

CHAPTER 8

Towards the Therapeutic and the Political

This concluding Chapter returns to the theoretic, therapeutic and political significance of restoring transformative and healing agents or agency to the project of emancipation in late modernity. Also, Giddens's and Habermas's strengths in articulating emancipation and agency are re-iterated and the further claims of K-C for a model of reflexive causal agents or agency are outlined. Then the different approaches of Giddens, Habermas and K-C theory to the practice of therapy and politics are compared. By therapy is meant practices that require reflexive attention being given to a personal problem wherein choices and decisions are made and sustained. The object is to effect a long term identity-based change in the life project of the individual(s) involved. By politics is meant practices oriented to the transformation of human and social action, and this generally includes structural reform, change and self-emancipation. A discussion of more specific and possible objections to K-C theory and an end note follow.

Why are therapy and politics desirable?

Changes that are presently occurring in decisions made at the level of everyday life, social organisation and global systems no longer derive their direction from a secure basis of established tradition or orthodox political and religious practices. In their place agents' personal life projects, new and unfamiliar forms of social networks and global institutional imperatives impact upon, shape and redefine political changes and decision-making (Beck

et al. 1994, vii-viii). In these circumstances, where responsibility for self and society falls to the decisions made by autonomous agents and where agents and systems are prone to error, therapy and politics become important points of focus for social theory and sociology at large. Furthermore, anticipating the processes and impact of decision-making by reflexive agents or systems on the still uncertain future becomes important if the quality of life of new and future generations is to be nurtured and refurbished. A politics (Bhaskar 1986, 176) of moral/ethical agency is imperative if the present malaise and discontent with the Welfare State is to be counteracted in the manner suggested by Giddens, Habermas and Bauman.

What relevance do Giddens and Habermas have for emancipation?

Giddens's 'reflexive monitoring agents' have responsibility for coping with the abstract systemic imperatives that intrude into their lives, but structuration theory does not indicate how personal agency is able to transform itself into interdependent action. Emancipation is implied, science has a role to play in determining acceptable risks in a world bounded by manufactured uncertainty, and agent-selves work out their new found opportunities in sexuality and pure-relationships, but there is no discernible mechanism upon which these contemporary activities can draw for exposition save for duality and the double hermeneutic.

Habermas's 'reflexive interpretive agent' is subsumed within communicative action and the linguistic dimensions of rationality, and the transformative nature and decision-making power of these subjects are not well delineated. The theory of the colonisation of the lifeworld by the systems of power and money explains the cause of the legitimation crises that characterise advanced capitalist society, and the theory of 'discourse ethics' is the procedure by which the integrity of the lifeworld can be upheld or

transformed. Emancipation remains the goal, and justice is its overarching source of guarantee. However, agents as agents are accorded little overt participation in this endeavour because of the emphasis on consensus and rationality.

My critique of the status of agency in Giddens and Habermas shows that the efficacy of agents or agency in the emancipatory project of each is undercut by virtue of the assumptions and implications of each project. Giddens's ontological and 'desiderata' type of approach allows for ambiguity amongst concepts and disconnection between theory and substantive research. Nevertheless, his concepts of the dialectic of control, double hermeneutic and historicity help to capture the elements of tension, conflict and transformation fundamental to the discourse on emancipation. Habermas's shift to a linguistic paradigm redefines the project of emancipation in the light of contemporary criticisms, but at the price of relegating the agent to the sociological periphery and to the discipline of psychology. Yet, his concern for ethics and morality, his concepts of open reciprocity and the linguistic dimensions of rationality open the doors to greater exploration of the role of agency or agents in personal and formal emancipation. Notwithstanding these potentials in Giddens and Habermas, room remains for the conceptualisation of the transformative and healing agent whose absence screams out for attention if the juggernaut of 'risk' society is to be challenged, and if 'hope to go on' is to be regained.

What do Giddens and Habermas have to contribute towards the conceptualisation of transformative and healing agents or agency?

In this light, Giddens's emphasis on therapy as the reflexive means to construct life projects in duality with the imperatives of abstract systems is very significant. His concept of utopian realism and its call for agents to take

opportunity along with the danger of unavoidable risks sets a tone of hope and action for the healing and transformative agents. Giddens's approach is rightly tempered by suggestions of Bauman to engage ambivalence and contingency as well. However, his claim that new networks arise to help agents cope with the risks and dangers of manufactured uncertainties is limited by the neglect of any definitive explanation of how these networks are to be constructed, as interdependent transformative action, to resolve disputes and anomalies.

Habermas's clearly political and substantive critique offers more on the level of building such networks and consensus amongst agents. The ideal-speech situation and its overtures of democracy, equality and opportunity provide a critique of what forms of action are institutionalised in late modernity, as well as an ideal of what goals intersubjectivity can reach - even if it remains always fully out of reach. Because communicative action of this sort allows agents to abstain from consensus, it serves (in theory) to secure freedoms for agent-selves. Nevertheless, seeking consensus in the ideal-speech situation remains potentially threatening to autonomous agents, and so it is helpful for us to explore how agent decisions are arrived at in ideal-speech or communicative action. What capabilities are they manifested through? How do they impact, or not, upon the life project or narratives of agents? In other words, how do agents come to say 'yes' or 'no' to personal transformation or social change?

Concerns with 'yes' or 'no' open the door to 'old' questions of morality explored more overtly in the modernity projects. For his part, Habermas explains how rational action is co-ordinated within the listening process of agents, and here he highlights the importance of a listener taking a 'yes' or 'no' position before acting in accordance with established actions. He also assumes that, while morality and ethics are separate, autonomous morality is

embodied in ethical life. On the other hand, Giddens sees ethics as belonging to the public domain, difficult to demonstrate and vulnerable to power. In response, conceptualising the healing agent or agency from within a world of many and varied claims to significance should be expected to address the place of moral/ethical judgements as a part of agent reflexivity, identity-self and normative critique.

What has K-C theory added to the conceptualisation of the transformative and healing agents or agency?

K-C theory has restored moral/ethical agency as the embodiment of personal and systemic emancipation within the late modernity project. It has shifted from the essentially interpretive platforms of Giddens and Habermas towards a more pragmatic stance on how agents act and what possible options can follow. Specifically how this is accomplished step-by-step has been tabulated in Chapter 1 (pages 16-17) and Chapter 7 (Figure 7.6 page 198). In broader relief, the theory raises to causal status the validity claims that underpin intentional and routine action, and it hypothesises the mechanisms of interaction that connect agents and systems. It does not specify any form of action, but rather action that 'frees us to act'. By getting to the validity claims below action it enables criticisms to be made about unwanted and unneeded obstacles. Here too it enables agents to engage existential questions that impact upon their lives and substantive experiences. Moral/ethical decisions are now pivotal. Even 'ideas' prevalent amongst groups or cultures become accessible to explanatory critique which may complement or contradict practices. Focusing on validity claims increases the range of possibilities in contexts and empowers equally the observer and the participant. Most significantly, the hypothesised mechanism of interaction in K-C theory allows agents and groups to pin-point and to restore wellbeing with open-ended possibilities for survival

in 'risk' society. K-C theory identifies social practices without overlooking how individual instances are intertwined, because the agent's own accounting is used. This model of a 'reflexive causal agent' draws its transformative power and methodological efficacy from the levels of rationality in Bhaskar's critical naturalism and has its manifestations in the agents' capabilities for reflexivity, identity-self and normative critique.

How differently are therapy and politics practiced in Giddens, Habermas and K-C theory?

Giddens

The wide-spread availability of information, practices, programmes and groups focused on therapy in Western societies is for Giddens a clear indicator of the intrusions by the abstract systems of high modernity into personal relationships. His approach to therapy is based upon persons' capabilities for reflexivity and choice. 'The first injunction of all therapy programmes is a reflexive one: recognise that you have a problem and, by dint of that recognition, begin to do something about it' (Giddens 1992b, 90-91). Self actualisation and decision-making are clearly part of the process of therapy. Analytical and descriptive concepts pertinent to therapy from structuration theory include pure-relationships and their connections to the reflexive project of self and to the model of confluent love (1992b, 90). Through these concepts Giddens conceptualises the contractual and somewhat impermanent relations amongst agents seeking to construct life projects in new and fluid circumstances. These circumstances are generated by post-traditional mechanisms in high modernity and they include the internal referentiality of selves and systems, time-space distantiation and 'disembedding'. Giddens's theoretic approach is contingent and discursive which is consistent with his model of a 'reflexive monitoring agent'.

Balancing anticipated outcomes against alternatives is the essence of politics for Giddens (1991, 111). He has both a narrow and broad conception of politics. The narrow conception applies to the process of decision-making in the government sphere. The broader conception applies to any mode of decision making for resolving debates or conflicts due to opposing interests or values. Life politics is both of these (1991, 226). It involves questions of rights and obligations: citizenship rights are the arena of life-political debates. They are enabling devices (1992b, 187). Most importantly, life political problems do not fit readily within existing frameworks of politics (1991, 228). Giddens's concept of utopian realism is informative here. It encourages anticipations of the future by agents of the present: such anticipations thereby rebound back upon how the future actually develops (1992a, 177-178). Giddens's politics of the personal reaches further than the matter of formal emancipatory politics - which is oriented to the distribution of power, class relations, etcetera. It is concerned to remoralise existential issues put aside by the 'sequestration of experience' in post-traditional society (1992b, 197). Issues of ethics and practical action are re-admitted as is clear in Giddens's proposals for a new radical politics. These he generates from the argument that '...an individual must achieve a certain degree of autonomy of action as a condition of being able to survive and forge a life;...' (Giddens 1994a, 13) in a world of high reflexivity .

Giddens's proposals for a radical politics (1994a, 12-21) for risk society are built upon the idea of autonomy, which implies reciprocity and interdependence. *Life politics* are necessary because what used to be fixed in the world of nature and tradition are now subject to human decisions. *Generative politics* is necessary to fill the gap between the State and the reflexive mobilisation in society at large. It allows individuals and groups to make things happen; it provides material conditions and organisational framework for life-politics; and it is '...the main means of effectively

approaching problems of poverty and social exclusion in the present day' (1994a, 15). However, generative democracy depends on the building of active trust in institutions and agencies. Traditional political symbolism and ways of doing politics, as places of embedded power, can be reshaped by *dialogical democracy* which integrates reciprocity and interdependence. This type of democracy can be mobilised through self-help groups and new social movements that can reach outside of formal political structures as well. These are opportunities or 'open spaces for public dialogue' to remove or refine issues (1994a, 17).

The *Welfare State* should be rethought fundamentally in relation to global poverty before class compromise, because the issues of the latter have altered markedly. A new construction should aim '...once more at connecting autonomy with personal and collective responsibilities (1994a, 18). *Violence* too should be approached through dialogue and understanding in both personal life and larger social settings. Universal values such as the sanctity of life, human rights and preservation of species have come to prominence through collective threats to humanity, and they impute agent responsibility. No single group or agent can carry the hopes of humanity '...; but there are many points of political engagement which offer good cause for optimism' (1994a, 21).

Habermas

Therapy is brought about in an experience of reflection, and its liberating force is confined to single illusions, not the totality of a course of life (Habermas 1987b, 300). Such self critique, aimed at '...unconsciously motivated perceptual barriers and compulsions to action, is related to the narratively recollected entirety of a course of life or way of life' (Habermas 1987b, 299-300). An example of this dialogically conducted self-critique is the analytic conversation between a doctor and patient. Furthermore, those who belong to a shared lifeworld can

potentially assume the role of impartial critique in the process of self-clarification (Habermas 1993, 11). 'This role can be refined into the therapeutic role of an analyst once generalizable clinical knowledge comes into play' (1993, 11). Self-clarification leads to evaluative comment on what is good for a particular person. This process inculcates a conscious decision to own clinical advice given and to transform one's life in the suggested manner (1993, 12). Habermas's approach to therapy is clearly of the more clinical, psychoanalytic mould than is Giddens's but he too is concerned for self-actualisation, choice, decision-making and self identity.

Habermas perceives the political as '...: fighting all modes of settlement that are somehow unjust' (1992, 479). Because personal identities depend on socialisation and intersubjective relationships, Habermas argues that the morality of autonomy and equality must be supplemented by political ethics. These are aimed at mediating justice and collective identities, as in the law and public policy (Cronin 1993, xxvii). Moral constraint on the use and organisation of politics is necessary because political power is not a neutral medium. However, not all matters requiring legal regulation are of a moral nature (Habermas 1993, 155). Pragmatic reasons also play a considerable role in reaching a fair balance of nongeneralisable interests in law, as do ethical grounds in groups with different traditions and identities within them (Habermas 1993, 155-156). Habermas confines his philosophical comment to procedural questions on morality and ethics because to do more is not possible due to the limitations of one's own history and context. So he emphasises critical theory instead (Habermas 1993, 176).

It is to his critique of 'the colonisation of the lifeworld' that Habermas has had to make some political responses. He suggests that to push back the boundaries of the lifeworld it is necessary to radicalise the institutions already established in Western countries. 'This means to move towards a form of

radical democracy that could affect change of administrative structures (Habermas 1992, 470). Clarity here would be determined by the specific situation - an approach like that of Giddens. Autonomous publics should be able to contain the side effects of the systems that make us suffer and '...almost destroy core areas of class and racially specific subcultures' (Habermas 1992, 469). The public sphere can also attempt to exclude physical violence from politics (Habermas 1992, 479). Although his theory is basically to help change practice, Habermas admits to being overly abstract and to emphasising speech-act and moral theory. His defence is that one can become overtly political once one has debunked the underlying implicit presumptions of an established practice (Habermas 1992, 479). It follows then that in politics Habermas sustains a 'reflexive interpretive' model of agency.

Knowledgeability-Competence theory

The K-C theory approach to therapy and politics pro-actively restores the healing and transformative agent to late modernity (Lash and Wynne 1992, 3). Giddens and Habermas have in a sense arrived at their programmes defensively. For example, Giddens's universal values are coined against what he sees as common threats to humanity, and Habermas's lifeworld must be defended against the threat of the systems. Giddens's radical politics is a sound desiderata-type platform of personal and institutional politics. His identification of universal values provides an authentic vision of what global society should aspire towards. Then, Habermas's 'colonisation of the lifeworld thesis', and his prescriptive concepts of public sphere, 'discourse ethic' and 'ideal-speech situation' provide a theoretic-pragmatic programme for restoring to late modernity what was good in modernity. What is missing from these ontological and abstract programmes is a definitive statement of exactly who goes about transforming the world, how this transformation occurs, and the

optional outcomes. This is what K-C offers. It makes claims about how interaction works and how moral/ethical decisions direct the transformative power of agents. Now we can explore how the universal values and vision of Giddens's 'risk' society and the emancipatory programme of Habermas's critical theory can or ought to become embodied in new life projects and institutional practices. Giddens's 'reflexive monitoring agent' and Habermas's 'reflexive interpretive agent' are now remoulded in the 'reflexive causal agent' of K-C theory.

In seeking what is good for an individual therapeutically, K-C theory examines the dialogue and narrative of the individual concerned. This is done by using the underlying mechanism of interaction to connect their actions with the validity claims behind the patient's dimensions of rationality. In such analysis, the potential points of decision-making are identified and isolated *either* at the level of everyday common-sense *or* at that of expert clinical help *or* both. Intervention can be made */or* not at these points.

In the example to follow, language and the personal narrative of the agent constitute the resources for interpreting the episodes of interaction amongst actors. Giddens has used anorexia nervosa as an example to emphasise that individuals are responsible for the reflexive design of their bodies (Giddens 1991, 102). His interpretation is analytically descriptive and it demonstrates his notion of life politics and self-actualisation. He does not interpret anorexia as a denial by a young woman to leave girlhood and become an adult, but rather as a condition resulting from a search for self-identity in a society that offers a plurality of options with limited access. 'The tightly controlled body is an emblem of a safe existence in an open social environment' (Giddens 1991, 107). It is the exhibition of personal power, through the body, in a confined gender context. It has more to do with self-denial by a young woman than with a beauty image of the body. Anorexia then is a symptom of self-reflexivity being

overcome by a false-self system that is alien to the body. Agent power, gender, plurality of choice, reflexivity, progressive development and self-actualisation are identified as collectively contributing to the formation of this psycho-physical condition. But how does one arrive here or return to wholeness or well-being?

Closer examination of the key elements of a patient's description of her anorexic episode that Giddens uses in *Modernity and Self-Identity* (1991, 103-104) will make my claims for K-C clearer. In this episode, a reformed anorexic woman tells of how she arrived at her condition through the exercise of her intention to express her femininity. The options in K-C mechanisms of interaction occur at least thrice in her narrative and experience of her condition, with three different outcomes (and according to the cyclical trajectory in Figure 7.6).

The first episode and cycle

*Her intentional journey to discover self, '...I wasn't thin and I wanted to be' (Giddens 1991, 103), originates in her capacity for knowledgeability-communicative competence. She knew how to lose weight and she set about doing it obsessively.

*Her decisions to fast were opposed (in a dialectic of control) by the discursive and counter claims of her mother who 'fussed' and took her to the doctor. As a result, the girl said 'yes' to open reciprocity with her mother and tried to uphold what was the norm for the adults. There was a clear struggle continuing here or a dialectic of control for her, both personally and with her mother. The result of the episode was that the normative order or status quo was upheld.

The second episode and cycle

*In time, the mother's warrants and actions for change against fasting were inadvertently challenged by an old boy acquaintance who

complimented the girl on her new found attractiveness. The dialectic of control is continuing. Her open reciprocity with the boy acquaintance on what she considered as attractive, meant that she upheld her decision to fast. Open reciprocity with her mother was rejected in favour of that with the boy. She now takes the risk and returns to fasting. The result of the interaction now is regressive transformation.

The third episode and cycle

*The girl was eventually helped to wellness by her 'doctor mediated' understanding of the need to 'choose' what to do with her life. But this time it was open reciprocity with a difference. Her decision was reached in the overt conditions of idealic-speech, 'I trusted her. I needed her; this person who listened so carefully to what I said, who didn't judge me, who didn't tell me what to do, who let me be. I tried, with her help, ...' (Giddens 1991, 104).

*In this liberating context and relationship with the doctor, the girl confronted her false impression of femininity, took the risk - 'It is a risky business, being a woman.' (Giddens 1991, 104) - and established an ethic for her future life to follow. The result of the episode is a moral/ethical decision that inaugurated an identity change for the better. The catalyst for this last result is probably the conditions of free, equitable and uncoerced communicative action.

Now to return to the politics of K-C theory. Agents are causal in that their 'validity claims are causes'. Language, praxis and rationality - especially reason as healing power - are the conduits of politically transformative agency. Lay actors therefore take their place with experts as creators of the new politics in everyday life. This is because the theory assumes all communicative action to be potentially political, and that the moral/ethical decisions made by agents are directly causal in fashioning the outcomes in life politics and institutional politics. K-C conceptualises agency both as established institutional

behaviours, as in family, education, politics or economy, and as counterfactual behaviours that become necessary from outside of the established normative structures to overcome unwanted and unneeded sources of determination (cf. Lash and Wynne 1992, 7). In this counterfactual sense, agents anticipate and drive both liberation, as in transformation of life projects in everyday practices, and emancipation, as in transformation from unwanted and unneeded to wanted and needed sources of determination (Bhaskar 1986, 171).

It is important to restate that K-C theory makes the clear distinction between the critical power of an actor either as a self or institutionally positioned actor. The measure of constraints brought upon the exercise of their transformative power in each case is different, as in constraints that originate among autonomous actors and those that are institutionally secured. *But the reflexive and constitutive process utilised in either instance is the same.* They each remain subject to matters of validity claims, judgements, consensus, morality, ethics and personality formation. K-C theory presumes actors and not structures or systems to be the primary custodians of the lifeworld (Manicas 1993, 226), and it is consistent, in this assumption, with the Weberian notion of 'charisma' in social theory (Weber 1977, 79). For Weber, structure 'emerges out of the doings of human subjects and the conceptualisations of professional observers' (Johnson et al. 1984, 80).

Understandably then, K-C theory embraces, even if reservedly, the observer-participant dilemma of subjectivity. In this it imitates the examples of actor-oriented anthropological research assembled by Long and Long in their edited book *'Battlefields of Knowledge'* (1992). The situation of communicative action, or idealic-speech acts, prescribes for K-C theory a procedure of equitable interaction that enables a much less adversarial integration of these two formerly disparate levels of the social scientific discourse. It also introduces for both the observer and participant a spirit of democratic critique and positive

action. In this sense K-C theory returns the actor to prominence in sociological analysis (Touraine 1988, 18). It must be acknowledged, however, that the emphasis on consensus in communicative action introduces into the observer-participant dilemma an assumption of a dominant but not necessarily a permanent or 'end point' type of moral order (Antonio 1989, 723).

The K-C emphasis on language places the nature of everyday praxis under tight scrutiny. This comes about because of the intuitive need to verify knowledgeability through the dimensions of rationality. This latter methodology, of actor or of scientist, potentially exposes the 'taken for granted' in conversation to the criticism of the validity claims made by the listeners. A corollary to this dissection of language is the capacity of the theory therefore to focus microscopic vision upon the subjective enactment of transformative agent power, emancipation and constraint. In contrast, structuration theory and communicative rationality have concentrated instead on power in its broadest and ontological sense; a tendency that, in itself, disconnects the agent from society and amplifies the feeling of helplessness or anomie that haunts the individual agents' experience of late modernity.

As a model of critique, K-C theory has a different emphasis to that of the older Marxian sense of 'theory driven practice'. Social order and change hinge upon a mechanism of interaction constituted by the individual's capacity to understand, to make ethically right or wrong judgements and to reach consensus. It does not rest upon a class prescriptive-formula, but upon knowledgeable agents and their responsible defence of the lifeworld against the more debilitating outcomes of the system. The theory remains similar to Marxian critique in its pre-occupation with emancipation and domination as fundamental points of focus.

Michel Foucault, on the other hand, would have objections to the use of a model of human agency as the basis for an emancipatory theory due to such a

model's diminished sense of what he sees as the more key role of the historical processes in the formation of the subject. K-C differs in that it confers a key role to underlying mechanisms of interaction and because it can cope with a good, bad or no outcome to critique.

What are some objections to K-C theory?

Where is K-C located in terms of Habermas's attempt to replace the philosophy of consciousness? Does it attempt to better or replace it? K-C theory builds upon the diminished but not absent sense of agency provided by Habermas. By focusing on the transformative everyday activity of actors, it takes attention back to individualised substantive problems in late modern society. Habermas continues largely to focus upon the defence of his new paradigm against his philosophical contemporaries, some of whom offer other alternatives. I have in mind here Luhmann, mentioned in Chapter 2 (page 52), and especially Macintyre, who defends the thesis that 'there is no context-transcending rationality' and the thesis that it is not feasible to cross the boundaries of competing self-centred traditions of rationality (Habermas 1993, 97-98). By building upon open reciprocity, communicative action and idealic-speech, K-C theory utilises key advances upon the problems of the philosophy of consciousness made by Habermas. K-C tends otherwise to follow in the path of Giddens 'utopian realism' approach.

There is an inherent paradox in K-C theory due to its subjectivist and critical pedigree. The attempt to theorise with Habermas's notion of the 'decentred self' is in direct opposition to the *need of the subject to first give meaning to the object* if communicative action is to take place. Communicative competence requires a phenomenological objectification of the discourse first before reflexivity or debate can be initiated between actors. In K-C theory therefore, the relations between dualism and attempts to transcend it are not to

be understood as mutually exclusive (Layder 1994, 2). Nevertheless, while consciousness is the cardinal tenet, K-C theory uses a linguistic methodology much removed from the self-as-centre notion at the heart of the dualism. This idea of the need to give 'subjective meaning to the object' in K-C is like that advocated by Lash in his concept of 'the we' (Lash 1994, 148). There he suggests that the movement to subject-object modes of thought is activated only when shared practices and meanings break-down.

Hindess (1988, 100-102) has expressed concern about Giddens's concept of knowledgeability. As a form of rationality, it has paradigmatic status for discussing any form of social action - and this can be said for K-C as well. He agrees with Giddens '...that actors do indeed make decisions and act on them, and that their decisions should not be seen as reflecting their position on some overarching social structure' (1988, 101). He does not accept though that knowledgeability implies that actors are right most of the time, or that they consistently communicate their knowledge to others successfully. K-C theory does not assume that actors are right all the time in order to sustain the continuity of society; this is accomplished by the mechanisms of interaction. It does endorse, however, the need for personal and group ethical standards based on reflexivity and personal and collective judgements. K-C does presume, as with Giddens and Habermas (Calhoun 1992, 477), that actors communicate successfully most of the time, but it places the emphasis on language and context as conditions for attaining open reciprocity and providing a methodology for discerning the types of validity claims that the actor upholds. Emphasis is less on correctness of communication than it is on the process and conditions of decision-making; conditions that include prescriptive options.

My emphasis on validity claims and consciousness revives the long standing difficulty with the place of the unconscious, and in this sense, it is a potential stumbling block for K-C theory. Also in need of consideration is

Harre's (1979, 247-253) listing of other theoretic limits to agency. These include the fact that people are incapable of unlimited self-intervention; that motives can be repressed; and that one's socio-economic environment can bring constraints to bear upon the autonomy of actors. I concede that the actions of moral/ethical actors of K-C are not immune to these limits. In K-C furthermore, the unconscious impacts upon behaviour as aesthetic-expressive or dramaturgical rationality. The constraints upon agency enumerated by Harre (1979, 247) impact upon the transformative and healing actor as they must, due in large measure to the causal impact of system.

Two other immediate and related queries can be addressed to K-C theory concerning interaction and system. (a) When is individual agency activated as opposed to collective agency? (b) What conditions underly the frequency of the contexts of ideal-speech in the system? The first question is particularly relevant to this model which proposes agents to be the embodiment of critique and social change, and the second is directed to the K-C incorporation of the procedures for communicative action as a natural and available mechanism.

(a) When is individual and when is collective transformative agency activated? This question is specific to what can be a tautological claim at the heart of the theory, namely, that knowledgeability-communicative competence is simultaneously individual and collective. The answers rest in the specifics of context, ethical judgement, open reciprocity and the dialectic of control. An agent's knowledgeability-competence and ethical judgements activate individual actions and these contribute to the formation of personality through the developmental capabilities of reflexivity, identity-self and normative critique. These latter criteria in turn will determine the degree and nature of the individual agent's transformative power acting in relation to that of the collective or system.

On the other hand, collective agency and consensus originate in the situation of the dialectic of control and around a crisis in ontological security (for an agent) or in legitimation (for the collective). The momentum towards collective action takes shape in the acceptance of a situation of open reciprocity around the crisis, by two or more agents. If this is followed by action towards broader consensus through the procedure of communicative action, then collective agency and systemic reform begin to emerge. Significantly, the condition of open reciprocity does not preclude intrusive constraint from system imperatives working behind the situation of risk/opportunity. Collective agency is not an actor in its own right but '...the individual members of the collectivity act as though their interests were identical with those of the collectivity' (Dietz and Burns 1992, 194).

(b) How frequently and under what conditions is the ideal-speech situation of free, equal and unfettered debate actually experienced in the face of the resistance of the system? Clegg (1989) answers that ideal-speech is not the norm. 'Discursive participation in consensual goal formation is not a normal condition for most organization members' (Clegg 1989, 135). His view is supported in the example of the anorexic discussed earlier. The K-C reply to the issue of frequency is that ideal-speech situations emerge when the modes of interaction experienced by the actors stimulate a crisis of identity and or ethics amongst them. Papadakis (1988, 436-7) provides an example from which to illustrate this point.

He refers to a particular contradiction that has confronted the German Green Party. This NSM had set in motion the means with which to control its parliamentary representatives. These included a time limit upon their terms of office, and the power of the membership to censor or dismiss the members in parliament. Papadakis argues that these controls, set up to maintain the counterfactual of the movement, have rarely been evoked (Papadakis 1988, 437)

because the members prefer the 'activist' level of the movement while the leadership want financial and job security. The controls have therefore had the opposite effect for which they were intended. The K-C theory interprets the two controls set in place to sustain the goals of the NSM as evidence of a dialectic of control between the members of the Movement, on the one hand, and the impact of the modes of interaction upon the Movement, on the other, specifically that of legitimation. This dialectical condition is now manifest in a crisis of continuing identity and ethics. This crisis is an empirical instance for the attempted renewal of the consensus on established ideals of the Movement through the ideal-speech situation of communicative action.

Because they are ideal, the conditions of the ideal-speech situation cannot be assumed, but the agent has some power to make these situations happen at the level of the everyday, whether in institutional or cultural contexts. Pairs of agents or more can utilise the prescribed condition of the ideal-speech situation to solve crises of ontological security. The agent would need to engage in the public sphere, new social movements or generative politics to generate these conditions in matters requiring larger collective consensus (Tucker Jr. 1993, 199), such as legitimation or economic crises. Ideal-speech situations are a function of the will or intentionality of agents more than they are a function of systems or structures.

End Note

In late modernity the conditions of personal and formal emancipation have changed significantly. In light of Giddens's 'double hermeneutic', this substantive development, is both the subject of the ongoing theoretic critique of modernity and rationality and the indirect effect of such critique. The claim in my thesis is that society is at risk and the agent is substantively disconnected from systems. If the new personal and systemic dangers and complexities

identified for late modernity are to be addressed meaningfully, and if a sense of hope for reconstruction is to endure, then a model of a connected, transformative and healing agent or agency becomes necessary.

Restoring such moral/ethical agents or agency has required an analysis of specifically how the modern agent has been re-modelled in the late modernity projects of Giddens and Habermas. Further from this analysis, it has required an exploration of an alternative model of the nature of agents and how they do and ought to produce and reproduce their personal lives, institutions and systems. As an alternative, K-C theory hypothesises the links amongst agents and systems and specifically situates the place of interaction and the impact of moral/ethical decisions within the transformation and healing of society.

At the same time, the present complex and alarming difficulties of personal and institutional life call attention to the practice of therapy and politics at the personal and formal levels of emancipation. Against these substantive needs, K-C theory serves to consolidate upon the leads made by Giddens and Habermas in this direction. To this purpose it is an attempt to come to terms with the how of responsible action by autonomous actors who alone can carry the hope of a better world. Reaching out with such hope and resilience is surely an acceptable and needed ambition for sociology if it is to participate in the construction of the future without over reliance upon chance or evolution.

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