992:43)

Conversations are local agreements among people where the rules are controlled locally. While the institute, as science, might seek to homogenize these rules using performativity as the criterion, conversations are guided by 'parology', the invention of new language games. Control does not, as in science, come from the centre but is subject to the consent of local players. These local agreements can resist outside prescription and can be terminated among the local subscribers. Rather, then, seeing the fragmentation of society as being something that we should try and overcome, Lyotard sees this as an opportunity for local groups to develop creative and imaginative solutions to their own local problems. While innovation, for Lyotard, is under the control of the system, 'parology' is:

" . . . a move (the importance of which is often not recognized till later) played in the pragmatics of knowledge" (1992:61).

While Parsonian and Critical theories tried to achieve agreement among the players, this agreement or consensus is seen by Lyotard as a form of terror that coerced agents in ways that limited individual freedom. Innovation is an example of this, where new was defined as a better or cheaper method of achieving the system's goal of performativity. Performativity was the systems criteria for judging the worth of any new moves. Lyotard wants to go beyond performativity with his notion of parology which begins with a dissension from the system and ends in the articulation of new moves or rules. The only legitimation that the postmodern agent can look for is in the fact that s/he can speak. While new moves or games can be articulated by this agent, validation is not something that the agent should expect. While in art, the avante-garde was considered to be about breaking out of conformity, Lyotard fears that there are attempts being made to fashion the avante-garde as nothing more than conformity. Lyotard wants to resist what he sees as a conformist avante-garde by showing that the agent should just strike out into the unknown without worrying about whether any new move or game could be

legitimated presently. Even the author or agent of any creation will perhaps never know that some creation will become legitimate in a future when someone else picks up on the idea. The author or agent, for Lyotard, is less important than the moves or games that s/he creates. The postmodern artist should not look for legitimation but should be free to create without being too conscious of whether the creation can be currently understood or appreciated.

The postmodern agent, for Lyotard, must resist the subjection of his/her actions and choices to the standard of any grand narrative whether a social or scientific theory. We are, for Lyotard, following an illusion, our nostalgia for the whole and the one, in trying to get our actions to conform with any of these so-called realities. Seeing these grand narratives as illusions, can help the postmodern actor to slacken off in his/her attempts to reconcile their actions to any grand theory. Nor, thinks Lyotard, should we simply adopt the only modern viable alternative, performativity, as a standard for our narratives. Seeing these grand narratives as illusions can allow the postmodern agent to act freely on the basis of his/her individual desires. Two desires, for Lyotard, constitute the postmodern agent; the desire for justice and the desire for the unknown. Justice, like freedom, for the postmodern agent, is being able to play any game that the agent wants, free of the illusion of a grand narrative. While the postmodern agent acts on the basis of her/his desires, the postmodern agent's main desire is a desire for the unknown. By playing whatever game s/he wants, the postmodern agent may accidentally create new moves or new games. The postmodern agent may not know this and should not even hope nor care whether they do; only history can judge that. Rather, seeing that there is nothing really coercing the postmodern agent is enough for Lyotard. This seeing frees the postmodern agent to play, to invent new moves and new games. Play is a central part of this agent's existence; we can join or leave any game when we like. The postmodern agent, for Lyotard, is situated in a flexible

communication network, sending and receiving messages; free to respond or not. To help us to make the choice in any situation, Lyotard thinks that the situation should be made as transparent as possible and in a world of perfect information where everyone would have equal access to the information this freedom would be enhanced. Here, the postmodern agent could formulate the unknown, which will await future recognition and legitimation. Freedom and voluntarism are the two principles that guide Lyotard's theory. The postmodern agent must be free to do and choose whatever they s/he wants. This agent wants to resist as an illusion any notion of something, such as principles, which might seem to put a limit on the actor's freedom. Freedom is maximized by the postmodern agent when s/he can act voluntarily without the coercion of values or principles. Legitimation, if it comes at all, can only come much later, too late for the author who will not know exactly what s/he is doing. The actor, then, in postmodernism must just act on the basis of his/her desires without really knowing if any moves will come to ultimately mean anything

Postmodernism has had a major influence in the arts and sciences. Here, individual freedom, where the agent carried no 'baggage' or hang-ups, was put forward as a cornerstone of the postmodern era. The idea that grand narratives could fulfill individual aspirations, the reconciliation of the whole and the one, is seen by Lyotard as an illusion. Lyotard wants us to see that the reality formulated by grand narratives has restricted individual freedoms. The postmodern agent, then, should slacken off from any attempts to live with the terror of grand narratives and should instead remain in any situation or game for as little time as they want. Like all games, conversation has certain agonistic features which always raise the possibility of new and innovative moves to new games. The postmodern agent, then, is essentially mobile, able to move and stay only as long as s/he wants. Since everything is potentially an illusion, the

postmodern actor must give up on the hope that there is a reality to be found and must instead concentrate on creating his/her own reality. Since language is potentially inexhaustable, the potential for new moves and new games is without limit. By recognizing the terrorism and totalitarianism in these grand narratives, the postmodern actor is free to act. What choices s/he makes will be a matter of individual choice, with any commitments made always subject to eventual cancellation. We can see this theory in action in the major arrival of short-term contracts of work and the escalating divorce rates. Freedom, as formulated here, is constituted by each agent acting on the basis of his desire. The agent is free to leave any agreement when s/he wants to. This is the difference between Nussbaum and Lyotard. While Nussbaum would want to say that our convention is one agreement that we should not leave behind, Lyotard would want to say that this universal agreement is something that we should aspire to move away from since it a form of terror. Nussbaum's position, for Lyotard, would still be too coercive in that she would want her agent's desires to at least conform to her grand narrative as convention. Postmodernism does not want to get too serious about convention but it does not propose itself as an 'alternative' to convention. Rather, Lyotard wants instead, the postmodern agent to 'play along' with convention in the search for something new outside of our current convention. The postmodern agent justifies his/her adoption of convention as a strategy rather than a serious commitment to convention, which Nussbaum wanted for her agent. The postmodern agent does not get too serious about any commitment, since it is something that s/he must be prepared to drop at any time. This is in contrast to Blum & McHugh who want to say that their agent is serious about his/her commitments as principles. Freedom for Blum & McHugh's agent is principled freedom; freedom within the constraints of principles. While Lyotard's agent was essentially free, Blum & McHugh's agent was essentially principled. Lyotard would want to say

that principles were just a hang-up, an illusion, that was not really there. We can contrast these two versions of freedom by examining their theories in practice.

While Blum & McHugh want to formulate freedom as the exercise of principles, Lyotard wants to say that freedom is constituted by his first desire, the desire for justice. This desire means that each individual must be free to act on the basis of his/her desires, free of any obstacles, either internal or external. Freedom, for the postmodern agent, is 'negative' in that it requires the removal of certain obstacles to the free exercise of individual wills (Berlin, 1969). The recent advancement in the notion of individual freedom fits well with the postmodern notion of negative liberty. Government of whatever party tend to support the notion of individual freedom and even some parties assert that government itself is the biggest obstacle to individual freedom. This might be an example of an external obstacle to freedom. Lyotard formulates individual freedom negatively as the removal of any restrictions, whether external or internal, on the postmodern agent's ability to act as they wish. In contrast, Blum & McHugh want to say that freedom is constituted by principles which have their foundation in a common life. The notion of a common life would restrict the postmodern agent's freedom in that Lyotard would suspect that this notion was just another grand narrative to terrorize the agent. Lyotard would want to say that a common life was a move to force a homogeneity on what was really the heterogeneity of different language games or rules. What was crucial, for Lyotard, was that his agent could see through this homogenizing move and recognize the essential difference between each rule or game. The realization that there was no essential unity between these rules was what freed the postmodern agent to act. Freedom now was a matter of individual choice where the postmodern agent took up or left any game or rule that s/he wanted. Any restriction on this individual freedom was seen as a form of terror that limited this agent's freedom to act. All theories,

whether science or hermeneutics are, for Lyotard, restrictions on individual freedom. For Lyotard, freedom is a freedom from coercion, whether this coercion is external as with performativity or internal as in 'the unanimity of rational minds' or both as in the *Dialectics of Spirit*. Principles, as formulated by Blum & McHugh, would be a danger for individual freedom in that they seem to be something that could restrict the postmodern agent's freedom to act. Principles, as we have seen, both constitute the principled agent and the situation. As such, they can be seen as an obstacle to the free exercise of individual freedom in that they are something that the agent brings to every situation. The obvious solution to this problem for the postmodern agent is to simply shrug them off, disown them as not something that an agent would really need. Blum & McHugh, however, want to say that principles are essential moral values that the agent would have difficulty in really disposing of. We can examine whether principles are a constituent part of the notion of individual freedom, using examples from Charles Taylor's essay *'What's wrong with Negative Liberty'* (1985). While Blum & McHugh would say that principles are an essential guide for practice, Lyotard would want to say that principles restrict practice.

Principles, as external obstacles to freedom, are, for Lyotard, something that the individual does not need to get too serious about. Freedom, here, as 'negative' freedom, would consist in the removal of any external obstacle to freedom; this could be done by seeing all obstacles including principles as illusions. However if we compare two restrictions that Lyotard would want to say could restrict his agent's freedom, we can see a difference in quality. In the first example, we could find that the local council had decided to erect new traffic lights on my regular route to work, so that school children could more easily and safely get to school. This might inconvenience me and cause me to be late for work. If we compared this restriction with a

certain prohibition on my ability to worship at a church of my choice, it is clear that both restrictions are not the same. For proponents of negative freedom, such as Lyotard, both these restrictions are equally restrictions on individual freedom. For Lyotard, all external obstacles are equally obstacles to individual freedom in that he would want restrictions in travel to equate with restrictions on our ability to worshi: Part of the reason for this is that Lyotard wants to formulate the notion of society as an illusion, a grand narrative. In this illusion, all parts of society and all obstacles constituted by that society are restrictions on individual freedom. The rule that erects traffic lights, perhaps for safety reasons, is equated with the rule that restricts my ability to worshi: Lyotard does not have a method for evaluating these various rules since he wants to formulate the whole of society and its 'noise' as a form of terror. No rule, in this society, is better or more significant than any other; all are forms of terror that restrict individual freedom. Freedom, here, is constituted as the removal of all rules to the free exercise of individual wills; no rule is more significant than any other. However, while I could constitute a restriction on my right to worship as a restriction on my freedom it would be more difficult to constitute the erection of traffic lights as anything more than a matter of convenience or safety. What makes the difference between these two situations, in terms of freedom, is, for Blum & McHugh, principles. Principles allow some situations to be seen as more significant for freedom than others. Not all situations or restrictions, as Lyotard imagines, are external obstacles to freedom, some are just about safety or convenience. While we can see some situations as constitutive of freedom, we can see that a principle was needed to show this significance.

As McHugh points out:

“It is the significance of difference, of course, that is the basis of community, in which we not only recognize identity (the difference of a difference) but also our commitment (the worth of a difference). ” (1994:29).

Differences between rules in postmodernism are technical in that none are essentially or significantly different from any others. Part of the reason for this is that Lyotard sees the postmodern world as a collection of individual agents with no common life. If there is any common life, it is willed by individual agents and is subject to eventual cancellation. Nothing is significant or more valuable than anything else and even if there are projects that bring people together, they are only valuable as long as the individual wants them. No rule can be evaluated, in postmodernism, in terms of a common life. Without any notion of community, nothing has any more significance than anything else. The postmodern agent is isolated from others, in a network of communications. If there is anything more common to all postmodern agents it is local and temporary. It is not that Lyotard wants to try and evaluate restrictions or rules, he thinks that this would be a form of terror. He does not allow his agent to constitute situations, knowledge as information does this. In a world of perfect information, all situations will be known. Situations, constituted by knowledge, are facts that the postmodern agent could take or leave; no situation has any more importance than any other. For Blum & McHugh, the foundation of our common life is language which collects both rules and principles. Language, as community, allows us to see, in common, some situations as more significant than others. In our example, a common life allowed us to constitute some situations as more significant than others. Principles, here, were not something that the agent simply made for him/herself. Principles, as a part of language, allow us to constitute some situations as more significant for freedom than others; principles allow us to differentiate situations in terms of significance. Language, for Lyotard, is a collection of language games with no essential connection between each. If it were a matter of individual agency, no situation could be any more significant than any individual agent says it was. We can see this if we now look at possible internal obstacles, such as principles, to individual freedom.

While Lyotard might want to say that there is no real internal obstacles to individual freedom, we can perhaps formulate our desires as something that would be internal. Lyotard would agree that desires are a constituent part of the postmodern agent in that he wants the postmodern agent to be free to act on the basis of his desires. However, for Blum & McHugh, this is a weak version of desire in that desires here equate to rules. Blum & McHugh want to show that desires as rules are not essentially constitutive of freedom. Principles, as validation of rules or desires, is a thoughtful evaluation of any desire or rule that the agent has. Principles would be an internal obstacle to the postmodern agent's freedom to act on the basis of desires in that they could restrict the agent's freedom to what s/he wants. Freedom, then, would be disposing of all principles that might restrict the agent's desires. Desires, like, external restrictions, are all the same to the postmodern actor; no desire is better than any other. What is the best desire, for the postmodern agent, is the one that s/he has right now. The postmodern agent is free when s/he just does whatever s/he wants. The postmodern agent never thinks about his/her desires but just acts on them. How does this agent know that this current desire will enhance his/her individual freedom?. Lyotard would want to say that since the agent is able to exercise his/her desires, then they are free. True desires or authentic feelings are simply those desires or feelings that the agent experiences, right now, as the strongest. To see desires as simply rules with no significance between them would leave the actor to see all desires as equivalent. To act on the basis of this desire that one experiences as the most immediate or strongest could lead to a loss of freedom. To equate all desires would be to see our desires as equivalent to the brute feeling of something like pain or the feeling we get when someone runs his/her fingernail along a blackboard. Feelings, here, are brute, in the sense that if I fail to perceive the pain or hear the fingernail, then it is not there. The agent, here, is never wrong; no perception, no pain.

However if we look at notions such as fear or spite, we see that desires are not always morally equivalent and cannot be simply equated with rules.

To equate all desires as nothing more than the brute feelings that an agent perceives would not be a constituent part of freedom. If we take an example, such as fear, we can see how a brute definition of desires could cause us to lose part of our freedom. A fear of public speaking is proving an obstacle to my ambition to secure a job or career that I know I would like and that I would be good at. This fear is an obstacle to my freedom to pursue a life that I want. In Lyotard's terms, one should act on the basis of this fear and so I would lose out on the opportunity to pursue a more significant desire. Again, we could think of a situation where, driven by spite, I act badly towards someone whose relationship I valued. I cannot help myself, even though I know that my actions would sour our relationship: The immediately stronger feelings, whether fear or spite, are the ones that Lyotard thinks we should act on. However, we can see that these immediate desires are internal obstacles to my freedom to pursue the kind of desires that are more significant. Acting as Lyotard suggests would cause us to be less free as he does not want to say whether any desire or rule is better than any other. All desires, for Lyotard, are rules that Lyotard's agent formulates for him/herself. Since the agent never thinks about these rules, but just acts on them, the postmodern agent could end up restricting his freedom. In contrast, Blum & McHugh's principled agent acts on the basis of principle rather than blindly following his/her more immediate desires. In situations like these, a principle such as courage could help us to achieve our more significant desires. Courage, as a principle, could allow us to act in a more decisive and significant way and thus help us to enhance our freedom.

Lyotard does not want the postmodern agent to think about his/her desires but simply to act on them. While Lyotard wants to say that the integration of the agent with his/her desires or rules was something that his agent did not have to think about, Blum & McHugh want to 'question this integration unconditionally'. This means that Blum & McHugh want to reflect on this fear or spite, the immediate desire or rule. The principled actor can question or evaluate his/her desires, make an essential difference between desires. By questioning his/her integration with any desire or rule, the principled agent can ask whether it is essentially a constituent part of his/her identity. Acting on principles is acting on essential desires rather than just any desire that is more immediate. In our example of fear or spite, principled action would act on the basis of our deeper or more significant desires. In principled action, the agent, constituted by principle, comes to see the more immediate desire as something not essentially his/hers, an obstacle to freedom. These more immediate desires, such as fear or spite, are seen as internal obstacles to my freedom to pursue my more significant desires, my principles. In thinking or reflecting on which desires or rules are more essential, the principled agent can come to see that a principle such as courage is what is essentially needed in a situation such as our example. Desires are different from principles in that one can come to see what desires or rules are an essential part of who I am and which are just accidental. By reflecting on desires, I can come to see this fear or spite as something I would be better off without and also come to see that courage is what is essentially required. For Lyotard, acting on the basis of our fear would restrict the freedom of his agent, whereas, for Blum & McHugh, principled action could enhance our freedom. Principles, as a constituent part of human agency are essential for individual freedom otherwise the agent could restrict his/her freedom.

The notion of radical individual freedom as the removal of restrictions, whether internal or external, seems have no method for judging any of these restrictions. For Lyotard, external restrictions are all the same, whether traffic lights or prohibitions on worshi: Internally, Lyotard wants to say that restrictions are not really there and that the agent is free when s/he exercises his/her desires. However we saw, with our examples of spite and fear that desires could be internal restrictions on freedom. If I gave in to spite or fear, I could be less free to pursue my more valued desires. What makes the difference in significance of desires, in the example of spite or fear, was my sense of myself as an agent with principles. My desire for a certain kind of life or career was seen by me as more important than my fear of public speaking, This immediate desire, fear, was something that I could come to see as not really mine, something that I could overcome. To see some desires as essentially mine and others as circumstantial or accidental is to have a certain view of myself. In contrast, Lyotard, who has no method for judging his desires might act on his more immediate or strongest and this might be a fear of public speaking. To act on this fear would be to restrict my freedom in my choice of career; it would also lessen the significance of my desire for a certain type of career and perhaps make it impossible for me to see myself as an agent with any basic purpose.

In part, this is the idea of postmodernism. The postmodern agent, who is free, just wanders from situation to situation without any sense of who s/he is and without any purpose, acting on the basis of whatever desire moves the agent. Lyotard want to dispose of any notion of human agency as being part of the Totalitarian illusion and a restriction on our freedom. For him, human agency is nothing more than a situational production that can only be glimpsed through the agent's immediate desire. The postmodern agent, who does not amount to much, has no sense of him/herself as having a continuous life but only a series of episodes where what moves

the situation here, fails in another. Human agency is just a random and accidental collections of desires that the agent picks up and drops. However, in our examples, we saw that freedom needed principles rather than rules. Rules, as a constituent part of freedom could only allow us to see all external obstacles as equal restrictions to freedom. This meant that the agent could not distinguish between situations that were restrictive of freedom and situations that were concerned about other things. All situations, for postmodernism, were the same. Rules, as the measure of all our desires, could not really distinguish between desires that could restrict our freedom and desires that could enhance it. The postmodern definition of freedom could restrict the freedom of the individual but the postmodern agent, constituted as a rule-follower, had no way of knowing this. Freedom, as constituted by principles, could discriminate situations and desires that were essential for freedom. In our example, the principled agent, could act on the basis of his/her more significant principle and enhance their freedom. However, while I could say that fear or spite were desires that I would be better off without, this evaluation would still make me the best judge of my more significant desires. While Lyotard might not approve of me seeing myself as a person who could be serious about a career or a life, he would not want to judge me on that basis. For Lyotard, significance would be a matter of each individual agent saying what his/her more significant desires are. Freedom would still be a matter of the postmodern agent just acting on the basis of his/her more significant desires, as judged by the agent. Significance would have to be judged quantitatively as the strongest. The post modern agent would be free when s/he acted on the basis of her/his strongest desire. While principled freedom suggested that principles were essential, this was their significance, Lyotard might want to say that any notion of something essentially constituting human agency would be just an illusion.

While we could see that principles could be a constitutive part any situation, we also saw that principles were something already there. While Lyotard did not want to judge any desires, seeing this as a form of coercion, we also saw that his failure to reflect on his desires could lead him to restrict what he really needed, which was individual freedom. What made the difference between freedom constituted by rule and freedom constituted by principles was the notion of human agency. While Lyotard wanted to say that the human agent did not amount to much, Blum & McHugh want to say that it is human agency that constitutes the difference. We are all, to a greater or lesser extent, egotistical enough to imagine that who we are does matter. We do see freedom as the freedom to pursue certain ends whether social, political or economic; that we do have basic purposes. In this sense, we do think that some desires are more important than others. Principles, our sense of ourselves, allow us to discriminate between desires. Seeing some desires, fear or spite, as desires that we would be better off without depends upon our notion of ourselves as agents with 'depth', with purposes that are constitutively related to who we are. Blum & McHugh want to formulate freedom as essentially involving principles which can allow us the freedom to develop: In our examples of fear or spite, we saw how a principle such as courage was essential, while Lyotard thinks rules are sufficient. However, we saw that freedom constituted by rules could cause us to be terrorized by our most immediate desire and could lead to a serious loss of freedom.

While Lyotard would want to say that principles were too coercive for the postmodern agent, we saw that they were a constitutive part of freedom. Individual freedom, for Lyotard, seemed to mean that each individual could just do what they wanted. Individual freedom, for Blum & McHugh was principled in that it allowed the agent to develop his/her individuality, while in Lyotard's version of freedom, the best that any actor could do was to do and see situations the

same as everyone else. Individual freedom seems to be the great equalizing project of much modern theory. We are all equal in this world and radically free to pursue our own ends, all ends being as relatively good or bad as each other. For who can say, in this world, what good and bad really are since 'one man's meat is another man's poison'. All we can do here is to 'do our own thing'. Any attempt to judge anyone else is now considered an imposition, a form of tyranny. The individual, our postmodern actor, is free to wander, to please him/herself. This actor has no limits other than the limits s/he decides on. However this was a freedom to wander, not a freedom to get anywhere. For postmodernism there was nowhere to go since all situations were the same. With Blum & McHugh, principled freedom was a freedom to realize ourselves, our basic purposes as individuals. This principled freedom had its grounds in language, where differences between agents were articulated. In the postmodern world there is no conversation, no development between the agent and community. However, we saw how essential a community is and how it can make a difference and allow the agent to realize him/herself. In postmodernism, there is no community just a network of communication posts with no guarantee of any communication. While Lyotard welcomes the fragmentation of our 'society', we could see that community was an essential part of our seeing some situations as more significant than others. While Blum & McHugh wanted to formulate our common grounds as language, Lyotard saw language as a means to an end, the generation of new games. Language, in postmodernism, was an individual not a common resource. While Blum & McHugh see language as a common resource, they want their principled agent to reflect on this resource, make it a topic. Self-reflection, 'an eccentric reflection on language from within language' can help the principled actor to evaluate his/her principles. For postmodernism, the agent does not have to make language a topic since this agent is never wrong. This is the scientific project come back to formulate speech as universal. The difference between speech and language is dissolved, the

difference between the actor and community is abolished. Everyone is equal here but this is equality without quality. We are all equal but that's all we are, none of us are for anything in particular. There is no authentic development here, the best that we can be is equal and we are already that 'deeply'. We can call attention to ourselves by our choice of methods but it all comes to the same thing in the end and it doesn't really matter anyway.

While postmodernism proposed itself as a theory of individual freedom, we can see that Lyotard is not fully conscious of his own enterprise. His version of individual freedom could lead the agent to restrict his/her freedom. Blum & McHugh, by contrast want to show that the notion of individual freedom needs principles if it is to be practiced in a way that the agent knows what s/he is doing. Principled action, for Blum & McHugh, is action that would want to show, in its doing, the principles that have constituted the action. While the postmodern agent could only act on the basis of rules, this seemed to mean that the agent while thinking s/he was acting freely could be restricting their freedom. However, we might still have a hard-headed libertarian who might argue that all external obstacles do involve a restriction on freedom. The argument might be that people must just be allowed to do whatever they want and that this is the only real freedom. This radical freedom however could, in our example of fear or spite, end up restricting freedom. Even here, as we saw, significant desires would be the ones that the agent says they are. Individual freedom could still be formulated as our acting on the basis of our most significant desire, judged by the agent, on the basis of strength or immediacy. While Lyotard does not want to judge any other agent's desires in terms of significance or principle, something significant like a principle keeps this agent playing. We will take this up in the next section in our discussion of health.

iii. *Health as Principles*

“For if there is a ‘health’ of language, it is the arbitrariness of the sign which is its grounding. ” (Barthes, 1972:131).

“If it should turn out to be true that knowledge (in the modern sense of know-how) and thought have parted company for good, then we would indeed become the helpless slaves, not so much of our machines as of our know-how, thoughtless creatures at the mercy of every gadget which is technically possible, no matter how murderous it is” (Arendt, 1989:3).

This section will examine Blum & McHugh’s formulation of health as principles. Blum & McHugh want to say that healthy action is action that is undertaken for principled reasons. In the last section, in our discussion of the difference between freedom constituted by rules and freedom constituted by principles, we saw that a notion such as individual freedom needed to be constituted by principles otherwise the postmodern agent could find him/herself acting in ways that would restrict their freedom. Similarly in our discussion of health, we need to construct a version of health that could help the agent to develop in a healthy way. This section will contrast health as formulated by Blum & McHugh with a modern version of health as formulated by Lyotard. Lyotard’s version of health as playing will be examined to see if this version of health can lead to healthy practice. While we saw that Lyotard would not want to be coerced by any principle, Blum & McHugh would want to say that principles were an essential part of any version of health. While Lyotard wanted to resist all principles, we can see that there is a principle that Lyotard uses to justify his agent playing. We will examine the version of health that he is proposing to see if it would allow his agent to act healthily.

Health, for the postmodern agent, is constituted by two desires, the desire for justice and a desire for the unknown. The healthy postmodern agent acts healthily on the basis of these two desires. However we have seen, in the previous section, that desires which have not been thought about

equate with rules. In the previous section we examined his desire for justice as a standard for individual freedom. In this section we will examine his desire for the unknown as a standard for health. For Blum & McHugh's agent, healthy action is action that orients to principle, that the action is being undertaken for good reasons rather than simply what one is supposed to do or because that is simply what the agent wants. It is not that the principled agent does not want to carry out the action, s/he does; it is more that the agent has persuaded him/herself that this action is right and needs to be done. Of course, an immediate problem would be that any agent could just say that his/her action 'needs' to be done. However, Blum & McHugh want to say that what needs to be done is less a subjective evaluation and more a communal ideal. Any reflection, for Blum & McHugh, is guided by the object under examination. With freedom, a resource that was examined was the notion that freedom is the removal of all restrictions. While our discussion was an examination of the limits of freedom, we saw that freedom could not be, as Lyotard claims, to be simply the removal of all restrictions. We found, instead, that any notion of individual freedom required us to accept some restrictions, both externally and internally, as constitutively related to the notion of freedom, and other restrictions that were not really about freedom. While any agent could say that all restrictions were essentially restrictions on freedom, our examination showed that subjectivity was not the limit, freedom being just whatever any individual said it was. If the agent were simply correct, as Lyotard wants to say, there would be no development in our freedom. Freedom, as constituted by Lyotard, would be always the same, never changing and never allowing the agent to develop. What individual freedom amounts to, as articulated by Lyotard, is a freedom to be static. Blum & McHugh, however, want to say that both the notion and the agent do develop as the agent reflects on what the notion essentially needs. While our discussion examined the notion, freedom, subjectivity or correct judgement was also being developed. Self-reflection allowed the agent to reflect on his/her opinions on a

topic and to develop those opinions, to see the kind of practice that these opinions seemed to produce. By seeing that Lyotard's opinion about what individual freedom was could lead to a restriction on his freedom, Lyotard could think again about what the notion essentially needed and also what he, as a free agent, really needed. While Lyotard wanted to formulate freedom as essentially the same for everybody in terms of his universal value, we also saw that there was nothing individual about it. Again, for Blum & McHugh, healthy practice is practice that is guided by a version of health that has been formulated as a good. Blum & McHugh's version of health wants to constitute health as a morally necessary practice. Historically, Lyotard is a part of the tradition in which Saussure and Barthes occupy a prominent place. The Structuralist project of showing the essentially constructed nature of any meaning or sign has had major reverberations through social and 'critical theories' since. While some may argue that critical theory has moved on since the publication of *Mythologies* in 1957, the essential indeterminacy or arbitrary nature of the sign or the trace has constituted a methodological rather than theoretical debate. In wishing to resist the scientific enterprise, especially after Hiroshima and Nagasaki, much of these modern and postmodern theories drew comfort from the notion, advanced by such thinkers as Heidegger and Wittgenstein, that meaning was essentially a social construction and that scientists were essentially no different in that respect from anyone else. The fact that the sign or meaning was essentially and 'naturally' arbitrary, gave these theorists an opportunity to resist what they feared as the totalitarianism of science. If there was anything that provided a sure foundation for any theory it seemed to lie in the fact that meaning was arbitrary. Any theory, then, which seemed to add another layer or synthesize or homogenize this natural arbitrariness was seen as a form of coercion and distortion. Health, for Barthes as for Lyotard, was constituted by the arbitrary nature of the sign. Any notion of an authoritative meaning was seen, now, as a form of coercion like the imposition of a false consciousness. Authority was

seen as synonymous with conformity and these theories, via the 'semiological turn', want to resist the conformity that grand theories seemed to require. Resistance, then, was built around the notion of the arbitrariness of the sign. Since meaning was arbitrary, all meaning was allowed. In postmodern and critical theories the notion of any original or authentic meaning was resisted in the notion of the 'death of the author'. Now even the original meaning that an author intended was seen as just as good or bad as any other meaning to be gleaned from any writing. While the function of the author was relegated, the conditions that produced the discourse were seen as more important (Foucault, 1982). Any meaning was as good as any other because meaning was free to be anything. This was encapsulated in the notion of the 'free play of signifiers' where meaning had been seen to be freed from the imperialism of science. The meaning of a notion of health was seen to be arbitrary rather than something that only doctors or experts could articulate. Health, now, was a matter of individual articulation. This version of health is a modern version of health that sees health as subject to the free choice of individual agents. These agents could produce health in any way that they wanted, only needing to justify it to themselves. Principles would be a danger here as they could distort the arbitrary nature of health. It is not, however, that Blum & McHugh want simply to resist the arbitrary nature of the sign. What is essential, for Blum & McHugh is that we can come to see this arbitrariness as principled. For Blum & McHugh, principles are a constituent part of health. In Hegel's terms, principles can give us a commensurate relationship between the agent and the situation. This is in contrast to the notion that health, as the arbitrariness of the sign, would resist any commensurability, seeing it as a distortion; a removal of its natural meaning.

Liotard did not want to evaluate any version of health, all being as good or bad as each other.

When the postmodern agent subscribes or articulates a version of health, this is all the validation

the agent needs. Any attempt to go beyond this individual validation would, for Lyotard, be a terroristic act. Good, then, is just whatever the agent says it is. However we saw, in the previous section, that this was not necessarily Lyotard's position. For Lyotard, two desires seem to be more good or better than others. Two desires, 'the desire for justice and the desire for the unknown' constitute this agent. These two desires are constitutively related in that each seem to need the other. Lyotard's desire for justice meant that he wanted the postmodern agent to do whatever s/he wanted. As we indicated, this meant that the postmodern agent slackened off in any efforts to be serious in any situation. Part of the reason for this 'playing' can be found in the notion that any situation, in postmodernism was as good or bad as any other. Coercion, for Lyotard, would be any rule or situation that tried to impose itself on the human agent. This was Lyotard's problem with science or grand narratives which he thinks have tried to get us to see situations in terms of society's needs rather than the agent's needs. In the face of this terrorism, Lyotard thinks that we should just take or leave any situation as we wish. Resisting this terrorism is one reason why Lyotard thinks we should slacken off in our efforts to match an ideal formulated by someone else. The desire for justice is a universal good that validates each agent being able to just act as they please. We saw how this universal good, the desire for justice, produced an agent who did not have to think about his/her desires since they had already been validated by this universal good. This failure to validate one's desires, to make a distinction between accidental and essential desires, meant that the modern agent always risked restricting his/her freedom. While this desire for justice was formulated as a universal good, Lyotard thought that this was all the validation it required. However, while we have shown this desire for justice to be a poor guide for practice, we have done so only indirectly in our more direct examination of its implications of allowing each agent to simply please him/herself.

In this section we examine, more directly, Lyotard's other universal desire, the desire for the unknown. While Lyotard wanted to say that his desire for justice would require a notion such as individual freedom of choice thus justifying the postmodern agent acting on the basis of his/her more immediate desire, the desire for the unknown justifies this agent's not getting too serious about any situation but just playing along as s/he pleases. Both the desire for justice and the desire for the unknown are constitutively related. What is good about Lyotard's desire for justice, for Lyotard, is that it can lead to another good, the unknown. What validates the agent in his adoption of rules is the possibility of new and unexpected moves, the unknown. However, this good is not an essential but accidental consequence and is, for Lyotard, not something that the agent should really be conscious about. The unknown, then, for Lyotard would be moves or rules that had not yet been articulated. The agent would not know what s/he had articulated at present, only others would discover the new rules in the agent's articulation. All that the postmodern agent can do is to adopt whatever rules s/he wants and not worry too much how history will judge them. Any action or desire aims, for Lyotard, indirectly and not too consciously, for the unknown. The postmodern agent moves from situation to situation freely exercising his/her most immediate desire with the possibility of articulating new formulations or rules. This, for Lyotard, is the significant effect of his agent playing by the rules. Not because they sincerely believe in the rules but because these rules are a means to an end, 'the quest for parody'. Health, for the postmodern agent, is playing along, not getting too serious about any situation. We can examine Lyotard's version of health as playing, if we examine his situation.

Lyotard, the postmodern agent, is caught in a tension between his fear of science and his desire for the unknown. He fears the totalizing effects of any science or grand narrative and its restrictions on his freedom to pursue the unknown. His solution to this tension is to play, to just

allow the agent to act on his/her immediate desires. The postmodern agent, formulates 'playing' as his way of staving off his fear of science. Playing, for Lyotard, would help his agent by allowing him to leave any situation that he did not want to stay in. Lyotard advocates moving around as much as possible. Lyotard welcomes the advent of short-term contracts and we could see this as a part of his version of health. While health is, like a short-term contract, a matter of ambiguity, Lyotard thinks that this can work to the advantage of each agent. In economic terms, it might be advantageous to both employer and employee to have temporary affiliations that each side can leave at short notice. For Lyotard, the healthy agent should use this to their own individual advantage. In health terms, this would mean that the postmodern agent would not have to tolerate the prescriptions of the expert; s/he could move on at any time. Any version of health would be a matter of individual and temporary consent. The growth in 'alternative' or 'complementary' medicine shows that more people are taking individual responsibility for their health by seeking out more individualistic help. As many commentators on the 'therapeutic turn' point out, everyone is now encouraged to 'find themselves'. Many individuals do move from one kind of therapy to another. While Lyotard would want to encourage people to move around, he would also want to say that we should not get too serious about any of them. As long as it is what any agent wants, s/he should play the game but should always be prepared to move on to something new and different. For Lyotard, there is no grand purpose behind what we do, this is an illusion. After all, for Lyotard, there is not much of a self to find.

Playing, then, allows his agent to not be really involved in any situation. Whatever the postmodern sees in any situation, s/he can decide whether to play or not. This agent is not constitutively related to the situation as s/he is more of a bystander, ready to accept or leave the situation when s/he wants. As we saw earlier this means that the agent has nothing to really

think about since s/he acts on his/her immediate desires. Was this fear of science a real fear or something that the agent would be better off without?. If we look at our example where fear of public speaking was stopping me from pursuing a life or a career that I valued, we saw how we could come to see that fear as something that I could in principle overcome. This was because I could see that a more significant desire was being impeded. What made this significant desire better was that I saw this desire for a certain life as being more authentically part of me. What made the difference in our evaluation of desires was how I saw myself. This fear of public speaking was an obstacle to a stronger desire that I could see was essentially mine. My identity as a certain person with life-plans made the difference between desires that I could see were circumstantial and desires that were essential. By seeing this fear as inessential, I could see that it was something that required a principle that was more firmly rooted in how I saw myself. What can differentiate desires is how I see myself. Because I could see the pursuit of a certain career as more authentically mine, I could come to see this fear as circumstantial rather than principled, something that I would be better off without. This fear is something that I could get over and I could set myself to overcome it. Courage, as principle, could help me to act decisively on my more significant desire. Differences, then, in desires were evaluated in terms of my identity; each desire being evaluated in terms of how I see myself. However, Lyotard formulates this fear as essentially part of every agent and so not something that an individual agent would have to think about. While he wants to formulate health as an individual choice, he does not allow his agent a choice about fear.

This fear is real, for Lyotard, because he thinks of science as totalizing. In this sense again, the agent has nothing to think about; all science or grand narrative is simply coercive. The only option, in the face of this coercion, is for Lyotard to play along with it, without becoming

ensnared in its totalizing power. In contrast, Blum & McHugh would want to say that this fear is something that we all, to some extent, share. While Lyotard wanted to say that this fear was a constituent part of human agency, Blum & McHugh would want their healthy agent to reflect on this fear, to see whether it is essential or circumstantial. To see this fear as essential, as a constituent part of human agency, would be, for them, to act unreflectively. How I see myself is a resource that, Blum & McHugh, use to differentiate desires or rules. While Lyotard wanted to see this fear as an essential part of his definition of health, Blum & McHugh would want to say that fear was not an essential part of a principled version of health but was, rather, something that the principled agent could think about. Health, as principles, then, involves an evaluation of desires or rules rather than simply giving in to the most immediate, which, in Lyotard's case, would be fear. The healthy postmodern agent lives with this fear, any action being simply an accommodation to this fear. This fear, for postmodernism, is something really there that we just have to live with. However, this fear, as we have seen in our example of freedom, could restrict our health. While one could see that there might be situations when we would think it right to be fearful of science, we could also imagine situations where science is just what we needed. The postmodern agent, then, by acting on his fear cuts himself off from something that might be needed for health. As Taylor (1990) points out, the scientific enterprise, from Newton's time at least, was articulated morally in terms such as God's purpose for us. Seeing ourselves as being duty bound to enrich human lives for the greater glory of God was a major impetus for the scientific revolution that followed. Even production and consumption were seen as fulfilling God's plan for us. Science, as Taylor shows, had principles or moral sources that guided it. To see science, as Lyotard does, purely in terms of coercion is to forget all the benefits, including medicine and technology, that have made ordinary life for a large number of citizens qualitatively better than it was three hundred years ago. Lyotard imagines that we can still allow

science to play its own game without it having any real effects on us. As Taylor shows, science can have a direct impact on our lives and so we should evaluate this impact rather than, as Lyotard seems to suggest, just minimize the effects of science. Blum & McHugh, like Taylor, want to formulate science in terms of principles and so can recognize the good and bad that science can do. For Lyotard, science is an objective fact that is impervious to all evaluation. The postmodern agent just acts on the basis of this fear since this fear is self-justifying. While some desires were circumstantial, this fear was universal, a part of all situations. All situations were dangerous, for this agent, since s/he always feared the terrorism of science. In the face of this fear, the agent just plays along with situations, not involved and always ready to leave. Situations, too, for this agent were superficially different and this knowledge allowed the agent to play. More deeply, all situations, were the same; all were constituted by this fear of science and the possibility of the unknown.

What allows me to see, in any situation whether this fear is real or an illusion is how I see myself. In our previous example, we saw that a standard or principle, courage, could allow me to see that fear was not essential for our version of health. While we saw that fear was not an essential part of any notion of health, we also see that fear is not a constituent part of human agency. This is the way that Blum & McHugh show the development of the agent as s/he develops a notion such as health. By seeing my identity as a constitutive part of any formulation of the situation, I could see some desires, such as fear, as not essential. This, however, is not the limit, for the principled agent. Situations allow the principled agent to not only reflect on desires such as fear but also give the agent the opportunity to reflect on principles as well. While any agent could say that they were acting on principles, these principles can also be evaluated. While, for Blum & McHugh, identity is an essential part of my evaluation of this fear, the

principled agent must be prepared to evaluate this identity. Principles, as correct judgement, must, for Blum & McHugh, be taken through the steps so that the principled agent can develop his/her sense of self. It is not that, once one has principles, the agent cannot develop: The notion of conversation or dialectic points to the possibility of development. As we have indicated, this resource, my identity, can, in self-reflection, become a topic. Self-reflection can theorize the difference between what I appear to be and what I really am. Lyotard never allows the agent to be anything more than a fleeting appearance, a trace. A trace, like a footprint, leaves us with general impressions but no particular sense of an individual.

This is a crucial paradox in notions such as individual freedom and health as an individual possession. While they propose individuality as an essential part of their theory, they do not see the need to provide for the particularity of any individual. While Lyotard proposes that health should be a matter of individual choice, this choice is superficial and not really something that is particularly individualistic. The fear that constitutes his agent is a universal fear which affects all agents equally. In contrast, Blum & McHugh want to situate their agent between sameness and uniqueness. For McHugh, all:

“ . . . speech-in-the-world, whatever its mode, must be practiced, and practiced by speakers who actually live within the incompleteness of speech in two vital senses of that idea (1)The many varieties of practically possible actions and understandings that are relevant at any one moment, and (2)the non-self-explicating, profoundly ambiguous meaning and significance of any single social action” (1994:31)

They formulate principled action or speech as able to articulate the particularity of the principled agent. Principled action allows others to see where the principled agent stands on any matter. It is not that Blum & McHugh think that what they say is absolutely true, this would make them unique. It is more, that having gone through the steps in persuading themselves that this is what any notion essentially needs, they want to show that their action or speech has been undertaken

for reasons that reflect how they see themselves. Rather than hiding behind abstract theories, Blum & McHugh want to formulate principled action in a way that allows others to both see where they stand but also to engage with them in a conversation. If principles were formulated as the absolute truth, there would be no conversation. Principles, however, are a demonstration of their particularity, given that the sign is arbitrary. While Lyotard and Barthes might see anything more than arbitrariness as being somehow a distortion, Blum & McHugh want to develop this arbitrariness to show their own particularity and authority in their formulations. Health as principles would allow the agent to develop beyond the sheer arbitrariness of the sign to a version of health that can develop any agent's particularity. However, as we have said, this particularity is not simply a matter of correct judgement; this would not be reflective enough for Blum & McHugh. Self-reflection is an examination of correct judgement in terms of what is essential and what is accidental so that a principled and right formulation can be articulated. While Blum & McHugh would want to say that this fear was something, like a fear of public speaking, that the agent could think about, Lyotard formulates this fear as something beyond doubt. While Blum & McHugh would want to articulate health as constitutively related to how I see myself, they would also want to say that the principled agent could, in principle, be wrong. Truth, for them, is when they have articulated their principles but these principles are not the absolute truth. The knowledge that they don't know absolutely is the irony which is a constitutive part of any principle. Blum & McHugh have a different relationship with the absolute truth than Lyotard. While Blum & McHugh would want to acknowledge that principles do not say it all absolutely, Lyotard thinks that the absolute truth is a possibility.

The possibility of the unknown validates the postmodern agent playing superficially in all situations. This principle, a desire for the unknown, acts like a science in that it validates all

desires without making any distinction between them. All desires are equally significant in that they can lead to the unknown. This desire for the unknown is another metaprescription or meta-rule that validates all of the agent's desires. Validates is perhaps too strong a word as it is more that Lyotard is not interested since any desire is as good as any other. The postmodern agent just plays, not being too serious about any desire other than the desire for the unknown. This seems to be the ultimate significance of playing, that it might lead to parology. However is this significant desire, the desire for the unknown, Lyotard's grand narrative or principle or the foundation for the postmodern agent's desires?. Lyotard explicitly rejects the notion of a foundation or grounds as an illusion or at best, nostalgia. However if we imagine it as the principle that guides the postmodern agent's conduct, we can see it as this agent's basic purpose. In our example of a fear of public speaking, we could come to see that fear as irrational because we saw that it interfered with our basic purpose, a career in teaching. This is what would happen to the postmodern agent if s/he stayed too long anywhere; his/her basic purpose, the quest for the unknown would be ruled out. However my desire for a certain career or life is something that I just cannot overcome in the same way. To allow my fear to overcome my more basic purpose is something that is more difficult to do and something that would profoundly affect the way I think of myself. While I could be wrong here about my basic purpose, Lyotard does not want to allow that his basic purpose, the principle of the unknown, could be wrong since he never thinks that this standard need validating. However if we could never be wrong about our basic purpose, this would seem to allow fanatics to terrorize and murder. While we might think of the desire for the unknown as a basic purpose, the postmodern agent should not, for Lyotard, be too conscious of this; this can only be alluded to. While Lyotard wants to put forward the search for the unknown as a principle, he does not really want to think about it. In contrast, Blum & McHugh want to reflect on the significance that principles, themselves have for us; to

become more conscious of our principles. While they want to say that there is something essential about principles in a way that is different from rules, they also want to evaluate this difference; to see the worth of a difference. In theorizing an undertaking, Blum & McHugh want us to become more conscious of our principles, to evaluate our basic purpose.

The postmodern agent is situated between the known, science, and the unknown, parody. The known as:

“ knowledge (or information, if you will), and the reserve of knowledge-language’s reserve of possible utterances-is inexhaustable. ” (1992:67).

Knowledge, as information, constitute the language games that are presently available for the postmodern agent to play. These known games are just facts or information that are presented to the postmodern agent who takes or leaves them as his/her feelings incline them. The agent has no responsibility for articulating any part of the situation other than the validation that comes from the agent agreeing to play it. While not being too conscious of what they are doing, the postmodern agent could articulate new moves or games. This would be accidental and not really anything much to do with any agent’s original intentions. The unknown, then, is both knowledge that has not yet been articulated, new language games, and also a lack of knowledge about what the agent is doing. The postmodern agent does not really know what s/he is proposing since Lyotard does not want the agent to think too much about that. We could say that the postmodern agent’s ends are unknown although the means, the quest for parody, is known. Lyotard thinks that our need for the unknown, new language games through parody, will allow us to play and develop new games. These ends are what the postmodern actor needs his/her health to pursue. The unknown, for Lyotard, is something that could, in principle, be a possibility in the postmodern world. Lyotard talks about the possibility of a world of perfect information where

everyone has access to all information. Here, the whole (perfect knowledge) is always a possibility for the agent (the one). Then, in the world of perfect information, his dream of the whole and the one would be realized. Since all the combinations, the reserve of possible utterances is inexhaustible, the postmodern agent would spend his/her life playing with the combinations provided by perfect knowledge. Can we say, then, that Lyotard's world of perfect information is his nostalgia for the whole and the one. Yet Lyotard wants to dismiss this totality as an illusion. Health, as playing, seems to have its foundations in an illusion. Health, for Lyotard, seemed to be a matter of pursuing knowledge towards completeness; the dream of the whole. The limits for the postmodern actor were mathematical; action was limited to an infinite number of combinations. Does the postmodern actor know that his ends are given or would this be unknown?. He fears the totalitarian instincts of science and so he embraces the totality of knowledge. We can see that his purposes are illusions. Since his version of health does not evaluate itself, it fails to see this as an illusion. Rather than developing, the postmodern agent is now longer constrained by science but also by the totality of knowledge. Development, here, is limited by knowledge; the agent can only develop in the technical way prescribed by knowledge. New rules, as new language games, are articulated within the prescriptions of knowledge. The postmodern actor understands him/herself as a rule-follower and nothing more. The trick can be performed in one of two ways. Firstly, the postmodern actor, may not know (he has a lack) and simply play the game in perfect innocence of its ends; this is a charge against science. Alternatively, the postmodern actor knows that knowledge is his limits, in which case he almost acts in bad faith. In either case there is no authentic health. Both play within a version of health limited, could we say terrorized, by knowledge. There is no authoritative sense of health here, individual health amounts to being free to do what anyone could do. Health is a question of technique, the technical use of the rules. Whether through innocence or bad faith, the

postmodern actor, can only develop technically since his ends are already there. The best that Lyotard formulates that the postmodern actor can do is to produce new games.

Performativity, the criteria of science, is also now the criteria for postmodernism. Success, for the postmodern actor, would be an increase in productivity, the production of new and more games. As Lyotard points out, speed is a crucial feature of performativity, and the postmodern world of perfect information will increase the speed and generation of new games. Parology and performativity merge, become a one, in the postmodern world; Lyotard's dream of the whole and the one has been realized. While the postmodern agent might consider parology to be different from performativity, science's 'smiling into its beard' has shown him/her the harsh reality of knowledge. Knowledge can make a difference between parology and performativity, but this difference can only be sustained by knowledge. Knowledge formulates a rule that parology and performativity are different. The postmodern actor is given no opportunity to reflect on the limits of knowledge or is it just that rules do come to an end ?. Justice, then, would consist in us being terrorized or coerced by knowledge into just stopping. Lyotard gives us no method for freeing us from the terrors of knowledge. The postmodern actor understands him/herself as being circumscribed by knowledge. Development can only be within the limits prescribed by knowledge; the metaprescription that the postmodern agent imagined that s/he had escaped from. Knowledge as our limits cannot reflect on itself since it cannot imagine anything other than itself and so there remains nothing to reflect on except in the external generation of criteria developed by knowledge itself. In contrast, Blum & Mchugh give us a method, self-reflection, that can evaluate knowledge (*rules*), not based on external criteria (other *rules*), but one grounded in moral sources (*principles*).

While the healthy postmodern agent plays, the possibility of the unknown, which the postmodern agent is not fully conscious about, exists. While the agent acts on the basis of desire, new moves or rules are validated 'too late for the author'. This seems to produce an agent who is not clear about what s/he is doing and so as one not fully responsible for what s/he does or says. What makes any action significant, for the postmodern agent, will be the articulation of new moves or rules. What makes these new rules more significant than the old rules will be simply that they are new. This is how the notion of health as playing justifies itself; in the possibility of new moves. While Lyotard wanted to say that new moves or rules were the values that each agent unconsciously sought, the value of this new move would be temporary. While Lyotard wanted to formulate the unknown as a universal value, we can see that this value does not exist for very long. This new move, as soon as it was articulated would lose its value by becoming just like any other move. Each new move or rule, previously unknown, formulated by the postmodern actor would be something that any other agent could subscribe to. However, no one could be serious about this new game as it would be something that any agent could take or leave. Differences between old and new would be temporary and would only last as long as it took to create or invent it. The value of the difference between the old and the new seems to lie in the notion of production. What is good about a new rule is that is new production. While Lyotard would want to resist performativity as a value since it was concerned with production, increased output, he thinks that paralogy is different. However we see, here, that his paralogy has the same production value as performativity. There is no essential difference, no principle, between performativity and paralogy; to be healthy here would be to be a producer.

Lyotard did not want his agent to reflect, to become too conscious of either his fear of science or his significant purpose. Reflecting on this fear would have allowed him to see that this fear was

constituted from a version of science and technology as sheer terrorism or destructiveness (Blum, 1986). If Lyotard could have evaluated science, he could have seen the good that science can do. It is not that science is all good or all bad, but reflecting on its value, in each situation, would have allowed Lyotard to evaluate his fear. However, since he conceives of science as 'totalizing', he thinks that he does not need to think about his fear and so his fear is something that he cannot overcome. While he fears that science can do violence to our lives, he thinks that the only solution is to play. Here science, formulated as the 'madness of invention', seems to Lyotard as something that could do violence to our life. All work, whether science or postmodernism, is invention. Lyotard cannot make any distinction between science or postmodernism, parody or performativity; he fears what he produces and he produces what he fears. The postmodern agent is circumscribed by knowledge and production, knowing and making (Arendt, 1989). Rather than thinking about these limits, which put him at the mercy of knowledge, Lyotard thinks that we should just play. The point for Blum & McHugh is not that one should fear science but that one should develop a principled relationship to it. What are his books but invention or production, or something that he just had to fear?. Lyotard's version of health would restrict the agent to being a producer. This is Garfinkel's and Parson's version of knowledge where human agency was limited and evaluated in terms of production. The postmodern agent understands him/herself as a producer. However, as we noted earlier, this can only be achieved if we can get some distance from situations and refuse to reflect on the way our principles constitute situations. Self reflection allows us to reflect on this production in two crucial ways. Firstly, it allows us to see what part of the situation is our responsibility and which part is objectively there outside of our control. And secondly, to evaluate this responsible production. While Lyotard wanted to say that knowledge was our limits, Blum & McHugh want

to say that knowledge itself can be theorized in terms of its moral requiredness and that this reflection can allow the agent to develop.

How does the agent develop in Blum & Mchugh's version of health as acting on principles ?.

Health, as principles, allows us to explore our limits by exploring the limits of any notion.

Nussbaum formulates these limits as our common understandings. We saw, in our example of Agamemnon, how Nussbaum had to work hard to ensure that her agent worked within these limits. We saw that her method of keeping her agent within these limits was based on her decision just to stop with what she assumed was self-evidently in front of the actor; situations faced by actors were tacitly understood as objectively there. The actor's role was to make the best of any situation. Nussbaum, then, needed a distance between her agent and the situation since her agent was not involved in an articulation of the situation. Lyotard's agent is formulated in a similar way. Lyotard's agent is articulated as a communication post where situations are constantly passing through. The postmodern agent is surrounded by these situations but is not essentially involved in the articulation of these situations. In this sense, the situation is objectively there in front of the agent. What the postmodern agent's health amounts to is his/her freedom to choose any of these objectively available situations to support. Life, like this, is indeed a game. Think of Monopoly as the life of the postmodern agent. The game, like any situation, comes to the players enclosed in a box, with its own rules. Of course, the agent can refuse to play the game; s/he cannot be coerced into playing. Whether the agent decides to play the game is based on the agent's own desires. The game imposes an equality on the players by requiring them to follow the rules; all players are bound by the rules. Any player can leave the game at any moment. Whether or not it is a good game or situation is a matter for the agent; if s/he is playing the game it is, for Lyotard, enough validation that any game could expect. The

postmodern world is a world of inexhaustible games or situations that the postmodern agent is free to take or leave. It is possible that the agent may decide to play the wrong game but the hope is that in the Utopian world of perfect information, the individual agent's validation of him/herself will be complete. Self-understanding will be complete when the postmodern agent has perfect knowledge. This is the limits for the postmodern agent. While s/he understands him/herself as being essentially distanced from games or situations, the perfect choice of games awaits perfect knowledge. In contrast Blum & McHugh see perfect knowledge as an, in principle, impossibility. For them, our limits reside in moral sources rather than in epistemological sources. While Lyotard might want to base our self-understanding on knowledge, Blum & McHugh want to show the moral character of this understanding. Lyotard's agent, by limiting his/her actions to the following or not of rules, acts, for Blum & McHugh, with a weak version of morality.

The postmodern world is composed of inexhaustible situations or games with their own rules; the actor is free to pick or leave any rule on the basis of his/her desires. We have seen, from Taylor's work, that the absence of a grand view, our basic purposes, can lead the agent to act against his/her interests. The postmodern agent understands him/herself as essentially a game player, the same as everyone else. This agent plays and stops playing games whenever s/he wants. The agent's relationship to the game is limited by desire and this relationship is never questioned; the agent either plays or doesn't. To understand self is to come to see self in other, other is something that is essential for self-understanding. In postmodernism, other is only a technical limit. In the postmodern ideal world other would be nothing more than that not yet formulated. To be able to say it all, perfect information, would be to abolish other. This is the postmodern ideal where self and other collapse into sameness. Self-understanding, for the

postmodern actor, can be complete when s/he understands him/herself as essentially the same as everyone else. The postmodern agent raises this knowledge to a principle of sameness; that we are all subject to eventual cancellation. In contrast to Lyotard who wants to formulate a theory of individual health which, if practiced, would give the agent possibly less health, Blum & McHugh see principles and a reflection on them as essential for any notion of health. If there is to be such a thing as individuality, a theory must be able to draw attention to itself rather than hide behind the anonymity of radical sameness.

Principles, as formulated by Blum & McHugh, are standards that are both internal to and external to the agent. Principles are the moral values or commitments that a principled actor would orient to in formulating a situation. While some theorists, including Nussbaum and Lyotard, would see the situation as objectively there, Blum & McHugh see any formulation of the situation as being 'interested', that is, constitutive of the agent's identity. The task for the principled actor is to see these principles and ultimately to evaluate these principles in action. All action, for Blum & McHugh, will show its principles, what it really needs, in its articulation. Their method, self-reflection, allows the principled actor to 'go through the steps' in evaluating any situation. This allows the principled actor to evaluate these principles; this can lead to the actor's development. Health, as principles, allows the principled actor to see his/her principles in his/her practice. What is objectively there, for Blum & McHugh, is principles. In Lyotard's terms, principles would be an obstacle to health, something that his agent should not be serious about. Principles, for Blum & McHugh, are moral sources which are a constitutive part of the agent's identity. These principles help shape any articulation of the situation. Self-reflection allows us to become more conscious of these principles in our articulation of any situation. In this sense, self-reflection allows the agent to 'think again' about his/her principles. Principles

then, are not simply the subjective attitude of the actor, understanding, here, being the subjective understanding of the actor. The limits for this kind of actor would reside in the notion of interpretation. Self-reflection allows the principled actor to think again about his/her interpretation. This is not the infinite regress, the interpretation of interpretation, all future interpretation being as good or bad as any other. By showing the grounds, or principles inherent in the self-reflective interpretation, Blum & McHugh want to show the good of the interpretation; the values that the interpretation orients to. Rather than interpretation, which justifies itself in terms of another rule, another interpretation, Blum & McHugh want to demonstrate, in the interpretation, the principles or good reasons that constitute the interpretation. While some, Lyotard and Nussbaum, might formulate their interpretative actor as interpreting a situation that is objectively there, they can only do so by effecting a reconciliation between science and hermeneutics, the dream of the whole and the one. In postmodernism, the agent and the situation, theory and practice, are essentially disconnected. Postmodernism is a method for effecting this connection, a bridge or technology that connects the agent to the situation until the bridge, like any technology, is updated. Self-reflection, however, begins with the agent and the situation as essentially connected, in the middle of things. With this beginning, the self-reflective actor orients to the fluidity of his/her connection with the situations. Situations, for the self-reflective actor, are not external but are constitutive of his/her identity.

Blum & McHugh's principled actor shows his principles in his practice. Principles, as basic purposes, in Taylor's terms, show us the significance of our practice. In any situation, the principled actor can reflect on his principles and their constitutive relationship with the situation. This allows the principled actor to see which part of any situation he has a responsibility and which part is outside her/his control. Situations, then, are opportunities for the principled agent

to reflect on his/her principles and to come to see him/her more clearly. Rather than, with Cartesian reflection, standing back from the situation, Blum & McHugh's self-reflection is their method of coming to see the principles that constitute both the actor and the situation. This method allows the agent to discriminate between the *essential*, part of the agent's identity, or *accidental*, outside the agent's control. This method allows the agent to develop his/her own self-understanding and its reflexive possibilities. Their version of health as principles allows any agent to exercise responsibility for his/her actions and to act in a decisive way. As the principled agent thinks about what healthy action is needed, in situations, the agent comes to see him/herself more clearly and what s/he needs to develop: The healthy agent, in formulating principled action, is ironic in that principles can never say it all. While the principled agent grasps for the absolute truth of a notion such as health, s/he knows that the difference between principles and the absolute truth is something essential. To obliterate this difference would be to reduce the particularity of the principled agent to the universal agent dreamed of by science. A principled version of health needs this essential difference so that any particular agent can develop: Health, as formulated by postmodernism dreams of obliterating this difference, of reducing us all to the sameness and conformity of science.

Conclusion

Health as principles is acting out of a sense of moral commitment rather than, as with postmodernism, developing ways of conforming 'strategically'. Principles are not a strategy, for Blum & McHugh, but an engagement in each particular situation. Principles allow the healthy agent to see each situation as principled. Principles are not, as with postmodernism and much of modern theory, situated within the endless cycle of knowledge and production. In our

examination of postmodernism, we saw that knowledge and production are used to validate each other. Here the healthy agent did not have to think, s/he had simply to conform. While Lyotard imagined that his agent could simply play, all that s/he could really do was conform, become the 'helpless slave of knowledge. In contrast we saw how principles, rather than conforming to knowledge and production, were a thoughtful response to both. As we have seen, principles are not simply external to both, evaluating both production and knowledge from a distance.

Principles are both internal and external to both knowledge and production in that they are the moral grounds of both. Principles allow us to act healthily by allowing us to think about both knowledge and production. Rather than allowing knowledge to determine what is there to be seen in any situation, principles allow us to evaluate the situation, see the good of a situation.

This allows the principled agent to formulate healthy action as more than just production.

Principles allow the healthy agent to act decisively and responsibly in each particular situation.

Self-reflection, as responsible resistance, allows the healthy agent to develop his/her health by coming to see, becoming more conscious, of the principles involved in any situation. Healthy action, as principled action, is moral in that the principled agent has decided to act for good reasons rather than out of a sense of obligation. The healthy, principled agent can think about obligations and undertake to conform or otherwise as a sign of their particularity.

Health, as principles, allows each individual to develop in a thoughtful way. To act morally is to think about what one is going to do and to act because one has decided that this is what one should do. Blum & McHugh, want to give us a method, self-reflection, for thinking about what we are doing, so that our actions can be principled. Choice, in any situation, is a healthy and principled choice. Choice, here, is a choice made with a self-conscious grasp of what is involved in any choice. In the next chapter, we will examine the work of Charles Taylor. In his work,

Taylor wants to say that our choices are moral choices that have their ground in principles or moral sources.

Chapter 4. Health as Engagement.

Introduction

In Chapter 3 we examined the work of Blum & McHugh who formulated health as principles. Health as principles were seen to be a clearer articulation of the involvement of the agent in situations. In any situation, the principled agent could think about what was essential and what was circumstantial. Blum & McHugh wanted to say that what their agent always needed was a sense of themselves as principled. Principles, a constitutive part of the agent's identity, was something that situations could allow the agent to think again or reflect on. In this way the agent could come to see and articulate what s/he essentially needed in any situation. To say something more or become more conscious allowed the principled agent to develop his/her health. Any notion, whether health or freedom, was seen to essentially need a principled interpretation rather than one constituted by rules. Contrary to theories such as postmodernism, principles were not simply coercive but could also allow the agent to develop in a principled way. Health, constituted by rule, allowed an actor to develop in a superficial way by just changing one rule for another. Here, there was no real development and the agent seemed to run the risk of damaging his/her health or limiting their freedom. In this chapter we will examine the work of someone who seems to share Blum & McHugh's notion of principles. Like Blum & McHugh, Charles Taylor thinks that our identity is something that we bring to each situation. The task for Taylor's agent is to evaluate each situation in terms of the agent's identity and like Blum & McHugh, Taylor also thinks that this identity could be a topic as well as a resource. He provides a method,

strong evaluation, which like self-reflection, allows the agent to think about what s/he wants to do in terms of essential rather than contingent desires and commitments.

i. *The. Moral Self*

"The really difficult thing is distinguishing the human universals from the historical constellations and not eliding the second into the first so that our particular way seems somehow inescapable for humans as such, as we are always tempted to do". (Taylor 1992 :112)

"My identity is defined by the commitments and identifications which provide the frame or horizon within which I can try to determine from case to case what is good, or valuable, or what ought to be done, or what I endorse or oppose. " (Taylor 1992:27)

Charles Taylor, in *'Sources of the Self' (1992)*, aims to retrieve the moral foundations of the modern identity by examining the continuities and contrasts in the historical development of the modern conceptions of the self. Taylor's work, 'part chronological and part analytical', seeks to uncover the richness and plurality of modernity as a response to its impoverishment by modern notions of radical, individual freedom. Taylor wants to challenge the modern and postmodern versions of the human agent as an uncommitted self with radical choices; the Autonomous Self. Taylor wants to show that even a commitment to the notion of our being agents who have individual freedom to act also presupposes other commitments to such modern life-goods as human dignity, respect and benevolence. The modern notion of ourselves as autonomous, free agents, and we all see ourselves to a greater or lesser extent like this, is, for Taylor, to mis-read our situation. For Taylor, situations are only articulated using certain unspoken assumptions about modern life goods as a resource, including the good of ordinary life. His work, in articulating the concrete historical origins of the modern self, aims at showing that even the modern or postmodern human agent is committed to certain life goods without which human agency would be incomprehensible. For Taylor the good self is universally committed to modern life-goods such as ordinary life, the relief of suffering, universal freedom, the dignity of

human beings and respect for all living things. These life goods, our universal commitments, are interpreted differently in particular contexts but they nevertheless are universally agreed as being good in themselves. For Taylor, even the worst tyrants claim a commitment to these goods.

For Taylor, the modern self has developed from Enlightenment Science and Romanticism which have influenced each other. While today, they are often seen as opposites, like art and science, Taylor wants to show that they often shared the same foundations or moral sources and are much closer to each other than they seem at first to be. While Enlightenment Science, articulated through such figures as Descartes, Locke and Kant, wanted to want us to dis-engage from both the world and ourselves through their objective methods, Romanticism seems to want us to become more involved in our explorations of both ourselves and the world. Taylor wants to show the assumptions that both share and the common ground that they both shared in articulating their particular differences from each other. Taylor, like Blum & McHugh, wants to resist both Enlightenment Science and Romanticism as being too narrow and individualistic. He wants to show that our modern conception of ourselves as an agent who has a self is a product of historical constellations that began with Augustine. Through Augustine and the Enlightenment to Romanticism, our whole view of ourselves has undergone transformations which have taken us away from older, more 'cosmic' interpretations of human agency. While the older, more theistic versions of ourselves as situated within a cosmic order have given way to secular and naturalistic sources of order, Taylor wants to show how each have help constitute the modern agent. The modern self, for Taylor, is constituted by certain universal commitments which have their foundation in moral sources.

Taylor's work wants to trace the different historical conceptions of the self from The Greeks through to modernity. What, for Taylor, has powered these differences has been their grounds in moral sources. For Taylor, these moral sources provide a continuous ground for our view of the modern self. The modern self is committed to a plurality of life-goods that have their source in constitutive goods; goods that articulate what we find valuable in the life goods. The relationship between life goods and constitutive goods is sometimes circular but always essential. Modernity, with its formulation of these life goods as primary or privileged, often seems to close off for us a view of these constitutive goods. Taylor wants to recover this view of the essential relationship between life goods and constitutive goods. Although there is universal agreement about the importance of the modern life-goods, there is disagreement concerning the constitutive goods. Taylor formulates this disagreement as forgetfulness or even self-delusion and wants to show us, historically, how essential each moral source has been and how they contributed to the development of modern life goods. Our modern moral sources whether Theistic, Enlightenment or Romantic have developed from each other; Taylor articulates these moral sources as continuity, a mutual need for each other. It is, for Taylor, the interaction of our moral sources and life goods that give a depth to our lives. Taylor wants to show us how essential these constitutive goods are as the foundation of modern life goods. By showing the essential relationship between life-goods and constitutive goods, Taylor wants to re-assess the modern identity in terms of the depth of its moral commitments. Taylor uses the changing conceptions of the self, throughout history, as a method of examining this relationship:

Taylor wants to show that, historically, neither the articulation of constitutive goods nor life-goods has priority in this relationship; they depend on each other. These moral frameworks are the frameworks within which we make sense of our lives as human beings. We have, as human

beings, thinks Taylor, certain universal moral intuitions, such as respect for all human beings, which seem to be instinctive, we instinctively feel that human beings are worthy of respect. Behind this instinctive claim and sometimes in front of it is the notion of the 'nature and status' of human beings; this is to formulate certain 'ontological' grounds for our moral reactions. For Taylor, an important strand of modernity seeks to do away with ontological accounts of morality in favour of a simpler, more concrete and naturalistic account of morality. The modern naturalistic account of morality takes its strength from its successes in natural science and wants to do away with the 'speculative' nature of ontological accounts. This epistemological version of morality has, for Taylor, been in danger of losing sight of its need for a given ontology of the human. In *Sources of the Self*, Taylor seeks to restore this moral ontology to its essential place in any discussion as to what it means to be a human agent. Taylor does this by showing the continuities and contrasts in both epistemological and ontological accounts of the self .

For Taylor, the modern identity is the result of a tension between 'ontological' and 'naturalistic' versions of the constitutive goods. These constitutive goods, Taylor's moral sources, include Platonism, Theism, The Enlightenment and The Romantic Era. These moral sources have underwritten the changing notions of the self, the human agent. The original ontological sources beginning with Plato and developing through theistic variants such as the Judaea-Christian religions looked outside the self for a moral order. Plato's notion of the self located in a cosmic order or Christianity's notion of God's kingdom oriented the human agent and gave it purposes outside of our ability to control. Responsibility, for this kind of self located within an external order, consisted in reaching out for this order. The 'inward turn', characteristic of the modern version of the self, originates with St. Augustine, who makes the first-person standpoint "*fundamental to our search for truth*" (1992:133). For Taylor, Augustine's search for God was

formulated firstly as within ourselves. Augustine shows that certain truths are not the property of an individual but are a common reality that we all share. These truths such as wisdom or numbers are not capable of being judged by ourselves but are common standards that transcend the individual. Since we are not responsible for these common standards it follows, for Augustine, that these truths, these common standards, point to God. For Augustine, our search for God begins with the reality of these common standards, which ground our activities. The human agent, for Augustine, must search within him/herself to discover these principles or common standards; that is the way to truth, to God. For it is God who guides our striving to know our-selves: self-knowledge being our way not just to truth, but to God. God and these truths are, for Augustine, to be found with an inner exploration. Augustine originates this 'inward turn', which is more definitively articulated by Descartes. Descartes' break with the notion of an external standard and his arrival at the stance of disengagement, focussed even more clearly on the notion of truth as inner certainty. For Taylor, Descartes begins with Augustine's method of reaching higher, sources by formalising the inward turn. Beginning with ourselves as thinking beings, the Cogito, Descartes formulates the correct procedures for gaining any certainty about the world through his articulation of the rational method. For Descartes, truth as certainty could be found in the mind if we are able to disengage from the world. For Taylor, Descartes' 'procedural' rationality differs from the earlier 'substantive rationality'. Substantive rationality is when we correctly grasp the order of things which exist independent of our will; for Taylor, this was still Augustine's position. With Descartes and rationality now defined procedurally according to standards we construct for ourselves, certainty and truth are to be found in our mind, essentially disengaged from both the world and our bodies. For Taylor, Descartes' picture of the disengaged subject with rational procedures for knowing both him/herself is able, by objectifying his/her desires, feelings and needs, to win control over the self so that

we are able to make the appropriate adjustments to ourselves. The modern emergence of the 'disciplines' in the eighteenth and nineteenth century resulted from this view that we could control our selves through disciplined action. For example, much of Michel Foucault's work is an exploration, in his own terms, of the rise of these new forms of discipline in hospitals and asylums and their focus on self-discipline (Foucault, 1977). For Descartes this disengagement from ourselves can give us the control over ourselves that can lead to certainty both about ourselves and the world.

For Taylor, Locke goes further in articulating this disengagement from ourselves and the world. Locke's method of disengagement exhorts us to suspend all customs and habits and to examine them according to the canons of procedural rationality. Beginning with a suspension of belief places responsibility clearly on us to construct things anew. This constructive work was reflected in Locke's 'building blocks' theory of the mind. This notion, a powerful modern idea, that we are able to re-make ourselves, gives us control over ourselves by showing us that we are free to do anything by suspending any constraints on our thinking. For Locke, what our thinking is aiming for is pleasure or happiness. This combination of voluntarism and hedonism has had effects that originate our modern notion of us having a self with radical freedom. Locke's notion of the human agent as possessing a self and having the freedom and the method (disengagement) to pursue the path to happiness continues to exert a tremendous influence in modern times. For Taylor, Locke's 'Punctual Self', was the precursor, refined through Enlightenment science, of the modern variants of the self as an object capable of being re-fashioned and re-made.

The radical, reflexive turn of the Enlightenment paradoxically for Taylor, produces both an objective self, to be worked on, and a subjective stance of 'I' being the one who articulates. For

Taylor, the subjective I is an essential condition for the adoption of the Enlightenment version of a detached, objective self. The Enlightenment, for Taylor, produced our modern version of the human agent as a self with inner depths to be explored. The mind, through the Enlightenment, becomes the locus for this self-exploration. Self-knowledge, with the Enlightenment, was to be found in the minds of self and others. The Enlightenment and its production of the universal mind, placed responsibility for following its rational method on the individual self. For Taylor, we become, with the Enlightenment, responsible for taking this inward turn, reflexivity, as a method for becoming more aware of who we are and how we think. However, following Descartes and Locke and the new Enlightenment science, human agency was given unlimited power to fashion the world and self, including nature, to its particular purposes; self-making becomes our responsibility. The Enlightenment and its location of knowledge within us, in the mind, gives the self the responsibility for thinking according to its rational method. Rationality in the Enlightenment is for Taylor, now formulated procedurally using the canons of natural science. The older version of rationality, Taylor's substantive rationality, which focuses on the content of thought, is overcome with this modern procedural version of reason. In the Enlightenment the self becomes formulated as detached consciousness that is able to make and re-make all the particulars of the world including our selves. In its practices, including science, this Enlightenment produced evidence of its benefits to mankind and so philosophy and practice seemed to re-enforce each other. The power of re-making was formulated in the Enlightenment as within ourselves and our responsibility. Taylor resists the Enlightenment version of the human agent for a number of reasons.

For Taylor, this view of the human agent is unreflective. To take an objective view of the world and self is, for Taylor, to fail to see that we are situated in the world and cannot always get away from our first person experience of the world. He points out that :

" when we see something surprising, or something which disconcerts us, or which we can't quite see, we normally react by setting ourselves to look more closely; we alter our stance, perhaps rub our eyes, concentrate, and the like" (Taylor, 1992 : 163).

The kind of disengagement that Locke calls for is a different kind of method that calls for us to abandon these kind of everyday practices, our natural inclinations. This kind of disengagement assumes a mechanical universe and rejects the notion of our having any natural inclinations which are formulated, by Locke, as excess baggage or 'rubbish' that restricts our thinking. By adopting this objective stance, Locke frees us from any subjective attachments to ourselves or the world. More importantly, this objective stance tries to 'neutralize' both the world and our experience of it. For Taylor, while it is theoretically possible, the natural science model is an example of this objective impulse, it is neither practical nor desirable. The rise of the disciplinary methods shows us the difficulty of even adopting a detached, objective stance to ourselves and the world. While there has been some successes in specialized contexts, the disciplines have not succeeded in getting us to abandon our direct experiences of the world. This particular method remains the exclusive preserve of the expert and even s/he does not live like this. This kind of objective stance calls for the separation of work and life which industrialization made more possible. It requires the complete removal of the individual in influencing situations and we have, for Taylor, all bought into enough of modernity to subscribe to the notion of individuality and to reject this aspiration to neutrality. Even this third-person perspective, for Taylor, needs a first-person stance, an 'I' who disengages. This is the paradox, for Taylor, inherent in modern naturalism; that radical objectivity is grounded in radical

subjectivity. Modern naturalism and its scientific offshoots do not reflect on their essential need for subjectivity and the kind of agent who is doing the objectifying.

While the Enlightenment formulated a universal method for taking the reflexive turn, it was grounded in the notion of a universal human agent; common life became common minds (Arendt:1989). Romanticism, a resistance to the objective detachment of the Enlightenment, formulated the notion of subjectivity while keeping the notion of individuality and its highest expression as a power within us. For Taylor, resistance to this view of self responsible freedom can be seen in the work of Montaigne. Montaigne, while continuing Augustine's inward turn, found within himself such instability and disorder that he turned to nature for guidance and limits. For Montaigne, in Taylor's work, the human condition must be situated within natural limits and the way to self discovery was not the third person observations of Locke's 'punctual self' but the first person exploration of self's inner depths. The universal attributes of the human that science formulated through its universal rational method contrasted with Montaigne's assertion of individual difference through self-exploration. For Montaigne, each of us must seek our particular self-knowledge through this inner exploration. Whereas Descartes and Locke called for a disengagement from our particular first person experiences of the world, Montaigne demanded a deeper engagement with our individual, particular nature. For Taylor, modern notions of individualism owe something to both Descartes and Locke with their notion of individual freedom and Montaigne's idea of individual difference. Both strands, the disengaged objective sciences of the Enlightenment and Montaigne's subjective engagement as a resistance to objectivity helped formulate our modern notion of the individual self; a unitary self of rationality (Enlightenment) and sensibility (Romanticism).

In the following centuries both strands were developed in contrary directions but both were grounded in the principle of individual, human dignity. In the Enlightenment, Kant, following Descartes and Locke, sought to restore a morality as universal reason to us. Continuing Montaigne's notion of nature as the source of the human condition, Rousseau sought this natural source. For Taylor, a third strand of the modern identity, that of personal commitment, grew out of both these diverse origins of modern individualism. Contract theory and the notion of consent all grew out of the idea of personal, individual commitment; all modern theories tend to begin with the individual. This notion of individual consent or commitment seems obvious to moderns; it seems self-evidently the case that we can freely choose what our commitments will be. The whole idea of individual rights is based on the 'common sense' idea that fundamentally we are individuals and that society or any collective is produced by the consent of individuals. Yet for Taylor this idea of the primacy of the individual is too quick and unreflecting. For individualistic beginnings gather their strength from their obvious plausibility. Taylor's work wants to show that there are commitments that are prior to the individual, commitments that we universally subscribe to. These commitments are not subject to our individual will and are part of what has become the modern identity. Taylor shows that, historically, there have been notions that have been formulated prior to the individual; for example in Montesquieu's notion of 'citizen virtue' or the 'civic-humanist' movements evident today but also historically in the revolutionary movements in France and America in the eighteenth century. Taylor wants to show us that these commitments or common standards are an integral part of our modern identity which we bring to each situation.

For Taylor, both Enlightenment naturalism and paradigmatic writers such as Montaigne formulated a new version of the human agent as a self with inner depths and individual

sensibilities; a version which is the dominant one today. Yet both the punctual self and the self of individual differences and sensibilities were formulated within a theistic framework. Theism, an older constitutive good, still circumscribed these newer, enlightened versions of the self. Taylor identifies the change away from a transcendental order such as the Good or God to a more 'naturalistic' account of human beings in the work of people like Shaftesbury. The idea of sentiment as an internal, 'natural' attribute is first formulated by Hutcheson but is given an atheistic turn by Shaftesbury. For Plato, we love the Good because it is good, but with Hutcheson and Shaftesbury we love the good (God) because we have a natural affection for it, being part of it. From this time onwards, the role of sentiment assumes greater import and leads to the modern ethic of benevolence and the articulation of the person as the bearer of natural and inalienable rights. Enlightenment science, the separation of mind and nature, produced its own resistances to itself as rational method. While Locke formulated a disengaged stance to nature, firstly Montaigne and subsequently Hutcheson wanted a fuller engagement with nature as both inner and outer moral source. For Hutcheson, we as God's creatures, have a natural affection for each other, a sympathy, which we can discover within ourselves and in nature. The sciences of the Enlightenment, in their advance, showed the interconnectedness of each thing in the universe. The world was formulated as a whole, firstly a providential and later a natural order, with each separate thing functioning as part of the whole. The world as this harmonious relationship of parts was seen as a good; to be good was to act according to nature.

The Enlightenment, in the figure of Kant, had provided us with a rational method for acting morally. For Taylor, Kant sought to restore a morality as universal reason to us. Kant's formulation of morality places responsibility on us to follow the procedures of practical reasoning and live by its principles; this is a radical self-responsible freedom whose source is

within us as rational beings. The self-responsible agent now had a duty to get in touch with his/her rational self. In contrast to this was the more 'natural' guidance of nature, more fully articulated by Rousseau. While Kant wanted to emphasise our autonomy as rational agents, Rousseau saw nature as both an inner and outer source for our moral deliberations. Both universal reason and nature were the two sources, for Taylor, that constituted the modern identity. The older version of an external order that needed the 'higher' kind of life such as seclusion or contemplation was superseded by the elevation of the ordinary life of labour, love and the simplicity of natural life. The shift from a theistic to a secular, from a providential to a natural order, re-enforced the dignity of man and led to the celebration of the ordinary as an essential good for the modern self. For Taylor, both the Kantian autonomous agent and the Romantic movement were only made possible by the Enlightenment; resistance needs something to resist. The Enlightenment notion of inwardness was a crucial resource for what was to follow. The Romantic Movement, originally a resistance to disengaged reason, sought to integrate mind and nature. Early proponents such as Shaftesbury, Hutcheson and Rousseau were the originators, for Taylor, of Romanticism and 'the Expressivist turn'. Truth, for early Romantic writers was to be found within us, in our feelings and our connection with our natural selves. Mind, separated from nature, begins in Shaftesbury to be referred to as a self, an agent with internal qualitative motivations. With the Expressivist turn the focus is now on the expression of the quality of these motivations; a move to integrate the ethical and the aesthetic. The Romantic poets, such as Wordsworth and Holderlin, attempt to make manifest, to create this natural order through an integration of 'sensuality and spirituality'. With Romanticism, for Taylor, the agent both speaks to and listens to nature; this is his/her responsibility. Responsibility, for the Romantic self, resides in the adequacy of self expression; an adequacy defined by self. Self expression, the integration of mind and nature, is tied to a personal vision which struggles to

articulate in a 'subtler language' this integration. However, this notion of fulfillment and expression, at its limits, has led, for Taylor, to the modern notions of a narrow self-fulfillment where responsibility is formulated as 'doing your own thing' or 'finding yourself'. Mind, now responsible for knowing itself, pre-occupies itself in the last two centuries through its procedures (methods), in achieving a unity between it (self) and nature. Mind, as the locus of this self-knowledge, uses these methods to explore its own possibilities. There develops, for Taylor, a circumscribed, narrow version of the self that limits its possibilities to the productions of its mind; possibility limited to productivity.

In *'Sources of the Self'*, Taylor examines the constitutive relationship between the modern life goods that constitute the human agent and their moral sources. Taylor's work wants to show the historical continuity and development of our modern notions of human agency. He wants to show the moral sources that have constituted the modern identity by showing us how essential these moral sources are. The inward turn, articulated by Augustine, was powered by a search for God within us. The theistic source of our identity was overtaken by secular and natural variants which have been influential in constituting the modern identity. While there have been disagreements about these moral sources or frameworks in which we have articulated the modern individual, Taylor's work shows that some moral framework was essential. In a sense, then, Taylor answers Foucault's notion that we are not the same people who routinely mutilated and tortured our fellow citizens. Taylor instead wants to show a continuity in history in terms of our need for a moral framework. While it is true that witches were burned in the name of a moral source which led many people to reject that particular moral source, they could not, for Taylor, simply decide to do without any moral source. The dignity and autonomy of human beings replaced, for many, the outmoded notion of a God as moral justification for our practices. For

others, the notion of nature as moral source became an orienting framework, our task being to discover this within ourselves. How we come to see ourselves, whether radically free or situated in a larger order, Taylor's work shows us that we cannot do without these moral sources. These various moral sources are, for Taylor, constitutively related to our modern notions of human agency. The life goods of modernity such as our sense of human dignity and the good of ordinary life are mutually constitutive of these moral sources. The modern self, for Taylor, is universally committed to these life goods which only have significance within a horizon of moral sources. Some people live by a single moral source, in Taylor's work a 'hypergood'; the love of God is an example. This 'hypergood' can trump all other goods and we use it as a framework for all our evaluations. Others live with a plurality of moral sources. For Taylor, to be without any moral framework would be dis-oriented, to lose any sense of ourselves as human agents. The modern notion of 'alienation' shows us the consequences for moderns of losing touch with our moral sources.

Both Enlightenment and its counterpart, Romanticism, have articulated new moral sources or principles (Blum & McHugh, 1984), that have constituted the modern unitary agent. For Taylor, the modern identity, a mix of rationality and sensibility, has its sources in a theistic, a disengaged or natural source. Whatever the source, the notion of disengaged reason as well as the creative imagination are an integral part of modern notions of the self. The notion of an external order, unrefracted through personal making, seems unreal to modern sensibilities. Both Enlightenment science with its detached objective method and Romanticism with its radical subjectivity are too narrow and extreme for Taylor. The hope of disengaged reason, that we can extract ourselves from our experience of the world, seems not just something we find very difficult to maintain but something we wouldn't want to do all the time. Romanticism, in its earliest phases as a

description of nature, seemed less than adequate as a resistance to the technological successes of Enlightenment science. At the extremes, in its modern variants, it seemed to be nothing more than a celebration of the power of self expression. However its resistance to the notion of universal rationality and its formulation of a narrow, rational self re-enforced this inward turn. For Taylor, Enlightenment science with its unitary self as the centre of control and re-making of the world and Romanticism with its attempt to overcome reason with sensibility, both rely too narrowly on this view of a unitary self as the origin for our self-understanding. At their limits, moral sources tend toward the formulation of practices that are too narrow for Taylor; radical individualism and narrow self-fulfillment. Taylor, the 'realist', rejects the projectivist notion that all goods are subjective, products of our own making. He wants instead to steer a middle course between Enlightenment naturalism and Romantic expressivism through a language of 'personal resonances'. This realistic self sees subjectivism as part of the good life but also-acknowledges a place for universal goods, beyond the particular self, as being already there, not something that we are responsible for producing. For Taylor, Plato's Form of the Good looks naive, with its search for truth in a self-manifesting universe; responsibility being to get in touch with this external order. Taylor's realism is in accepting the plurality of modern goods while acknowledging a (in his case) theistic or moral source that can give these goods their ultimate value. Personal responsibility, for the realistic self, is through a language of personal resonances that can put us in touch with our moral sources. This is Taylor's development and our responsibility; to use these sources to articulate what we do in new and deeper ways. Taylor gives us a method for re-assessing our values and re-making our (selves). Practical rationality, Taylor's view of reality, is his method for getting us to recognize both our universal commitments and our particular identifications in each situation.

It is within a language of personal resonance that Taylor's self can transcend itself; retrieve the lived experience of the world. For Taylor, it is through a language of personal resonances that we we can move beyond the notion of a unitary self. For Taylor, both Enlightenment naturalism and Romantic Expressivism are grounded in the notion of this unitary self. A language of personal resonances, as well as being self-affirming, can help us escape from the artificial limits of a unitary self. Taylor's work, shows us the limits of this unitary self and also shows us the moral sources that powered this modern notion of a unitary self. Through a language of personal resonances the self reaches out to articulate the sources that empower us and so develop a deeper truth about the human. Taylor formulates a method that can give us a clearer, more realistic view of our place in the world by re-assessing what we do (practices) in terms of our moral commitments. His method is practical reasoning, a reasoning 'in transitions', which will give us the best account of our practices. Taylor's best account, his *B. A. principle*, collects the practices and formulates their grounds within the limits of the conceivable. For Taylor, our practices (discourses) that often hide their commitments to a particular moral order. Naturalistic accounts of human nature, for example science, claim that we function best when we free ourselves from the constraints of any imagined order of things external to ourselves; practice (science) defines its morality in terms of its method. The modern variants of naturalism include the demand for action to be totally voluntary; for the moral agent to be radically free to choose anything. Taylor disagrees with the notion of a radically free agent and his work is, in part an uncovering of the commitments that even a radically free agent needs if s/he is to be minimally a human agent. Freedom, for Taylor's agent, is a situated freedom, where universal commitments and 'particular identifications' provide us with an order, to make sense of the situation. As we have already indicated, Taylor uses the practical example where we take a look at something that surprises us or disconcerts us and rub our eyes or alter our position and concentrate. This second

look is a stronger form of engagement that we carry out to get a better purchase on what we see. Altering our stance, for Taylor, can allow us to be more explicit or more clearly articulate what our underlying commitments are: this can give us a clearer self-understanding

Practical rationality, Taylor's good view, originates in surprise, when we are confronted by the unexpected. Taylor's good view is a re-assessment, a closer engagement with the world and our commitments. Practical reasoning does not mean perception alone but also involves an emotional reaction to the situation; the good view has to 'move us' body and soul. Practical reasoning is the integration of seeing and feeling in an engagement with our commitments and the world. The good view, practical rationality, is a view of the good of human practices; a clearer articulation of what principles the practice is committed to. In this sense Taylor's practical rationality is not the same as giving a basic reason for the practice as articulated in Utilitarianism or the basic reason (the Good) Taylor detects in Plato. For Taylor, a basic reason is a reason that is external to the practice and fails to allow the practice to retain its individual presence or distinctness. For Taylor, it is not that a practice cannot be committed to a single good, it can, but rather that we must begin with the practice and allow it to reveal its commitments. Taylor's good view allows the implicit commitments in the practice to be uncovered. Rather it is the practices and the goods (commitments) articulated in the practice that can give us the good view of our moral sources and can help us to a fuller understanding of ourselves as agents with depth. Practical rationality, then, is Taylor's method, the good view, for getting us to re-assess our practices and our commitments to provide the best account of our lives. Taylor's historical 'retrieval' formulates the modern self as an agent with moral responsibility. Responsibility, for this agent, consists in integrating his/her self with their moral sources. Taylor gives us a method, practical rationality, to achieve this integration. Practical

rationality, for Taylor, gives us a good view of ourselves as agents with a moral responsibility towards our commitments. The good view, thinks Taylor, will provide the best account of our lives. Taylor's formidable work, an uncovering of the origins of the modern self, is a resistance to the idea of modernity as aimless or without value. Taylor, in his work, wants to affirm the good of modern life through an articulation of human goods (value). Taylor's work (self, Practice) must now be examined in the light of its appearance. What we need (method) is to question this appearance and recognize it as real.

ii The Situated Self

"This radical evaluation is a deep reflection, and a self-reflection in a special sense: it is a reflection about the self, its most fundamental issues, and a reflection which engages the self most wholly and deeply. " (Taylor 1985:42)

In *'Sources of the Self'*, Taylor wants us to see the essential involvement of our identity in our descriptions of the world and ourselves. Our descriptions of our selves and the situations that we encounter in our ordinary life are, for Taylor, essentially linked to the kind of agents we moderns are. This means, for Taylor, that reality is essentially refracted through a personal standpoint which we could not and should not try to disengage from. Taylor, in his work, examines the origins of modern theories of the human agent and his/her relationship with the world, expressed in Scientific and Romantic discourses. For Taylor, modernism has tended to obscure these origins and sources of our modern notions of the human agent and his/her involvement in the world. Taylor wants to uncover these sources and to trace their implications through to our modern practices, in our relationship with situations in the world.

Enlightenment Naturalism tries to formulate the human agent as ideally distanced from the world or situation. For Enlightenment Naturalism, a clear, distortion free view of things could be achieved by standing back, taking an objective look at things and situations. Science, the paradigm theory of Enlightenment Naturalism, formulated the relationship between this objective stance and our descriptions of the world as a mathematical one; the greater the objectivity, the more certain the description. This mathematical, instrumental stance has been responsible, thinks Taylor, for numerous benefits for mankind in general and for certain clearer, better articulated descriptions of our place in the world, for example, cosmology and astronomy. The instrumental mode of life, pointing to its successes in natural science, seemed to offer us a way out of this 'stumbling' kind of practice and give us more certainty in our lives. This disengaged stance to ourselves and the world does not just enable us to more clearly 'see' things but also, beginning with Locke, gives us the power to re-make ourselves and the world; instrumentalism promises us more control over ourselves and the world. However, for Taylor, this instrumental mode of life, though giving us many benefits, has only a limited applicability in the field of human affairs. Instrumentalism, as a theory of human practices, needs a narrow, pre-specified and limited environment if it is to successfully predict and explain human affairs, for instance, in economic theory. More crucially, this disengaged stance requires us to systematically forget our direct experience of the world; this, for Taylor, is in practice as well as principle, impossible. For Taylor, our description of what we do, our practices, are essentially linked with who we are and our essentially first person orientation to the world.

The Romantic movement resisted the notion that we should forget our experience of being in the world but should instead try to heighten or intensify this experience. For Romanticism, the solution to our stumbling, fuzzy descriptions of things was not to disengage from situations, as

science demanded, but to more fully engage with the world, so that the truth, or at least a clearer picture would be revealed to us. For the Romantics, Enlightenment science promised certainty but at too high a cost. The narrowing of human activity that seemed the price of this certainty was, for the Romantic movement, liable to deprive us of the opportunity of individual self-fulfilment. Romanticism tried to restore what the Enlightenment threatened to do away with, our first person stance in the world. Using nature as a source of inspiration, the Romantic agent could express him/herself in a fuller and more fulfilling way than the picture of the agent as the disengaged subject of universal rationality propounded by defenders of the Enlightenment. Originally the Romantic agent was passive, listening to nature, but this gave way to a more active agent in Romantic Expressivism where the quality of the expression or articulation became crucial. Locke's notion of a self, capable of re-making, was a crucial resource for Romanticism. Here, self-expression was made to depend on our attunement to our circumstances where this closeness can help to reveal our inner and richer selves. Self-exploration, for the Romantic agent, was a bringing to the surface of our latent possibilities as unique, individual agents. For the Romantics, science wanted to give us a universal method for relating to the world. The Romantic movement saw this as a closing off of our individual differences and wanted to preserve a closer relationship with the world. Through notions such as sentiment or the modern notion of 'intimacy', the Romantic movement sought to give this relationship a certain expression. The expression of individual difference, our own unique view of our relationship with the world, became the norm in the Romantic movement. Description as subjective rationality was for the Romantic agent, now a matter of our realizing our selves, of how well we express ourselves. At the extremes, this subjectivity has led to the repudiation of anything that does not originate within ourselves. This can re-enforce the idea that we are committed to nothing other than our individual selves; where nothing counts other than what we

can produce. Our powers of description, for the Romantic movement, resided within ourselves; description was now a contingent activity, dependent on ourselves and how we saw things. The Romantic resistance to the imposition of the universal rational method of Enlightenment science led to our modern notions of the radically free agent of Romanticism, free to choose his/her own ends and whose values move around according to circumstances. For proponents of radical freedom, values are contingently related to circumstances and, in principle, everything is possible.

Taylor's work wants to resist the theories of the self that emerge from these two versions of the modern agent. Both theories of science and expressive fulfillment are grounded in the notion of individual freedom. Freedom as a modern life good is an essentially constitutive part of our modern identity; how it comes to be articulated will depend on its connection with a moral source. Both the Enlightenment and Romantic Movements produced the modern unitary self of control and expression yet both reject the notion of the self with essential commitments; for both, commitments are too co-erive as they seem to emanate from outside our own powers of making. For both Enlightenment science and Romantic Expressivism, commitments are a production of the situation which the agent can articulate if s/he clearly perceives the situation. For both, the agent comes to situations, free to commit or not; no commitments or values are prior to the situation. Taylor resists this notion of self-responsible freedom with his notion of situated freedom. For Enlightenment science, the agent must take an objective, free of commitments (bias), stance to the situation, so that s/he can see more certainly what is really going on. The Romantic agent, by contrast, by immersing him/herself in the situation, was able to derive certain values from the situation which allowed the agent to 'grow'. For Enlightenment science, values are something to be overcome, to be screened out of our description of the

situation. For Romanticism, values are relative to the situation and are anchored in our powers to see them. Taylor's situated freedom wants to show us that our commitments are already a part of our identity which we use to articulate the situation and, given this, we should reflect on our description of situations so that we can more clearly see what these commitments are and what they amount to. We can examine Taylor's theory more closely, if we use an example to illustrate the issues.

The two modern senses of theory which are used today are theories that are explanatory and theories that are self-defining (Taylor, 1985). Science, for Taylor, aspires to theories that explain things more clearly to us. For Romanticism, the self-defining purpose of theory is more important. What they have in common is that they are both intended to help us cope better with situations. Science, as explanation, wants to resist this self-defining attribute of all theories by formulating universal laws. Romanticism wants to limit theory to this relative function, the articulation of individuality. Taylor wants to resist both these narrow views of theory by showing that all theories are self-defining. The task, however, for Taylor is not just to stop with a recognition that theories are self-defining. Taylor wants to say more about the self that each theory defines. By examining the kind of self or agent that any theory articulates, Taylor hopes to show the incoherence of some modern theories, particularly in their claims for a radically free agent. Taylor wants to show that the modern human agent is essentially situated in 'the middle of things' and is not the uncommitted agent of much modern theory. We can, in this section, examine Taylor's theory of the 'Situated Self', the self with commitments that are not contingent and compare it with the radically uncommitted agent of some modern and post-modern theories.

For Taylor, both the notion of objectivity and subjectivity are founded on the notion that we can get outside situations and any view of ourselves. Locke's punctual self, for Taylor, was grounded in the notion that we should only validate what we ourselves have sanctioned. As Taylor points out, this objective evaluation can only be carried out from the first-person standpoint; this objectivity is, paradoxically, a radical subjectivity. Romanticism, for Taylor, has continued with the notion of radical subjectivity more directly, insisting that each individual is free to 'make' their own lives. Enlightenment naturalism and its disengaged rational method ask us to step back from the situation and rationally evaluate the situation. Evaluation and the choice of what to do in these situations, for the rational agent, would be based on an external good such as utility or pleasure or happiness. Practices for this kind of agent would be committed to this single external principle, maximizing happiness or pleasure. The modern notion of individual freedom seems to we moderns to be almost 'natural', self-evidently the case. As Taylor shows, this kind of disengaged practice would want to neutralize our direct experience of the situation and 'rationalize' our choices. Opponents of this universal rationality saw the loss of personal freedom inherent in this method; the task of the human agent seemed to be limited to following this rational method. Modern opponents of this restrictive view of human agents have countered with the notion of the human agent, radically free and uncommitted to any rationality other than his/her own. Proponents of this modern and post modern human agent see these commitments (goods) as restrictions or 'hang ups', placing artificial limits on our choices. They advocate the radically free human agent, unrestricted in the choices s/he makes.

In this section we will examine Existentialism as a theory which seems to combine both the notion of objectivity and a radical subjectivity. Existentialism, as articulated by Jean-Paul Sartre, formulates itself as a theory of radical choice where the existential agent acts somewhat

like Locke's punctual self. The existential agent acts with the knowledge that anything that is real is only real if s/he has personally sanctioned it. This agent is unencumbered by any 'rubbish' such as an essential commitment or value that could impede his/her freedom. Theories of radical choice tend to see any commitments as constraining the choice that the agent has. In the consumer society it seems that maximizing choice is the ideal situation; the greater the choice, the more ideal the situation. Here the agent is formulated as free to choose anything, committed to nothing other than his/her freedom to choose. As we mentioned earlier, Taylor resists the notion of a single external Good as being unrealistic but he also wants to resist the notion that the alternative is the agent of radical choice. Taylor's work wants to affirm the human agent as committed to certain life goods but also to show that this agent has the freedom to act and to take personal responsibility for his/her actions. Taylor's work is in two parts; he firstly shows us that human agency is essentially committed to certain life goods and, given that we have commitments, he gives us a method, strong evaluation, for examining these commitments. Our commitments, for Taylor, an essential part of our identity, are re-assessed in strong evaluation. Taylor's method, strong evaluation, can allow us to re-assess any situation so that a clearer sense of the value of these commitments and ultimately ourselves as agents with commitments can emerge. This will help us to more clearly articulate our moral responsibility for the choices and decisions we make. Existentialism, a blend of dis-engagement and radical subjectivity, thinks that all this is an illusion that we can leave behind without regret.

We will begin with Sartre's notion of the radically uncommitted actor. Taylor uses Sartre's example of the young man torn between remaining with his ill mother or going away to join the Resistance. Sartre makes the case that in situations such as these, we have no reasonable way of deciding what to do and must fall back on a radical choice and just choose one of them. For

Existentialism and its 'unencumbered' or uncommitted agent there are no criteria that can help the young man to adjudicate between these two competing claims; the choice is between two incommensurate values. The unencumbered self, faced with this situation, must make a radical choice and simply choose one. Radical choice, for Existentialism, limits the responsibility of the unencumbered self to the making of the choice. For Sartre, there are no grounds for choosing one or other action and so the young man must accept his responsibility and make a radical choice. Responsibility, in this theory, is focused on the agent's choices and as such, responsibility is attached to the radically free agent. The unencumbered self, free to choose, is clearly then responsible for his/her actions and choices. Responsibility, for this theory, comes attached to the agent, an individual self-responsibility.

In this example from Sartre, Taylor shows, in a number of different ways, how this situation as radical choice and the kind of agent it produces essentially need a moral framework for it to make sense in the way Sartre thinks it does. This situation is presented as a moral conflict between the young man's commitment to his mother and his commitment to his country. As we discussed in Blum & McHugh's example, it would be difficult to see this situation without some sense of the situation as a conflict between moral commitments; it is only a moral dilemma because a certain implicit moral background allows us to understand this as a moral conflict. Taylor points out that without this moral background or framework a choice between staying with his mother or going off to fight with the Resistance would have the moral equivalence of a choice between staying with his ill mother or going on holiday. As with our previous example with Blum & McHugh, we see that a theory such as Existentialism implicitly needs a world with moral significance while explicitly seeming to rule out any notion of the moral. This is perhaps due to their more valuable, for them, notions of radical choice and radical freedom. . Again, in this

example, we see that it is not simply a matter of the agent choosing significantly 'without regret'. In this kind of theory, there is really nothing to regret since any choice seems to be the equivalent of any other choice. What Existentialism fails to see and what Taylor shows, is that any situation such as the one Sartre formulates is already significant because it appeals to our sense of morality. Both leaving his mother or going to war are commitments that we could see would involve a moral dilemma; they are more significant than a choice of whether to get an ice-cream or not. For Existentialism, all situations and choices have the same equivalence; none can be more significant than any other.

Existentialism and radical subjectivity are theories, for Taylor, that fail to evaluate themselves and so fail as a practice. While Existentialism wanted to formulate an agent constituted by radical choice, it needed a distance from any situation or commitment. For Taylor, we live in situations that are already significant and he thinks that by engaging more consciously in situations, we can come to see the significance of each situation. His method of strong evaluation, like Blum & McHugh's self-reflection, can help us to see what is significant in any situation or choice. Taylor shows that a commitment to radical freedom is unreflective since the agent of radical freedom, articulating a human agent essentially un-committed, is essentially committed to something; radical freedom. Taylor shows that a reflection on this commitment, radical freedom, would make every situation morally equivalent and we would lose any distinction between hard choices and easy ones. Taylor also shows that the radically subjective agent of radical choice, if s/he reflects on the goods that radical choice is essentially committed to, would end up articulating modern life goods such as the dignity of human agency and radical human freedom as essential. Taylor shows that radical freedom does not reflect on certain essential life goods without which a notion such as radical freedom would not make sense; even

radical freedom needs certain essential conditions for its existence. This is the irony of Existentialism; it never questions the conditions necessary for its own existence.

Taylor shows with Sartre's example that both the situation and the agent are left untouched by radical choice. The agent of radical choice, is shown by Taylor, to be essentially committed to certain life goods which s/he fails to reflect on. The situation, which is just there, is nothing more than an opportunity to make a choice. What also seems to be forgotten is the part that our experience, what we bring to the situation, helps in articulating the situation. For radical choice, the agent must approach each situation, unencumbered, with no commitments or previous experience; each situation is a radically new situation. Taylor shows us that our previous experiences shapes our seeing of any situation. For Taylor, if we had no experience of previous moral choices we could not appreciate Sartre's example as a moral dilemma. As Taylor, makes clear, for a situation to be a moral dilemma we must experience the full force of the competing commitments and for this we need to bring to any situation our previous knowledge and experience of other moral dilemmas. Our previous experiences help shape the kind of person we are and allows us to develop a certain self-interpretation that we also bring to each situation. This is what allows us to experience Sartre's example as a moral dilemma and as different from a simple choice of whether to have an ice-cream or not or of between going on holiday or staying with an ill mother. Of course, it is perfectly possible to go on holiday but this would involve a rationalisation of the choices down to a simple preference based on fiat. This rationalisation, though possible, necessarily removes us from the experience of the real force of these commitments and produces a human agent as a 'simple weigher'. However to choose as a simple weigher is problematic for both radical choice and moral judgement.

Moral dilemmas require us to feel that there is an authentic conflict between competing moral claims. This means that the judgement that we make, involves us in giving our assent to the choice. For the agent of radical choice, even preferences are too co-ercive, s/he simply does one or the other. As Taylor points out, even a choice must be grounded in something, otherwise it is only movement. Sartre's agent could just find himself doing one of the two things, say, staying at home, but it would no longer be possible to characterize it even as a choice. Choice itself, for Taylor, needs minimally to relate to preferences. Preferences, as weak evaluation, do not engage our identity as agents and are only minimally reflective, focusing on the choice rather than on the kind of agents that can produce this choice as a moral dilemma. Existentialism, as a self-defining theory, shows a self that is defined, though this may change, as a result of the choice that is made. No consistent self is produced as a result of radical choice since the agent is radically free to make any choice the next time.

Radical choice is a solution to the perceived problem of commitments as coercive forces that leave little room for the agent to do anything other than follow external rules in acting. Using external criteria to decide seemed to reduce choice to rational calculation. Taylor criticises Utilitarianism and the Platonic Good as examples of external criteria which, once adopted, allow us to measure all action with a single yardstick, e. g. the greatest happiness, pleasure or good as measured according to its participation in the Good. What, for Taylor, is the problem with these external criteria is that they fail to reflect on the criteria itself, so that the hard question of why I should adopt Utilitarian principles remains unexplored. Since we have no criteria (words) for re-assessing these principles, one solution to the problem seems to plump for a theory such as radical choice where our principles are abandoned and we just choose. Yet as Taylor points out, even the young man, in choosing whether to stay with his mother or go off to fight for his

country, will, in giving reasons for his eventual choice, plump for something like utility. It would seem strange to us if the young man, in accounting for his choice, said that he simply did one thing. This kind of agent, a modern version of the ideal actor (Blum & McHugh, 1984), has no commitments and seems alienated, neither choice exerting any moral pressure on the decision he makes. Thus Taylor's critique of Sartre parallels Blum & McHugh's example of Camus' stranger, alienated in a world where nothing matters. To smoke or not to smoke, in the presence of his dead mother's body, can only be resolved by radical choice since he has no principle for guiding his conduct. Decision making for this modern actor is discretionary and arbitrary because nothing seems to matter to him, he just chooses.

The Existential description of the situation between going to fight or staying at home is formulated in neutral terms; the actor's responsibility is simply, to react to circumstances outside of his/her making. But even the radical chooser has to choose whether to stay at home or to go and fight. Whatever way he chooses, he will have made a moral choice. He might choose to stay, reasoning that blood is thicker than water; we might say he values his family over his country. He might desert his mother, reasoning that his country's survival will ensure his mothers or that his country just comes first. In either case, he will have gained a new understanding of himself; he will have developed. We see that a description of the situation, firstly as a choice between blood and water, then as a pragmatic choice and then as a choice between the duties of a citizen and the duties of a son, depends on a certain self-interpretation. For Taylor, we must first choose our description, which is linked to our self-interpretations, and this is his stronger sense of responsibility. Radical choice theories try to obscure their responsibility for their description of the situations and focus responsibility simply on the choice. For Taylor, circumstances can bring contingent commitments together in conflict. However if

we reflect on these commitments we will see, thinks Taylor, that the conflict is accidental, circumstantial, and not essential. Our young man in Sartre's example can be described as having a choice between staying and fighting. These two commitments are contingent, we don't need the idea of fighting to understand the notion of staying. The choice might be between fighting in the Resistance or running away to Switzerland; here our commitment to fighting is circumstantially in conflict with a commitment to running away. However a reflection on these contingent conflicts could re-formulate the choice as one of bravery or cowardice. A commitment to courage is essentially related to a notion of cowardice. We would not be able to understand courage if we did not have its essential contrast, cowardice. Strong evaluation, for Taylor, needs this language of qualitative contrasts where conflicting commitments are no longer contingent but essential. The young man 'seeing' his choice as a conflict of contingent commitments, between staying or fighting, is essentially committed to the appearance of things. Failing to reflect on his own commitment, he radically remains with the appearances of the conflict, he goes one way or the other. Even here, as we indicated, the young man would account for his choice as the stronger commitment; the more desirable in these circumstances. In some other circumstances, the young man might choose staying with his mother if the alternative was going on holiday. The contrasts, in both cases are dependent on circumstances. However reflecting on the two commitments, contingently related, the young man could reformulate the choice as the conflict between two essential commitments, between courage and cowardice. Strong evaluation, for Taylor, can help us to see a conflict of essential life-goods and this involves a re-description of the situation; contingently, staying or fighting, and essentially, between courage or cowardice. Our previous experience will influence our choice of description and we often attribute 'distorted' descriptions to peoples' previous experiences. An understanding of people's previous experience can be used to limit the level of responsibility we

attribute to people's actions as when we say in matters of health that s/he can't see the harm they're doing to themselves. We will take this issue up more fully in the next section but Taylor shows us the essential connection between our self-interpretations and our description of situations that face us.

Taylor shows that theories such as radical choice cannot be practised as we bring to every situation certain essential commitments that help us to articulate the situation. Even the agent with radical choice must forget that s/he is involved in an articulation of the situation; moral dilemmas just appear without the participation of the agent. Taylor shows the incoherence of this theory and the essential part that commitments play in both our articulation of the situation and in the eventual choices we make. What is essential, for Taylor, is some version of the human agent as essentially committed or as we saw with Blum & McHugh, a principled actor. Both for Blum & McHugh and Taylor, something essential is missing from this radically free agent; he acts in the absence of principles. We see, with both Taylor and Blum & McHugh, that choice, articulated in the absence of principle, seems to collapse into movement and this seems incoherent. Rather than abandoning our principles, as we are urged with the theory of radical choice, Taylor and Blum & McHugh show that we are essentially committed and give us a method, strong evaluation and self-reflection, for evaluating these commitments. It is with strong evaluation and self-reflection that we are able to articulate the worth of our commitments and the significance of our practices. In strong evaluation the situation can be transformed and a clearer, more articulate definition of the situation can emerge which can help us to see the good of the practice. On the other hand, while theories of radical choice seemed to forget their commitments, theories propounded by theorists such as Martha Nussbaum, while acknowledging commitments seemed to make these commitments conditional upon circumstances.

In Sartre's example, the agent of radical choice cannot see his commitments nor his part in the formulation of the situation, his sole responsibility is to choose and to make his choice, unreflectingly and radically. Nussbaum is an interesting example of a minimally reflective theory which formulates commitments as relative, related essentially to circumstances. For Nussbaum, situations can show us our commitments but these commitments alter with circumstances. Nussbaum, for us, could not see that she approached each situation already committed, in her case to 'flexibility'. This meant, like Existentialism, that her agent could not be consistent since she allowed circumstances to determine what her choices would be. Poor choices, for Nussbaum, were choices where the agent had not correctly perceived the situation. For Nussbaum, Agamemnon cannot 'see' his commitment to his daughter, and for us, Nussbaum cannot 'see' her commitment to flexibility. Nussbaum's agent, minimally reflective, does not engage new situations in the way that the agent of radical choice does. For Sartre, each new situation is like beginning again. Nussbaum does acknowledge a certain experience which the agent brings to the situation. However what Nussbaum's agent brings to the situation is a stance of attention, an opening to the possibilities of the situation. For Nussbaum, experience can prepare us for a situation but it can do no more than that. Experience can help us to feel the richness and the emotional complexity of situations. In *'Love's Knowledge'*, her example of Ann Beattie's 'Learning to Fall' is used to show how previous experience, in this case of love, can prepare the heroine for falling in love. We are asked to see, by Nussbaum, how a new relationship depends on certain previous experiences of relationships, so that the actor is minimally prepared. However the relationship or situation is not something that we have any control over. For Nussbaum, our engagement and our previous experience allow us to be flexible; to be ready to fall or let go. Experience, for Nussbaum, gives us minimal guidelines as

preparation for situations so that we don't see situations as completely new. Circumstances however, for Nussbaum, are always particular and it is only by responding flexibly to the particularities of each situation that we will be able to experience each situation. Situations, for Nussbaum, just appear and the agent responds with his/her knowledge of previous situations to guide him/her. But a commitment in a previous situation can be set aside in the new situation. Nussbaum, unlike Taylor, does not seem to allow that experience and a certain self-interpretation can influence our description of the situation. This results from another of Nussbaum's essential commitments, one that she does not reflect on; her commitment to saving the appearances. Nussbaum's flexibility is an evaluation of choices not an evaluation of the person who is formulating the choice. Circumstances do not make any demands on Nussbaum's agent other than to engage flexibly with the situation. Her commitment to the appearances rules out any sense of her having a responsibility for an articulation of the situation; circumstances are just there, by chance. Taylor's work shows that circumstances are articulated, refracted through a personal standpoint and that our description of circumstances is constitutive of our self-interpretations.

Strong evaluation, an engagement of self and situations, Taylor's situated freedom, can help us to articulate our responsibility for the 'making and re-making' of circumstances. We are responsible, thinks Taylor, for the description of circumstances; how we describe situations will depend on the kind of agents we are. Our experiences will shape our descriptions and may limit our responsibility. Descriptions, for Taylor, articulate a certain kind of agent and are not just neutral reports on facts or self-evident situations. For Taylor, we bring our selves, our commitments shaped by our experiences, to situations; this will influence how we 'see' situations. Taylor's strong evaluation, his seeing good, can help us to distinguish between

contingency (circumstances) and self (commitments); between contingent commitments and essential commitments. Seeing the good of our commitments can help us to re-formulate the situation and to more clearly articulate our responsibilities both for our description of the situation and our response. Both strong evaluation and self-reflection allows us to distinguish between our essential commitments and the contingent commitments of circumstances. To make this distinction between contingent and non-contingent conflict clearer, Taylor shows us the essentially constitutive relationship between our self-interpretations and our description of circumstances, where the self essentially committed to certain life goods engages in situations.

If we engage in strong evaluation, we can, for Taylor, distinguish between accidental conflicts of commitments and essential conflicts. Our essential commitments, part of our identity, are an integral part of the description of situations; strong evaluation helps us to see this and to judge ourselves. In strong evaluation, we engage ourselves in situations; this is Taylor's version of health where we come to see and judge the proportionate relationship between the agent and the situation. Strong evaluation can help us to be healthy, to articulate the proportionate life. We will take this matter up more fully in the next section, but before doing so, we will finally examine Taylor's notion of situated freedom in choices to show that for Taylor, strong evaluation, does not produce certain commitments that oblige us to act in prescribed ways. This is important in that commitments that are seen to be something that an agent would essentially need could be construed as both too coercive and of lacking any notion of the agent being able to develop. While Taylor would want us to see, in each situation, what our commitments are, he does allow his agent to choose freely. The difference between Taylor and a theory such as Existentialism is that Taylor wants his agent to be more conscious of what is really involved in any choice or situation; to see the moral significance of actions and choices. In choosing,

Taylor's agent acts with a clearer sense of what kind of agent s/he is. Situations, for Taylor, help his agent to develop their sense of self which is not limited by particular circumstances. We will take both these issues up again in our discussion of health, but we can see that Taylor wants to formulate moral responsibility in a similar way to Blum & McHugh.

Situations and choices can be expressed in a number of ways, the choice of which is our responsibility. We can confine ourselves to responsibility as the simple decision maker either as deciding between simple desires or on the basis of perceived outcomes or consequences; these are weak examples of responsibility. Our responsibility, in strong evaluation, is stronger in the sense that what we now choose between is conflicts over self-interpretations; where our identity itself is examined and re-evaluated. Yet just because we can engage in strong evaluation doesn't mean that we are obliged to do so; we are free to choose any description of the situation and this need not be a description that emerges from strong evaluation. Strong evaluation demands more than the superficial decision-maker of much modern theory; it is an acknowledgement of a deeper responsibility for ourselves. Some matters are too trivial for us to think about for too long but a difference that Taylor wants to make with Existentialism is that some situations do matter more than others. As we saw with Sartre's example, he cannot see any difference between fighting for the resistance or deciding whether to have an ice-cream. Taylor's point is that some choices and situations are 'deeper' than others. A theory such as Existentialism cannot see that since there is no method for distinguishing choices or situations. Again, Taylor also wants to say that even if we are able to distinguish between superficial and deep choices, we are still not obliged to act in a prescribed way. We are free, then, not to evaluate situations strongly but, for Taylor, we are also free, having engaged in strong evaluation, to rescind from any conclusions that strong evaluation has led us to. Strong evaluation is difficult as we must leave

the certainty of our assumptions behind as we struggle to transcend our current articulate limits. It is doubly difficult as we are inclined to resist change and prefer our present comforts to the pain that this uncertainty brings. Often, even if we do engage in this type of reflection and discover some new truths about a situation or ourselves, we can go on feeling the same way or refuse to change; in either case we have gained a new insight.

Whether we engage in strong evaluation or not, we are still responsible for our articulation of the situation. It is not, as Nussbaum and Sartre think, that situations just appear and we have to find some way of dealing with them. For Nussbaum, her commitment to flexibility and the appearances of the situation means that she is only minimally reflective and as such is a weak evaluator; responsibility is dependent on a correct perception of the situation where the situation is just there, awaiting the correct perception. The human agent, after many years is able, for Nussbaum, to be better prepared for each situation but it is the situation which guides the agent's action. For Sartre's agent, committed to radical freedom and the appearances of the situation, responsibility is limited to a radical choice, a narrow self-responsibility. It could be argued that the radically free agent is not even committed to the appearances of the situation; situations, being less real events and more just abstract problems that need nothing more than a yes or no. Nussbaum, at least, has a sense, though limited, that we inhabit a real world where some things do matter. Her problem seemed to be that what mattered to the human agent depended more on circumstances than anything the actor did or did not do. For Taylor, we saw how an actor was responsible for not only articulating the situation in a certain way but also for choosing which articulation was appropriate. Taylor's method also allowed us to see that this deeper reflection did not produce an agent who was constrained either in his/her articulation, so limiting freedom of choice, or obliging the agent to follow the conclusion of any of the articulations, so limiting

freedom of action. Taylor's work resists the notion of radical freedom, where we are free to do anything. He also resists the idea that commitments limit us to just following a series of rules laid out in advance of situations. We are responsible for our articulation of the situation and we can make our choices with a more self-conscious grasp of what is really involved in each particular situation. This responsibility, then, includes our freedom to choose with a clearer articulation of the choices but with still the responsibility and the authority of a real choice to be made. In strong evaluation, we can evaluate these commitments and still decide if they are appropriate in the circumstances. He recommends, as we shall see, that in many situations it may be appropriate to make an unreflective choice or a rationalisation of our choices. Since we can carry out this deeper reflection we can choose to do so, and this choice is our responsibility. This is Taylor's version of self-responsible freedom.

Strong evaluation, as we have previously indicated, is more than just a question of acknowledging our responsibilities in the articulation of situations, a showing of our commitments. Flexibility, for Nussbaum, focussed on perception as a method for 'seeing'. This method, an emotional engagement with the situation, forgets its responsibility in producing the situation. Taylor's method, by contrast, shows us the essential part that our identity plays in producing the situation. Yet strong evaluation does more than show us our responsibility for our description of the situation. In strong evaluation, our commitments engage their grounds in their moral sources. Without this interaction between our values and their sources, our choices could become extreme or obsessive. Strong evaluation allows us not only to see our responsibility for our description of the situation but also to evaluate, to see the good, of our description. When we act or choose, strong evaluation can allow us to evaluate, to see the good in our practices. Strong

evaluation, as a method for validating our commitments, can give us new insights into our practices. We can examine this if we compare Taylor's and Nussbaum's version of health.

iii. Health as Engagement

"These judgements take us beyond merely formal criteria of rationality, and point us towards the human activities of articulation which give the value of rationality its sense", (Taylor, 1985:151).

"A principled actor orients to the essential significance of his action in that he understands its being undertaken as a sign of value" (Blum & McHugh, 1984:160).

In *"Philosophy and The Human Sciences"* (Taylor, 1985), Taylor formulates two different forms of social/political theory. For Taylor, we live in a theoretical age; theory is used as an orienting guide, to help us understand what is 'really' going on in the world. In our ordinary life, we use our common understandings as our main method for making sense of things and they suffice, more or less, in allowing us to find our way around. At the back of all this, though, is a feeling, that we more or less all share, that there is more to all this than 'meets the eye'. Our modern need for experts in all aspects of our daily life, scientists, doctors, nurses and so on, testify to this feeling. One modern use of theory, then, is to explain to us what is really going on or what things really mean or our real reasons for doing or not doing certain things. Theory can act as an explanation, showing us what is going on by showing the norms that we orient to. As Taylor points out, theory seldom just limits itself to making explicit what we do; it often wants to correct what we do. One way that theory can do this is by repudiating our ordinary understandings, showing us that our practices are wrong or inadequate. Theories, modelled on natural science, purport to correct our ordinary perceptions of the way things are, by getting us to

stand back, objectify our environment and clarify our perception. Theories like this explain what is going on in neutral terms, purporting to give us a reality beyond what we ordinarily envisage. For Taylor, theories of human nature, modelled on natural science are causally related to practice. Failure in practice is usually attributed to incorrectly applying the theory. This causal relationship is between two independent objects, theory and practice, which are external to each other. Theory functions here to formulate truths that are then applied in practice. Taylor wants to show that the relationship between theory and practice is essentially constitutive. This means that theory, in its articulation, does not just explain things but must also define a certain self or agent at the back of the theory, often as an implicit assumption. Theories, then, like natural science, which produce certain procedures for attaining objectivity also produce an agent who will carry out these procedures (methods). While rationality and the so-called rational agent are measured in terms of consistency between theory and practice, Taylor's work shows that the agent produced by these theories cannot very easily practice the theory. These theories require us to practice while systematically forgetting our direct experience of the world and the meaning things have for us. By forgetting this constitutive relationship between theory and practice, natural science formulates the relationship as technical: practice being no more than an instrument of theory. Practice, here, can be validated in terms of its rationality, that is, its consistency with theory. Taylor's work shows that this kind of instrumental practice tends to give us a narrow and shallow agent. In the case of Existentialism, we saw how it seemed to give us a practice bordering on incoherence or simple movement.

In this section, we will examine two rival theories of health; Taylor formulates health as engagement and Nussbaum formulates health as flexibility. The question that immediately springs to mind is how we might arbitrate between two rival definitions of the same good. In

other words, what makes one theory good and better than the other. One way suggested by Taylor is to examine the practice that each theory articulates. Taylor suggests that we should examine "*our theorizing about social matters as a practice*" (1985:91). We saw, in the last section how Existentialism fails to account for itself as a practice, the reasons for Sartre's young man acting seeming to descend into incoherence. Practice, then, can evaluate theory by being able to give reasons for what we do. To be rational is to give reasons, to give an account of the practice. We have seen, in Taylor's work, how the two modern versions of rationality articulated by Enlightenment Naturalism and Romanticism originated. For Enlightenment Naturalism, to be rational was to conform to the universal rational method. For Romanticism, rationality was a relative matter and to be irrational was more difficult to articulate. As we have indicated, this seemed to formulate rationality, for both, as a consistency between means and ends. Science, as an explanation of ourselves and the world around us formulates the scientific, objective method as being a practice consistent with its theory. Rationality here seems to be about being consistent; the greater the consistency the more rational we are. Romanticism has often defined rationality as relative, the agent being 'the measure of all things'. Again, rationality is judged individually as the consistency between what 'we say and what we do'. In both cases we see how rationality as consistency links theory to practice. Since we cannot, in principle, judge someone's actions by criteria that they do not subscribe to theoretically, we use consistency as a common standard for rationality. A criticism of scientific practice is that it is irrational because it does not rigorously apply the theory. Romanticism can be criticised if it uses scientific means for achieving its goals; much of the rejection of modern medicine as a healing process is directed along these lines. Consistency, then, is a criterion that we can use to judge what people do. Taylor wants to formulate rationality as more than just consistency between theory and practice. If consistency was the only criterion to judge what we do, we would have no means of

criticising differing practices other than judging them against the theory they subscribe to.

Taylor wants to show that, as well as consistency, rationality involves a clearer articulation of what our practices are, the significance of our practices for our way of life. Rationality, then, is being able to say more, to:

"be engaged in articulation, in finding the appropriate formulations" (Taylor, 1985:137)

To be able to say more about our practices is to validate the theory that the practice orients to. In this way practice can validate theory and judge between two competing theories of the same good, in our case, health. In this section we will examine theory and practice, specifically Taylor's and Nussbaum's theories of health to examine what each kind of practice each theory points to. As well as a consistency between theory and practice, we need to judge the rationality of the practice as being able to lay out what we do in a 'perspicuous order'.

Nussbaum's problem, is different in its intention from natural science, but similar in its practice. What Nussbaum wants is a bigger object so that we can more clearly see it. One could argue that Nussbaum's theory is a happy blend of Enlightenment Naturalism and Romantic Expressivism. While Enlightenment science might want to correct our ordinary understandings and Nussbaum might want to preserve them, both do so at the cost of a stripped down version of the human agent and a certainty about the object. For Nussbaum, as for natural science, the problem is the object and our approach to the object. For Nussbaum, the object, circumstances, can only be seen clearly if we approach it in a flexible way; the more flexible, and we learn this with experience, the more clearly we can perceive the object. Unlike natural science, Nussbaum wants to preserve our ordinary understandings and she thinks that the object can enrich our understandings. Yet as we saw with Agamemnon, she doesn't allow the agent to be more than a passive receiver rather than an active participant in the articulation of circumstances.

Description, for Nussbaum's agent, who is as effectively neutralised as her natural science counterpart, is simply a report, arguably fuller and richer, of the object (circumstances). This is because she refuses to see these ordinary understandings as not only involving understanding of others but also a greater degree of self-understanding than she can allow. In Nussbaum's theory, these ordinary understandings have a certain objective reality that the agent has to respond to; the agent's response *has* to be flexible. Circumstances, now an objective reality, are only minimally interpreted by the agent who comes prepared with experience from previously similar situations. The role for the human agent is minimal, differences of interpretation limited to the different experiences of the agent. But it is less the situation and more the response that the agent needs experience for. This is because her agent acts with the minimal sense of responsibility that we indicated earlier. Nussbaum acknowledges, in her theory, that the object (circumstances) can change the subject (self) but she has no place for an agent, oriented in a strong way, who can change or re-describe circumstances. This seems to indicate that practice develops theory but it is less clear how theory can help practice. The relationship between subject and object seems to be a causal one, where objects (situation) determine subjects (self). This theory seems blind to its self-defining qualities by placing responsibility for its description of the agent on situations and not on its self. In contrast Taylor wants to show the constitutive relationship between theory and, practice, between subject and object rather than the causal link propounded by scientific theories and those like Nussbaum's. Taylor's agent with commitments, oriented in a strong way, comes to situations and articulates the situation in the light of these commitments. This involvement of the agent with the formulation of circumstances is a constitutive relationship: How we see situations is constitutively related to ourselves as agents with commitments. This involvement, Taylor's engagement, means that the relationship between what we do, our practices, are constitutive of who we are, our theory; theory and practice are

constitutive of each other. This kind of theory doesn't undermine practice by repudiating our self understandings but wants to show the 'constitutive norms' that the practice orients to. Theory can show the significance of the practice, articulate, the good of the practice. Practice can validate the theory by showing that the theory can enhance the quality of the practice. For Taylor, good theory can make the practice less stumbling and more clairvoyant. We can examine Taylor's theory of health as engagement to illustrate the point.

Engagement, as health, begins with our understanding of ourselves as agents with commitments. We use these commitments as an orienting guide, a map, to make sense of situations. We saw, in the previous section, how our self-understandings help shape our description of situations and our choices in these situations; self understandings and situations being constitutively related. Health as engagement shows us the underlying commitments that our practices orient to. Healthy practices are, then, practices that show these commitments. Healthy practice is practice that can show the good of the practice, the values that the practice points to. Engaged practice, Taylor's practice, is healthy practice oriented and committed to a good, health (engagement). Nussbaum's theory of health as flexibility allows her agent to engage situations in a flexible way. Nussbaum's healthy agent opens herself to the situation so that she can extract as much of the richness and plurality of the situation as it has to give. This openness means that her agent cannot come to any situation burdened down with prejudice but must be in a position to respond flexibly and that means being free enough to respond in any way within human limits. Of course, we saw with our example of Agamemnon, how this theory of flexibility seemed to limit practice to conformity which seemed to be inconsistent with her theoretical desire for freedom. We could leave the matter here and show this inconsistency as an example of Nussbaum's irrationality.

However we can develop the point if we look at Nussbaum's example of healthy practice. We can then judge which theory can give us the more effective practice.

In *'The Fragility of Goodness'* (1986:115-116), Nussbaum gives us the example of Phaedra who is faced with the choice of eating a bagel or going running. The problem that Nussbaum articulates for Phaedra is that if she eats the bagel now, it will give her a cramp and limit her ability to run. Her failure to complete her running schedule will make her angry with herself and may also make her less healthy. As she weighs up the consequences of her choice, she sees that the best thing to do would be to run first and eat the bagel when she gets back. However, swayed by her hunger and the attractiveness of the bagel, hot and buttered on the plate. she eats it.

Nussbaum contrasts this example with another where Phaedra, utilizing an external, rational principle, to maximize her bagel eating, makes a choice. In this example, Phaedra is faced with the choice of a plate containing two bagels and a plate containing only one bagel. Ruling out all qualitative distinctions, whether aesthetic, romantic and so on, and faced with the simple quantitative difference. between either two bagels or one, Nussbaum argues that it would be absurd, irrational, for Phaedra to choose the plate with one bagel. Nussbaum, here defines rationality as acting against principles, being inconsistent.

Nussbaum's point is that if we do adopt a rigid external principle, as she accuses Plato of proposing, we end up with the agent as rational calculator, or Taylor's example of the simple weigher, whose freedom and responsibility is limited to weighing or calculating between the values propounded in the situation, values being simply a matter of quantity. Nussbaum wants to resist this notion by claiming that this formulation of the human agent is too restrictive and will deprive us of the richness and plurality of human life. This kind of narrow, human life is, for

Nussbaum, neither a recognizably human life nor a life worth living or one worth, aspiring to. Instead of a rigid, external criteria, Nussbaum formulates a healthy human life as one where we must be flexible about the choices we make. Nussbaum's first example of the choice between eating the bagel or running is used by her to articulate a freedom and flexibility which can give us, she thinks, a better quality of life than the life of the scientific, rational calculator. Her second example is contrasted with the first to demonstrate the benefits, in terms of freedom that the first has over the second.

In the first example, Nussbaum wants to articulate flexibility, the absence of external criteria, as an essential good for the quality of human life. In this example, where Phaedra, open to all the possibilities of the situation, finally chooses to eat the bagel despite the fact that it could damage her health, Nussbaum's appeal is to the freedom that flexibility can give us, so enhancing our life. If asked to account for her choice of eating the bagel now, Phaedra, Nussbaum's agent, can cite its immediate attractiveness as against the less perceptible gains in her health. This looks like the way that we do, in fact, choose some of the time but if we look more closely at the situation, a number of issues emerge. Nussbaum is committed to a good, flexibility, that she rigidly applies to all situations. Healthy practices are practices where we rigidly apply the rule of flexibility; this results, as we previously indicated, with practice being an illness (rigidity, conformity) and inconsistent with the theory. However she resists the notion of an external, rational principle being used to decide our choices for us. External principles or goods, happiness, utility or pleasure, are seen by Nussbaum as restricting, too rigid. Yet she resists this by offering us another rational, external principle, flexibility, instead. The application, and this is how Nussbaum judges the practice, of the principle of health as a good, results in the practice oriented to a bad, lack of health. Nussbaum would want to argue that Phaedra did not see it like that.

Phaedra, Nussbaum's agent, saw the bagel as a good and ate it, she might want to claim. Yet she also saw it as a bad (lack of health) and ate it. Phaedra sees the bagel as both a good (immediate gratification) and a bad (lack of health). She also sees not eating the bagel as both a good (health) and a bad (failure to assuage her hunger). Her principle cannot guide her practice, it leaves the choice up to her. Health as flexibility, cannot help her in her choices, in her practice; either action, eating or running, can be attributed to her principle so the principle ends up as a licence to 'do your own thing'. Nussbaum's commitment to flexibility cannot suffice as a reason for the practice. Nussbaum's agent would end up accounting for her choice as a simple preference. Health as flexibility cannot help us to live healthy lives. What is missing from the practice is any sense that real essential commitments are involved in the practice, Flexibility as health allows us to live as circumstances throw up contingent commitments that the agent is free to take or leave. Flexibility as a theory of health cannot guide our practice since the agent is left to please him/herself. What the agent cannot be is flexible (healthy) about his/her health (flexibility). Since Nussbaum's agent and her intention are oriented to freedom, freedom seems to be limited to conformity. A theory of freedom ends up as the practice of conformity. We can examine Taylor's version of health as engagement, a situated freedom, in terms of the practice it articulates; where the agent can use his/her principle of health to examine choices and to act healthily.

For Taylor, the weak evaluator, is reflective in this minimum sense, being able to evaluate on the basis of outcomes (health) or preferences (immediate desires). This seemed to be the extent of the reasons for choice available to Nussbaum's agent. In Taylor's terms, Phaedra seems to be a weak evaluator. For Taylor, to be a strong evaluator, the agent must engage with the situation and reflect on his/her involvement in the situation. One difference that we can articulate between

Taylor and Nussbaum is that engagement for Taylor involves the agent in an articulation of the situation. This means that our description of the situation will be oriented, show our values in its description. Nussbaum shows her values, however unconsciously in her description of the situation and in her choices but these values are difficult to interpret in her practice and are contingent, varying from situation to situation. Evaluation of these values will be dependent on each situation but will more deeply depend on our agreement that what Nussbaum's agent, Phaedra, sees will also be what we see. Nussbaum's theory does not allow us to see any more than her agent sees; we can be flexible about our choices but not about our description. We can see how Taylor's version of health as engagement might alter our description in his similar example of someone choosing between swimming and eating.

In Taylor's example of healthy practice, we are faced with a choice between eating lunch or swimming. We can articulate the situation in the way that Nussbaum does. Faced with a choice of eating or swimming, we might evaluate the choice in terms of its immediate attractiveness or in terms of its outcomes. Again we might reason that we should lunch now because we're hungry or swim first because it would be better for our health. However our engagement in the situation might induce us to 'see' the situation in a different way. Bringing to the situation a sense of ourselves as agents with a certain view of ourselves could alter our view of the situation. Our sense of self-respect and of our own dignity might allow us to see the situation as a choice between dignity or degradation. We might see that a person who cannot control his appetites, who has so little self control, is a degraded sort of person and that my dignity as a person requires that I exercise some self control and swim before I eat. Circumstances have contingently related two incompatible values; swimming and eating. This is the way Nussbaum would see it; we can swim or we can eat, therefore we must choose one. This is why she

operates with a narrow version of action as activity; we can only judge what we see and what we see is mediated through our common mind as objective reality. Our description is nothing more than a neutral report of this objective reality and the problem is formulated procedurally as what to do, given these circumstances. For Taylor, the human agent is more than a transmitter; s/he is a transformer. Engagement with the situation can transform the situation, help us to more clearly articulate the situation and make our practice more clairvoyant.

Our engagement of ourselves in situations can allow us to see the situation anew. Dignity and degradation are not contingent but are an essential part of my view of myself as an agent with some worth. While I can imagine circumstances where swimming and eating are not necessarily related, the notion of dignity needs a notion of degradation to make sense. We can imagine people who face up to situations, the firing squad, in a dignified way. Dignity here is understood in relation to acting in a degrading way such as begging for mercy, blubbing or betraying our comrades. To see our situation as a choice between dignity and degradation is to see the situation in a new way. Whereas before it was a question of acting out of our immediate desires or in calculating the most favourable outcome, the situation is now formulated in a way that matters to me. Now I see the real significance of the choice; to eat first would be degrading and I'll swim first. Of course, as Taylor, points out, someone may protest that I am putting the matter too strongly. They might say that its simply a matter of bodily health and that swimming first will benefit my health more than having lunch first. They could argue that to put the situation as a choice between dignity or degradation was too obsessive or extreme; they might accuse me of a certain arrogance and that the issue was one of either simple preference or maximum utility. However, for the engaged agent, s/he might agree that this is indeed too strong but the choice, with engagement, is now a choice of rival self-interpretations.

We might agree that to put the situation as one of dignity or degradation is too obsessive. Yet if we took any of the other two options available they would no longer look like the simple choices that Nussbaum nor Utilitarianism imagines. Engagement is an acknowledgement of the constitutive relationship between subject and object. Our objects, eating and swimming or health and illness are transformed with our engagement. Our choices, as engaged choices, are now seen as constitutive of our self interpretations. If we eat first our choice is an acknowledgement that sometimes we are the kind of person who responds to immediate desire. If we swim first, we see that we are the kind of person who is interested in outcomes or consequences; a rational calculator. In either case we can be more articulate about our choices and about our reasons for our choices. Choice, therefore is essentially related to a certain self-interpretation. Engagement allows us to see what is involved in situations more clearly. What is involved is ourselves as certain kinds of agents. We can pose the question of whether to swim or eat but our engagement in the situation transforms this choice into a choice between rival self-interpretations. If I decide to eat lunch or the bagel, I do so with the knowledge that my view of myself has been illuminated and that I have gained in self-knowledge.

Health as engagement allows me to practice guided by my principle. Engagement allows me to see that what we do points to a self-interpretation and shows our responsibilities more clearly. Our choice of whether to eat or to swim is now a more responsible choice. We can eat and act healthily. It is not that having formulated the situation as one of dignity or degradation, we are obliged to act on it. Principles do not bind the actor to act according to rules, this was Nussbaum's problem. Flexibility, her principle, had to be rigidly applied in practice and she did not allow for an agent who might 'interpret' this principle in a flexible way. Flexibility only

allowed her to see and act in the situation in a prescribed way, as a neutral description and as an agent of conformity. Agamemnon, in Nussbaum's terms, was both too flexible and not flexible enough; he should have seen what he was doing, killing his daughter and not crying. In Phaedra's case, flexibility is formulated as seeing the attractiveness of the bagel and eating it. Flexibility is the conformity of theory and practice; good practice is practice that conforms to theory. Could Nussbaum's agent, Phaedra, see the attractiveness of the bagel and not eat it?. The answer seems to be that she could but only if she changed her theory (description), in this case to Utilitarianism. For Nussbaum, flexibility does not give Phaedra the possibility of acting decisively; Nussbaum's agent sees it this way and her practice confirms this way of seeing. Perception and action, as theory and practice, are causally connected in contingent contexts. All theories are moral theories but Nussbaum's morality is the procedural kind; there is no essential connection between theory and practice. Here morality is judged by how well we do something, in Nussbaum's case, how flexible we are. Nussbaum's agent can only conform or not, she couldn't enjoy conforming because she cannot see that this is what she is doing; blaming Agamemnon for not crying or praising Phaedra for eating the bagel. It is not that we resist the idea of conforming, most of the time it is what we do. But even if we do conform we need a sense that this is what we are doing. Engagement allows us to be more conscious of what we do when we do it. If we are conforming, engagement allows us to see this and to act with this knowledge. Practice is then oriented, showing, in our actions, our values. We become, with engagement, more conscious of our practice, more aware of what our practices mean. Even if we decide to eat instead of swimming, engagement allows us to do this healthily. Health as engagement allows us to be more conscious of our involvement in our choices. Health as engagement helps us to re-formulate our choices not as simple alternative desires but as alternative self-interpretations. Our choice, with engagement, of eating rather than swimming, is

a judgement that I can make about myself; it reveals something about me. In some cases, I can reflect on these rival self-interpretations, and, with strong evaluations can re-evaluate these self-interpretations to judge their rightness.

Faced with rival self-interpretations, Taylor's strong evaluation can help us to assess these rival self-interpretations. Strong evaluation, Taylor's 'deep'reflection, is carried in in a stance of attention within the language that we have available. Because it is difficult, we are not inclined to do it too often. In our situation between eating or swimming, we would be likely to just plump for one but it would be wrong, as Nussbaum imagines, to believe that our choice does not involve us but is a matter of method (flexibility) only. As we saw with Nussbaum's agent, Phaedra, she was unable to articulate any reasons other than she felt like it for her choice of eating the bagel. She might have said that she was committed to utility and that to assuage her hunger was a greater good than her health. Nussbaum is coy and we cannot conclude whether it was its attractiveness or her hunger or both. In any case, she lacks a language for articulating the value of her eventual choice; why did its attractiveness or her hunger sway her. This lack of articulation is for Taylor, an example of weak evaluation. To articulate the worth of my ultimate choice, to be a strong evaluator, is for Taylor, to, become more rational about the choices we make. To be more rational is to articulate in a language of qualitative contrasts an account of our reasons for our choices. As we discussed earlier, the contrastive language of strong evaluation is not contingent. Nussbaum's example of the contrast between health and illness is expressed in outcomes, with Phaedra free to choose a bad outcome. Nussbaum lacks a method for expressing her preference in a language of higher or lower; she cannot answer the question as to why she ate the bagel other than to say she wanted to. What gets Nussbaum to decide is her decision not

to reflect on outcomes but to appeal to the appearance of the bagel; she was tempted and she succumbed.

For Taylor, health as an engagement with the situation alters our articulation in a number of ways. Nussbaum takes no responsibility for her articulation. This situation, her example, is just there and she does not see that she has some responsibility for her formulation of the situation as either eating a bagel or running or even health versus illness. As Taylor points out, a deeper reflection on the situation could have articulated the choice as one between dignity or degradation. When faced with the same appearances between eating a bagel or going running, a deeper reflection could lead Phaedra to conclude that her dignity as a person would not have allowed her to be swayed by mere bodily appetites or immediate gratification. For Phaedra, now our self-reflective actor, to succumb to temptations of this kind, would now be a degrading matter. We can see that health (engagement) allows us to act healthily. This is what the strong evaluator is able to do; practice his/her principles. Nussbaum's agent, as we have seen, can end up breaching his/her principles in the practice. Nussbaum might object to this characterization of the choice that has only been made possible by changing the appearances. Yet it was Nussbaum herself who made these appearances and she must accept responsibility for this.

Nussbaum's insistence on saving the appearances limits the possibilities for strong evaluation. Description for Nussbaum is self-evident and not a matter that can be reflected on. The difference between Nussbaum and Taylor, between weak and strong evaluation, can be examined in their respective notions of description. Descriptions, for Nussbaum, are independent of choice and do not engage our responsibility. For Taylor, descriptions are essentially linked with how we see things which reside in our self-interpretations. Nussbaum's principle of flexibility did not

allow her to see that she was breaching her principle unreflectingly in the choices she made. Nussbaum wants the human agent to live in an uneasy balance between stability and chaos, though she seems to prefer chaos. Yet she does not give us a method that can reach the 'mean' of human life. We saw in the example of Phaedra that a failure to reflect on principle means that our actions can be extreme, contradicting our principle. Taylor, by contrast, gives us a method, engagement, which allows us to live moderately. We can eat the bagel or lunch, if we consider the issue formulated as one of dignity or degradation, as being excessive. We can agree that the matter is more simple than that and can eat the bagel or have lunch without acting against our principles. We can decide that eating first is, in the circumstances, the best thing to do but we will have done so with the full knowledge of what is at stake here. Health, as engagement, allows us to validate our theory (health) as a practice. We can more clearly articulate our reasons for our choices and this allows us to be more rational. We have pointed out that Nussbaum and much modern theory are inconsistent in practice but we have formulated rationality as more than consistency. We can formulate our practice (health) as an articulation and a judgement about ourselves and can show our practice as significant rather than circumstantial. Whether we swim or eat, we are clearer in what we are doing and are able to act in a more decisive and responsible way. Health as engagement allows us to act in a morally responsible way by being more articulate about our practice.

Conclusion

Charles Taylor shows us that modern notions of the self are essentially committed to moral sources. The older idea of an external order which we have no responsibility for making has lost much if not all of its power in modern times. The moral sources, which ground modern versions

of the self, are shaped and articulated by human agents. Even science, with its objective stance to the world, has its source in the disengaged subject whose moral sources are grounded in human dignity. Given that we are essentially agents with certain universal commitments, Taylor wants us to become more conscious of what they mean and the essential part they play in our lives. Taylor gives us, in his work, a method, strong evaluation, for assessing these commitments and for acting in a more decisive and responsible way. Taylor's work, then, allows us to see the values in our practices and to re-valuate these practices so that we can become more rational and more clairvoyant in what we do. Strong evaluation can help us to, preserve our health so that our practices are oriented rather than accidental. Health as engagement allows us to be more articulate about our practice and to develop ourselves and our health.

As we have indicated in our discussion of health, Taylor wants to show that while there are goods that are universally accepted in modern life, this does not mean that these goods or standards coerce us in the way perhaps science does. We have indicated an essential difference between Taylor and natural science both in terms of engagement/disengagement and also in terms of the kind of freedom proposed by science. The modern problem with science, articulated by Foucault, Lyotard and others, is that it restricts human agency to a narrow conformity. The obvious solution, as we indicated, seemed to be the opposite, a radical subjectivity. While the appeal here was partly negative in that it was seen as a resistance to the growing, perceived menace of science but this subjectivity had a positive side in that it allowed room for the more 'expressive', artistic part of human agency. However, while science wanted to constitute itself as an external standard and subjectivity formulated itself as an internal standard, Taylor wanted to formulate life-goods as both an internal and external standard. These modern goods are neither something internal that the agent produces nor simply external standards that limit the

agent's choices in situations. With engagement, Taylor's agent can come to see, become more conscious of these standards and still have the freedom to choose. As we saw with our discussion of health, the agent can still choose to lunch. Health as engagement allows Taylor's agent to be clearer, more articulate in his/her justification of his/her choice.

Conclusion

This thesis has examined modern theories of health in terms of the practice that each theory constitutes. While health is often formulated as an objective fact, best measured by experts, we found that this theory, exemplified in the work of Parsons, did not allow an actor to do anything other than conform with the prescriptions of experts. While a proposed antidote to the expert definition of health was to allow each individual agent to define health for him/herself we saw, in the work of Garfinkel, that the agent could only conform to something that s/he could never decide was really there. The agent, subjectively producing health, never knew whether his/her actions were really healthy or not. Foucault's solution to this problem was to say that one should resist the idea that there was such a thing as health since it forced us to conform to something that was not really there. While we might imagine that we were leading healthy lifestyles or acting healthily, we were, in reality, measuring our actions against a standard that did not really exist other than as a form of imperialism and domination. Foucault's critique of both objective and subjective versions of health seemed to show that a notion such as health was a strategy for duping us into thinking that while we were seemingly acting in a healthy way, we were really conforming to an illusion. While health has become a greater influence in our lives, Foucault wanted to say that modern life was just a prison, made more insidious by the absence of visible signs of our confinement. Foucault wants us to see that we are not really getting anywhere in adjusting our diets or changing our therapies, hoping to lead healthy lives. Foucault wants us to resist any version of health and see it as an illusion; as long as we think that there could be such a thing as health, we will be dominated and imprisoned. Foucault's work was, as we have seen, a powerful critique of modern versions of health in particular and modern life in general.

The remainder of the thesis was a search for a version of health that would respond to the crisis that we seemed to encounter with Foucault's work. While Foucault thought that any version of

health was bad, Martha Nussbaum wanted to formulate a good version of health as flexibility. However, when we examined her theory as a practice, we found that her agent could be acting unhealthily if s/he did not simply conform with what the situation seemed to demand. Nussbaum tried to combine both objective and subjective versions of health in a flexible relationship. However, we saw how this flexibility ultimately depended on the situation rather than anything her agent had to say. In practice, her agent could sometimes choose subjectively, while at other times, the choice seemed to have already been made. However even subjective choices were required to conform to a normative standard. Health as flexibility was a method for connecting both objective and subjective versions of health while leaving the choice of what was there to be seen to a so-called objective reality. While Nussbaum wanted her healthy agent to be involved in situations and respond in a healthy, flexible way, she did not trust her agent enough to allow her to influence the situation. Flexibility as health seemed to focus on methods for conforming to what the situation prescribed. While wanting to say that there was some good in modern life, Nussbaum's practice seemed to articulate conformity as the greatest good. We rejected this version of health as flexibility since it did not give us a practice that was anything more than conforming to something that was not necessarily there.

In the work of Alan Blum & Peter McHugh, we examined a version of health as acting on principles. Principles as health were both an internal standard and an external standard that allowed the healthy actor to be more conscious of what s/he was doing. Blum & McHugh wanted to contrast their version of health, constituted by principles, with other theories of health that were constituted by rules. In our examination of the notions of freedom and health, we saw that principles could allow us to practice in a way that was not only consistent with our principles, but that could also allow us to develop or to say more about our practices. While health as constituted by rules seemed to allow an actor to do no more than conform, health as principles allowed the actor to think about whether conformity would be the right thing to do. In comparing their work with postmodernism, we saw that Blum & McHugh wanted to say that

principles were really there, in our common life, and not something that depended on the agent producing them. Blum & McHugh's actor, constituted by principles, could influence each situation in a principled way. Situations allowed their actor to act healthily by coming to see what principled action would be necessary in this situation. While having the freedom to decide, the principled actor acted with a more conscious notion of what was really involved and what his/her decision amounted to. Principled action allowed the actor to act in a more decisive and responsible way than action that could only be undertaken and validated because it conformed to external expectations.

In a similar way, Charles Taylor wants to say that life-goods are a constituent part of what the modern agent has become. For Taylor, we already have certain universal values that are an essential part of any view we take of ourselves. The world, rather than being a neutral external thing, is constituted by this sense of ourselves that we have. Our direct experience of the world cannot be separated from this sense of ourselves as agents with significant purposes. Rather than attempt to construct theories that are grounded on our being able to separate ourselves from the world, Taylor wants to say that we are always engaged in the world. This engagement allows each individual agent to connect with something beyond the individual self. Taylor's life goods are a constituent part of this relationship between the individual agent and our common life. Like principles, his agent, constituted by these essential values, can come to situations and transform them. These essential values are engaged in any seeing of the situation. Taylor's healthy agent, essentially engaged, can come to see the good of any situation and can say more about what s/he is doing. Engagement allows the healthy agent to see the significance of his/her practice.

We have, in our search for health, concluded by finding two version of health that could allow us to live healthy lives. Both involve our becoming more conscious of what essential values that we already have. Both versions of health resist the notion that values are relative or circumstantial.

While essential values were objectively there, each agent has the opportunity of seeing these values in any situation s/he is in. The actor constituted by principles or life-goods is a communal actor who is essentially engaged in a common life. These versions of health resist the possible fragmentation of modern society by showing that we do have essential values in common. While some, like Lyotard, have seen this increasing fragmentation as a freedom from the coercive influence of a common life, Blum & McHugh and Taylor want us to see that any notion of fragmentation essentially needs something to be fragmented from. Rather than see this fragmentation as something inevitable, Blum & McHugh as well as Taylor want to show that modern life does contain certain universal commitments or principles that we do universally share. In a real sense, these principles are not something that we can simply shrug off nor are they dependent on individual production. These principles give us a standard that can allow us to evaluate both ourselves and the situation and can show us the significance of what we are doing.

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