

Bryan S. Turner



The Body & Society

Third Edition



The Body & Society

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The Body & Society

Explorations in Social Theory

3rd Edition

Bryan S. Turner



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To Mike Hepworth (1938–2007)
Sociologist and Humorist

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Acknowledgements

Since the original publication of *The Body and Society* in 1984, I have been concerned to provide an ontological grounding to sociological theory, partly because existing theories of social action typically have what one might call a cognitive bias, thereby ignoring the corporeality of human life and the embodiment of the social actor. I have been motivated intellectually to take the quiddity or 'stuffness' of the human condition seriously by addressing human embodiment as a basis for writing about politics, rights and human vulnerability. I had taught a course with Mike Hepworth on body, self and society at the University of Aberdeen in the late 1970s which laid the basis for a co-edited work on *The Body: Social Process and Cultural Theory*. Mike Featherstone and I subsequently co-founded the journal *Body & Society* in 1982 to promote greater awareness of these issues, and in a sense to promote the sociology of the body as a sub-field within the discipline. My approach to corporeality was first developed in the sociology of religion in *Religion and Social Theory* (1983) in which I argued that, unlike anthropology, sociology had not paid sufficient attention to embodiment in understanding religious belief and practice. Employing these concepts of the body and embodiment I sought to give a new foundation to medical sociology in such works as *Medical Power and Social Knowledge* (1987), *Regulating Bodies* (1992) and *The New Medical Sociology* (2004).

Over these three decades, in developing the sociology of the body, I have become increasingly critical of social constructionism as an epistemology. Instead I have explored the damaged human body in various publications and written with Steven Wainwright on the ballet dancer as a criticism of constructionist epistemology. The vulnerability of the human body has increasingly dominated my thinking about embodiment, and I have developed this theme with respect to such diverse topics as injury, old age, disease, and more recently, human rights. The critical intersection between medical science, demography and social change is particularly important as a basis for further developing the sociological understanding of the body in society.

This attempt to provide an ontological grounding for sociological theory is part of a broader project which is to establish the notion of human embodiment as a necessary precondition for any theory of action. Some of these issues were considered in *Society and Culture* (2001) with Chris Rojek, in which we attempted to develop a three-dimensional view of the social, involving embodiment, enselfment and emplacement.

The Body and Society was written in part as a response to the work of Michel Foucault. While many of the issues explored in the first edition – religion, medicine and sexuality – are still relevant, it appears necessary

radically to revisit those concerns and perspectives. In this edition of the book, I have become increasingly interested in time and the body, and this issue of the temporality of the body with respect to illness, ageing and death necessarily leads one to the philosophy of being and time of Martin Heidegger. His preoccupation with boredom provides a stimulating context for thinking sociologically about age and life expectancy.

Many people have directly or indirectly contributed to this new edition: Gary Albrecht, Alex Dumas, Anthony Elliott, Mary Evans, John O'Neill, Chris Rojek, Steven Wainwright, Darin Weinberg, Kevin White, Simon Williams and Zheng Yangwen. Various masters, doctoral and postdoctoral students – Caragh Brosnan, David Larson, Rhiannon Morgan, Ruksana Patel and Nguyen Kim Hoa – have over the years contributed to my sharpening awareness of the centrality of vulnerability to rights, health and politics. I owe a considerable debt to Chris Rojek who has over the years encouraged me to persist with the project of the sociology of the body.

For this third edition I have written a new introduction which surveys some of the developments in the sociology of the body, but more importantly points to new issues such as bio-medical sciences, technology, demography, longevity and human rights. Additions to the text reflect a single thesis, which is that human vulnerability is the foundation of common human experiences and interests, and hence the concept can be employed to question sociology's love affair with cultural relativism.

Chapter 11 outlines my argument that sociologists have rarely concerned themselves with the body-in-motion. This topic is illustrated by some issues in the sociology of dance, which I studied with Steven Wainwright. This research was originally focused on injured ballet dancers and hence on the assumption that ballet careers are compromised by the very vulnerability of the dancing body. The penultimate chapter on the life extension project reflects my current interest in analysing the possible social and psychological implications of any significant extension of human life expectancy. This new concern with ageing has been developed in co-operation with Alex Dumas. In turn, this final preoccupation with ageing reflects my ongoing critical reaction to the idea of the social construction of the body. I am grateful to Darin Weinberg for help in developing a critique of the social construction paradigm. Life extension projects hold out the promise that science can triumph over our human vulnerability but the promise itself threatens to increase human inequality and hence human suffering. Tom Cushman has been important in encouraging me to develop the concept of vulnerability as an approach to the theory of human rights. The results are presented, partially at least, in the final chapter.

A version of Chapter 11 was first published as 'Bodily performance: on aura and reproducibility' in *Body & Society* (2006) vol. 11(4). Aspects of the argument of Chapter 12 appeared as 'Culture, technologies and bodies' in Chris Shilling (ed.) *Embodying Sociology* (2007). The Epilogue, in which I argue that the original metaphors of religious membership – the shepherd

Acknowledgements

and the sheep – have broken down, but that we need a socio-theology of embodiment if we are to make any sense of our being, was originally one aspect of 'The end(s) of humanity' in *The Hedgehog Review*, Summer 2001. All three pieces have been thoroughly rewritten and extensively developed for this third edition.

Introduction to the Third Edition

Virtue and the Body: The Debate over Nature and Nurture

The very existence of the sociology of the body raises an important and perennial problem about the relationship between nature and culture. Although modern sociology has been prone to dismiss 'nature' as merely a construct or has treated it as a cultural system, the tension between the body as a living organism and as a cultural product continues to underpin the sociological understanding of, and debate about, the body and embodiment. There are, of course, strong political reasons for being anxious about the contrast because the nature/nurture divide has often been used to legitimate or to justify social inequality as a natural inequality, such as the (unequal) gender division of labour in society. The ideological justification of this division suggests that men belong to culture and are responsible for the public sphere, while women in their domestic roles fulfil natural functions such as child-rearing and family maintenance. While one can dismiss these claims relatively easily, this distinction needs to be constantly re-assessed since developments in the natural sciences have contributed to a profound change in the ways in which the human body is conceptualized, managed and produced. The contrast between nature and culture also therefore influences the ways in which we think of science itself. We should not take a caricature of the differences between men and women – between the public and the private – as the definitive case against a contrast between nature and culture.

Although the nature/nurture distinction has been a favourite topic of social anthropology, we have somewhat forgotten that the original contrast was an important part of classical philosophy, where nature referred primarily to biological life outside the city and culture was the rational life of the citizen. The contrast between 'mere life' and 'the form of life' within the city was a basic component of the idea of sovereignty. The modern sociological debate about whether the body is natural (outside the city) or socially constructed (under the realm of political sovereignty) has unfortunately become disconnected from the political. If the sociology of the body is to have an important future role in shaping sociological debate, it needs to embrace the relationship between the political and the corporeal as a major research focus.

The original debate around the contrast between nature and nurture, between nature and culture, or between nature and the political was thoroughly explored in classical philosophy. For example, in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* there is a decisive distinction between *zoē* as the life which humans share with all living things, and *bios* as the way of life

of a particular person or group (Aristotle, 1998). Similarly, the Stoics recognized a distinction between *physis* (nature) and *nomos* (law). While human beings shared nature with animals, their moral or spiritual well-being could only be realized in the *polis* or the political community in which they could exercise rational discourse, thereby rising above their natural being. A civilized or cultured person is one who has been nurtured by education. When human beings acquire a *hexis* or stable disposition, they can exercise moral virtues and can act in terms of their practical wisdom. Politics exists to ensure the happiness (*eudaimonia*) of its citizens by expanding their excellence in rational action. We should note that in Aristotle's world rational excellence was grounded in a habitus that involved bodily perfection and control. This notion that the *polis* was the environment in which rational men could be fully cultivated has persisted in Western philosophy. For example, in the work of Hannah Arendt there is an articulation of this classical view that the private world is closer to nature (and to deprivation), while the public sphere brings nobility to human actions. Her most influential philosophical work was *The Human Condition* (1958) in which she divided human activities into labour, work and action. She argued that human life can only be meaningful if people can engage effectively in the public sphere. The issue here is that the division between nature and culture or between the body and society is in fact the foundation of political sovereignty. The body also comes to define the space of the political.

This Aristotelian distinction plays an important role in the modern discussion of political sovereignty, pre-eminently in the philosophy of Giorgio Agamben. In his *Homo Sacer*, Agamben argues that the fundamental classification of classical society was not necessarily between the sacred and the profane, but between *physis* (nature) and *nomos* (order), or more precisely between *zoē* or natural life and *bios* or the forms of life. Human beings are essentially animals who have created the *polis* as a form of political life. Agamben's central interest is in the problematic character of political power of the modern state as sovereignty, which resides in *nomos*, or law, in the ordering (*Ordnung*) of the *polis*. Nature is characterized by its violence; the *polis*, by its order, and yet the paradox of sovereignty is that it requires a monopoly of violence. The Hobbesian sovereign overcomes the state of nature by incorporating that violence into its power to order men and things. This idea that the normative authority of sovereign power has to disguise its origins in violence was central to Jacques Derrida's analysis of the paradoxical features of power or force (*Gewalt*). This notion of the paradoxical relationship between law, state and authority ran throughout Derrida's philosophical works from *On Grammatology* (1976) to his later lectures on religion (Derrida and Vattimo, 1998). Derrida's thesis was that, in so far as the law is a command of the state and in so far as the state has a monopoly of force in a given territory, then the legitimacy of the law requires that the origins of law have to be disguised. Law pretends to have no history and no context; it is a form of pure

authority. If law has its historical origins in state violence, how can law be an ordering of violence without itself being an instance of arbitrary violence?

The contemporary debate about the exact nature of political life that has occupied modern philosophy for some decades has been engaged with the legacy of Carl Schmitt (1996). Writing in the context of the erosion of authority in the liberal Weimar state, Schmitt defined sovereignty as an exception to the law, and as the capacity to declare that an emergency exists. The state had the power to bring about order in the face of an emergency by exercising its monopoly of violence. Schmitt was a student of Weber's political sociology, which distinguished two forms of power – symbolic and physical (Weber, 1978). The Church is that institution that has symbolic power to order society and individual lives, operating through forms of ritual and discipline to control souls. The state is that institution that has a monopoly of violence in a given territory, operating through law and coercion to police bodies. Adhering to a positive theory of law, Weber defined law as the command of the state. Under what conditions are laws legitimate? When they are issued by the authority of the state, then they have legality, but Weber could not ultimately solve the dual problems of legality and legitimacy of state power. Schmitt, in the context of the Weimar crisis, raised some awkward issues for liberal parliamentary democracy, and rewrote the rule of law as rule by decree in his *Legality and Legitimacy* (2004) by allocating extraordinary powers to the office of the President, thereby paving the way for Hitler's 'leadership-democracy' (*führer-demokratie*).

In his analysis of violence and the sovereignty of the state, Agamben belongs to this tradition of political thought that includes Weber and Schmitt. He is also deeply influenced by Michel Foucault's theory of 'biopolitics' and his idea of 'governmentality' (Foucault, 2000). Sociologists have recognized the importance of Foucault's concept of governmentality as a paradigm for understanding the micro-processes of administration and control within which self discipline and social regulation are integrated. The concept of governmentality, which appears late in Foucault's political writing, provides an integrating theme that addressed the socio-political practices or technologies by which the self is constructed through discipline. Governmentality has become the common foundation of modern political rationality in which the administrative systems of the state have been extended in order to maximize productive control over the demographic processes of the population. This extension of administrative rationality was first concerned with demographic processes of birth, morbidity and death, and later with the psychological health of the population. The administrative state has made eugenics an essential feature of modern government, despite the fact that the very word 'eugenics' is normally hidden from view, given its bad historical connections with fascism and genocide. Governmentality ultimately refers to the ways in which bodies are produced, cultivated and disciplined.

As a generic term for these micro-power relations whereby bodies are controlled by the state through local institutions and authorities, governmentality has been defined as 'the ensemble formed by the institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, the calculations and tactics, that allow the exercise of this very specific albeit complex form of power, which has as its target population, as its principal form of knowledge political economy, and as its essential technical means apparatuses of security' (Foucault, 2001: 219–20). The importance of this definition is that historically the power of the modern state has been less concerned with sovereignty over things (land and wealth) and more concerned with maximizing the productive power of populations, the human body and reproduction. Furthermore, Foucault interpreted the exercise of administrative power in positive terms, that is as enhancing a population's potential through state support for the family and reproduction. The state's involvement in, and regulation of, reproductive technology is a further example of governmentality in which the desire of couples to reproduce is enhanced through the state's support of new medical technologies. In these examples, the eugenic policies of the state are implicit or hidden within the benign interventions of the general practitioner, the social worker or the marriage counsellor. In these administrative arrangements, birth and death become key events in the exercise of state power at the level of everyday life.

To this discussion of sovereignty, we must add the analysis of space. One distinction between religion and politics, between sacred and sovereign, is the question of the territorialization of power. This question of space is nicely illustrated by the distinction between *Ordnung* and *Ortung*. In his account of sovereignty, Agamben (1998: 19) argues that what is at stake is the definition of space within which the juridico-political order can have validity. He goes on to argue that the state of emergency has been historically illustrated by the concentration camp, starting with the use of such camps by the British in the war against the Boers, and then by the Nazi concentration camp. This site of detention is one in which law is suspended and the inmates exist without the protection of rights. For Agamben, the state of emergency has become a normal method of the exercise of sovereignty, even by liberal democracies.

His arguments have been highly controversial because he claims that the Patriot Act recognized a state of emergency and that Guantanamo Bay has the same legal and political status as the Nazi concentration camps. When the state of emergency becomes permanent in a war against terrorism, then the city becomes a camp, and the inmates of these extra-judicial zones are exposed to 'bare life', that is they are expelled from *bios* to *zoē*. These camps offer the state the opportunity of indefinite containment for anybody who is deemed to be a potential threat (Butler, 2006). The principle of indefinite detention which Guantanamo expresses means that the camp offers the state a strategy of political storage whereby, even were the inmates to be tried and found not guilty, they could still be detained. In this sense, the inmates are in a state of permanent storage.

Greek philosophy established a distinction which we still recognize, namely between human behaviour that is determined either by instinct (nature) or by virtue (nurture). This contrast in Greek philosophy was subsequently embraced by Christian theology, especially by St Augustine, who proposed that human beings were citizens of two cities, an earthly city dominated by passion and violence, and a 'city of God' in which their true spiritual beings could be realized. Christian teaching attempted to subordinate human nature (the passions or desires) by moral training, confession and discipline (or cultivating the soul). Christianity established a set of disciplines – or technologies of the self (Foucault, 1997a) – that were designed to regulate the natural man through ascetic regulation, primarily in the form of diet. By abstinence, the religious could transcend the limitations of the animal life of desire. Laymen were to a large degree ensnared in natural desire, but various institutions of grace – confession, Eucharist, baptism and the last rites – offered partial relief from these tribulations. In particular, marriage provided some regulation of natural sexual drives which could be channelled through holy matrimony to some beneficial purpose, namely reproduction.

Traditional religious teaching on the family in the West obviously depends on the biblical view of sexuality, marriage and reproduction. In view of the authority of the New Testament, it is important to recognize that Jesus had very little to say about marriage and family life, and in general his observations on sexual relationships were limited. By comparison with Jewish teaching at the time, Jesus appears to have taken little direct interest in the family and marriage. The Gospels do not therefore contain a developed or systematic theology of this-worldly institutions such as marriage, the family, inheritance and divorce. In order to discover what the teaching of the early Church was on marriage and family life, we need to turn to the letters of St Paul to the primitive church. These epistles to the early Christian communities, such as the letters to the Corinthians, were essentially ad hoc responses to specific local issues, but they have come to acquire a clear authority. Paul's teachings precluded divorce and if the couple did separate, they were not permitted to remarry. In recognizing that celibacy was superior to marriage, he created a new hierarchy of virtue: virginity, widowhood and marriage. Throughout subsequent Christian history, virginity became a significant test of sanctity. For example, the claims of Joan of Arc to sainthood rested significantly on her reputation for virginity (Warner, 1981).

Of course the Christian view that nature had to be subdued if the life of the spirit was to flourish, had its roots in Old Testament views of gender and gender differences. Christianity inherited the traditional Middle Eastern assumption that women, because they are closer to nature, are inferior to men. In the Genesis story, the serpent tempts Eve, and subsequently Adam and Eve recognizing that they are naked are forced to cover the genitals with the leaves of a fig tree. One thing that distinguishes humans from animals is human modesty; humans need to cover nature (genitals, hair or the face)

with culture (the loin cloth, the head scarf or the veil). In some cultures, eating is also assumed to have animal connections, and hence it is polite to cover the mouth while eating. One could list a whole series of activities – defecation, copulation, mastication and so forth – which have strong animal or natural connotations and where human societies have the cultural need to hide or disguise such activities. In the Christian view anything that comes out of the body, especially any involuntary secretion, has the potential to defile a person. Children need training or nurturing in order to understand what behaviour is considered uncivilized and needs to be controlled, hidden or suppressed.

Western positivist philosophy reversed the relationship between nature and culture, arguing that human nature determines mental and cultural existence. Empiricism and materialism attempt to demonstrate that mental life is determined, often mechanistically, by our material organic life. The development of a mechanistic dualism between mind and body, or between mental and material causation, is often historically associated with René Descartes and Francis Bacon. Cartesianism rejected the speculative scholarship of mediaeval philosophy, and paved the way towards rationalism and empirical scientific experimentation. The scientific revolution of the seventeenth century laid the foundations of experimental (laboratory) science in which scientists attempted to explain human behaviour by reference to human anatomy, or biology or chemistry. For example, in the eighteenth century medical scientists became interested in the theory that human diet determines human behaviour. Physicians such as George Cheyne attempted to explain the prevalence of suicide in England in terms of poor diet, and developed various dietary regimes for sedentary occupations to guard against obesity or depression, a condition known at the time as ‘the English malady’. Cheyne’s dietary recommendations influenced religious leaders including John Wesley, who felt that these dietary recommendations were especially compatible with the requirements of Christianity for discipline.

Diet has in fact a double meaning – the political government of a sovereign body and the government of a human body (Turner, 1982a,b). There is both a dietary regimen and a political regime. In the late nineteenth century, the discovery of the calorific scale allowed scientists to calculate with considerable precision the intake of food that was required for a given output of human labour. Dietetics was subsequently used to improve the efficiency of the military, and to make the management of prisons more rational. Dietetics sought to give some scientific foundation to the traditional proverb that a man is what he eats. In the modern world, advanced societies have become obsessed with the problem of clinical obesity as a cause of depression, death and morbidity. The incidence of diabetes has greatly increased with the greying of the populations of the advanced industrial societies. There are, in addition, various arguments from nutritional science that various products, especially sugar, produce uncontrollable behaviour in children. The so-called hyperactive child is a syndrome that has been

connected with the presence of artificial agents – colouring for example – in food. In short, the dietary management of the child by parents is often thought to be as important as education in the upbringing of children. These contemporary attempts to explain offensive or criminal behaviour by reference to genetics or diet can be seen as the modern legacy of nineteenth-century positivist criminology.

In the seemingly endless debate over whether inheritance or social environment was the causal framework within which criminal behaviour was to be adequately explained, Cesare Lombroso (1835–1909) claimed from his own observations of the physical composition of known criminals that there was a definite ‘criminal type’. More importantly, the criminal was an atavistic specimen – a throwback to a pre-social figure whose stooping frame, large hands and low brow marked him out as different from a law-abiding citizen. The criminal was born, not socialized within a deviant environment. He belonged to *zoē* not to *bios*, that is to ‘bare life’ rather than to the *polis*.

Lombroso’s positivistic criminology promised to resolve definitively the puzzle of criminal behaviour, and more importantly it claimed to be demonstrably grounded in a scientific methodology that delivered unambiguous results. Criminal Man had stigmata that could be read by the criminologist with the same clarity as reading an English text. Nineteenth-century positivism was a deterministic and reductionist doctrine that departed from the classical tradition of criminology, which had been much more closely associated with legal theory, the doctrine of free will and philosophical liberalism.

What is striking, however, about criminology at the close of the century was the concentration not so much on the criminal type but on the notion of feeble-mindedness in the criminal personality. Crime was a consequence, not of the robust atavistic man, but of the feeble-minded simpleton who could not cope independently with the exigencies of urban life in a social world that was rapidly changing. The real social problem with the feeble-minded criminal was his unfortunate capacity to reproduce. If the feeble-minded man had been infertile, he would have been less problematic in the social landscape of late Victorian Britain. The criminal type within the Victorian moral framework was not so much a vicious and dangerous character, but a sad and pathetic figure who required regulation and restraint, and medical guidance.

With the growth of evolutionary theory in nineteenth-century biology and zoology, two incompatible views of mankind emerged. ‘Monogenism’ – the belief that the diverse races of mankind had a single or common origin, but had degenerated at different rates with the progress of humanity – was compatible with the myth of Adam as the Father of Mankind in Genesis. By contrast, ‘polygenism’ was supported by secular rationalists who argued that human races have separate origins and different attributes, and that humanity was characterized by its extreme diversity. Polygenism was attractive to rational humanism and had no support in Old Testament mythology. While neither argument was politically

egalitarian, polygenism was more consistently used, for example in the United States in the nineteenth century, as a justification for racial inequality. Charles Darwin's biological theory of evolution was eventually transformed into social Darwinism, which claimed that human societies were based on endless struggles resulting in the 'survival of the fittest'. The ethical idea of the unity of mankind that had been the basis of Natural Law appeared to have been irreparably shattered by the progress of scientific knowledge.

Social Darwinism attempted to show that natural selection in the evolutionary development of society provided a causal account of the development of personality traits, and that the educational nurturing of new generations was less significant than the natural selection of behaviour that was related to evolutionary adaptation. Natural causes – the survival of the fittest – were more important than human socialization. Evolutionary psychology attempts to show that our contemporary psychological make-up, such as aggressiveness in human males, is a consequence of our evolutionary adaptation to our environment, for example as hunters and gatherers.

While physical anthropology supported nature over nurture, social anthropology and early sociology generally rejected such naturalistic explanations of human behaviour, arguing that culture is the most significant component of any explanation of both individual behaviour and social organization. Social anthropology has rejected biological reductionism on two grounds. First, it argued that the very distinction between nature and culture is itself a cultural distinction. What counts as 'nature' or 'natural' in human societies is infinitely variable, and the task of sociology and anthropology is to understand these variations. For example, the dividing line between nature and nurture can be explored in terms of what and how people eat food. Not all food is regarded as 'naturally' appropriate for human consumption. Because Western societies tend to regard domestic animals as possessing certain minimal rights, we are reluctant to eat them. The domesticated dog may be a delicacy in Hanoi, but not in Harlow. By contrast, while we relish a side of English beef, Hinduism regards the cow as sacred. Pork is relished by Filipino Christians but not by the Muslims of Mindanao. These anthropological arguments, which in themselves are well known, seek to show that the distinction between nature and culture or nature and nurture is itself contingent, historical and cultural.

Secondly, social anthropology has attempted to demonstrate through comparative ethnographic research that 'human nature' varies between cultures and hence there is no common generic nature to humanity. Perhaps the most famous example of this approach is from the work of Margaret Mead who demonstrated that even the gender division of society cannot be explained by heredity. She published a number of books – *Coming of Age in Samoa* (1928), *Growing Up in New Guinea* (1930) and *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies* (1935) – in which she showed that many societies were very tolerant of sexual experimentation outside of marriage for young adults, and furthermore that there is an important difference between gender, sex and sexuality.

In some societies men stay at home and concentrate on personal cosmetic beauty and women undertake manual work. Therefore, masculinity cannot be explained by reference to biology. Gender refers to the social roles which people occupy that are produced by a gender division of labour; sex refers to biological sex and sexualities refer to the performance of gender identities.

Arnold Gehlen and the Theory of Institutions

Modern mainstream sociology came to reject the idea that social phenomena can be explained causally by reference to natural phenomena, and yet sociology has been influenced, somewhat indirectly, by the legacy of philosophical anthropology, which had a very different interpretation of human nature in relation to institutions. Much of the recent work on the sociology of the body has been explicitly influenced by Peter Berger and therefore implicitly by the philosophy of Arnold Gehlen who is now widely recognized as the founder of 'philosophical anthropology'. Concerned with the relationships between biology, environment and institutions, Gehlen was influenced by contemporary developments in biological science and by Friedrich Nietzsche. Offering an original perspective on the conventional nature/nurture debate, his philosophical thought is controversial, partly because he was closely associated with National Socialism. His philosophical anthropology has had a lasting impact on the sociology of knowledge, especially in the work of Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann. Gehlen has also been particularly important in the development of social philosophy in Germany where his influence on Jürgen Habermas, Axel Honneth, Hans Joas, Wolfgang Iepkens and Niklas Luhmann is significant. A neoconservative, his thought has had a direct impact on radical socialist criticism of modernity.

Following Nietzsche, Gehlen (1988) argued that human beings are not yet finished animals. Man, to use Gehlen's terminology and the title of the English translation of his major work, is, by comparison with other animals, a 'deficient being'. By this notion, he meant that human beings are poorly equipped biologically to cope with the world into which they are involuntarily thrown. They have no finite or specific instinctual equipment to a given environment, and require a long period of education in order to adapt themselves to the social world. This state of incompleteness compels them to become creatures of discipline, because their very survival requires self-discipline, training and self-correction. In order to manage their world openness, human beings have to create a cultural world to replace or to supplement their instinctual legacy. Ontological incompleteness provides an anthropological explanation for the human origins of social institutions. In this sense, we can define 'philosophical anthropology' as a perspective that employs the findings of anthropology and human biology to address traditional philosophical problems concerning ontology.

A theory of institutions is the core of Gehlen's work. Human beings are characterized by their 'instinctual deprivation' and therefore humans do not have a stable structure within which to operate. Social institutions are the bridges between humans and their physical environment, and it is through these institutions that human life becomes coherent, meaningful and continuous. In filling the gap created by instinctual deprivation, institutions provide humans with relief (*Entlastung*) from the tensions generated by undirected instinctual drives. Habit is a central aspect of relief, because it reduces expenditure in motivation and control in everyday life. Habit defines the contours of a taken-for-granted social reality.

Over time, these institutions merge into the background assumptions of social action and the foreground is occupied by reflexive, practical and conscious activities. With modernization, there is a process of de-institutionalization with the result that the background becomes less reliable, more open to negotiation, increasingly precarious and routinely an object of reflection. Accordingly, the foreground expands and life is experienced as risky and unpredictable. With a process of de-traditionalization, objective and sacred institutions suffer erosion, and modern life becomes subjective, contingent and uncertain. In fact we occupy a world of secondary or quasi-institutions, which are fragile and subject to constant change. Institutions, which are exposed to persistent reflection, cannot provide humans with necessary psychological relief. There are profound consequences associated with these changes. While primitive human beings had character, that is a firm and definite psychological structure corresponding to reliable background institutions, in modern societies people have personalities that are fluid and flexible, like the institutions in which they exist.

Gehlen's work developed into a profoundly conservative social criticism of modernity. While the fundamental premises of the Enlightenment are dead, their consequences continue. With modernization, society as a system has become separated from the cultural and value assumptions of modern technology, science, economics and state. While the transformation of technology is a restless and hectic activity, culture has crystallized because its transformative capacities have already been realized. The exterior appearance of excoriating social change masks the underlying crystallization of culture.

His work has also been, somewhat paradoxically, important in the development of social constructionism. Because human beings live in a state of world openness, they have to construct their human world culturally through building social institutions. However, human beings cannot remain persistently reflexive about this social construction, and the social world must take on a taken-for-granted factual character. Gehlen's social philosophy is conservative because institutions are necessary and it is psychologically dangerous constantly to criticize these institutional supports. Critical reflexivity undermines the capacity of social institutions to survive as 'natural' features of the everyday world. His theory underlined the

importance of order and stability, and hence he treated all forms of social change as corrosive.

Human incompleteness provides an anthropological explanation for the human origins of social institutions. In short, human behaviour is conditioned by institutions not instincts. Gehlen's work has been important in the development of contemporary sociology especially in, for example, Peter Berger (1980). For Berger, human beings have to create cultural institutions ('a sacred canopy') in order to give their world some structure and stability (1967). With Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality. A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (1966) was one of the most influential discussions of culture in modern sociology. Berger and Luckmann's sociology of knowledge can therefore be seen as a response to the traditional nature/nurture debate.

Social Constructionism

Constructionism – the philosophical idea that things are not discovered but socially produced – is a perspective that has been applied within both the natural and social sciences. In one sense, sociology is constructionism, in so far as sociologists argue that what appear to be naturally occurring phenomena are in fact products of social processes. Constructionism invites us to presume that all facts are necessarily social facts in the sense that social communities produce them. In contemporary sociology, the notion of constructionism has become influential as a theoretical orientation because developments in the theory of language (the so-called 'the linguistic turn') have forced social scientists to re-assess the legacy of naturalistic empiricism.

Empiricism argues that our senses are our best guide to what exists and can be known. Naturalistic empiricism claims that our senses are our best guide to knowledge about nature. Social constructionism raises serious criticisms about the reliability of such evidence of the senses, claiming that culture determines how we apprehend and comprehend the world. Our knowledge of the natural and social world is determined or constructed by background cultural assumptions.

Constructionism is often associated with the notion that social reality is a narrative or text. This idea of society as narrative has become a persuasive paradigm in cultural sociology, and has changed the conventional methodologies of social inquiry. The debate about the construction of social reality has for example been important in sociological approaches to the human body. The history of anatomical maps of the human body – a text about the structure of the body – shows how the anatomy of the body has been constructed according to changing medical fashions. How scientists see the body is dependent on their cultural framework and is not simply based on direct empirical observation.

Several criticisms of social constructionism can be considered. First, it is a mistake to assume that social constructionism represents one single,

more or less coherent, doctrine. There are in fact a great variety of different and contradictory constructionist perspectives. Different types of constructionism present very different accounts of human agency, and thus have different implications for an understanding of social relationships. Secondly, constructionism tends to ignore or deny the importance of the phenomenological world. This issue is especially important in the debate about the social construction of the body. Cultural representations of the body are historical, but there is also an experience of embodiment that can only be understood by grasping the body as a lived experience. Constructionism does not allow us to analyse the phenomenology of the everyday world, including the body, and by insisting on the textuality of phenomena it does not provide a vocabulary for studying human performance or human experience. Sociologists may argue, for example, that dental science constructs the mouth as an objective of scientific inquiry, but this tells us nothing about the phenomenology of the experience of toothache.

A third criticism is that constructionism as a cultural theory does not ask whether some social phenomena are more socially constructed than others. If society is an ensemble of texts, are all texts of equal importance, and how can we judge their significance? Is gout less socially constructed than homosexuality? Constructionist arguments tend to be employed when a condition such as a disability is politically disputed. Constructionism is often a basis for political advocacy, for example in the women's movement where it was used to argue that 'anatomy is not destiny'. Constructionism shares these problems with earlier forms of the sociology of knowledge, namely the problem of how one measures or understands the social effects of discourses, texts or statements regarded as 'ideological' or socially constructed. Theories of ideology (and by extension theories of social construction) have not been particularly successful in showing that a pervasive set of beliefs has consistent effects or consequences on belief and practice such that it could be said to constitute a dominant ideology or a dominant discourse. Without a more robust research methodology, sociological interpretations of social texts have the same force or lack of it as literary interpretations. There is an important sociological difference between claiming, for example, that anorexia is socially constructed, and exploring the intended and unintended consequences of anorexia in the lives of individuals.

In the last 20 years, the traditional nature and nurture debate has become submerged under or incorporated within the development of the sociology of the body. Sociologists have argued predominantly that the human body, far from being a given natural phenomenon, is, according to constructionism, a product of social processes of interpretation and fabrication. Following Marcel Mauss (1979) sociologists have noted that the human body needs to be trained to undertake basic activities – walking, running, dancing or sitting. Different cultures have different body techniques which must be mastered if the child is to be accepted into society – for example, eating with chopsticks in Japan or not spitting in public in Victorian England. The work

of Pierre Bourdieu (1977; 1984) has been important in demonstrating that the human body has to be trained to occupy a habitus within which the individual acquires an appropriate deportment that is shaped by social class. The shape and dispositions of the body are the products of a cultural habitus within the specific location of a certain social class. The natural dispositions are cultivated in the habitus – an idea that Bourdieu adapts from Aristotle – where individuals acquire a socially constructed taste for objects that have cultural capital. We can re-interpret Bourdieu as saying that primitive or raw desires (nature) are reconstituted in the habitus (nurture) where they emerged as socially sanctioned tastes or preferences.

More recently, this traditional argument in favour of culture has been once more challenged by the findings of genetic research. In public discourse, it is often claimed that there is a gene to explain some aspect of human behaviour – such as a divorce gene to show why some people are prone to divorce or a God gene to show why some people are more prone to spiritual experiences than others. These popular notions are often challenged by genetic scientists who claim that the causal connection between genes and human behaviour is more complex and can rarely be reduced to the effect of a single gene. The new genetics has clearly made important strides in explaining the prevalence of certain specific diseases such as Huntington's Disease, but it has been unable to achieve similar results in the explanation of complex human behaviour such as criminality. However, these new developments in genetics do open up innovative opportunities for a more sophisticated dialogue between social science and genetics, and hence it is premature to dismiss the debate around nature and nurture. One consequence of modern applications of genetic research such as stem-cell therapy has been to raise the question as to whether life expectancy – an issue which I explore in Chapter 12 – can be increased significantly. The prospect of a significant extension of life has implications for the nature of our humanity, opening up the prospect of post-human existence (Fukuyama, 2002), and behind the prospect of prolongevity is the underlying problem of, paradoxically, increasing our vulnerability as creatures at the very point of defying death.

Vulnerability

The notion of vulnerability is derived from the Latin *vulnus* or 'wound' (Turner, 2006). Its etymology signifies the human potential to be open to the world and hence to be wounded, that is to experience physical trauma. In modern usage, the idea of human vulnerability refers to both physical and psychological harm: it indicates human exposure to psychological harm or moral damage or spiritual threat. More generally it includes our ability to suffer psychologically, morally and spiritually rather than merely a physical capacity for pain from our exposure to the physical world. Our common human vulnerability is illustrated by our morbidity and mortality, and these

in turn can be regarded as the basis for shared human rights, such as the right to life itself.

The modern revulsion against physical torture in international legal codes illustrates the common theme of vulnerability running through universal human rights declarations. In referring to hazards and disasters, these conventions draw attention to the risky relationship between people and their natural environments. Various disasters in modern times – Hurricane Katrina, the tsunami disaster, the Kobe earthquake and African droughts – have encouraged governments and international agencies to seek improved measures of risks and vulnerabilities.

In an information society, vulnerability has acquired yet another meaning, referring in computer sciences to the weakness in a system in permitting an attacker to compromise the integrity and security of a system, its data and its applications.

Vulnerability is perhaps most closely associated with what appears to be the inevitable ageing of the human organism. With the aging of populations in developed societies, the leading causes of death have changed from infectious disease in infants to geriatric conditions – stroke, heart attack and cancer – among the elderly. For instance, the American Heart Association has identified several risk factors associated with heart disease such as increasing age, male sex, and heredity. There are also life-style factors which make people vulnerable such as smoking, physical inactivity, obesity and diabetes mellitus. Psychologists in the 1950s argued that there was an ‘executive disease’ among white-collar employees in the corporate world. American cardiologists claimed that type-A men were competitive and ambitious, and their corporate life-style made them vulnerable to heart attack as a consequence of high levels of stress. Medical debate has concentrated on assessing whether vulnerability to disease is produced by environmental factors (such as pollution) which can be modified by legislation and political intervention or whether the primary causes are genetic, where medical intervention (such as genetic counselling for Huntington’s Disease) involves long-term strategies. The evidence suggests that disease is a product of both environmental and genetic causes, and requires appropriate strategies to address both social and genetic dimensions.

With globalization there is greater interconnectivity between societies, making the rapid spread of infectious disease more problematic. With technological development, the risks of industrial pollution and hazard are much greater. With growing sophistication in military technology, the risk of intended and unintended military disaster is also much greater. In short, with modern social change, human vulnerability and institutional precariousness increase. These social and technological changes were summarized in the concept of ‘risk society’ (Beck, 1992). Reflecting on the impact of uncertainty, risk and hazard, Beck developed a sociological perspective to show why disasters such as Bhopal, Three Mile Island, Chernobyl and global warming were products of modernization involving

the intensive application of technology to transform the environment to satisfy human needs. Such risks were the unintended consequences of technological modernization.

These Aristotelian themes – body, habitus and virtue – have also been important in the development of the work of Pierre Bourdieu. In summary, there are broadly two dominant traditions in the sociology of the body. There is either the cultural decoding of the body as a system of meaning that has a definite structure existing separately from the intentions and conceptions of individuals, or there is the phenomenological study of embodiment that attempts to understand human practices that are organized around the life course (of birth, maturation, reproduction and death). Sociologists including Bourdieu have offered various solutions to this persistent tension between meaning and experience on the one hand, and between representation and practice on the other. Bourdieu's development of the notions of habitus and practice in *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977) provides a theoretical strategy for looking simultaneously at how status difference is inscribed on the body and how we experience the world through our bodies that are ranked in terms of their cultural capital. The reconciliation of these traditions can be assisted by distinguishing between the idea of the body as representation, and embodiment as practice and experience.

In considering the future development of the sociology of the body, there are at least two important issues. There is a general view that, while there has been an extensive theoretical debate, there is a dearth of empirical ethnographic research. Secondly, there is a growing research interest in performance, offering further empirical grounding for the study of the body. For example, to study ballet as performance rather than as representation, sociologists need to pay attention to the performing body. In *Performing Live*, Richard Shusterman (2000), drawing on the work of Bourdieu and developing a pragmatist aesthetics, has argued that an aesthetic understanding of performance such as hip hop cannot neglect the embodied features of artistic activity. The need for an understanding of embodiment and lived experience is crucial in understanding performing arts, but also for the study of the body in sport. While choreography is in one sense the text of the dance, performance takes place outside the strict directions of the choreographic work and analysis. Dance has an immediacy which cannot be captured by discourse analysis. It is important to re-capture the intellectual contribution of the phenomenology of human embodiment in order to avoid the reduction of bodies to cultural texts. My presumption is that the concept of embodiment must be placed at the core of any adequate picture of social life, and that a renewal of the critical project of sociology depends on a theoretical integration of the connections between the vulnerability of human embodiment, the precarious nature of social institutions and human rights. The richness of metaphors of embodiment is never very far from an effective conceptualization of institutions. The fact that the body is important to the metaphors we use to think with has been commonly recognized in social anthropology from Robert Hertz to Mary Douglas.

Let us consider religious mythology. Because the body is traditionally always the nearest to hand source of metaphors for understanding society, it is hardly surprising, for example, that Christian theology has been constructed around body metaphors: virgin birth, charisma as blood, Adam's Rib, Mary's milk, Christ's wounds, the Sacred Heart and the Eucharistic Feast. It is also the case that basic social theories have also been corporeal. Feasts provided an elementary model of society and the Church was conceptualized as a body of believers. From the idea of the Church as the Body of Christ came early models of trading groups as corporations. The body is, however, more than a rich source of metaphor. It is constitutive of our being-in-the-world, but in contemporary societies the dominance of bio-technology has brought about an erosion of any sense of our common ontology. The metaphors by which we can think about society have become either irrelevant or exhausted, and we live in societies in which the common stream of metaphorical meanings is constantly challenged by scientific change. As a conclusion to this third edition of *The Body and Society* I turn to the issue of the possibility of a theological imagination of body and society.

The Mode of Desire

Needs and Desires

Human beings are often thought to have needs because they have bodies. Our basic needs are thus typically seen as physical: the need to eat, sleep and drink is a basic feature of people or organic systems. It is also in social philosophy to recognize needs which are not overtly physical, for example the need for companionship or self-respect. 'Need' implies 'necessity', for the failure to satisfy needs results in impairment, malfunction and displeasure. The satisfaction of a need produces pleasure as a release from the tension of an unresolved need. The result is that 'need' is an explanatory concept in a theory of motivation which argues that behaviour is produced by the search for pleasure and the avoidance of pain. In Greek philosophy, the Cyrenaics and Epicureans placed great emphasis on the satisfaction of pleasures as a criterion of the good life. In utilitarianism, the notion of the hedonistic calculus became the basis of Bentham's political philosophy: the good society is one which maximizes the greatest happiness of the greatest number. The problem is that not all pleasures appear to be necessary and many of them appear to be destructive and anti-social. Human capacity for pleasures appears infinite, including self-flagellation, homosexual rape, torture, plunder and pillage. The philosophical solution has been to distinguish between good and bad pleasures, between real and false needs. For example, the outcome of the debate about pleasure and virtue in Greek philosophy was that 'we should try to live a frugal life in which necessary desires are satisfied, and natural but not necessary desires given some place, while vain desires are outlawed. Such a life would naturally be virtuous' (Huby, 1969: 67). While a person may gain sadistic pleasure from the pain of others, these pleasure-giving activities are not regarded as conducive to a good society based on companionship and these pleasures are thus regarded as vain and unnatural. There are at least two problems with this position. The first is that I am an authority on my own pleasures and therefore individuals may not be easily persuaded that their private pleasures are somehow false. Secondly, the argument equates 'desire' with 'need'.

Although the analysis of desire has a long history in philosophy (Potts, 1980) and although 'desire' is often associated with 'appetite', it is important to be clear that a theory of desire is not the same as a theory of need. For example, Freud's psychoanalysis was primarily a theory of desire

and cannot be translated into a Marxist anthropology which is essentially a theory of need. The difference is that need implies an object which satisfies the need, the object of the need being external to it; desire cannot be finally satisfied since desire is its own object. The view of desire provides the basis of Freudian pessimism, because desire cannot be satisfied within society. The Oedipus myth signals this impossibility. The satisfaction of needs can be the criterion of the good society, whereas the satisfaction of desire cannot. *Concupiscentia* and *ira* are thus corrosive of that friendship which the Greeks saw as the cement of social groups as well as the basis of individual virtue.

Wisdom and Friendship

Sociology is literally the wisdom or knowledge (*logos*) of friendship (*socius*). The task of sociology is to analyse the processes which bind and unbind social groups, and to comprehend the location of the individual within the network of social regulations which tie the individual to the social world. While sociology is a relatively new addition to the social sciences, the notion that friendship is the ultimate social cement of large-scale social collectivities, like the state, is relatively ancient. In *The Symposium* Plato gave full expression to the Greek ideal of friendship as that social condition which overcomes the anti-social desires for personal possessions and competitive eminence. The aim of the individual and the state should be the cultivation of virtue and happiness rather than the satisfaction of desires which are the springs of disharmony and envy. The order (*kosmos*) within the individual is necessary to the ordering (*kosmos*) within the large social world and both are intimately connected to friendship. It was Eros which was the force capable of bridging the gap between the two essential elements of reality – rationality embodied in Apollo and irrationality embodied in Dionysus (Jaeger, 1944). The interior of the individual reflects the anatomy of society as a contest between desires (of which envy is especially prominent), and reason (Gouldner, 1967). Both Eros and friendship are necessary to fuse these disruptive and corrosive features of the psyche and society. We can see then that the roots of Western philosophy lie in two related issues: the struggle between desire and reason, and the opposition between the binding of friendship and the unbinding pressures of individuation.

There is much that separates Plato's philosophical enquiry into the nature of friendship and the sociological analysis of social bonding, but, as I shall show, there is also much continuity. More importantly, the world in which Plato existed has been transformed by two events which are crucial to this particular study: Christianity and the industrial revolution. Given the strong chiliastic dimension of early Christianity, the primitive church posed a sharp and decisive opposition between the world and the spirit. The cultivation of the body could have no place within a religious movement which was initially strongly oriented towards the things of the

next world. Early Christianity may have inherited from gnostic Essenism the view that creation was corrupt and worthy of moral condemnation (Allegro, 1979). After the destruction of Jerusalem and the absence of the Messianic Return, the Christian church was forced to accommodate to the existence of Roman imperialism, but it retained what Weber called inner-worldly asceticism, that is a strong hostility to the things of this world. To some extent the emphasis in Pauline theology on the sinfulness of sex was reinforced by the adoption of Aristotelian philosophy which was similarly hostile to women.

Within the Christian ascetic tradition, sexuality came to be seen as largely incompatible with religious practice. In particular, sexual enjoyment is a particular threat to any attempt to create a systematic religious response to sinfulness. This problem of subordinating sexuality to a rational lifestyle forms the basis of much of Weber's view of the origins of religious intellectualism and rationalization. The argument is that 'ascetic alertness, self-control, and methodical planning of life are seriously threatened by the peculiar irrationality of the sexual act, which is ultimately and uniquely unsusceptible to rational organization' (Weber, 1966: 238). One 'solution' to this dilemma of human existence was the division of the religious community as an elite which withdrew from the world in order to abstain from sexuality and the mass which remained embedded in the profane world of everyday society. The laity reproduced itself within the restrictions of organized monogamy. The elite withdrew into celibacy and monasticism, recruiting its members through vocations rather than carnal reproduction. Sexuality, even within the limitations placed upon family life by religious norms, was thus a lay activity, permitting monks and priests to follow a life of rational control over the flesh. As a result of this severity towards sexual sinfulness, the human body was transformed from the occasion for sin to its very cause. The body became the prison of the soul, the flesh became, in the words of Brother Giles, the pig that wallows in its own filth and the senses were the seven enemies of the mind (Black, 1902). To control the body, the ascetic movement in Christianity turned ever more rigidly towards rituals of restraint – fasting, celibacy, vegetarianism and the denial of earthly things.

The Mode of Desire

It is possible to conceive of a mode of desire corresponding to every economic mode of production. In *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, Engels (n.d.) argued that, within the materialist perspective of history, every society has to produce its means of existence and reproduce its own members. An order of sexuality thus corresponds to an order of property and production. The mode of desire is a set of social relations by which sexual desire is produced, regulated and distributed under a system of kinship, patriarchy and households. These relations of desire determine the eligibility of persons for procreative roles and legitimate sexual unions for

the production of persons. The mode of production of desire consequently has social, political and ideological dimensions; for example, sexual ideology interpellates persons as sexual objects with appropriate relations for the consumption of sexuality (Therborn, 1980). It can be argued that the mode of production produces social classes as effects of property relations (Poulantzas, 1973). Similarly, a mode of desire specifies a classification of 'sex groups', of which gender is the principal dimension dividing the population into 'men' and 'women'. However, the dominant sexual classification also designates 'boys' as subordinates who are not eligible for reproductive functions – they may be, of course, appropriate objects of desire. In modern terminology, we can suggest as an initial starting point that every mode of production has a classificatory system of sexual desire – a discourse which designates appropriately sexed beings and organizes their relations. It is this social discourse which specifies eligible sexuality not the dictates of human physiology.

Marx (1974, vol. 1: 85–6n) argued that in the feudal mode of production it was Catholicism which constituted the dominant ideology of feudal social formations. It is possible to re-express Marx's view by claiming that in a feudal mode of production there has to be an ideological regulation of sexuality corresponding to the specific economic character of feudal societies and that it was Catholic sexual discourse which provided the dominant mode of desire. Human agents live their sensual, sexual experience via the categories of a discourse of desire which is dominant in given societies, but this discourse of desire is ultimately determined by the economic requirements of the mode of production. The discourse has a grammar specifying who does what to whom and it is this grammar of sex which designates the objects and subjects of sexual practices. It is clear that this rendition of Marx is an attempt to bring together an Althusserian analysis of modes of production (Althusser and Balibar, 1970) and a Foucauldian outline of discursive formations (Foucault, 1972). This study of the body departs from these perspectives in two crucial features. The first is that both Althusser and Foucault have little to say in any detail on the resistance of either individuals or classes to forms of regulation and surveillance, despite frequent reference to resistance to discourse. Secondly, structuralist analysis of discourse either ignores the effectivity of discursive formations or takes their effects for granted. To show that a discourse is prevalent is not to show that it is wholly effective (Abercrombie, Hill and Turner, 1980).

Every society has to reproduce its population and regulate it in social space; at the level of the individual, sexuality has to be restrained and persons have to be represented. These four problems may have a different prominence and salience in different societies depending on the nature of the economic mode of production. In feudal societies, especially for the dominant landowning class, the reproduction of the dominant class depended crucially on the regulation and restraint of the sexuality of subordinate members of the household. The conservation of land depended

on the stability of inheritance through legitimate male heirs; a discourse of desire was necessary to secure these economic objectives and this discourse was primarily patriarchal and repressive. These features of the discourse were contained predominantly within Catholic morality which aimed to repress pleasure in the interest of reproduction. This is not to suggest that mediaeval attitudes towards women were all of a piece; woman was both Eve (the cause of all our woe) and Mary (the source of spiritual power) (Bernardo, 1975), but the principal feature of the social position of women in feudal society was dependency and subordination within the household. In the seventeenth century, 'a roving woman causes words to be uttered' and this pronouncement applied to nuns as much as it did to married, noble women (Nicholson, 1978). A woman's place was next to the hearth with her master's progeny. This mediaeval discourse promoted legitimate sexuality and separated it from desire. Within this context, the confessional assumed especial importance (Hepworth and Turner, 1982); it was a ritual for the production of the truth of sex (Foucault, 1981), but to establish the truth of sexuality it had to understand the error of pleasure. Much can be learnt, therefore, about feudal sexual discourses by an analysis of the teaching of the penitentials on marital and extramarital coitus.

For mediaeval Christian theology, any act of coitus which did not result in the insemination of the woman was a 'sin against nature'. The sexual act was to be devoid of pleasure and therefore if a man enjoyed his wife the act was regarded as equivalent to fornication. These 'sins against nature' included not only sodomy, bestiality and masturbation, but also coitus interruptus. These were unnatural because they did not result in insemination and their primary motivation was pure pleasure. The same arguments applied to concubinage and extramarital sexuality, especially where these were undertaken with primitive contraceptive measures. The confessional manuals also proscribed certain sexual positions which increased pleasure and decreased the likelihood of conception. The condemnation of extramarital sex combined a variety of notions; it was associated with pleasure, with contraception and with unnatural positions. In addition, it implied that husbands would unwillingly become the parents of children whom they had not fathered. There was a danger therefore that property would pass to offspring who were not in reality legitimate. The order of legitimate sexuality would not correspond to the order of property relations.

It is very easy, as a result, to discover in these mediaeval texts a discourse of desire which separated pleasure from property. The sociological question is, however, to discover whether these discourses had real effects on social behaviour. Since it was impossible to form a household without sufficient capital, there are commonsense reasons for believing that young couples would adopt coitus interruptus for pleasure where procreation was economically precluded (Flandrin, 1975). Marriage was thus regarded as an economic and political contract between families for the conservation of a landowning class; the marriage bed was devoid of pleasure. Since procreative activities

were confined to these contractual unions in marriage, desire had to find its location elsewhere.

Asceticism

In mediaeval times, the attempt to create a rational and systematic regimen of denial was largely confined to the religious orders who, as it were, practised asceticism on behalf of the lay man. Expressing this differentiation in spatial terms, reason was allocated to the internal domain of the monastery, while desire ran rampant in the profane world of the lay society. In this respect, we could perceive the principal argument of Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1930) as an account of how the Reformation took the ascetic denial of desire out of the monastic cell into the secular family. Protestantism thus sought to break the distinction between the elite and the mass by transforming elite practices into everyday routines of self-control. Abstinence, the control of passions, fasting and regularity were thus held up as ideal norms for the whole society, since salvation could no longer be achieved vicariously by the labours of monks. The disciplines and regulations of the family, school and factory thus have their historical roots in the redistribution of monastic practices within the wider society. The monastic cell was installed in the prison and the workshop, while ascetic practices spread ever outwards (Foucault, 1979: 238).

Of course, the attempt to impose monasticism as a general secular norm of restraint necessarily led to resistances. The history of English sexual culture can be seen as a pendulum swing between restraints on sexuality and relaxations in moral behaviour. The Puritan revolution of the seventeenth century was followed, with the Restoration, by a new liberalism in sexual conduct. The return to a more rigid sexual life-style in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was followed by a new permissiveness which has been the dominant theme of contemporary society (Stone, 1979). To some extent these restraints on sexuality also corresponded to restraints on the table. From an ascetic point of view, eating and sexuality are both gross activities of the body. Eating, especially hot, spicy foods, stimulates sexual passion. To control sexuality, Protestants attempted to regulate the body through a regimen of dieting. The Puritan Revolution of the seventeenth century was thus also accompanied by a series of restraints on food, cuisine and consumption. Spices were banned and major festivals, such as Christmas, ceased to be occasions for secular enjoyment; the festivities surrounding Twelfth Night were also crushed. With the collapse of the Cromwellian era, the social revolt 'against Puritanism is shown in the excesses that took place at court. Often important banquets and entertainments were inclined to relapse into dissipated orgies, the honoured guests spattered in cream and other beverages' (Pullar, 1970: 128). While in the nineteenth century cookery became increasingly the object of domestic science, eating itself was still clothed with a certain Puritan prudery. Like sex, eating for

nineteenth-century women was something more to be endured rather than enjoyed.

Max Weber's sociology of Puritanism is normally interpreted as an argument about the ascetic origins of capitalism. In these introductory comments, it has been suggested that, more widely examined, Weber's analysis of Christian asceticism is in fact about the rationalization of desire. There were many dimensions to this process of controlling desires. Certain institutions were developed to subordinate internal passions to reasonable controls – monasticism, celibacy, monogamy, castration. Desires were regulated by routines – vegetarianism, dieting, exercise, fasting. The passionate side of human personality was subject to scientific enquiries, and technologies were developed to prevent various forms of 'self-abuse', especially in children. Human energy could be safely channelled through vocations. In the world the drive for sexual conquest was directed towards economic triumphs in business and commerce. Festivities, festivals and carnivals which were historically occasions for orgiastic release were originally suppressed by Puritanism and then prohibited by the routines of industrial capitalism. Public and collective festivals were gradually replaced by more individualized and private pastimes. In Weber's sociology of rationalization, there is the argument that the whole of life becomes increasingly subject to scientific management, bureaucratic control, discipline and regulation.

There are, however, at least two problems with Weber's analysis of capitalism. Asceticism provided a suitable cultural norm for capitalists who had to deny themselves immediate consumption in the interests of further accumulation. The requirement of investment for future profits precludes full enjoyment of present wealth. For the worker, it is different. Because they are separated from the means of production, they are forced to labour, to live under conditions of what Marx referred to as the 'dull compulsion' of their existence. The problem of capitalism as a system is, however, that there also has to be consumption of commodities otherwise the circuit of commodity capital becomes blocked and stagnates. With the growth of mass production, the rationalization of distribution in the department store and the post-war boom, capitalism also had to develop a consumption ethic, which in many ways is incompatible with the traditional norms of restraint and personal asceticism. Weber's account of capitalism ends with the arrival of early, competitive, capitalism in which desire is still denied in the interests of accumulation. Late capitalism, by contrast, is organized more around calculating hedonistic choices, advertising, the stimulating of need and luxury consumption. Late capitalism does not so much suppress desire as express it, produce it and direct it towards increasing want satisfaction.

The second problem with Weber's account is that while early capitalism transferred the monastery into secular society, it also bifurcated the secular world into a private sphere of use-values and a public sphere of exchange-values. Desire was relegated to the world of the intimate, private citizen, while the public realm became increasingly dominated by the norms of

rational calculation and instrumental knowledge. Such a division largely corresponded to the division between men and women, the latter being the vehicles of emotion, need and intimacy. There is, therefore, a social division of emotions which runs alongside the social division of labour, rendering women the custodians of the intimate and the private (Heller, 1982). This spatial division is, however, further disrupted by the increasing involvement of women in production, the transformation of the nuclear household and the decline of male-dominated, labour-intensive industries with the deindustrialization of late capitalism.

Desire and Reason

The legacy of both Christianity and industrialization is the prominence of bipolar oppositions in thought and culture between the body and soul, the body and mind, matter and spirit, desire and reason. These classificatory oppositions are true not only of society, but of the basic forms of thought in Western culture and philosophy. It is not surprising that these distinctions should come to play a major part in sociological thought itself. Social thought has been modelled around the notion that human beings are simultaneously part of nature in so far as they have bodies and part of society in so far as they have minds. Social contract theories from Hobbes onwards resolved this dilemma by arguing that, as a rational animal, it was in the interests of men to form binding contracts in order to have security inside society. In forming contracts, men give up certain natural rights and submit to authority, whether in the person of the king or a government, to achieve some respite from the insecurities of their natural condition. The notion that civilized life requires certain basic restrictions and restraint has subsequently become a widespread tenet of sociological and psychoanalytic thought. Freud, for example, treated the incest taboo, a prohibition on sexual intercourse between affines and a resulting guilt complex in the Oedipus complex, as the original basis of social grouping:

The tendency on the part of civilization to restrict sexual life is no less clear than its other tendency to expand the cultural unit. Its first, totemic, phase already brings with it the prohibition against an incestuous choice of object, and this is perhaps the most drastic mutilation which man's erotic life has in all time experienced. ... Fear of a revolt by the suppressed elements drives it to stricter precautionary measures. A high-water mark in such a development has been reached in our Western European civilization. (Freud, 1979: 41)

Since Freud's attempt to analyse taboo as the basis of civilized life, both psychoanalysis and anthropology have reconceptualized totemism as a system of classifications. Language, not prohibitions, constitutes the division between culture and nature, but the same theme of desire versus power is central to much recent structuralist analysis.

Language is an impersonal system of communication in which we surrender our individuality. Language represents the authority of society

over the unconscious. Thus in the work of Lacan (1977) language is the basis of the alienation between the self and the world, and this alienation involves a division between the infinity of our desires, which are denied by social conventions, and the finitude of our demands which are allowed by society. Similarly in the work of Foucault, there is an opposition between power/knowledge which is localized in every authoritative institution and freedom/irrationality which is implicit in every deviant resistance. Madness had to be banished from the realm of reason by Descartes just as the mad have to be removed and confined in society. Fundamentally, the control of madness involves the control of passions. Foucault's quotation from François Boissier de Sauvages's *Nosologie méthodique* of 1772 neatly restates the classic opposition between desire and order:

The distraction of our mind is the result of our blind surrender to our desires, our incapacity to control or to moderate our passions. Whence these amorous frenzies, these antipathies, these depraved tastes, this melancholy which is caused by grief, these transports wrought in us by denial, these excesses in eating, in drinking, these indispositions, these corporeal vices which cause madness, the worst of all maladies. (Sauvages, 1772, vol. VII, p. 12, in Foucault, 1967: 85)

The imposition of reason over desire and the internment of the insane corresponds to a new apparatus of control in the asylum and a new horizon of knowledge in the sciences of man.

Homo Duplex

Despite the trend in sociology to see all human attributes as the product of social determinism, sociology and social thought are often founded upon a concept of *homo duplex* in which the individual is a complex balance of asocial passions and social reason. For example, Durkheim, who is often regarded as the sociological determinist *par excellence*, also adhered to the model of double-man. *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* argued:

Man is double. There are two beings in him: an individual being which has its foundation in the organism and the circle of whose activities is therefore strictly limited, and a social being which represents the highest reality in the intellectual and moral order that we can know by observation – I mean society. (Durkheim, 1961, p. 29)

The role of culture is to impose on the individual the collective representations of the group and to restrain passions by collective obligations and social involvements. Without cultural restraint, the individual is under certain circumstances driven by excessive expectations towards anomic suicide. The conservative dimension to both Durkheim and Freud is therefore the view that society is bought at the cost of sexuality. For Durkheim, that cost was both necessary and desirable. Since man is both a member of nature by virtue of being an organism and a member of society by virtue of culture, some solution has to be found to this Jekyll-and-Hyde duplicity. For Durkheim,

the restraint and regulation of man-as-body was to be found in the coercive nature of moral facts.

Although many social theories presuppose a dichotomy between mind and matter, soul and body or reasons and passions, their account of and solution for that duplexity are highly variable. While there is a theoretical link between Durkheimian sociology and modern structuralism, there are also important differences. For example, Foucault does not see power as always constraining; indeed he regards power as productive and enabling. Power does not so much deny sexuality as produce it for purposes that lie outside the individual. One feature of modern society to which Foucault draws attention is the idea that every individual, as a crucial feature of their social identity, must have a single, true sex. One has to be either male or female, since the hermaphrodite is a false or pseudo sex. It could have been imagined that what really mattered was 'the reality of the body and the intensity of its pleasures' (Foucault, 1980b: vii), but changes in law, juridical status, medical science and the administrative apparatus of society in the period 1860 to 1870 began to force individuals to have unambiguous sexuality. Behind the medical enquiries of the period, there existed a moral project that suggested people with dual sexuality were capable of indecency. While in contemporary society it is accepted that one may change one's sex, the notion that finally everybody must be either male or female is not dispelled. In this sense, it can be said that medical knowledge and medical power produce sex as a category of necessary identity rather than denying or removing it.

There are important indications in modern philosophy, especially phenomenology, that the traditional dichotomy of mind and body is false and in need of rectification. Whereas Cartesian philosophy set up an opposition between the body as a machine and the mind as rational consciousness, we cannot properly regard the body as an unconscious thing, since the body 'is both an object for others and a subject for myself' (Merleau-Ponty, 1962: 167). I both am a body and have a body, that is an 'experienced body'. Alternatively, much radical thought regards the opposition of body and mind as an aspect of social power, which subordinates desire to reason for purposes of authoritarian control. For such writers, the liberation of society presupposes the emancipation of the body and its passions from both psychic and social control. There is thus a long tradition of critical thought which advocates sexual freedom as essentially a political act of opposition. The critique of patriarchal power, the harmful consequences of sexual asceticism, the liberating character of pleasure and the denunciation of the element of prostitution in marriage have been themes linking together a wide variety of writers – Charles Fourier, Havelock Ellis and Wilhelm Reich. Although their positions are theoretically diverse, they are linked together by a certain eccentricity and utopianism – Fourier's communes and Reich's organismic box are clear illustrations of both. Of modern writers, Herbert Marcuse has provided a more coherent account than most of the denial of pleasure which capitalism allegedly requires.

Play and Pleasure

Marcuse departed from much of the orthodox core of traditional Marxism by asserting that labour, far from being the source of all value, was simply a burden. Play and pleasure have to be restrained and subordinated to guilt in capitalist society in order to prevent any 'irrational' diversions from the centrality of productive labour. Hence, for Marcuse, play and sexuality have a revolutionary potential which has been seriously neglected by critical theory (Geoghegan, 1981). Marcuse adopted the basic framework of Freudian psychology to explain the processes of social control in capitalism where the superego controls libidinous drives under the watchful eyes of the state and the family. Capitalism, however, comes to depend on 'surplus repression' which goes far beyond what might be regarded as the necessary constraints on individuals as members of society as such (Marcuse, 1969). These moral and political restraints on human sexuality were being gradually undermined by economic changes in late capitalism – particularly automation – which made the traditional pattern of work and the family increasingly irrelevant to capitalist economic processes. Social freedom requires sexual freedom; both freedoms were being made possible by capitalist economic change. The main threat to these potentialities came from the commercialization and commodification of sex, which rendered sexuality profitable. In *Eros and Civilization* (1969), therefore, perverts replaced the proletariat as the principal agents of change within a capitalist society.

Marcuse's reinterpretation of Marx via Freud raises a problem which is central to all social theories grounded on an opposition between desire (as liberation) and reason (as restraint). There are two dimensions to this. The first was clearly expressed by MacIntyre: 'What will we actually *do* in this sexually liberated state?' (1970: 47). The second relates to this, namely that sexually liberated men may find their desires satisfied via dominance and pornography at the expense of women. The liberation of desire is implicitly the liberation of male desire which fails to provide any explanation of the location of women in a society where men through economic changes are either driven out of work by structural unemployment or liberated from work by automation.

The naive argument in favour of sexual liberation cannot adequately cope with the problem that sex can be a commodity – prostitution and pornography – that reinforces rather than questions prevailing social relations. Pornography is, however, paradoxical in providing both the illustration of the commercialization of sexual relationships and also the critical reflection of power and dominance in sexuality. The commodification of sex lends support to the argument that modern society is a pornographic society, 'a society so hypocritically and repressively constructed that it must inevitably produce an effusion of pornography as both its logical expression and its subversive, demotic antidote' (Carter, 1979: 86). What most liberationist accounts of sexuality, such as Marcuse's, fail to confront

is the problem of pornography as the expression of (male) desire over instrumental rationality. The fascination of de Sade and Sadism is that Sadism both expresses the inherent power conflict that trails alongside sexual freedom and by expressing power unmasks an over-romanticized view of male/female encounters:

An increase of pornography on the market, within the purchasing capacity of the man, and especially the beginning of a type of pornography modelled in that provided for the male consumer but directed at women, does not mean an increase in sexual licence, with the reappraisal of social mores such licence, if it is real, necessitates. ... When pornography abandons its quality of existential solitude and moves out of the kitsch area of timeless, placeless fantasy and into the real world, then it loses its function of safety value. It begins to comment on real relations in the real world. (Carter, 1979: 18–19)

The pornographic utopia then begins to act as the mirror-image critique of the 'natural' but exploitative relations between men and women within the domestic sphere of the home. Marcuse's approach to desire/reason with its emphasis on play as liberation fails to take adequate notice of pornography as a practice of power which, only under special circumstances, acts as a platform of criticism and change.

One interesting absence from the critique of instrumental reason and its subordination of desire in the tradition that links together Fourier and Marcuse, is the absence of children (Bell, 1980). This absence is one very strong indicator of the fact that the conventional or traditional debate about reason/desire is a debate among men which submerges or obliterates the connection between desire and reproduction. Children are almost entirely absent from the sexual utopias of men. The liberation from restraint often appears therefore as a one-sided male liberation from surplus restraint on the id. In writing the history of desire we would in fact have to write two histories, male desire versus female desire. Both Marxist and critical theory have been peculiarly blind to the social division of desire in terms of gender and patriarchy. This study of the sociology of the body hinges, as a result, on masculine control over female desires. The liberation of sexuality has to ground itself in an analysis of how desire versus reason has been institutionalized within a sexual division of labour which also involves a social division of emotions.

Foucault recognizes that, in the modern period, a sexual identity is imposed on us and this sexual identity has to be either male or female – an issue which he explores in the story of *Herculine Barbin* (1980b). Yet in his major work on sexuality there is no significant attention given to gender divisions and how cultural divisions are elaborated onto the physiological difference between men and women. For Foucault, sexuality is a unity which can have one history; we do not talk about the history of sexualities, because in Foucault's account the body is implicitly the unified datum upon which knowledge and power have their play. This assumption is widespread in the literature. In *Bodies in Revolt*, Thomas Hanna, for example, while recognizing the difference between male and female sexual roles, can still refer naively

to sexuality as 'a centrum for human experience' (1970: 287). Similarly, while Deleuze and Guattari (1977) have attempted to criticize the notion of desire as merely lack or absence, they also imply that desire (the id) is ultimately a unity.

Capitalist Bodies

Our attitudes towards sexuality, women's social roles and gender are in part the arcane legacy of feudal Christianity and the requirements of property relations in modes of production based on private appropriation. Our attitudes have also been shaped by the ancient history of family life and patriarchal household. In late capitalism these attitudes in many ways no longer conform to the actual requirements of the economy or to the social structure of a capitalist society which is organized around corporate ownership. Because property and investment are now concentrated in corporate bodies, family capitalism no longer plays a major role in industrial economies. Capitalism no longer requires the unity of the family in order to guarantee the distribution of property. Although capitalism may still require the household as a unit of consumption, it is not a requirement of capitalism that these households should be of the nuclear variety. The ascetic mode of desire is thus not pertinent to contemporary forms of capital accumulation and largely inappropriate to individual consumption. The factory floor must have social regulations to ensure continuous and efficient production, but even in the case of productive arrangements it is perfectly possible to de-skill the labour force and replace it with the dead labour of machinery. Modern capitalism tends to foster hedonistic calculation and a narcissistic personality. Consumer culture requires not the suppression of desire, but its manufacture, extension and detail.

The theoretical and moral reaction to these new possibilities of mass pleasure has been varied and complex. One position is to see that new culture as essentially an ideological incorporation of the working class into capitalism; the new consumerism is simply the old 'bread and circus' approach to domination. Much recent analysis of consumption is in this respect largely negative (Baudrillard, 1975; Lefebvre, 1971; Marcuse, 1964); modern consumption is seen to produce a passive, subordinated population which is no longer able to realize its 'real' needs. Despite its critical tone, the analysis of consumerism often assumes a conservative stance. The argument that consumerism encourages narcissism can implicitly embrace a nostalgic adherence to the family, the work ethic and patriarchal authority (Barrett and McIntosh, 1982). The critique of modern leisure and consumption can also be puritanical, neglecting the element of personal freedom which some modern technology makes possible (Kellner, 1983). The critique of consumerism is thus a version of the dominant ideology thesis (Abercrombie, Hill and Turner, 1980) in which consumers are uniformly incorporated by all commodities. It is simply not the case that consumers inevitably

absorb the meaning and purpose of mass advertisements (Ewen and Ewen, 1982).

There is, of course, another version of the incorporation argument. The hegemonic control of capitalism over desires and needs is exhibited in the situation that capitalism can survive and tolerate individual deviance and social pluralism; the tolerance of capitalism is oppressive. However, if capitalism can survive successfully in a context of widespread sexual permissiveness and personal freedom in the marketplace of commodities, then it is reasonable to conclude that capitalism does not require massive ideological supports. It operates through political, economic and legal regulation of the population. The paradox of the hegemonic argument is that capitalism enjoys the hegemony of permissiveness which it does not actually require. In my view, the argument can be expressed in a more cogent sociological form: capitalism no longer requires hegemony in sexual and personal domains, and this is precisely why cultural pluralism is characteristic of late capitalist societies. What capitalism does achieve is the commodification of fantasies and pleasures. There has been a rationalization of desire through the supermarket, advertising magazines, credit facilities and mass consumption. Although the critique of consumerism correctly points out that many aspirations in the population cannot be adequately satisfied by consumer society, because, for example, the unemployed do not possess purchasing power, it is also the case that the content and nature of advertising are shaped and determined by consumer needs. With changes in the nature of employment and the household, the focus of advertising has shifted from the young to the middle aged. The relationship between needs and consumption is far more complex than the hegemonic argument suggests.

The critique of capitalist consumerism has eventually to rest on some notion of real needs and on some distinction between need and pleasure. Desires are 'vain', but needs are 'real'; capitalism operates at the level of trivial pleasures, but it cannot, according to the consumer critique, ultimately satisfy our needs. Behind this argument there is another assumption: exchange-value is bad, use-value is good (Kellner, 1983). By virtue of our embodiment, we have real and mundane needs which must be satisfied and these needs are universal, which in some respects defines what it is to be a member of the human species. There are various problems with this position which are explored throughout this study. There is, however, one point which we can note immediately about the argument from universal needs. What we can say about these needs is generally vague and trivial. Human beings need to eat, but what, when and how they eat is entirely variable. Individual variations in sleep patterns, sexual activity and eating habits appear to be unlimited. Even our individual anatomy is variable (Williams, 1963). The problem is that we live in a socially constructed reality and our pleasures are acquired in a social context, but this is also true of 'need'. To some extent the contrast between 'need' and 'desire' is grounded in a distinction between 'nature' and 'culture'. Our needs are seen to be real,

because they are natural and they are natural because our bodies are a feature of the natural landscape of our existence. By contrast, desires are vain because they are cultivated. Our culture emerges from the cultivation of our bodies and the more civilized we become, the more unnecessary our cultural baggage appears to be. While desire is mere luxury, needs are necessities. This distinction is difficult to maintain, because what we perceive as needs are in fact thoroughly penetrated and constituted by culture. The distinction between need and desire is primarily a value judgement. In the mediaeval period, theologians condemned husbands who found pleasure in the bodies of their wives; in the twentieth century, critics of consumerism condemn the middle class who find pleasure in vain commodities. Both critiques make a value judgement based on a distinction between necessities and luxuries. What we regard as a need is very much bound up with expectations about what is normal, and what is normal is not simply a statistical criterion because what is normal is essentially cultural. The oddity is that in everyday language we often use 'normal' interchangeably with 'natural' and thus what conforms to nature is what conforms to social expectation. However, since with technological and social changes, modern societies are less exposed to, and dependent on, 'nature', nature as a criterion for social arrangements becomes increasingly irrelevant. Social change rolls back the barrier of natural necessities.

The ontological status of 'nature' is of particular importance in the debate about gender relations. There is general agreement in sociology that notions like 'maternal instinct' and 'maternal deprivation' are aspects of an ideology which induces women to stay at home as mothers. The conventional view of women as mothers confuses 'mothering' with 'parenting'. More generally, while there are biological differences between men and women, these are culturally mediated and historical. What we regard as male and female characteristics are socially constructed differences and these characteristics can be radically changed by social and political intervention. The logic of this argument would, however, also include the notion that biology is itself socially mediated and that biology is a classificatory system by which experiences are organized. What stands behind 'gender' is not an unmediated reality but another level of social constructs and classifications; the anatomy of the body is precisely such a classification (Armstrong, 1983). 'Gender' is a social construct which mediates another social construct of 'biology'. There are no natural criteria for judging what is valuable or real and to admit that there are biological differences between men and women may be perfectly admissible, but it necessarily means the adoption of a perspective. Biology is cognitive systematization (Rescher, 1979). Biological facts exist but they exist by virtue of classificatory practices which preclude fixed points (such as 'nature') precisely because we inhabit a world that is perspectival.

Concepts like 'desire', 'need' and 'appetite' are part of a discourse by which we describe rather than explain. From a structuralist perspective, 'biologism' is one type of discourse; 'feminism' is another. Structuralism

regards these discourses as autonomous since 'texts' have a life of their own. Although structuralism represents a particularly powerful position, the argument of this study is that the discourse of desire, and more generally the location of the body, has to be understood in terms of massive changes in the whole structure of societies. The debate about the nature of women in modern societies is an effect of the changes in the social position of women and the transformation of the social role of women is an effect of the reorganization of capitalism. Whereas the economic process of feudalism required the detailed control of female sexuality within the landowning class, the organization of property in late capitalism does not require a regimen of sexual control. Capitalism no longer depends on the existence of the nuclear family and the structure of the household has changed fundamentally in the post-war period. The traditional notion that women were desirable but not desiring has collapsed along with the Victorian family and the double standard. It is not inconceivable that capitalism will cease to be a society in which there are definite sexes; genetic engineering certainly makes this outcome technically possible. What contemporary capitalism does require is the security of production, a technology of consumption and the commercial legitimation of desire. The differentiation of bodies by sex is increasingly irrelevant to these three conditions.

Sociology and the Body

Absent Bodies

Contemporary sociology has little to say about the most obvious fact of human existence, namely that human beings have, and to some extent are, bodies. There exists a theoretical prudery with respect to human corporality which constitutes an analytical gap at the core of sociological enquiry. The collective phenomena of births, ageing and mortality have become the academic monopoly of historical and mathematical demography, where the moral and social significance of these events is subdued in favour of exact calculation. What one might term the theodicy of the body is equally neglected even in the sociology of religion (Turner, 1983). The oddity of the failure of sociology to develop a theory of the body and bodies is emphasized by the prevalence of commonsense notions that diet, jogging, fasting, slimming and exercise are not merely essential aids to sexual fulfilment, but necessary features of self development in a society grounded in personalized consumption. Some recent debates in sociology, particularly with respect to narcissism (Lasch, 1979), have illustrated an awareness of the changing symbolic significance of the body in relation to capitalist development, but these are exceptions that prove the rule. The reasons for sociology's exclusion of the body from theoretical enquiry are not difficult to trace.

The epistemological foundations of modern sociology are rooted in a rejection of nineteenth-century positivism, especially biologism which held that human behaviour could be explained causally in terms of human biology (Parsons, 1937). Sociology emerged as a discipline which took the social meaning of human interaction as its principal object of enquiry, claiming that the meaning of social actions can never be reduced to biology or physiology. The academic institutionalization of sociology involved its separation from eugenics and Darwinist biology. It is clearly the case, however, that evolutionary biologism played an important part in the theoretical development of sociology, especially in the work of Herbert Spencer (Peel, 1971) and Patrick Geddes (Boardman, 1978). It can also be argued (Foucault, 1973) that the emergence of social science was closely connected with the growth of rationalized medicine, through the collection of health statistics with the growth of urban populations in the nineteenth century. Despite these institutional and theoretical connections with positivist biology and medical science, the

central assumptions of sociology were inimical to its submersion in biology. The physical sciences and bastard offshoots like sociobiology do not provide a model for the explanation of social reality which cannot be subsumed in nature. The central assumptions of sociology are that the natural world is socially constituted and transformed by human activity. Human beings do not simply apprehend the natural world as a given, since nature is always mediated by culture. In arguing that the reality in which the human species is situated is socially constructed (Berger and Luckmann, 1966), sociology has to some extent incorporated the argument of Karl Marx that man opposes himself to Nature as one of her own forces, setting in motion arms and legs, head and hands, the natural forces of his body, in order to appropriate Nature's productions in a form adapted to his own wants. By thus acting on the external world and changing it, he at the same time changes his own nature (Marx, 1974, vol. I: 173).

The external world, including the human body, is not a given, but an historical reality constantly mediated by human labour and interpreted through human culture. The human body as a limiting point of human experience and consciousness seemed less important than the collective reality of the social world within which the self was located. The legitimate rejection of biological determinism in favour of sociological determinism entailed, however, the exclusion of the body from the sociological imagination. The primary dichotomy of sociological theory was not Nature/Society, but Self/Society.

The Self

Sociology extracted itself from the physical sciences as a model of social theory by viewing itself, according to Max Weber (1978), as an 'interpretative science' of the meaning of social action and interaction. Such interaction occurred between entities which were designated as 'the self' or 'the social actor' or 'the social agent'. The interaction of bodies is 'behaviour', whereas the interaction between social actors involves meaning and choice; it is the proper object of sociology. The social thus came to be seen as an on-going process of interactions between Ego and Alter, so that 'society' is an emergent reality and the product of ceaseless interactions. It is important to note that social actors (Ego and Alter) are not necessarily 'real' individuals, but socially constituted entities. For example, Alfred Schutz (1962) made an elementary distinction between direct, face-to-face interaction with consociates and indirect action with predecessors, successors and contemporaries. In sociology it is perfectly reasonable to include in 'interaction', exchanges between the living and their dead ancestors, between children and their dolls, between the faithful and their gods. A 'social actor' is an entity which is socially constituted as an interactant. In the perspective of symbolic interactionism (Rose, 1962), interaction fundamentally presupposes, as it were, an internal

conversion in which I interact with myself. The 'I' is the response of an individual in a total fashion to the variety of attitudes of others; the 'me' is the organized attitudes of others. The self is thus the complex union through interaction, symbol and gesture of the I and the me (Strauss, 1964). By concentrating on the self as a symbolically constituted phenomenon, symbolic interactionism reinforced the more widespread sociological perspective in which the corporality of social actors was relatively insignificant in social action. The self is fundamentally sociological not biological, since the self is little more than a principle for the organization of gestures. The idea that the body might be one component of the continuity of the self was discarded in favour of the argument that the continuity of the self rests on the continuity of others' perceptions of personal continuity. In this respect, symbolic interactionism aligned itself with a particular philosophical position on the traditional mind/body problem in which the persistence of identity does not depend on the continuity of the body but on the coherence of memory and consciousness. In summary, the emphasis in sociology on the socially constituted nature of social being resulted in an implicit position that the body of the social actor is a largely inconsequential feature of the self-in-society perspective.

It has been argued that one reason for the submergence of the body in sociological theory was an unintended consequence of a legitimate critique of biologism. In response, sociology emphasized the importance of culture and symbolism in the organization of the self and society. In the formation of sociology, however, the rejection of biologism is often difficult to dissociate from the rejection of methodological individualism and, more generally, from so-called 'atomism'. Although some sociologists have been fervent methodological individualists, whether covertly or overtly, the central tradition of sociology denies the argument that,

The ultimate constituents of the social world are individual people who act more or less appropriately in the light of their dispositions and understanding of their situation. Every complex social situation, institution or event is the result of a particular configuration of individuals, their dispositions, situations, beliefs, and physical resources and environment. (Watkins, 1959: 505)

The macro-sociological tradition has taken the social structure and the structure of collectivities as the constituents of society, arguing that 'structure' cannot be reduced to the relationship between individuals and that 'society' is *sui generis*. Because macro-sociology has, for example, been concerned with the relationship between social classes and political parties, between the state and the economic basis of society, and between the family and economic change, the human body cannot be located within this theoretical space. Whereas micro-sociology excludes the body because the self as social actor is socially constituted in action, macro-sociology excludes the body because its theoretical focus is on the 'social system'. In the latter tradition, any theoretical concentration on the body must smack of methodological

individualism, since it is assumed on a commonsense basis that the individual is uniquely located in a body. Thus any attempt to direct sociology towards a theory of the body must appear as an heretical betrayal, since such a movement suggests simultaneously biologism and methodological individualism.

Michel Foucault

In writing about sociology's neglect of the body, it may be more exact to refer to this negligence as submergence rather than absence, since the body in sociological theory has had a furtive, secret history rather than no history at all. The point of this book is to expose this submergence and to articulate a theory in order to bring out the prominence of the body and bodies. Before drawing attention to various areas of sociological theory where, so to speak, the body survived despite its theoretical exclusion, it is important to outline in a peremptory manner what is embraced by the sociology of the body. This brief recovery of the body has to be inserted in order to avoid any hasty accusations of biologism or atomism. Since this book, as will become evident later, is in part an application of the philosophy of Michel Foucault, some of the basic distinctions here are clearly Foucauldian. First, a sociology of the body can be regarded as a materialist enquiry. In an interview concerning power and the body, Foucault compared his own interest in the body with Marxist analysis of ideology and power:

As regards Marxism, I'm not one of those who try to elicit the effects of power at the level of ideology. Indeed I wonder whether before one poses the question of ideology, it wouldn't be more materialist to study first the question of the body and the effects of power on it. Because what troubles me with these analyses which prioritise ideology is that there is always presupposed a human subject on the lines of the model provided by classical philosophy, endowed with a consciousness which power is then thought to seize on. (Foucault, 1980a: 58)

For Foucault, the power-effects of ideology are not to be seen in terms of the manipulation of the human subject as pure consciousness. In modern societies, power has a specific focus, namely the body which is the product of political/power relationships. The body as an object of power is produced in order to be controlled, identified and reproduced. Power over the materiality of the body can be divided into two separate but related issues – 'the disciplines of the body and the regulations of the population' (Foucault, 1981: 139). The first relates to singular bodies and is referred to as an 'anatomy-politics', while the second embraces the species body and involves a 'bio-politics' of populations. Foucault regards medical science as the crucial kink at the level of knowledge between the discipline of individual bodies by professional groups (of psychiatrists, dietitians, social workers and others) and the regulation of populations by panopticism (in the form of

asylums, factories, schools and hospitals). The administered society involves the control of persons through the medicalization of bodies. While often presented as a critique of modern Marxism, Foucault's project can be seen to bear a relationship to a view of historical materialism presented by Friedrich Engels who, in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (n.d.), claimed that the materialist interpretation of history regarded the production and reproduction of immediate life as the determining factor of human societies. This determination had a two-fold character, namely the production of the means of subsistence and the production of human beings: 'The social institutions under which men of a definite historical epoch and of a definite country live are conditioned by both kinds of production: by the stage of development of labour, on the one hand, and of the family, on the other' (Engels, n.d.: 6). A materialist theory of the body has to provide the linkage between the discipline of the body and the regulation of populations in terms of the institutional connections between family, property and patriarchy.

While human society has changed fundamentally over the last 2000 years, sociobiology would suggest that the human body has remained, in all important respects, physiologically static. The implications of this juxtaposition are that a sociology of the body would be an ahistorical enterprise. Such a conclusion is, however, fundamentally misguided, since the questions of 'the body' and 'the population' in relation to socio-cultural structures are necessarily historical. This insight into the historicity of the body is one of the basic contributions of Foucault's approach to the history of Man as an object to science. With the demographic explosion of the eighteenth century, 'population' emerged as an object of innumerable scientific technologies and enquiries:

Within this set of problems, the 'body' – the body of individuals and the body of populations – appears as the bearer of new variables, not merely as between the scarce and the numerous, the submissive and the restive, rich and poor, healthy and sick, strong and weak, but also as between the more or less utilisable, more or less amenable to profitable investment, those with greater or lesser prospects of survival, death and illness, and with more or less capacity for being usefully trained. The biological traits of a population became relevant factors for economic management. (Foucault, 1980a: 172)

'Population' emerged as the focus of the sciences of the body and as in association with new disciplines, regulations and coercive practices. With the conjunction of the body and the population, the sexuality of individuals became a new focus of power relations which were directed at a management of life.

Spirit and Flesh

In more conventional terms, the body can thus become a genuine object of a sociology of knowledge. The Western tradition of the body has been

conventionally shaped by Hellenized Christianity, for which the body was the seat of unreason, passion and desire. The contrast in philosophy between mind and body is in Christianity the opposition between spirit and flesh. The flesh was the symbol of moral corruption which threatened the order of the world; the flesh had to be subdued by disciplines, especially by the regimen of diet and abstinence (Turner, 1982a; 1982b). The body in Greek thought had been the focus of the struggle between form and desire (between Apollo and Dionysus). Christianity inherited this viewpoint, but darkened it by seeing the flesh as the symbol of Fallen Man and irrational denial of God. In mediaeval times, the celebration of the body in festival and carnival came to be a political expression of popular dissent against the dominant literate tradition of the court and the urban centres of social control. Rabelais's confirmation of the primitive and popular language of the body in the tradition of the marketplace and the carnival was thus an affront to the refinement expressed in 'official' literature (Bakhtin, 1968). Within the sociology of knowledge, therefore, it is possible to trace a secularization of the body in which the body ceases to be the object of a sacred discourse of flesh and becomes an object within a medical discourse where the body is a machine to be controlled by appropriate scientific regimens. The history of this transition is complex. In gymnastic systems, the rationalization of movement represented an application of Borelli's iatrophysical school of medicine (Broekhoff, 1972). In dietary practices, there was a shift away from an eighteenth-century concern for long life as a religious value to the nineteenth-century concern for the efficient quantification of the body (Turner, 1982a). The result of these changes was to reify and objectify the body as an object of exact calculation.

The idea that the body is the location of anti-social desire is thus not a physiological fact but a cultural construct which has significant political implications. The contradiction between passion and reason as the basis of Durkheim's *homo duplex* is also the vindication of authority which provides the root of social order and social solidarity (Sennett, 1980). One of the principal arguments of this study is not simply that the body is culturally constructed in opposition to social authority, but specifically that the feminine body is the main challenge to continuity of property and power. The division between female passion and male reason is thus the cultural source of patriarchy. While patriarchy exists independently of the capitalist mode of production, being a specific distribution of power, capitalist society has articulated this division by providing a spatial distribution of reason and desire between the public and private realm, institutionalized by the divorce between the family and the economy.

In the ancient world, the private space of the domestic economy was the arena of necessity and deprivation, whereas the public sphere of the citizen was equated with freedom. Thus, the private space of the hearth was connected with the production of life's necessities by beings (slaves and women) who were not entirely human (Arendt, 1958). The growth

Table 2.1

Private	Public
gemeinschaft	gesellschaft
desire	reason
female	male
informal	formal
affectivity	neutrality
particularity	universality
diffusion	specificity
hedonism	asceticism
consumption	production

of privacy as a value presupposes the development of a doctrine of the private individual, an ideology of familialism, an institutional separation of family and economy in which the domestic unit ceases to have productive functions, and there exists a large bureaucratic apparatus by which the public life of individuals is measured and calculated for the purpose of social control. The union of capitalist industrialization, utilitarian individualism and the nation-state provided the general conditions for the rise of the division between the public and the private world. The important feature of this division in modern society is that the private space is characterized by the intimacy and emotionalism of the household which exists specifically for the servicing of the body, namely the production of children, socialization and the servicing of the labour force. There is thus a sharp contrast between the formality, impersonalism, neutrality and universalism of work in public space, and the informality, particularism and affectivity of the private home. In the social division of society, there is also a sexual division by which certain activities ('mothering' and 'working') become gender specific. In addition we can suggest that there is a spatial division between passions (private sphere) and reasons (public sphere).

This is illustrated in Table 2.1. In making this distinction between private/public, it would probably be more accurate to refer to private spaces in the plural. The modern home is opened to the world by an architectural emphasis on light and space. At the same time the home remains a castle cut off from other private spaces. The transition from the Renaissance to the modern world thus involves a transition from the 'open' body linked to the public world through ritual and carnival to the 'closed' body of individualized consumer society (Bakhtin, 1968). Desires are now inscribed in private bodies separated from the hygienic space of the public world.

Sociology of the Body

To write a sociology of the body is thus not to write a treatise on society and physiology. It involves the historical analysis of the spatial organization of

bodies and desire in relation to society and reason. The principal contours of such a study may be stated as the following.

- (1) For the individual and the group, the body is simultaneously an environment (part of nature) and a medium of the self (part of culture). The body is crucially at the juncture of human labour on nature through the medium of writing, language and religion and thus critically at the juncture of the human species between the natural order of the world and the cultural ordering of the world. The transaction between nature and society can thus be seen in terms of the body as physiology (that is, an internal environment). To take one obvious example, the body has physiological needs, in particular food, liquid and sleep. The nature, content and timing of these activities of eating, drinking and sleeping are subject to symbolic interpretations and to massive social regulation. We can thus think of the body as an outer surface of interpretations and representations and an internal environment of structures and determinations.
- (2) Corresponding to the internal/external division, it is important to make a distinction between, following Michel Foucault, the body of populations and the body of individuals. It has been argued that in Western culture the site of desire is the internal body which has to be controlled by the rationalized practices of asceticism (such as religious fasting and the medical regimen). Similarly, the body of the individual is regulated and organized in the interests of population. The control of group sexuality is the most obvious illustration. No society leaves social reproduction to the free choice of individuals. While in modern industrial society sexual behaviour often appears as the free choice of the private consuming citizen, there are regulations relating to abortion, infanticide, illegitimacy, homosexuality and prostitution. The regulation of the body of populations occurs along two dimensions of time and space, that is the regulation of reproduction between generations and the regulation of populations in political/urban space. The sociology of the body is thus a political sociology, since it concerns the authoritative struggle over desire.
- (3) The body lies at the centre of political struggles. While it can be argued unambiguously that the physiology of men and women represents a major difference (in reproductive functions), gender identity and gender personality have to be inserted into physiology by socialization into specific roles and identities. Similarly, while the body undergoes a natural maturation with ageing, the concepts of 'youth', 'infant', 'child' or 'senior citizen' are cultural products of historical changes in the organization of Western society (Ariès, 1962). The body – its character, structure and development – thus provides a basic metaphor of pre-modern social theorizing in such notions as the 'body politic', gerontology, gerontocracy, patrimonialism and patriarchy. For example, the debate about patriarchy, in its specifically political form,

goes back to Sir Robert Filmer's *Patriarcha* (published posthumously in 1680). In this doctrine of patriarchal sovereignty, royal power is derived from divine power via Adam. Patriarchy rested on analogy. The king is the father over his kingdom; Adam was father over nature and humanity; God is father over man. Patriarchy thus comes before the authority of law and is the source of all rights and obligations. Authority is thus transubstantiated through the body of kings just as it is transubstantiated through the body of fathers. In religious systems, the authority of Christ is transubstantiated through the eucharistic elements of flesh and blood, just as in the political system the continuity of blood is essential to the continuity of power.

- (4) Most forms of sociological theorizing make a sharp separation between the self and the body. G.H. Mead who in many respects provided the original philosophical basis of symbolic interactionism, wrote in *Mind, Self and Society* that

We can distinguish very definitely between the self and the body. The body may be there and operate in a very intelligent fashion without there being a self involved in the experience. The self has the characteristic that it is object to itself and that characteristic distinguishes it from other objects and from the body. (Mead, 1962, vol. 1: 136)

While the Self/Society contrast became the main focus of interactionist theory, it is also the case that most proponents of interactionism argue that the self is realized through performance. Crucial to self-performance is the presentation of the body in everyday life. It is possible therefore to reinterpret Goffman's sociology as not the study of the representation of the self in social gatherings but the performance of the self through the medium of the socially interpreted body. One important focus of his work is the question of the breakdown of the micro-social context through events which discomfort the self and social interaction. These include embarrassment and stigma. Significantly social disruptions are repaired by 'face-work' which reasserts the normality of interaction. These disruptions of interaction are typically, but not exclusively, focused on the body – flushes, tears and stigmatic abnormalities. The body is thus crucial to both the micro and macro orders of society. The body is the vehicle for self-performances and the target through rituals of degradation of social exclusion. Intimacies and exclusions focus on the body as the means of indicating the self (Garfinkel, 1956; Weitman, 1970). A sociology of the body would thus also have to embrace a sociology of deviance and control, since mortifications of the self are inextricably bound up with the mortifications of the body. Again it would be appropriate to distinguish between the deviance of body surfaces (blushes, flushes, unwanted excreta) which are subject to cultural surveillance and those 'deviances' of the inner body (disease and illness) which are likewise objects of moral evaluation. The sociology of the body as vehicle of

information about the self would thus divide around the stigmatology of the outer surface and a teratology of deformed structures.

A sociology of the body is not sociobiology or sociophysiology. It is not reductionism, although it is genuinely and literally a materialist analysis. As I shall elaborate later, a sociology of the body is a study of the problem of social order and it can be organized around four issues. These are the reproduction and regulation of populations in time and space, and the restraint and representation of the body as a vehicle of the self. These four issues presuppose the existence in Western society of an opposition between the desires and reason, which I have suggested articulates with a further set of dichotomies, especially the private/public, female/male dichotomies. The control over the body is thus an 'elementary', 'primitive' political struggle. The sociology of the body is consequently an analysis of how certain cultural polarities are politically enforced through the institutions of sex, family and patriarchy. This institutionalization is itself subject to certain major transformations of society (for example, from feudalism to capitalism) and the saliency of the four dimensions (reproduction, regulation, restraint and representation) is historically conditioned.

Locations for a Theory

While sociology has not overtly incorporated a sociology of the body, it has inherited the classical Western dichotomy between desire and reason which has informed much recent debate within sociological theory. This implicit theory has not been adequately or systematically examined. Crudely speaking, we can divide social philosophy between one tradition which treats nature/body/desire as the source of value and happiness in opposition to society/technology/reason, and a second tradition which regards desire/pleasure/the body as the negation of human value located in the life of the mind. My argument is that, mainly implicitly, sociological theory has been shaped by the opposition: civilization versus desire. As Daniel Bell has noted:

The rational and the passionate – these are the axes around which social thinkers have organized their conceptions of human nature since the dawn of philosophy. But which is to prevail if men are to be just and free? For the classical theorists, the answer was plain. (Bell, 1980: 98)

That answer was the necessity of subordinating passion to reason in the interests of social stability and social order: Apollo over Dionysus. While that polarity has characterized Western philosophy from Plato onwards, the debate about passions received a significant impetus in the nineteenth century following the opening of a new discourse on sex in the late eighteenth century. First there was the Marquis de Sade (1740–1814), whose work has recently attracted considerable reappraisal (Barthes, 1977; Carter, 1979; de Beauvoir, 1962), and second there was the neglected

Charles Fourier (1772–1837). For Fourier, civilization stood in opposition to passion and, by imposing artificial social duties on desire, destroyed the ‘natural’ liberty of the subject:

All these philosophical whims, which are called duties, have no relationship with nature. Duty comes from men; attraction comes from God; and to understand the designs of God it is necessary to study attraction, nature by itself without any reference to duty. ... Passionate attraction is the drive given us by nature prior to any reflection; it is persistent despite the position of reason, duty, prejudice, etc. (Beecher and Bienvenu, 1972: 216)

Fourier is often claimed as a formative thinker within the socialist tradition (Kolakowski, 1978); Marx was, for example, sympathetic towards Fourier’s economic analysis, but in general Fourier’s emphasis on sexual liberation was not incorporated within Marxist thought. Neo-Marxism and critical theory have been forced to incorporate a modified Freudianism in order to be able to analyse the relationship between sexuality and society. This turn to Freud was especially evident in the work of Herbert Marcuse (1969). The materialist tradition of the nineteenth century largely rejected Fourier’s utopia, but maintained his sharp dichotomy of desire and reason. Furthermore, Marx’s concept of active materialism in the notion of labour did not attempt to deal with materialism as physiology.

The major attempt to resolve the mind/body dichotomy in the nineteenth century which provided part of the background to Marxism came from Ludwig Feuerbach (1804–1872). In his later work, Feuerbach attempted to solve the traditional puzzle of mind and body through the idea of sensibility. Feuerbach attempted to give this idea of sensibility a materialist basis by grafting it onto the digestive theories of Moleschott’s *Theory of Nutrition* of 1850. The unity of thinking and being in the exchange between man and nature was located in man’s appropriation of nature by eating. While Feuerbach assumed that the traditional riddle of materialism and idealism had been solved by the chemistry of digestion, which he summarized in the slogan ‘Man is what he eats’, Feuerbachian man, as Marx and Engels recognized, remains passive. Feuerbach failed to extend his ‘diet-materialism’ by recognizing that ‘The dialogue between my stomach and the world in real activity, is mediated by the dialogue between production and consumption, the social dialogue of human praxis that Marx developed in his political economy’ (Wartovsky, 1977: 416). While Engels dismissed Jakob Moleschott as a ‘vulgar materialist’ in the *Dialectics of Nature* (Engels, 1934), he regarded Feuerbach as an idealist, partly because Engels saw Feuerbach’s intention as, not to replace religion, but to perfect it through anthropology. Feuerbach’s philosophy remained idealist because it had no genuinely historical dimension and his thought was limited despite his attempt to resolve the classical problems of philosophy in the developments taking place in chemistry:

For we live not only in nature but also in human society, and it too no less than nature has its historical development and its science. It was therefore a

question of bringing the science of society, that is, the totality of the so-called historical and philosophical sciences, into harmony with the materialist base, and of reconstructing it on this base, but this was not granted to Feuerbach. (Engels, 1976: 25)

There is an irony in this rejection of physiology as the basis of materialism. Given this hostility to physiology, the question of the human body and its relationship to production and reproduction via the institutions of the family and patriarchy largely disappeared from Marxist philosophy. The main exception to this assertion is to be found in the work of the Italian Marxist, Sebastiano Timpanaro, who in *Sul Materialismo* (1970) argued pessimistically that in death nature has its final and irreversible triumph over man. The problem of the body was submerged by this rejection of physiological materialism, which was regarded as ahistorical and passive. At the same time, Marx rejected the argument of Malthus and Malthusians that population pressures had a major importance for the analysis of economic growth and prosperity. The population issue had to be rendered as an historical question, not as a static restraint on the economic base: 'Every special historic mode of production has its own special laws of population, historically valid within its limits alone' (Marx, 1974, vol. 1: 693). For Marx, the idea that the accumulation of capital could be explained by reference to the control of sexual urges was a myth of hypocritical bourgeois theorists. Despite Marx's perceptive criticisms of the static nature of physiology as a basis for materialism, the consequence of these rejections was that Marxism did not, despite appeals to the notion of 'dialectics', address itself to the classical desire/reason problem. Furthermore, as a science, Marxism tended to embrace technical rationality. Consequently any interest in emotions, passions and desire, on the one hand, or populations and reproduction, on the other, was either diminished or seen to be the result of heresy, especially methodological individualism. Contemporary theoretical interest in the body/desire couple has thus been primarily stimulated by debates with Freudianism, which have emerged in two wings of modern social theory – critical theory and structuralism.

Critical Theory

The early work of the Frankfurt School (Jay, 1973) saw the struggle by man to dominate nature through technical rationality as resulting in political slavery and the renunciation of feeling. This theme can be seen explicitly in Adorno, especially in Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1973) where they explored the myth of Odysseus and the Sirens. Odysseus avoided the temptation of the Sirens' songs by blocking the ears of his sailors with wax and by lashing himself to the mast. This myth represents the psychological logic of bourgeois civilization in which the workers have to deny and sublimate their emotions in favour of hard work and practicality, while the bourgeois capitalist must restrain and discipline desire in the

interests of further accumulation. Enjoyment through consumption stands in the way of economic growth; capitalism requires the control of nature through technology but also requires, as it were, the control of inner nature in the human species. Because personal ecstasy is 'a promise of happiness which threatened civilization at every moment' (Horkheimer and Adorno, 1973: 33), civilization was seen by critical theorists in terms of renunciation. It is thus easy to understand why the Frankfurt School perceived the relevance of Freud's analysis of the permanent conflict between egoistic pleasures and social controls. However, for writers like Marcuse, capitalism at least had the economic potential to satisfy basic needs and to reduce the social requirement for psychic repression. The realization of that potential became the main political battle within late capitalism, a battle which aims 'to minimize the self-destructive aspects of human desires' (Leiss, 1972: 197).

Critical theorists, especially Marcuse, came to see hedonism as a potentially liberating force in society. Classical hedonism protested against the view that happiness was essentially spiritual by demanding 'that man's sensual and sensuous potentialities and needs, too, should find satisfaction' (Marcuse, 1968: 162). The failure of the Cyrenaic version of hedonism was that it took wants and needs as empirically given, and its commitment to ethical relativism prevented hedonism from making judgements about true and false happiness, or between short-term and long-term pleasures. This version of hedonism ruled out any critique of capitalist society, the existence of which depends partly on fostering false needs through advertising and mass consumption. By contrast, Epicurean hedonism attempts to differentiate between pleasures with the aid of reason. Marcuse thus suggested that the traditional opposition between reason and desire was false, since, in the case of Epicurus 'reason is made a pleasure' and 'pleasure is made reasonable' (Marcuse, 1968: 171). Capitalism, however, involves the splitting of reason and pleasure by restricting pleasures to the sphere of consumption and harnessing reason to the needs of technical production.

For Marcuse, classical Marxism is increasingly redundant as a theory of late capitalism. Marx could not and did not fully grasp the liberating potential in automation which could in principle free human labour from conditions of drudgery and boredom. In addition, Marcuse suspected that Marx's emphasis on labour harboured a puritanical, moralistic attitude towards play and leisure as mere epiphenomena. Against Marxism, Marcuse suggested that sexual fulfilment would result in a liberating devaluation of work and labour. This is a distinctively odd view of Marx, since Marx in the manuscripts of 1844 in many respects precisely anticipated the view of critical theory that civilization equals renunciation. Indeed, these were his precise words:

Political economy, this science of wealth, is therefore simultaneously the science of renunciation, of want, of saving – and it actually reaches the point where it spares man the need of either fresh air or physical exercise. This science of marvellous industry is simultaneously the science of asceticism, and its true

ideal is the ascetic but extortionate master and the ascetic but productive slave. Its moral ideal is the worker who takes part of his wages to the savings-bank, and it has even found readymade an abject art in which to embody this pet idea ... [P]olitical economy – despite its worldly and wanton appearance – is a true moral science, the most moral of the sciences. Self-renunciation, the renunciation of life and of all human needs, is its principal thesis. (Marx, 1970: 150)

The difference, however, between Marx and Marcuse is that in Marx the idea of human happiness as a criterion of social progress is relatively unimportant by comparison with other values, like freedom and equality. One other difference is that Marcuse reifies and unifies the emotional life of people into ahistorical oppositions between Reason and Nature or Man and Desire. While Marx and Engels in *The German Ideology* (1974) criticized the ‘speculative philosophers’, such as Feuerbach, for converting the life of real, sensuous men into the abstract ‘essence of man’, Marcuse persistently abstracts people from their social relations in order to write about the hedonistic interests of Man. Both aspects of Marcuse – the elevation of happiness to a political value and the reification of Man – have been usefully criticized by MacIntyre: ‘in making “Man” rather than “men” the subject of history he is at odds with Marx and that in making “happiness” a central goal of man’s striving he is at odds not only with Hegel, as Marcuse himself recognizes, but also once more with Marx’ (1970: 41). Two criticisms of Marcuse’s version of critical theory follow from this observation by MacIntyre. First, if we are to avoid any notion of a unified ‘essence of man’, then it is important to avoid even the generic notion of ‘men’. If the emotional life of people is fundamentally bound up with the particular social relations in which they are embedded, then we can have no unified concept of pleasure. We can only talk of ‘pleasures’ which are specific to particular persons in particular contexts. The implication is that ‘pleasures’ are inevitably relativistic, idiosyncratic, peculiar and personal. If this is the case, then Marcuse’s search for some notion of universally valid hedonism which is compatible with reason is false. In other words, the Epicurean version of hedonism fails because no universal standard of critical reason could adjudicate my pleasures. In the last analysis, I am the only authority on my pleasures. My preference for anti-social, short-term pornography may be incompatible with critical theory and the product of capitalist exploitation, but this preference is still pleasurable. One reason for this personal authority is that the relationship between my pleasure and my body is irreducibly immediate and intimate. This observation leads to the second criticism of Marcuse, namely that, despite all the talk about sexuality, Marcusean pleasures are strangely dissociated from the body. While it is obvious that thinking and imagining are activities we would describe as pleasurable, most of our pleasures involve the body because these pleasures typically involve physical sensations – eating, sleeping, sexuality, exercise, resting. I am not arguing that these are simply physical activities. They are in fact deeply cultural or at least mediated by culture, but they also presuppose that people have bodies and that the person is embodied. Marcuse does not take

seriously Marx's observation in the 'Theses on Feuerbach' that sensuousness is practical, human-sensuous activity.

Structuralism

In modern social theory, it is pre-eminently in the work of Michel Foucault that the human body is located centrally as an issue of knowledge. The importance of the body and desire in modern structuralist thought has often been recognized (Benoist, 1978), but the question of the body has a peculiar persistence in Foucault's approach to historical analysis. His ideas are difficult to grasp, but one important feature of his perspective is that, while in most conventional philosophy and social theory power is seen to repress desire, Foucault treats power as constructive and productive: desire is brought about by power/knowledge. While modern societies often appear to be characterized by sexual repression, in fact sexuality is constantly produced and examined by contemporary discourses, but these have come under the control of medical and psychiatric professions. The will to know has become the will to know sexuality and, since to know is to control, the sexual body has become the specific object of politics (Lemert and Gillan, 1982). There is, therefore, a very real difference between the approaches of Marcuse and Foucault in relation to the repression and representation of sexuality. For Marcuse, the repression of sex in capitalism is real and constitutes part of the surplus repression of libidinal pleasures. For Foucault, sexual repression is a myth, since sex has in fact become the object and product of endless scientific discourses – psychoanalysis, demography, biology, medical science – which aim to control and normalize sexuality. Knowledge produced desire in order to control it. In this respect, Foucault avoids the pitfall of treating desire as a unified phenomenon in history precisely because he treats desire as the product of certain historical discourses. However, this creates an ambiguity in Foucault's theory. At times he treats the body as a real entity – as, for example, in the effects of population growth on scientific thought or in his analysis of the effect of penology on the body. Foucault appears to treat the body as a unified, concrete aspect of human history which is continuous across epochs. Such a position is, however, clearly at odds with his views on the discontinuities of history and with his argument that the body is constructed by discourse. Thus, one interpretation of Foucault asserts that:

Clearly Foucault does not adopt Merleau-Ponty's solution. The body of desire is not, for him, the phenomenal, lived body. It is not a corporeal, incarnate subjectivity. ... Desire, for Foucault, is neither expressed in the body, nor is the body the lived form of desire. (Lemert and Gillan, 1982: 105)

On the other hand, Foucault has also said that, rather than starting with the analysis of ideology, it would be 'more materialist to study first the question of the body and the effects of power on it' (Foucault, 1981: 139). Such a materialist project would appear to take the corporeality of life seriously.

What is 'the body'? is thus a question which is central to Foucault's thought, but one which is not clearly answered.

Foucauldian structuralism is, at one level, a response to Cartesian rationalism. By splitting people into body and mind, Descartes represents an important stage in Western thought. The Cartesian revolution gave a privileged status to mind as the definition of the person ('I think, therefore I am') and an underprivileged status to the body which was simply a machine. To some extent Foucault reversed this situation by denying any centrality to subjectivity (the thinking, Cartesian subject) and by treating the body as the focus of modern discourse. Having rejected the transcendental Subject as merely a modern substitute for God or Logos, Foucault appears reluctant to have the Body as a controlling centre of social theory. The body is thus problematic for his theory. It looks as if Foucault wants to write the history of discourses about the body, of how the body is theoretically constructed, but this is specifically denied when he claims not to be producing a 'history of mentalities' which,

would take account of bodies only through the manner in which they have been perceived and given meaning and value; but a 'history of bodies' and the manner in which what is most material and most vital in them has been invested. (Foucault, 1981: 152)

To some extent, part of these difficulties is a product of his prior commitment to certain epistemological problems and thus the difficulties may be somewhat artificial. To reject Cartesianism it is not necessary to deny the corporeal nature of human existence and consciousness. To accept the corporeality of human life it is not necessary to deny the fact that the nature of the human body is also an effect of cultural, historical activity. The body is both natural and cultural.

Foucault and the Origins of Sociology

Foucault's approach to the history of ideas has major implications for the sociology of knowledge, but specifically for the history of sociology. Foucault has rejected the conventional view that sociology had its origins in French positivism:

Countless people have sought the origins of sociology in Montesquieu and Comte. That is a very ignorant enterprise. Sociological knowledge (*savoir*) is formed rather in practices like those of the doctors. For instance, at the start of the nineteenth century Guepin wrote a marvellous study of the city of Nantes. (Foucault, 1980a: 151)

The rise of modern medicine was associated with the development of new bureaucratic techniques in the panopticon system, the utilization of social surveys to map the distribution of diseases, the adoption of clinical methods for case-records and the elaboration of societal surveillance. Modern medicine is essentially social medicine as a policing of populations

and a clinic of bodies. Sociology has its origins, along with social medicine, in the knowledge and control of populations which survey techniques made possible. The implication of Foucault's view of the birth of the clinic (1973) is that medical sociology as the study of the health of populations and of the body of individuals is central to the sociological enterprise as a whole and that sociology cannot be divorced from medicine. This view runs counter to the conventional interpretation of medical sociology which treats the sub-discipline as a late addition to the sociological curriculum. Most textbook introductions to medical sociology locate its institutional origins between 1955 and 1966 (Cockerham, 1982) and argue that medical sociology has not developed theoretically because of its subordination to the managerial and practical interests of professional medicine (Roth, 1962; R. Strauss, 1957). The implication of Foucault's perspective is that sociology is applied medicine and its target is the regulation of bodies.

To some extent, this interpretation of the origins of sociology was anticipated by the notion of 'clinical sociology' which was first explicitly used by Louis Wirth (1931), who thought that sociologists would come to play a major role in the work of child-guidance clinics and who anticipated the spread of 'sociological clinics'. The value of sociology for medicine was its perspective on the 'whole person' whose illness could only be understood within a total social context. Wirth's views on clinical sociology were also echoed by L.J. Henderson who argued that sociology should adopt the clinical technique of medicine as a model for social observation and that medicine had failed to grasp the significance of the doctor-patient relationship as a social system (1935). It is interesting to note, given Foucault's comments on medicine and the origins of sociology, that Henderson saw 'the practice of medicine as applied sociology' (1936). It was Henderson's view of this proximity between medicine and sociology that provided the immediate context for Parsons' analysis of the 'the sick role' (1951), an analysis that formed much of the basis for modern medical sociology. Some recent studies from a Foucauldian perspective on the social role of the clinic, the dispensary (Armstrong, 1983) and medical orientations to 'the whole person' (Arney and Bergen, 1983) appear to duplicate this earlier emergence of clinical sociology.

Although medical sociology can be criticized for being merely an applied sociology whose aim was to facilitate the patient's compliance to the medical regimen, it was an area of sociological investigation which could not wholly avoid the problematic relationship between nature and culture. The debate about the 'sick role' kept alive the ambiguous nature of 'illness' and 'disease' as cultural categories (Mechanic and Volkart, 1961); it also provided a site in sociology where the critique of the medical model could be effectively located (Veatch, 1973). Because medical sociology is ultimately about the problem of social ontology in a very specific manner, it constantly raises questions about the status of the embodiment of human beings and it is therefore a theoretical location for a sociology of the body. The importance of Foucault's work on medical history is that it has made the theoretical

nature of medical sociology more obvious; at the same time it has alerted us to the historical and political linkage between medicine and sociology. A sociology of the body is thus fundamentally an exercise within medical sociology.

Phenomenology

It can be argued that structuralism had played a part in the modern analysis of the body either directly in the rejection of Cartesian dualism or indirectly in the analysis of the body as metaphor. Mikhail Bakhtin (1968) provided a rich diagnosis of the positional imagery of the body in mediaeval folk-humour. Another illustration would be Roland Barthes (1973) in his analysis of the messages of striptease and wrestling. Structuralism was in part a rejection, therefore, of the presuppositions of rationalism, which were grounded in the Cartesian formula – *cogito ergo sum*. This rejection of the mind/body dichotomy was not peculiar to French structuralism, but was a position which characterized post-war French philosophy generally. For example, within the phenomenological movement (Spiegelberg, 1960) writers like Gabriel Marcel in his *Le Mystère de l'Être* (1951) treated the body as the core of the ontological problem. Marcel argued that the body does not have a contingent or exterior relationship to existence, since my body is always immediately present in experience. He rejected the conventional dichotomies of subject/object and being/having to argue for the unity of mental and physical experience. For Marcel, to have a body is in fact always to be embodied so that existence is experienced-embodiment. The body is not an object or an instrument; rather I am my body, which is my primordial sense of possession and control. My body is the only object in which I exercise immediate and intimate rulership. For Marcel, therefore, the body is the ultimate starting point for any reflection on being and having, on existence and possession.

The mind/body legacy of Cartesian philosophy was also fundamental to the early philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre, especially in *Being and Nothingness* (1957). To some extent, Sartre intensified the Cartesian division of mind and body by emphasizing the importance of intentionality of knowing (Danto, 1975). Under the influence of the phenomenology of Husserl and Heidegger, Sartre distinguished between being-in-itself (*en-soi*) and being-for-itself (*pour-soi*) in order to bring out the irreducible presence of free will and intentional action as necessary features of human existence. Because we experience freedom and responsibility as burdens, we are inclined to act as if our lives are determined by forces, whether psychological or sociological, which are beyond our control. We live, that is, in bad faith. The central doctrine of existentialism is that a person is essentially what they choose to be and to know (Warnock, 1965). Given the centrality of intentional consciousness in Sartre's existentialist philosophy, it might appear that the body has little part to play in our being-in-the-world. The problem

of the body does, however, play an important part in Sartre's treatment of the philosophical question of the existence of other minds in his analysis of being-for-others. For Sartre, the body is our contact with the world which constitutes our contingency. Briefly, his argument is that we do not know other minds, but only minds as they are apprehended through the body. Sartre's account of the body is thus closely connected with his emphasis on intentionality and this feature of his argument is illustrated by his distinction between the three ontological dimensions. First, he drew attention to the body-for-itself. The body is not just a physical fact for me, alongside other facts – this typewriter, this chair or this paper – because my lived experience in the world is always from the point of view of my body. In seeing the world, I am not conscious of my eyes but only of a field of vision; my body-for-itself cannot be an object to me precisely because I am it. Furthermore, in so far as I apprehend my body at all, it is through objects in the world which indicate my location. My embodiment is indicated by the typewriter in front of me and the chair underneath me. Secondly, Sartre distinguished the ontological dimension of the body-for-others. Whereas I cannot apprehend my body as an object but only as a body-for-itself, I apprehend the body of the other as an object about which I take a point of view and realize that my body as an object is the body-for-others. I do not perceive, however, the other's body as mere flesh, but always in a specific and concrete situation which I interpret as meaningful. The other is perceived not as a cadaver, but as a being-in-body with intentions whose actions or gestures are goal-directed and purposeful – such as striking a match to light a fire in order to eat. This interaction of my body as a subject for myself and an object seen by the other leads to the third ontological dimension. Being seen and observed by the other results in a recognition of my facticity, that I am an object to the other. In interaction I begin to experience my intimate inside as an impersonal outside. The body-for-itself becomes objectified and alienated. What my body is, through being observed by the other, is simply a body.

Sartre's attempt to transcend Cartesian dualism has been criticized on a variety of grounds – for example by Merleau-Ponty in *Phenomenology of Perception* (1962) – but these objections may be summarized in the claim that Sartre did not overcome dualism: the problem was simply transferred to a distinction between *en-soi* and *pour-soi*, a distinction which is problematic and inconsistent with Sartre's commitment to an intentional ontology. The consequence of these criticisms and debates in French phenomenological philosophy is a rejection of any dualism between mind and body, and a consequent insistence on the argument that the body is never simply a physical object but always an embodiment of consciousness. Furthermore, we cannot discuss the body without having a central concern for intentions: the objective, 'outside' world is always connected to my body in terms of my body's actions or potential actions on it. To perceive the world is to reflect upon possible actions of my body on the world. Similarly, I experience my body as mine through my intimate, concrete

control over my body. The basic idea of embodiment is that my animate organism,

is me, and expresses me: it is at once the self-embodiment of my psychic life, and the self-expressiveness of my psychic life. Thus, we can say, the problem of the experience of the body is the problem of embodiment. ... The phenomenology of the animate organism is, accordingly, the descriptive-explicative analysis of the continuously on-going automic embodiment of consciousness by one organism singled out as peculiarly 'its' own, and, at higher levels, graspable by me as 'my own'. (Zaner, 1964: 261)

This view of the body from a phenomenological perspective is particularly important for sociology and, as I demonstrate in later chapters, especially for medical sociology as a critique of behaviourism. While the body is an object with specific physiological characteristics and thus subject to natural processes of ageing and decay, it is never just a physical object. As embodied consciousness, the body is drenched with symbolic significance. Phenomenology is a critique of behaviourism which, in treating the body as an object separate from consciousness, has to embrace, however covertly, Cartesian dualism. While the phenomenological critique is important, it is also limited as a philosophical basis for a sociology of the body.

The phenomenology of the body offered by Marcel, Sartre and Merleau-Ponty is an individualistic account of embodiment from the point of view of the subject; it is consequently an account largely devoid of historical and sociological content. From a sociological point of view, 'the body' is socially constructed and socially experienced. Their descriptive analysis of embodiment is of course consistent with phenomenological methodology which seeks to bracket out the question of existence in order to focus on the problem of meaning. Such an approach, however, brackets out too much, since in their own terms being involves meaning and vice versa. In presenting a sociological critique of their approach to embodiment, it is valuable to start with a consideration of the question: what is a person? The reason for this question is that the problem of the body in philosophical debate cannot be separated from the related issues of personhood, individuation and identity.

The Person

In philosophical terms, an individual person in the full sense of the term is a being with a body, consciousness, continuity, commitment and responsibility. Some aspects of this ensemble of characteristics are contained in the following statement of what is implied in the notion of the identity of a human being:

(1) the perception of an overall *coherence* – either 'substantive' or 'methodological' – within the experiences and expressions of an individual; (2) the memory of this individual and, normally, in at least some others of the *continuity* of

the 'story' or 'tale' of his life; and (3) a conscious, but not wholly conscious, *commitment* to a particular manner of both comprehending and managing one's own self. (Kavolis, 1980: 41, emphasis in original)

Each of these elements presents, admittedly, a number of difficulties. There has been much debate in philosophy as to whether individual persons are basically mental or physical entities (Shoemaker, 1963; Strawson, 1959). Whatever the philosophical problems, it is clear from a sociological stance that having a body with specific features, which has a particular placement in society, is crucial for everyday recognition and identification of persons. The interpellation of persons is typically the interpellation of specific bodies. This claim is not to deny that there are mistaken identities, false identities, impersonation and mimesis. The possession of a body is, despite these problems, an essential feature of the routine social identification of separate persons.

However, what both philosophy and sociology take for granted in the discussion of the body is that sociologically 'the body' is an animate organism. In fact the social notion of 'a body' is wider and more complex than this physicalist model implies. There are, for example, fictive and corporate bodies, at least some of which are also 'persons'. In mediaeval political theory, for example, it was held that kings had two bodies, one real and corruptible, one fictive and immortal (Kantorowicz, 1957). The king's sacred body was symbolic of the coherence and continuity of the whole society; the king's person embodied the body politic so that regicide was an attack on the person of the king and on the society as a whole. From a sociological point of view, it makes sense for a person to have two bodies, since the body is both a thing and a sign. In jurisprudence, the problem of identity has played a major part in the analysis of legal corporations as both bodies and persons. The idea of legal persons as legal unities, which were constituted as separate persons, was developed in the fourteenth century when Italian legal theorists were forced to deal with the emergence of corporations (Canning, 1980). While the law could conceive of human persons with rights and obligations, the law had not been fully developed to cope with collective entities like cities or trading corporations. To embrace such entities, the legal theorists developed the notion of *persona ficta* which was eventually developed into *persona universalis* – one person composed of many. In part, the theory of the corporation was seen to be analogous to the theory of the universal church. The real church was simply an embodiment of the universal church which in turn was simply the mystical body of Christ and as such continual and indestructible. While individual members of the physical church on earth were constantly replaced, the universal church had a continuity and existence independent of its actual adherents. The corporation was thus seen in a similar light; changes in individual membership did not influence the legal continuity of the whole. Hence, legal theorists conceived of the corporation as *persona perpetua*, such that membership of it changed the isolated nature of individual members

(*homo separatus*) into corporate persons. In socio-historical terms, 'the body' is not necessarily the individual animate organism, because what will count as a body is an effect of social interpretation.

The idea that the individual person possesses self-consciousness is equally an historical notion. As Mauss (1979) has shown, the idea of the unity of body, person and consciousness is the result of a protracted historical process. The concept of 'person' comes from *persona*, a mask which was external to the individual. When *persona* in Roman law came to equal the 'self', it still excluded slaves who did not own their bodies, had no personality and had no claims over property. The notion of *persona* as a moral fact was first elaborated by the Stoics, but it was not until the development of Christian moral thought that the self was given an adequate metaphysical basis in the indestructibility of the unique soul. From Christianity we derive the modern notion that the person is equivalent to the self and the latter is equivalent to consciousness. Much philosophical debate about what it is to be a person is thus culturally ethnocentric since there are cultures, such as classical Greece, in which human beings are not persons since they do not possess their bodies and have no public/legal identity.

There is also the argument that to have a personal identity as a separate individual is to have a certain coherence and continuity both from the point of view of the self and others. What I am is bound up with my ability to recognize myself and the continuous recognition of myself by others. In everyday practice, being the 'same' person is measured by the way in which that person adheres to the 'same' beliefs, attitudes and practices over time in different situations. We are stigmatized for our inconsistencies and praised for our coherence. However, we also recognize that changes of identity and person are not wholly uncommon and indeed some cultures, like Protestant Christianity, regard the person as highly convertible. The 'true' person emerges only after religious conversion when the old Adam is destroyed. In other cultures, initiation rites (generally *rites de passage*) are held to produce new persons (Eliade, 1958) and to mark the change the body is often inscribed with symbols of such transformations (Brain, 1979). The convertibility of persons throws doubt on the view that continuity is essential to identity in the sense that our personal continuity may be in fact the product of continuity in social definition of the person/body unity.

The crucial issue in the debate about personhood is, however, that human persons are regarded as entities which are bearers of rights and responsibilities; to be a human person is to be capable of rational choice and consequently to be held responsible for one's actions. We have seen that this argument was central to Sartre's existentialism which, given the importance of intentionality, regarded free will as an essential component of what it is to be a person. We differentiate between people and animals on a variety of criteria – language, rationality and a capacity for symbolization. One crucial feature is that we do not morally or legally hold animals responsible for their actions. A tiger which kills a man is not blamed for actions which are regarded as instinctual; a man who kills a tiger is blamed for

actions which endanger a protected species. Furthermore, a person cannot be excused by saying 'my body did it' because we are thought to have intimate rulership, to follow Husserl, over our bodies. However, this question of responsibility and control over our bodies raises particularly difficult issues for phenomenologists.

The phenomenologists argue that persons have direct government over their bodies and that this regime is exercised without reflection: I do not have to tell my arm to move the carriage on the typewriter. Gabriel Marcel did, of course, admit that slaves have less control over their bodies than free citizens. However, the individualistic nature of phenomenology prevents it from developing a systematic theory about the social structure which unequally distributes the government of the body. The system of slavery is the most obvious example, but it can also be argued that under conditions of patriarchy women do not control their bodies because on entry into marriage they cease to be legal persons. The legal regulations known as *coverture* specify that the legal personality of the woman is merged with that of the husband so that the male head of household controls the bodies of his subordinates. The examples of intimate rulership of the body supplied by phenomenologists are trivial: lifting my pipe, picking up a glass or reading the newspaper. Less trivial is the fact that women under patriarchy do not control their sexuality because they do not make decisions about reproduction. Women, children, slaves and the insane do not in any important sense govern their bodies because they are denied full citizenship and are partly excluded from the public domain. It is over this issue that Foucault's analysis of sexuality can be seen to be powerful. A society which treats sexual freedom as a value in fact forces us to confess fully our inner 'secrets', especially to medical and paramedical experts: our freedom forces us to conform to standards of personal exposure. In addition we live in a world where our bodies are increasingly subject to inspection and surveillance by professional, occupational or governmental institutions. To talk about our phenomenological rulership of our bodies is to miss the crucial sociological point, namely the regulation of the body in the interests of public health, economy and political order.

Summary

The problem of the body lies at the juncture of the major issues of sociological theory. The epistemological problems of sociology, from the neo-Kantian movement onwards, centre on the dual membership of the human species in nature and culture. The human body is subject to processes of birth, decay and death which result from its placement in the natural world, but these processes are also 'meaningful' events located in a world of cultural beliefs, symbols and practices. At the individual level, my body is an environment that is experienced as a limit, but my consciousness also involves embodiment. I both have and am a body. Part of this distinction

can be illustrated by the difference between disease and sickness. We might describe a person with Legg-Perthes's disease as suffering from degeneration of the thighbone, in which case the thighbone is diseased but not sick. Similarly we may describe an apple as diseased but not ill. Concepts like 'illness' and 'sickness' are socio-cultural categories which describe the condition of persons rather than their flesh, bones and nerves. Disease is not a social role, but it makes sense to consider 'the sick role' as a social position with norms of appropriate behaviour (Parsons, 1951). It follows that it is plausible to argue that I have an illness, but also that I 'do', or perform my illness. The value of the phenomenological critique of Cartesianism is to demonstrate that consciousness is embodiment and also intentional.

For sociology, the limitations of phenomenology are determined by its exclusive focus on my body and the body of the *other*. The body is always socially formed and located. What it is to be man or woman is a social definition, since physiology is always mediated by culture. As Foucault (1980b) has shown, having a 'true' sex is the outcome of medical/cultural practices, which in the case of hermaphrodites preclude the possibility of maintaining two sexual identities. 'Freaks' are also socially constructed (Howell and Ford, 1980).

While it is true phenomenologically that we have rulership over our bodies, it is never true socially in the sense that the social reproduction of populations is subject to institutional regulation ('the incest taboo'), power (in the form of patriarchy), ideology (in the contrast between desire and reason) and economics (the requirement of stable distribution of property through the household, typically in the form of unigeniture). Societies have traditionally been organized under the combination of gerontocracy/patriarchy in which the sexual behaviour of subordinates is regulated by the phalanx of God, king, priest and husband. The problem of the body is thus not simply an issue in epistemology and phenomenology, but a theoretical location for debates about power, ideology and economics.

The Body and Religion

Man is a creation of desire, not a creation of need. Gaston Bachelard,
The Psychoanalysis of Fire

Capitalism, Desire, Rationality

At various times in the history of sociology, the analysis of religion has been seen as central to the theoretical development of the basic conceptual concerns of social science. The problem of religion was the starting point of the young Marx's critique of social relations; it provided the focal point of the sociology of Durkheim and Weber; the Paretian framework of non-rational religious beliefs provided the groundwork of the Parsonian voluntaristic action theory. At other times, the analysis of Christian institutions in secular society has appeared to be a relatively trivial branch of organization theory and, as such, marginal to the perennial issues of sociology as a critical discipline. In response to this pendulum-swing development of the sociology of religion, Berger and Luckmann (1963) proposed that, in order to be grasped as central to the sociological enterprise, religion had to be treated as a crucial dimension in the legitimation of everyday activities and thereby constitutive of our 'knowledge' of social reality. The sociology of religion was thus allied with the sociology of knowledge or, more precisely, it was elided by the sociology of knowledge since religious beliefs became merely a sub-category of social 'knowledge'. In this sense, the sociology of religion could only remain influential by translation into a more general analytical framework. Alternative theoretical strategies might involve not so much the elision of the sociology of religion, but its intrusion into other sociological sub-disciplines for the purpose of contrast and opposition. My intention is to suggest some important, but largely neglected, theoretical connections between the sociology of religion and medical sociology (Turner, 1983). These connections could be elucidated by, for example, contrasting the difficulties in the conceptualization of 'religion' and 'health'. Instead of approaching this issue at the level of conceptual and methodological questions, this study insinuates the theoretical questions by an examination of the historical contradictions between theology and medical practice in order to introduce an additional dimension to the debate about the secularization of religion in Western civilization. My thesis is, quite simply, that the generative question in the

sociology of religion and medical sociology is the problem of the body in society.

The notion that the institutionalization of anatomy is a major problem of social order is in fact implicit, not in Berger and Luckmann's article on knowledge, but in their influential study of social construction (1966). Following the work of Arnold Gehlen (Berger and Kellner, 1965) on biology and institutions, Berger and Luckmann argue that, although the biological constitution of men presents a set of physiological limitations on social relationships, the central feature of human biology is one of pliability and plasticity. For example, although human beings are equipped with sexual drives, these biologically rooted needs may find their outlet in a variety of institutions and practices: monogamy and promiscuity, heterosexuality and homosexuality, rape and prostitution. The implication is that the variability of human sexuality has to be channelled into certain socially constructed, routine patterns if social stability is to be maintained. Their theory of socially constructed human universes is thereby based on the argument that there are necessary tensions between body and society, and between self and body. The potential anarchy of biological satisfaction must be subordinated by a variety of institutional controls – especially the family – if the nomos of interpersonal interactions is to be preserved. At the level of personal experience, there is also an unstable relationship between subjective and objective worlds in that human beings can be said to have and to be bodies. In raising these questions, Berger and Luckmann not only suggest important areas of common concern between sociology and philosophy (such as the mind and body problem), they also link the sociology of religion with those issues which have been constitutive of sociology and psychoanalysis.

The argument that there is a fundamental incompatibility between the satisfaction of human instinctual needs and the requirements of civilization has occupied a prominent place in Western social philosophy. While in the original Hobbesian formulation of social contract theory, human existence outside society was 'nasty, brutish and short', Rousseau's doctrine that social life is artificial and inimical to personal moral autonomy has probably been more influential in contemporary sociology. In Durkheim's analysis of the anomic division of labour, without adequate social restraints the instability of human desire represents a powerful suicidal tendency in human personality. A similar opposition between desire and social order was the underlying postulate of Malthusian demography, but the most pessimistic formulation of the contradiction between happiness and civilization was elaborated in Freudian metapsychology. For Freud, civilization is bought at the cost of instinctual satisfaction by the imposition of the demands of the superego over the id through the internal mechanism of guilt and conscience and the external mechanisms of social control. Civilization requires discontent. Unfortunately, the incorporation of Freudian psychoanalysis into sociology has often, as in Parsons' *The Social System* (1951), resulted in an over-integrated view of the relationship between the organism and the

personality system – an incorporation which has, however, been noted by critics of functionalism (Wrong, 1961).

How does this traditional analysis of the contradiction between desire and social control relate to the sociology of religion? In rather simple terms, it may be suggested that, whereas early social contract theory explored the contradictions between personal happiness and social order, sociology of religion has centred on the apparent incompatibility between meaning and civilization. In Weber's two addresses on vocation in science and politics, one finds the classic statement of how the abandonment of the garden of enchantment prepares the way for a society organized around the principles of rational calculability and means-end rationality. However, scientific stability and predictability are bought at the cost of meaning, since, given Hume's naturalistic fallacy, normative statements can never be deduced from statements of fact. From the point of view of moral coherence, every advance in scientific understanding entails a reduction in the meaningfulness of the social world. Indeed, the quest for abstract knowledge beyond immediate technical needs must itself be irrational as a calling which can secure no normative legitimation. Although Weber's sociology of religion is conventionally approached in terms of a contradiction between meaning and knowledge, there is a major component of Weber's analysis of religions as various systematizations of irrational salvational paths where the opposition between body and meaning becomes critically important (Turner, 1981). Despite Weber's personal disapproval of Freudianism, there are important theoretical parallels between the attitudes of Freud and Weber to religion. In Weber's sociology, there are two specific points at which we find the argument that the advances of civilization require the suppression of orgiastic antinomian satisfactions.

The central theme of Weber's *The Sociology of Religion* (1966) is the question of how various religions, in formulating the relationship between the sacred and the profane, develop salvational paths of asceticism or mysticism in response to the 'world'. These formulations occupy a continuum between world acceptance and world rejection. While in his analysis of Christianity as a religion of brotherly love Weber is primarily concerned with religious beliefs in relation to wealth and power, the problem of the sexuality of the human body plays an important part in his conceptualization of religious rationalization. Weber recognizes that religious behaviour originates in mundane interests in health and wealth – 'The most elementary forms of behaviour motivated by religious or magical factors are oriented to *this world*' (Weber, 1966: 1). However, the routinization of charisma arising out of ecstasy, the intellectual systematization of religious beliefs under the influence of the priesthood, and the rejection of magical means to mundane ends by prophecy, replace these mundane interests by 'otherworldly non-economic goals'. These mundane interests are, however, never entirely suppressed by the ethical systems of the official orthodoxy and there remains a permanent tension between the religion of the virtuosi and mass religion in which the laity turn to the cult of saints for prosperity and healing.

Similarly, the orgy of primitive religious expression is either repressed or sublimated in more acceptable institutional forms. Even the 'specifically anti-erotic religions' still 'represent substitute satisfactions of sexually conditioned psychological needs' (Weber, 1966: 237). The irrational sexual impulses of the body constituted a special problem within the Christian opposition to the world, since the unpredictable nature of erotic desire represented a direct challenge to any rationally organized system of ascetic self-control. Opposition to sexual irrationality was not, however, an issue peculiar to Christianity since 'no authentic religion of salvation had in principle any other point of view' (1966: 241). The rational control of these impulses through the institutions of celibacy and monogamy represents an important dimension of Weber's master concept of rationalization in which the emergence of labour discipline and asceticism in capitalism constituted a major historical turning point in the control of the body.

The second illustration of Weber's commentary on the tensions between instinctual life and social organization occurs in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. The *Protestant Ethic* thesis may be briefly summarized as follows: 'A man does not "by nature" wish to earn more and more money, but simply to live as he is accustomed to live and to earn as much as is necessary for that purpose' (Weber, 1930: 60). The conditions by which natural man is forced out of a situation of mere reproduction for the sake of immediate physical needs are two-fold, namely the separation of the worker from the means of production and the emergence of the doctrine of work as a calling. The worker cannot be enticed out of this simple enjoyment of use-values merely by an increase in wages since 'Labour must, on the contrary, be performed as if it were an absolute end in itself, a calling. But such an attitude is by no means a product of nature' (1930: 62). In Weber's theory of capitalist rationalism, every advance of capitalist production, therefore, requires the subordination of immediate instinctual gratification, the disciplining of the body and the quest for an economic surplus which far exceeds the present needs of utility and simple reproduction. Capitalist production requires both abstinence from immediate consumption on the part of entrepreneurs, and sobriety and self-control by the labour force. In this sense, capitalist accumulation is distinctively irrational from the point of view of 'nature', of basic instinctual gratification.

Although in the discussion of religious abstinence Weber was more concerned with the problem of wealth, he also recognized that sexual abstinence was a significant component of Puritanism and capitalism. The answer to religious doubt and sexual temptation was the same – 'a moderate vegetable diet and cold baths' (1930: 159). In this respect, the 'hygienically oriented utilitarianism' of Benjamin Franklin had converged with the ethical outlook of the 'modern physicians' who advocated moderation in sexual intercourse in the interests of good health (1930: 263). The control of the body, like the rational control of investment and production, appears to be an illustration of the rational spirit of capitalism and, in general, a feature of Western

rationalization, but 'by nature' such developments are highly irrational. If we link this perspective with the earlier discussion in *The Sociology of Religion* we can say that, for Weber, every extension of systematic, formal rationality in religion (such as the emergence of other-worldly, ethical monotheism) entails 'a characteristic recession of the original, practical and calculating rationalism' (Weber, 1966: 27) which is geared to the satisfaction of the biological needs of natural man.

It is well known that Weber's own attitude towards rational capitalism was typically ambiguous. On the one hand, the rationality of capitalism and modern science had liberated men from the garden of enchantment in which magic and primitive gods had ruled their lives. On the other hand, this rational enlightenment had left men without any intrinsic meaning for life, since scientific reasoning can by itself provide no answers to the central moral questions of human existence. Capitalism is the 'iron cage' in which people are mere 'cogs'. With the collapse of a religious calling to labour, the vocation for wealth and knowledge beyond immediate, utilitarian ends and beyond the basic needs of physical reproduction had, in fact, taken on a distinctively irrational quality. There is consequently a strong argument for drawing a parallel between Freud's pessimistic *Civilization and its Discontents* and Weber's sociology of religion. In both perspectives, the growth of an industrial civilization required a primitive accumulation of wealth which had been acquired at the cost of instinctual gratification and 'primitive rationalism'.

In these introductory comments, it has been suggested that the problematic relationship between body and society is a basic, but often implicit, issue in classical sociology, social philosophy and psychoanalysis. The plasticity of human instincts requires a set of powerful social and cultural mechanisms in order to maintain social stability. Weber, Freud, Berger and Luckmann have regarded religious asceticism as a major element in the development of the civilized institutionalization of instincts (Elias, 1978). This prefatory exegesis could be extended to examine the ambiguous attitude in Marxism to the sociological importance of asceticism (Seguy, 1977). The point of these observations is not, however, to provide yet another history of the sociology of religion, but to suggest that the theoretical linkage between the sociology of religion and medical sociology is internal and necessary rather than superficial and contingent. Both sub-disciplines are fundamentally concerned with the complex interface between cultural and physiological structures. While certain anthropological studies of the pollution theory of disease and historical studies of mental health have recognized the importance of the relationship between religion and medicine, the importance of this issue has been generally neglected in mainstream sociology. Although this relationship could be explicated at an abstract level, it is suggested here that the religion/medicine issue might initially be explored by an examination of the ambiguities of the Judaeo-Christian tradition with regard to health, disease and treatment.

Sickness, Salvation and Medicine

In evolutionary theories of religion, it was typically assumed that Christian spirituality and moral teaching could be neatly distinguished from primitive religions which failed to make a necessary distinction between physical pollution and moral sinfulness (Steiner, 1956). Sin could not be expunged by magic, ritual or other institutional means since Christianity had spiritualized primitive notions of physical evil. The scriptural evidence of this uniquely ethical view of conduct was that men are not defiled by what goes into their bodies, but only by their intentions. William Robertson Smith went further by suggesting that, within Christianity, this ethical stance was most fully developed in Calvinistic Protestantism, while Catholic sacramentalism had partly retained the notion that the cure of souls and bodies could be effected through the rituals of penance. There is some historical justification for this interpretation, since confessional practices in Christianity have characteristically been based on an analogy between priest and physician (Hepworth and Turner, 1982). In the early thirteenth century, for example, the parallelism between health and salvation was a common theme of confessional manuals. Robert Grosseteste drew a powerful analogy between the sinner/confessor and patient/physician relationship, and between moral vices and physical sins. In addition to confession, shrines and pilgrimages were traditionally associated with physical cures. Cure of disease was sought through religious relics for which shrines were erected (Bonser, 1963). While it was recognized that secular physicians had a definite sphere of competence, certain diseases and illnesses were the special province of priests. The miracles of Jesus provided a strong theological warrant for the priest as exorcist of demons. Given this tradition in Christianity of ritualized healing, it is not surprising that, when transplanted to other cultural areas, much of the therapeutic ritualism of the church proved especially attractive to indigenous populations. This is particularly true of the social significance of patron saints of disease for the aboriginal peoples of the Spanish American colonies (Guerra, 1969).

It could be argued, as Weber does, that these practices were merely concessions to the popular demand for healing services which ran counter to the central orthodox tradition of spiritual Christianity. With few exceptions, all religions have been compelled 'to reintroduce cults of saints, heroes or functional gods in order to accommodate themselves to the needs of the masses (Weber, 1966: 103). Against this interpretation, it can be argued that the care of the sick is an act of charity *par excellence*, that physical exposure to disease is indicative of heroic virtue, and that diseases which are the consequences of immorality find their compensation in the institutionalized grace of the Church. In Catholicism, Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theologica* clearly established the care of the sick among the principal acts of Christian charity, while suffering, nobly borne, was a sign of internal grace, as was, for example, exhibited in the life of Teresa of Lisieux. The theological interpretations of the meaning of the body and disease were, in fact, far

more complex than the doctrine of charity and virtuous suffering would suggest. On the one hand, the body ('the flesh') is deep-rooted in Christian symbolism of sinfulness. The frailty and eventual decay of the human body and the inevitable physical finitude of human beings provided an obvious metaphor for original sin and natural depravity (Frye, 1954). On the other hand, disease could be regarded as a sign of divine election by which the righteous are purified and perfected by the trials of pain (Job and Lazarus provided the biblical figures for this motif). There were, thus, three crucial types of illness – leprosy, hysteria and epilepsy – which were traditionally regarded as both an outcome of human sinfulness and as a sign of sacred election. Of these 'sacred diseases', leprosy is particularly instructive in the context of religious definitions of illness.

In the mediaeval ecclesiastical tradition, leprosy was not clearly distinguished from venereal disease and was specifically associated with sexual promiscuity. The outward decay of the leper was a sign of inner profanity. The leper constituted both a moral and physical threat to the community and had to be separated from the population by dramatic rituals and other legal means. The church's office at the seclusion of a leper did not differ in fundamentals from the office for the dead, since the *separatio leprosororum* defined the leper as a ritually dead person. In the service, the leper bends before a black cloth by the altar 'after the manner of a dead man' (Clay, 1909: 273). Once lepers had been ritually secluded, they were by law prevented from inheriting property, entering public places, touching wells without gloves or eating in company. Under these conditions, the leprosarium became a refuge. While these rituals of exclusion gave overt expression to the condemnation of leprosy as a punishment for carnal lust, leprosy was perceived in terms of two contradictory attitudes: 'the disease was the sickness both of the damned sinner and of one given special grace by God' (Brody, 1974: 101). The disease was paradoxically known as the 'sacred malady' and the disease of the soul. There was a clear need to remove the association of sin and leprosy after the First Crusade when soldiers, fighting a holy war in the hope of personal salvation, returned home with leprosy. The parable of Lazarus provided one means of regarding leprosy as a divine affliction which, through patience, led eventually to a divine reward. The contradiction was eventually removed by the disappearance of leprosy as a common disease in the middle of the fourteenth century. It was replaced by syphilis which again came to be regarded as a divine punishment for human sins.

In historical terms, there are a variety of different but related theological views of sickness. Within the spiritual scheme of human affairs, disease might have a number of different functions: 'To enhance the merits of the just through their patience, to safeguard virtue from pride, to correct the sinner, to proclaim God's glory through miraculous cures and, finally, as the beginning of eternal punishment as in the case of Herod' (Temkin, 1977: 54). Despite the apparent diversity of views, one important theme is that disease is not religiously neutral, but shot through with deeper spiritual significance.

The natural processes of the body were not merely events within an external, natural world but 'could conceivably be interpreted as a corporeal manifestation of the relationship between God and man and this meant of man's spiritual and moral life' (1977: 54). Such an interpretation raised two immediate difficulties. First, the notion of disease, as caused by moral imperfections for which individuals could be held responsible, conflicted with the idea that disease had a divine origin. The problem of disease was thus part of a deeper problem about evil, divine justice and hence theodicy. Secondly, the church was forced to adopt a conciliatory attitude to medicine which appeared to intervene in the divine mechanisms of disease by offering cure and therapy. To what extent could medical cures be reconciled with the idea of moral responsibility?

Medical Ethics and the Medical Fee

In Chaucer's Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales*, we find that the richly clad doctor

... was rather close as to expenses
And kept the gold he won in pestilences.
Gold stimulates the heart, or so we're told.
He therefore had a special love of gold.

These lines neatly indicate the problem of medical practice for any moral system grounded in supernaturalist presuppositions. Although medical intervention appears to conflict directly with the notion of disease as a sign of religious fate or as a dimension of a divine scheme for human affairs, a theodicy of pain can coherently incorporate medical therapy as an act of charity. However, if the physician charges a payment for his services, then it is difficult to reconcile the medical fee with the concept of charitable virtue. In particular, as in Chaucer's Prologue, it appears as if the unsuccessful doctor's career is parasitic upon the misfortunes of the body. The main solution to the moral dilemma of medical remuneration was found in the development of a code of practice by which the community sought some control over the client-physician relationship. The growth of the notion of the 'ideal doctor' in Jewish (Margalith, 1957), Greek and Christian culture produced a body of deontological writing out of which the professional ethic of medicine eventually emerged.

Within the framework of Greek science and philosophy, medicine as a practical skill of wandering craftsmen was, to some extent, socially stigmatized on two accounts. First, it was regarded as a manual, not mental, exercise as the name *techne iatrike* signified (Kudlien, 1976). The practical aspect of the occupation was even more pronounced where medicine was combined with surgery which literally meant 'hand-work' (*kheirergo*). Secondly, the fact that these craftsmen charged a fee distinguished them from noble callings, like mathematics, which were not aimed at and did not involve financial reward. Various professional ideologies were

developed in classical antiquity in order to legitimate medicine as a virtuous occupation. Elements of the Hippocratic corpus dealing with philanthropy were emphasized and attention was drawn to the noble descent of Hippocrates. If the physician had inherited wealth, he could afford to practise without payment, or at least remuneration would be less important. In Greek medical treatises, it was, therefore, suggested that medical students should be free-born citizens from wealthy families. In medical deontology, norms were established to regularize the interaction between doctor and patient in those cases where a fee was required. Payment should not be requested too early, the physician should not be too overtly concerned with personal gain and the poor should not be exploited. The ethical component of Hippocratic medicine was further developed by Galen of Pergamon who argued that the principal aim of medicine was not financial gain but service to the community in the restoration of health. Various medical tracts assumed an almost casuistic character in claiming that the real difference between ignoble occupations and altruistic medicine was that, in the case of medicine, the fee was accepted but not requested. It was the request for payment, not acceptance of reward, that made certain occupations dishonourable.

The reception of the classical conception of medicine as a virtuous activity, despite the vexed questions attending the medical fee, in early Christianity posed the problem of how to assimilate a secular practice within a religious framework. One consequence of this tension between the religious and the secular was that in the period from the fifth to the eleventh century writing on the code of medical practice was dichotomized around ethics and etiquette (MacKinney, 1952). While medical ethics emphasized the general moral qualities of the medical calling, etiquette dealt with the practical, secular problems of doctor–patient interaction. Etiquette was concerned with the doctor’s bedside manner, dress, language and deportment. In the religious tradition, medical practice was to some degree fused with the charitable work of the monasteries which permitted a certain *rapprochement* between Christian idealism and Hippocratic philanthropy. Despite the alliance of the monastic norm of charitable healing with the classical view, the norms of everyday medical practice for physicians were essentially this-worldly. The increasing influence of the medical school at Salerno gave a decisive impetus to the growth of a secular, individualist code of medical practice organized around etiquette rather than ethics (Bullough, 1966).

The debate concerning the medical fee in classical and Christian deontology was in fact indicative of a profound division in medicine relating to basic questions of theory, practice and values. Although the Hippocratic corpus contained a number of separate theoretical traditions, Hippocratic medicine divided into alternative perspectives, namely empiricism and rationalism. In the empiricist tradition, medicine was regarded as having a minimal, modest role in assisting the body to overcome disease in a manner which was determined by the organism itself. The physician did not alter the

course of the natural process of recovery; he assisted the natural sequence of illness, crisis and restoration rather than intervening to change the natural pattern of events. The drugs which the doctor may have prescribed were selected on the 'basis of "similarity" in that they stimulate the organism to continue along the path which it has already chosen' (Coulter, 1977, vol. 1: 89). Since the internal laws of the body were ultimately unknown and unanalysable, the physician had to pay particular attention to the symptoms of the disease which provided the essential clues for the choice of therapy. The empiricist tradition consequently regarded medical knowledge as the product of medical experience and as subordinate to medical skill. By contrast, the rationalist tradition treated the internal processes of the human body as analysable in terms of knowable causal mechanisms. Medical knowledge was abstract, coherent and deductive; it was not the outcome of medical practice, but, on the contrary, guided practice in terms of rational knowledge. Medicine did not help the natural processes of the disease crisis but intervened to change the disease through the use of 'contrary' medicine. The empiricist doctor at best was the assistant of *physis*; by medical intervention, the rationalist subordinated *physis* to theory.

The difference between these two approaches to medicine can be illustrated in terms of the humoral theory of disease. Although rationalist and empiricist positions in classical medicine were humoralist, empiricists argued that the body was constituted by an unknown, indefinite number of humours. Cure of the disease was to be effected by the coction of isolated humours through the normal processes of evacuation of sweat, urine and faeces. The doctor followed the course of the illness by careful examination of the body's excretions and secretions; the therapy of the empiricist physician typically involved a combination of 'diet, exercise, hot baths and applications (to promote coction), and laxatives (to promote evacuation)' (Coulter, 1977, vol. 1: 7). In the rationalist tradition of Aristotle and Galen, medical understanding of human pathology was founded on four specific humours: blood, phlegm, yellow bile and black bile. It was improper combinations of these humours which were the causes of specific illnesses. The humoral theory was elaborated to include four qualities (hot, cold, wet and dry), four elements (air, fire, water and earth), and four seasons (spring, summer, autumn and winter). The juxtaposition of these various qualities resulted in property-space diagrams in which a great diversity of diseases could be unambiguously located by deduction. The important difference between empiricism and rationalism was that the former treated each disease as a problem of the individual in the context of the patient's total life, while the latter dealt with classes of disease rather than individual cases. The goal of rationalism was, with the aid of a logically consistent theory, to penetrate behind the symptoms to the disease entity which was the cause of pathology.

Rationalism, particularly in the form of Galenic humoralism, became the dominant paradigm of medical practice until experimental anatomy in the Renaissance began to question much of the received wisdom of

Greek medical science. The triumph of rationalism was closely linked to the professional needs of medical practitioners. Empiricism was the perspective of medical practitioners who were not differentiated from other craftsmen and whose knowledge of disease was not different in kind from that of laymen. Rationalist humoralism was not commonsense knowledge based on experience and claimed to comprehend hidden causes of illness which could not, therefore, be observed and treated by the ordinary layman. The more medical theory could be removed from direct observation of symptoms and everyday experience, the greater the inequality of social status between doctor and patient. Given their belief in the specificity of disease in each individual patient, the empiricist physician had to make painstaking and lengthy observations on the patient before the appropriate therapy could be determined. Rationalism, by contrast, provided apparently quick, sure answers and a therapy which was determined by knowledge of cases, not individual patients. Finally, the test of empiricist therapy was whether the patient recovered and this situation meant that the individual doctor was particularly exposed to criticism from patients and relatives when the cure was ineffective. For the rationalist physician, humoralism was a valid theory; if the cure appeared to fail, it was because the patient had not followed the medical regimen strictly. The patient, not the theory, was responsible for lack of curative success.

Medicine as a Secular Practice

There is a common assumption in sociology that the transition from feudalism to capitalism in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Europe represented *the* great transformation which divided history into its traditional and modern phase. Although there is widespread disagreement as to details, it is generally held that traditional society was rural, stable and religious, while modern society is urban, complex and secular. It is against the theoretical background of the great divide doctrine that the study of medical history is of particular interest to the sociologist of religion. In Western society, the dominant medical paradigm has been, at least from the fifth century BC, pagan and this-worldly. While there has been some fusion of the Greek conception of philanthropy with the theology of Christian charity, the Church found itself forced to compromise with Greek medicine. As we shall see, Christian views of medicine and medical practice have often been an oppositional force against the mainstream of medical secularity. Thus, in medical history, the transition to capitalism did not affect the essentially this-worldly professionalism which was part of the Greek legacy from antiquity.

The rationalist character of Greek medicine may itself be an effect of early professionalization in a competitive market context. The status-conscious, secular physician looked to medical science as a basis for distinguishing his practice from the popular, magical remedies of leechcraft. This professional

hostility to superstition and popular belief may have been the basis of the overt secularity of the Hippocratic treatise on *The Sacred Disease* in which it was denied that epilepsy

is any more divine or sacred than any other disease but, on the contrary, has specific characteristics and a definite cause. Nevertheless, because it is completely different from other diseases, it has been regarded as a divine visitation by those who, being only human, view it with ignorance and astonishment. (Lloyd, 1978: 237)

In denying the sacred nature of epilepsy, the Hippocratic collection attacked those charlatans who made a profit from popular ignorance and superstition. An alternative, naturalistic explanation for epilepsy was proposed, namely a discharge of superfluous phlegm into the blood vessels of the brain. While such explanations of disease appear to be unambiguously secular, the interpretation of Hippocratic medicine is in fact more complex, since the Hippocratic corpus equated nature with divinity. One of the instigating circumstances of epilepsy was thought to be a southerly wind. Since the wind and other forces of nature are divine 'there is no need to regard this disease as more divine than any other' (Lloyd, 1978: 251). This 'rationalistic supernaturalism' (Edelstein, 1937) combined with the professional requirement of secular medicine to drive out any association between leechcraft and Hippocratic medicine. It was also for this reason that the association of Greek medicine with the cult of Asclepius did not influence the secularism of medical practice. Fictitious claims of descent from the hero-god, Asclepius, provided a sense of occupational communalism for itinerant medical craftsmen without influencing the secular nature of their craft (Sigerist, 1961).

The dominant Greek medical tradition was, therefore, secular and pagan with a pronounced theoretical emphasis which involved a definitely negative attitude towards medicine as a practical craft. Within the profession of medicine, there was a sharp differentiation between the theoretically oriented physician and the mercenary healer of bodies, the medicus. In addition, surgeons were merely manual workers who, in Britain for example, were not institutionally separated from barbers until the early seventeenth century. The separation of theoretical medicine from clinical experience was further intensified by the growth of university-based medical schools. The development of Salerno, Bologna and Paris as medical universities caused control of medicine rapidly to come under the monopoly of university-trained physicians. Various exclusionary practices, such as the importance of Latin as the principal vehicle of medical education, gave the profession greater control over entrance to medicine. The secular idealism of the Hippocratic tradition became increasingly important in controlling the activities of physicians and in justifying the exclusionary devices of the profession. Thus,

To sell the public on the exclusionary tactics of the university trained practitioner, the need for regulation had to be couched in terms of ideals, but to

gain the support of the would-be professional it was necessary to emphasize self interest. (Bullough, 1966: 93)

The legitimacy of the medical fee for a secular profession was thus an aspect of increasing institutional specialization of medicine in conjunction with humanitarian idealism. The emergence of a secular profession, organized around the pagan humanism of Aristotle and Galen, to a dominant position within mediaeval and Renaissance universities created a number of important tensions with the dominant religious culture of Catholic Europe and consequently opposition to secular medicine often took a decidedly Christian character.

While medical theory conceptualized the human body by reference to mechanistic analogies in which disease was the effect of known, physical causes, the Christian critique of Galenic medicine typically emphasized the importance of the patient as an individual uniquely related to the natural and social environment. This religious perspective was particularly important in the medical theories of Paracelsus (1493–1541), van Helmont (1578–1644) and Samuel Hahnemann (1755–1843). Doctors within the Paracelsan tradition were highly critical of physicians who treated the disease rather than the patient by attempting to oppose the natural process of recovery by ‘contrary’ medicine, who adhered to pagan medical theories divorced from clinical experience, and who had a materialistic and this-worldly conception of their professional calling. Christian opposition to secular medicine tended to embrace the empiricist critique of rationalism, infusing humanist empiricism with a religious conception of medicine as a calling. Paracelsus in particular was conscious of the stark incompatibility between the Christian ethic of love and the humanist medical tradition which he regarded as a thin disguise for acquisitiveness. Paracelsus’s aim was to ‘oust the false, pagan, Galenic and Arabic teachings of the schools’ (Coulter, 1977, vol. 1: 356) with the Christian doctrine of love, and his religious beliefs constituted not only a radical change in the doctor–patient relationship, but also a view of medical practice which was minimalist rather than interventionist. The least medicine was always the best medicine since recovery from illness was ultimately part of God’s will and subject to the natural healing processes of the body.

The justification for medicine based on charity and practical experience involved more than simply an appeal to the doctrine of brotherly love. To discover through medical practice the secret of the inner processes of the body was also to discover the hidden purpose of God. Paracelsus thus drew a parallel between faith as knowledge of what is hidden to natural man and medicine as knowledge of processes which are invisible to the eye. It can be argued that this emphasis on experience as the key to the knowledge of God and nature provided an important link between Paracelsan medicine, Baconian science, the scientific revolution of the seventeenth century and the homeopathic medicine of Hahnemann (Debus, 1972). While this argument in general supports my claim that the secularity of medical

knowledge and practice have traditionally presented acute problems for Christianity, there are a number of specific difficulties with this thesis as presented in Harris Coulter's *Divided Legacy* (1977). There are, for example, rather obvious problems of interpretation with regard to the medical theories of Paracelsus, who remains a particularly elusive figure in medical history (Temkin, 1952). More substantively, Coulter attempted to connect Christian opposition to Galenic medicine with Neo-Platonism and mysticism. One implication of this interpretation is that ascetic Christianity may have had a greater affinity with rationalist medicine, but Coulter fails to explore this particular implication. Any medical tradition, whether empiricist or rationalist, which provides a medical regimen of disciplined behaviour – diet, exercise and sobriety – is likely to prove attractive to religious asceticism. Despite the secularity of medical professionalism, there may be important affinities between those forms of personal denial which are implicit in the medical regimen and an ascetic life-style.

Capitalism and the Body

On crude Marxist grounds, it could be argued that capitalists have a contradictory attitude towards the health of the labour force. The competition between capitalists forces down wages and the mechanization of production creates an industrial reserve army of unemployed workers. The effects of these two features of competitive capitalism on the standard of health of the British working class were graphically portrayed by Engels (1952) in *The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844*. By contrast, it is also argued by Marxists that capitalists require an efficient, disciplined and sober labour force in order to maintain continuous production and maximum utilization of machinery. While Weber noted the importance of asceticism for the bourgeoisie, it has also been suggested that the Protestant sects were 'functional' for capitalism in creating a healthy, hard-working and sober working class. If mystical, Neo-Platonic Christianity provided a doctrine which opposed secular, Galenic medicine, there is, by contrast, an obvious relationship between Christian asceticism and medical theories which stressed the importance of restraint for physical health. There is, thus, a *prima facie* parallel between the idea of the medical regimen and religious rules of ascetic discipline, in that both are addressed to the government of the body. In England, the conjunction between Wesley's spirituality and medical asceticism provides an important illustration but this grew out of a background which was influenced by rationalist, not empirical, medical theory.

In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, medical theory, partly through Descartes' rationalist mind-body dualism, came to be markedly influenced by mathematical and chemical models of the body, which was conceived as a complex machine. A variety of iatromathematical and iatromechanical theories of disease gained in popularity under the

influence of Boerhaave's school of medicine at Leyden (Underwood, 1977). In Britain, the dissemination of these mathematical models of the body owed a great deal to the influence of the Aberdonian doctor George Cheyne (1671–1743). Following Harvey's discovery of the circulation of the blood, Cheyne argued that the body was merely a series of canals and that pathology could be properly studied mathematically. While Cheyne anticipated the rapid development of Newtonian medicine, he is best remembered as an advocate of diet, moderation in drink, and light exercise for healthy living and mental stability.

Cheyne's principal publications were devoted to advertising the benefits of moderate asceticism for mental stability and physical well-being. In addition to his writing on natural religion, his main medical treatises were *Essay on Health and Long Life* (1724), *The English Malady* (1733), *An Essay on Regimen* (1740) and *The Natural Method of Curing the Diseases of the Body* (1742). These works went through many editions in his own lifetime and through his clients and friends, who included Samuel Johnson, John Wesley, David Hume, Alexander Pope, Samuel Richardson and the Countess of Huntingdon, Cheyne enjoyed considerable popularity and influence. Wesley was particularly impressed by Cheyne's medical asceticism. It was from reading Cheyne that Wesley learnt, according to his *Journal*, 'to eat sparingly and drink water' and much of Cheyne's practical advice found its way into Wesley's popular *Primitive Physick or an Easy and Natural Method of Curing Most Diseases* (1752). Although Wesley's brand of asceticism was based on an eclectic interpretation of the Christian tradition, it is clear that Cheyne's view of the benefits of modern living was influential in the standards which were set by Wesley for the new Methodist societies. Cheyne's regimen had initially been aimed at an elite who were suffering from excessive consumption of meat and wine, but, through Wesley's *Primitive Physick*, these medical guidelines became part of the Methodist discipline for a much wider section of the community. In a period of expanding industrial production, the government of the body became, not only a sign of social standing, but an outward indicator of spiritual virtue. Weber, in emphasizing the importance of emotion and conversion in early Methodism, neglected this contribution of Wesleyanism to the rational conduct of the middle and working classes. If there is, at a general level, a set of tensions between the Christian doctrine of love and the medical fee as the financial basis of a secular profession, in the eighteenth century pietist asceticism merged with the medical regimen of healthy living to produce a moral code which was compatible with the capitalist's interest in a disciplined work-force. The duty to be healthy became part of a calling to world mastery and self-control.

There were, however, additional and perhaps more urgent reasons for capitalists to take an active interest in standards of health in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, namely that urban squalor represented a health hazard to all social classes because of the epidemics which were common in the new industrial cities. In this period, pietism provided

a significant moral component for the sanitation movement in both Europe and North America. From a religious perspective, disease is redolent with moral implications. The epidemics which accompanied nineteenth-century urbanization were seen to be the effects of human irresponsibility and, in particular, as consequences of human mismanagement of the social environment. Disease was part of the disequilibrium between body and environment, resulting from abuses of diet, poor hygiene, immorality and, above all, filth.

Health was the manifestation of the dialectic between order and chaos, purity and danger, responsibility and immorality. For pietists, the movement for urban sanitation was symbolic of human responsibility towards the physical environment in removing the evils of poor housing, congested sewers and inadequate ventilation. For religious reformers like Florence Nightingale, the order and cleanliness of the hospital was a microcosm of that harmony which was the ideal equilibrium of the larger society. Human culpability for infection consequent upon bad management and negligence brought volition and responsibility to the centre of the aetiology of disease. The concept of social pollution as a congenial environment in which diseases underwent a process of fermentation was especially important to pietist sanitarianism. The notions of 'fermentation' and 'putrefaction' became heavily charged with moral significance and, for Nightingale, the explanation of

[d]isease causation in terms of fermentation was effective in emphasizing the purity of God's atmosphere and the necessarily culpable role of man in polluting it. As compelling justification for the social activism demanded by her personality, the image of zymotic disease could hardly have been more appropriate. (Rosenburg, 1979: 123)

With their commitment to moral responsibility and an environmentalist theory of disease, pietists were opposed to the concept of specificity of disease as the product of definite germs which appeared to attack populations on a random, not moral basis. Pietist sanitarians like Edwin Chadwick and Dr Southwood Smith were also hostile or indifferent to new developments in immunology and bacteriology, because germ theory could not be easily amalgamated with a moral doctrine of disease as a consequence of human irresponsibility.

There was a Rousseau-like quality to religiously motivated opposition to the specificity of disease, immunization and vivisection in the middle of the nineteenth century since, amongst pietists, it was fashionable to believe that civilization breeds social and physical corruption. The answer to the diseases of civilization had to be sought in salvation and adequate sewage, without which technical advances in medicine would be ineffectual. Some anti-vivisectionists went even further to argue that experimental medicine displaced human responsibility for sin and disease onto the animal world. The best antidote to disease was healthy living, personal cleanliness and a pure water supply. The theme of social and physical purity also produced

a marked hostility to vaccination, because the preventive medicine of Pasteur involved the introduction of 'impurities' into the body.

In the late nineteenth century, the pollution theory of disease was harnessed to the evolutionism of Darwin and Spencer. The moral evolution of the human species would render vivisection and vaccination unnecessary, but the need for universal sanitation required increasing state intervention and this political requirement tended to contradict the essential individualism of pietism. Contagionism implied that, as it were, diseases select their victims at random, regardless of their moral standing and virtuous existence because the healthy might be infected despite their morally virtuous existence. Pietists tended to be anti-contagionists on moral grounds, but also because quarantine measures involved state control of the individual (Ackerknecht, 1948). However, religious sanitarians could not avoid the problem that good housing, pure water and efficient sewerage systems require legislation and the intervention of the state into the private domain of the individual. In Britain, Spencerian evolutionism and pietist sanitarianism paradoxically involved state legislation to create a physical environment for moral regeneration. The same paradox confronted liberal sanitarians in the United States where religious activism was the initial driving force behind the movement for public health. In France, by contrast, the public hygiene movement was dominated by men who had been trained in Napoleon's armies, and whose social outlook had been shaped by the legacy of Saint-Simon's *physique sociale* and the 'medical anthropology' of Cabanis. Despite the variety of religious and philosophical influences on the people who were the spearhead of social sanitation, public health involved state control of the urban environment.

The movement to improve the physical and moral condition of the 'dependent classes' in competitive capitalism thus provides us with an interesting Weberian parable. The religious 'world images' which had been the ideological force behind public health reforms had the unintended consequence of fostering secular, bureaucratic control of the environment. The ethic of healthy living could be said to have an affinity with the spirit of bureaucratic medicine, but, once constructed, bureaucratic sanitation no longer required the prop of religious asceticism. Individual choices about health are no longer set within a religious framework linking sin to disease and these personal choices are also set within the limits of legislation and secular campaigns against alcoholism, smoking and obesity. Such campaigns have to presuppose that 'life is worth living', but modern medicine can provide no basis for such a presupposition. Although modern medicine is forced to deal with decisions of life and death, it cannot contribute to the question of

[w]hether life is worth while living and when – this question is not asked by medicine. Natural science gives us an answer to the question of what we must do if we wish to master life technically. It leaves quite aside, or assumes for its purposes, whether we should and do wish to master life technically and whether it ultimately makes sense to do so. (Weber, 1961: 144)

Scientific medicine cannot address and does not provide answers to those problems of pain and suffering at which traditional theodicy was directed. The Weberian parable is thus completed by the fact it is precisely in those areas of social relationships where intimacy and meaning (Skultans, 1974) are at a premium that certain forms of 'religious medicine' – faith healing, spiritualism, exorcism – continue to flourish as an alternative, and frequently in opposition, to technically sophisticated, secular medicine.

My argument has been that there are important, but neglected, empirical relationships between religion and medicine, and equally significant inter-connections between the sociology of religion and medical sociology. In so far as pain, suffering and finitude constitute the principal referent for all theodicies, the body and meaning are critical concerns for all salvation religions. It was in this way that the problem of the body entered into tension between religion and the world in Weber's comparative sociology of salvational systems. It is also one of the perennial topics of social philosophy. The sublimation of instinctual life was a major feature of the philosophy of Nietzsche and the psychoanalysis of Freud, while the question of reproduction permeated, not only Malthusian demography and Social Darwinism, but the whole political economy of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

To raise the question of the relationship between the sociology of religion and medical sociology is thus not to introduce an extraneous side issue, but to return sociological discussion to a set of problems which are constitutive of the discipline. These problems have in this argument been illustrated by a series of case studies: Christian and Greek attitudes towards the medical fee; the secular content of medical ethics; the association between diet and asceticism; and the pietist background to sanitarian reforms. These studies illustrate both the perennial tensions between religion and the profane body, between Christian charity and secular medicine, and also the periodic alliances between the medical regimen and asceticism. Christianity arrived at a number of institutional solutions for controlling the body (such as limited sexuality within marriage) and a variety of compromises with secular medicine (such as an ethical vocation in medicine). Despite these compromises, the Christian churches have traditionally found themselves in some state of opposition to secular medicine. The medical fee was seen to be incompatible with the Christian doctrine of disinterested charity towards the poor and the sick. In addition, the explanation of disease by reference to specific cases of a chemical or physical character without reference to divine intervention conflicted with the religious notion of illness as a moral event for which the individual was accountable.

In making such sharp contrasts between body and meaning, the question of psychosomatic phenomena, where issues of meaning and intention remain important, has so far been generally ignored. While the relationship between religion and madness is historically interesting, it does not raise issues which are qualitatively different from that of religion and physical health. Just as

secular medicine viewed the body as a machine, so the mechanist–vitalist debate about the nature of the mind was resolved in favour of biology and physiology. The general trend of rationalist medicine is to treat ‘deviant behaviour’ (madness, alcoholism, drunkenness, homosexuality, and so on) as, in fact, a problem of chemistry. As with mechanistic theories of diseases of the body, psychosomatic medicine has become, in the last analysis, indifferent to those questions of meaning and morality which have been central to all religious world-views. From this sociological perspective, it would appear that one could perceive secularization as that process by which otherworldly views of disease were gradually replaced by amoral, mechanistic theories of the body under the impact of an increasingly powerful medical profession.

Conclusion

The sociology of religion appears to be particularly prone to theoretical crisis and self-criticism. The secularization of religion in modern societies threatens to rob the sub-discipline of empirical content in that the sociology of religion would then concern itself with obsolete beliefs and practices or, at best, become a minor feature of a more inclusive sociology of beliefs. While such academic pessimism may be well founded, this chapter has attempted to outline a programme of restoration of the sociology of religion to a place of theoretical importance by suggesting an alliance with medical sociology. Following Durkheim, the sociology of religion may be construed as the analysis of the social interaction between the sacred and the profane. Historically, the most potent symbol of the profane world is the human body. The body is dangerous and its secretions, particularly semen and menstrual blood, have to be enclosed by ritual and taboo to protect the social order. Yet, at the same time, the body is sacred. The charisma of holy individuals typically flows through their physical secretions, being stored up in blood and sweat. The concept of ‘salvation’ itself is intimately bound up with the health of the body as the verbs ‘to save’ (the soul) and ‘to salve’ (the body) indicate. The mediaeval penitentials gave expression to the notion that human sinfulness was a conflict between the body and soul which found its resolution in the healing ministry of the sacraments under the institutionalized monopoly of the universal church. The sacrifice of Christ’s body had produced a beneficial supply of healing charisma which the church stored up in a Treasury of Merit and which could be redistributed through confessional absolution and through the wine and bread of Holy Eucharist. In Christianity, the bread of communion was symbolic of spiritual and physical reconciliation and well-being. Comparatively, it is interesting to note that in Islamic Sufism, the *baraka* of the saints is also associated with bread which is symbolic of plentitude and health (Turner, 1974). The parallelism between spiritual and physical well-being is thus a common theme of the Abrahamic tradition.

Contemporary sociology of religion has generally neglected this intimate relationship between body and belief, between medicine and religion. With one or two exceptions, such as Norman O. Brown's *Love's Body* (1966) or Herbert Marcuse's *Eros and Civilization* (1969), the subtle linkages between biology and sociology have been widely neglected. Within the sociology of religion, this absence of theoretical reflection is somewhat surprising, given the ultimate location of the problem of meaning in the finitude of human existence (Turner, 1983). To some extent, this theoretical negligence is also characteristic of medical sociology, which, because of its practical importance for institutionalized medicine, has often devoted itself to limited empirical issues: doctor-patient interaction, hospital administration, social factors in the aetiology of sickness, the role conflicts of nurses, and so forth. Medical sociology has, however, also concerned itself with the meaning of illness and the subjective significance of pain. Both the sociology of religion and medical sociology converge on the question of human suffering and the indignity of death; they are therefore inevitably cultural responses to the problem of theodicy. The intellectual task of making that convergence theoretically systematic and deliberate is consequently not only an important item on the agenda of contemporary sociology of religion, but of the sociology enterprise as a whole.

Bodily Order

Hobbesian Materialism

It has been argued that the problem of order (namely the question 'how is society possible?') is fundamental to any social theory. The question has traditionally divided sociology into two distinctive branches of enquiry. Conflict theory argues that social order is deeply problematic and, in so far as it exists at all, is brought about by coercive circumstances, political constraint, legal force and the threat of violence. Consensus theory treats social conflict as abnormal by arguing that social stability is brought about by fundamental agreements over social values and norms which are instilled in social members by the process of socialization which rewards conformity to existing arrangements. This clear-cut analytical division rarely occurs in a 'pure' form, since social theories tend to adopt elements of both types of explanation. For example, the concept of 'hegemony', which is often used to explain the relative stability of capitalist societies, is a mixture of both cultural consensus and political coercion. The debate about social order in contemporary sociology owes a great deal to the formulation of the so-called Hobbesian problem of order in Parsons' *The Structure of Social Action* (1937).

Parsons' study of shared values as the ultimate bed-rock of social order was a reply to positivist theories of social action. For example, rational positivism argued that human action was to be explained in terms of the rational pursuit of egoistic interests such that any deviation from interest was irrational action. Hedonistic psychology and utilitarianism adopted similar views of the nature of human behaviour: human behaviour was rational in that human actions were aimed at the maximization of pleasure and the avoidance of pain. Parsons' argument was that such a model of human action was incapable of explaining social order and could not successfully distinguish between 'action' and 'behaviour'. If human beings rationally pursued their individual interests, they might quite rationally employ force and fraud to achieve their ends, but it would then be difficult to account for social order and stability in the widespread presence of force and fraud. In Parsons' argument, there has to be some minimal agreement about values in society for social relationships to exist at all. For example, there are certain agreements about avoiding fraud and such agreements make society possible. One criticism of social contract theory as expressed by utilitarianism is that it would not account for the binding nature of such contracts over

self-interested parties. Parsons' second line of criticism was that, while behaviour might be explained within a behaviouristic framework, social action could not be. Action involves the choice of certain ends and the selection of means to achieve these ends in terms of shared standards or norms. Action is purposeful not simply in terms of a pain/pleasure principle but in terms of intention and choice. Instrumental rationality is not the only definition of rational action, since actions may be regarded as rational if they are in conformity with certain values, which are not themselves reducible to biology, environment, economic interests or psychology. Parsons' solution to the Hobbesian problem of order in terms of shared values was thus also intended to be an answer to the limitations of positivist epistemology (Hamilton, 1983).

Parsons' approach to the nature of social order has been itself the object of considerable criticism (Black, 1961; Dahrendorf, 1968; Gouldner, 1971; Rocher, 1974). A number of basic objections to Parsonian functionalism have arisen from this debate. One standard criticism of the Parsonian model is that it cannot provide an adequate theory of social change, because it exaggerates the level of value coherence within societies. Another criticism is that, while values may be normatively adhered to, general values may also be accepted pragmatically because the alternatives to these values are not available or inadequately perceived (Mann, 1970). Parsons' treatment of values also assumes that the same values are held by all members of a society; an alternative position argues that different classes in a society may hold different value systems and that coherence of societies is to be explained by economic constraints on action (Abercrombie et al., 1980). Another general criticism of Parsons is that his sociology is couched at such an abstract level that it does not lend itself to empirical falsification.

Although Parsons has provided much cogent counter-criticism (Parsons, 1977), and although his approach is still subject to on-going assessment (Alexander, 1982), it is interesting to reflect on the nature of the problem of order by returning to its formulation in the work of Hobbes. Parsons referred to Hobbes's solution to the problem of the possibility of society as 'almost a pure case of utilitarianism' (Parsons, 1937: 90) and yet it would be far more accurate to see Hobbesian philosophy as a pure case of materialism. Hobbes's aim was to reconstruct political philosophy in terms of scientific principles, because he regarded existing philosophy as underdeveloped or uncultivated:

Philosophy seems to me to be amongst men now, in the same manner as corn and wine are said to have been in the world in ancient times. For from the beginning there were vines and ears of corn growing here and there in the fields; but no care was taken for the planting and sowing of them. (Molesworth, 1839, vol. 1: 1)

Hobbes's starting point was the geometry of bodies and the principles of motion. His materialist philosophy was developed in three stages: the

motions of bodies in space; the psychology of men; and finally the analysis of such 'artificial' bodies as the corporation and the state. Thus he wrote that his intention was to discuss 'bodies natural; in the second, the dispositions and manners of men; and in the third of the civil duties of subjects' (Molesworth, 1839, vol. 1: 12).

Hobbes started out characteristically with a definition of body as extension and referred to man as an 'animated rational body'. Hobbes went on to argue that in nature men enjoy a general equality of their four main characteristics: strength of body, experiences, passion and reason. However, this equality is undermined by vanity, appetite and comparison; because men will seek to preserve their lives, they necessarily come into conflict with other men: 'For every man by natural necessity desireth his own good, to which this estate is contrary, wherein we suppose contention between men by nature equal, and able to destroy one another' (Molesworth, 1839, vol. 4: 85). While men in nature live in a state of war, they also have reason and it is reasonable for men to pursue peace in order for them to secure their lives. The solution to the problem of order in nature is to create a society in which men transfer their individual rights to a third party, the state, which creates the conditions of general stability. Society is thus based on a social contract by which members transfer and relinquish individual rights in the interests of peace. The result of this contractual arrangement based on mutual consent is 'a body politic' which 'may be defined to be a multitude of men, united as one person, by a common power, for their common peace, defence, and benefit' (Molesworth, 1839, vol. 4: 122). The body politic is thus the artificial body which provides the framework within which the real bodies of men can find security and peace.

There are, of course, many types of political bodies – monarchy, aristocracy and democracy – but Hobbes's main criterion of government is that it should govern in such a way as to maximize security (Sabine, 1963). All government involves sovereignty and security requires that sovereignty is absolute and indivisible. There can be no divisions within the body politic and therefore it is imperative that the church should be subordinate to the state. The other problem Hobbes had to tackle was the possibility of division within the family. In *De Corpore Politico*, Hobbes argued that man has a natural right to his own body and this raised the question of parental dominion over children. Hobbes noted that there might be an argument that the mother has a greater right over the child than the father, but such a situation might bring about a division of sovereignty within the household. Hobbes consequently came to the conclusion:

It is necessary that but one of them govern and dispose of all that is common to them both; without which, as hath been often said before, society cannot last. And therefore the man, to whom for the most part the woman yieldeth the government, hath for the most part, also, sole right and dominion over the children. (Molesworth, 1839, vol. 4: 157)

The stability of the body politic rests on the patriarchal household in which the covenant between man and wife secures domestic peace. Hobbes went on to claim that by nature men are superior to women and therefore, in a system of primogeniture and monarchical government, male children would be preferred to female offspring:

Seeing every monarchy is supposed to desire to continue the government in his successors, as long as he may; and that generally men are endued with greater parts of wisdom and courage, by which all monarchies are kept from dissolution, than women are: it is to be presumed, where no express will is extant to the contrary, he preferreth his male children before the female. Not but that women may govern, and have in divers ages and places governed wisely, but are not so apt thereto in general, as men. (Molesworth, 1839, vol. 4: 160)

Unlike many other seventeenth-century theorists of patriarchy, Hobbes treated social institutions as artificial corporations or institutions rather than natural arrangements. He did however produce a characteristic theory of patriarchy in which the stability of society rests on the nature of sovereignty within the household where husbands have indivisible power over the wife, children and servants. The power of husbands was thus analogous to the power of kings. For Hobbes, the continuity of society was grounded in the continuity of bodies, property and power.

It has been argued that Hobbesian philosophy was thoroughly materialist and that his conception of an exact science, as a model for the science of politics, was taken from geometry. The individual body was a point within political space and the motion of the body was conceived in terms of appetite and aversion. The multitude of bodies, especially in a state of nature, had few distinguishing marks:

each individual appeared as an atom, somewhat different in composition but having the same general appearance, hurtling across a flat social plane; that is, a landscape without any visible contours of social distinctions to bar his path or predetermine his line of motion. (Wolin, 1961: 282)

The problem of order resulted from the fact that these bodies, if unchecked, would periodically collide, rather like stars in the firmament. The solution, as we have seen, was the creation of a sovereign power to regulate the motion of bodies. The notion that Hobbes did not consider the effect of social distinctions on this motion is not entirely correct, since Hobbes placed certain bodies (those of children, women and servants) under the control of patriarchal powers. Female bodies were, so to speak, slower and less weighty than male bodies, because the former were less endued with 'wisdom and courage'. Hobbesian philosophy was nevertheless essentially individualistic in that it could not offer an account of the ways in which societies are structured by social class, ethnicity, status groups or gender. For Hobbes, sexual differentiation was simply a differentiation of bodies and their potentialities; he had little conception of the cultural specialization of men and women into social roles. Almost every aspect of Hobbesian materialism is now open to question. It is difficult to maintain that Euclidean

geometry provides the basic map of material reality (Harré, 1964; Peters, 1956). In addition, many of the assumptions which are necessary for the theory of the social contract, such as the state of nature argument, are difficult to maintain.

It would appear that Hobbesian materialism has little to offer modern sociology as a theory of social order. Hobbes's social contract theory appears to be merely a point of departure for debates about the relationship between consensus and coercion in social relations. However, modern discussions of values, hegemony, legal coercion and economic compulsion as the basis of social order appear to have neglected the problem which was central to Hobbes, namely the problem of the body in space and time. In this chapter, I want to suggest that it is possible to rewrite Hobbes in order to produce a theory of social order which starts out from the problem of regulating bodies. Such a theory can include an analysis of patriarchy and power without embracing *in toto* Hobbes's mechanistic view of the body as matter in motion. It is no longer possible to accept Hobbes's definition of the body, since the body is simultaneously physically given and culturally constituted. In this respect, it is interesting to consider Husserl's comment on the body in his study of the origins of geometry:

All things necessarily had to have a bodily character – although not all things could be mere bodies, since the necessarily co-existing human beings are not thinkable as mere bodies and, like even the cultural objects which belong with them structurally, are not exhausted in corporeal being. (Husserl, 1978: 177)

Hobbes's physicalist account of the body is obviously not able to take into consideration the subjectivity of the body and the embodiment of consciousness in corporeal being. The other limitation is Hobbes's atomistic treatment of the body as an individuated entity in time–space motion.

Neo-Hobbesian Problem of Order

Given these limitations on the original Hobbesian formulation of the problem of social order, it is possible, however, to formulate a neo-Hobbesian version of the body which will transcend these inherent limitations of his Euclidean framework. Following Foucault (1981) it is important to make a distinction between the regulation of populations and the discipline of the body. Following Featherstone (1982), it is equally important to make a distinction between the interior of the body as an environment and the exterior of the body as the medium by which an individual represents the self in public. At least initially, these dichotomies are proposed as a heuristic device for constructing a general theory of the body and for locating theories of the body. At an empirical level, these four dimensions cannot be nicely separated, but this fact does not expunge the analytic value of the model. The theory can be presented diagrammatically, as shown in Table 4.1. The argument is that the Hobbesian problem of order as a geometry of bodies has four related dimensions which are the reproduction

Table 4.1

Populations		Bodies	
Time	Reproduction	Internal	Restraint
	Malthus		Weber
	Onanism		Hysteria
Space	Regulation	External	Representation
	Rousseau		Goffman
	Phobia		Anorexia

of populations through time and their regulation in space, the restraint of desire as an interior body problem and the representation of bodies in social space as an issue concerning the surface of the body. In Parsonian terminology, every social system has to solve these four sub-problems. Since the government of the body is in fact the government of sexuality, the problem of regulation is in practice the regulation of female sexuality by a system of patriarchal power. The reproduction of populations and the restraint of the body involve at the institutional level a system of patriarchal households for controlling fertility and at the level of the individual an ideology of asceticism for delaying sexual gratification in the interests of gerontocratic controls. The control of populations in space is achieved, as Foucault (1979) suggests, by a general system of disciplines with the generic title of panopticism. In essentials, such a system of control presupposes a bureaucratic registration of populations and the elimination of vagabondism. Finally, societies also presuppose a certain stability in the methods of self-representation in social space. In pre-modern societies, the individual body was represented through the impersonal and external *persona*, the mask which unambiguously defined its carrier. In modern societies, the problem of representation is particularly acute, since, partly as a result of the commodification of the body, the symbolic systems of presentation have become highly flexible.

These four dimensions of the body have been considered by a variety of social theorists, but no single theory has yet attempted to present a coherent account of the relationship between these features of corporeality. However, to illustrate these dimensions it is possible to select a small group of social theorists who were especially associated with a particular feature of the corporeality of social relationships. For example, Thomas Malthus has been correctly identified with the debate about the reproduction of populations and the problem of population control through either natural or moral restraints. My argument is that Malthusianism was a potent ideology of the patriarchal household in a society where population growth was regulated by delayed marriage. Max Weber has been selected as the classic theorist of asceticism and its bearing on the moral regulation of the internal body. By way of a theoretical aside, it is also suggested that Weber, not Foucault, is the pristine analyst of social disciplines and the rationalization of the body. Two contemporary social thinkers are selected in respect of regulation

and representation, namely Rousseau (Sennett, 1974) and Erving Goffman (1970). The spatial regulation of populations and the presentation of self via 'face-work' (Goffman, 1972) are problems of urbanized civilization. The locus of these features of social corporeality is to be found in the contradictions of intimacy and anonymity.

To illustrate further the complex texture of the body in society and society in the body, I want also to argue that certain characteristic 'illnesses' are associated with these dimensions of the body and that these 'illnesses' are manifestations of the social location of female sexuality, or more precisely 'illnesses' which are associated with subordinate social roles. The purpose of this classification is to make more explicit the analysis of medical history and sexual deviance which has been developed by Foucault (1973, 1981) by arguing that the medical problems of subordinates are products of the political and ideological regulation of sexuality. Late marriage was a structural requirement of European societies until the late eighteenth century (Andorka, 1978), a requirement which was enforced by gerontocratic and patriarchal control. The demand for late sexual gratification was ideologically enforced by certain medical theories which proclaimed the physical dangers of sexual 'self-abuse' in onanism and which expressed middle- and upper-class anxieties about the threat of masturbatory insanity. Just as capitalists were encouraged not to spend their wealth in luxurious consumption, so dependents were encouraged not to spend their sexual potentiality in unproductive onanism. Similarly, hysteria in young women was the consequence of sexual unemployment, but a necessary feature of delayed marriage in a society where marriage was an economic contract. If hysteria in the pre-modern period was an illness of scarcity (namely the inability to create new households), anorexia since the twentieth century is an illness of abundance. Anorexia is the product of contradictory social pressures on women of affluent families and an anxiety directed at the surface of the body in a system organized around narcissistic consumption. Only a social system based on mass consumption can afford the luxury of slimming. Finally, if hysteria and onanism are, as it were, diseases of time, that is, delayed time, anorexia and phobias are diseases of space, that is, the location of the embodied self in social space; they are diseases of presentation. The most obvious illustration of this relationship between space and illness is agoraphobia which is literally the fear of the market place. Masturbatory insanity, hysteria, anorexia and agoraphobia are aetiologically illnesses of dependency, while their traditional diagnosis and treatment reinforced and legitimated patriarchal surveillance.

Reproduction

Every society has to produce its means of existence (food, shelter, clothing) and every society has to reproduce its members. These two requirements were regarded by Engels (n.d.: 6) as 'the determining factor in history',

but the problem of populations has been largely ignored by Marxists. This theoretical silence is partly explained by Marx's violent rejection of Malthus as the 'true priest' of the ruling class and of Malthusianism as an explanation of "over-population" by the external laws of Nature, rather than by the historical laws of capitalist production' (Marx, 1974, vol. 1: 495n). While Marx claimed that every mode of production has its specific laws of population, he did not demonstrate how these laws operated in different epochs. The result is that Marxist demography is very underdeveloped in relation to other branches of Marxist social theory. Marxism does, however, require a theory of population, since the production of the means of subsistence is intimately related to the reproduction of populations – a relationship which is the nub of Malthusianism. It has been argued that Marx, in fact, took the demographic history of the nineteenth century as a basic assumption of his analysis of capitalism. For example, the immiseration of the working class and the creation of a reserve army as a result of the displacement of labour by machinery have as an implicit assumption the stability of the fertility rate (Petersen, 1979). Furthermore, it is difficult to give an adequate explanation of patriarchy without taking into account the requirements of human reproduction and the relationship between population growth and household structure.

Malthus's argument against Condorcet and Godwin was published in his *An Essay on the Principle of Population* in 1789. Malthusianism had an elegant simplicity: efforts to improve the living standards of the poorest section of the working class above the level of subsistence would be self-defeating since they would result in an increase in population. The increase in population growth would, by threatening the means of subsistence, restore the existing condition of poverty among the working class. For Malthus, humankind (or more precisely mankind) is dominated by two universal 'urges' – to eat and to satisfy the sexual passions – which he described as fixed laws of nature. These two urges stand in a contradictory relationship, since reproductive capacity always outweighs the capacity to produce food. The necessity to restrain the sexual urge in the interests of survival often leads to 'preventive checks' on population which are immoral – prostitution, homosexuality and abortion. Malthus's moral philosophy was, therefore, based on a sharp dichotomy between reason and passion. The unrestrained satisfaction of passion has disastrous consequences; indeed, any 'implicit obedience to the impulses of our natural passions would lead us into the wildest and most fatal extravagances' (Malthus, 1914, vol. 2: 153). In what he called 'some of the southern countries', the indulgence of the sexual impulse leads to a situation in which 'passion sinks into mere animal desire' (1914, vol. 2: 156). Since sexual passion is necessary for reproduction, the solution is to be found in 'regulation and direction', not 'diminution or extinction' (1914, vol. 2: 157).

There are three checks on population expansion beyond the means of subsistence, which are 'moral restraint, vice and misery'. The population will be reduced by starvation, by unnatural sexual gratification or by the

exercise of reason to encourage moral control over population expansion. Given these choices, Malthus thought that, from the point of view of reason, it was desirable to bring about certain moral preventive checks rather than allow 'positive checks' such as war and famine to reduce the rate of reproduction. Malthus's view on celibacy and delayed marriage as the principal methods of prevention were influenced by his visit to Norway between the publication of the first essay and the revised version of 1803. In Norway, where market relations had not penetrated the agrarian subsistence economy, farmers could not marry until they possessed a holding of their own; marriage was controlled by economic relations so that a man could not marry until he could support a family. Farmers without land were forced to become servants in existing household units. Malthus thought that delayed marriage would provide the most rational system of population restraint, but it would also inculcate positive moral virtues. The time of delayed sexual gratification would be spent in saving earnings and thus lead to 'habits of sobriety, industry and economy' (1914, vol. 2: 161). Malthusianism sought, therefore, not to abolish sexual passions, but, through reason, to redirect and regulate these necessary urges towards late matrimony.

Malthusian demographic theory has been criticized on a variety of grounds. As we have seen, Marx's criticism was that Malthus had derived population laws from fixed laws of human nature instead of treating 'instincts' as products of social relationships. Another criticism of Malthus is that he failed to see how technological changes in agricultural production could increase the food supply without any great increase in the cultivation of the land mass; in addition, technical changes in contraceptive methods provided the means of birth control within marriage without recourse to abortion. Partly in defence of Malthus, Petersen (1979) has argued that Malthus's emphasis on late marriage as a system of population control was, at least descriptively, a statement of the traditional European marriage system. The practice of late marriage among the peasantry was breaking down in Malthus's time and it was changes in marriage patterns which largely explained the increase in population in European societies in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. There is some agreement that the European marriage pattern, which combined late marriage and permanent celibacy for a large section of the population, was the principal social means for restricting fertility (Glass and Eversley, 1965). It is obvious that there are many competing explanations of 'the demographic transition', but family structure and marriage patterns appear to have played a major part (Laslett, 1972). A man could not marry unless, to use Laslett's expression, there was a vacant slot in the social structure which the new couple could fill. The word 'husband' itself derives from two words signifying 'to dwell' and 'house'; a husband was a householder who could afford to support a family without being a burden on the immediate community. It was not until the decline of subsistence farming, the growth of factory production and the emergence of urban occupations, that the traditional pattern of

late marriage began to decline in the working class. The collapse of the conventional system was accompanied by the growth of romantic love, the disappearance of parental supervision of marriage partners and the development of the modern nuclear family isolated from the wider kin (Shorter, 1977).

There are a number of highly technical debates which surround both Malthusianism and neo-Malthusianism, and there is a massive and growing literature on the sociology of fertility (Freedman, 1975). Many of these issues are not however pertinent to this present discussion. Malthus is important for my argument because his demography is deeply embedded in, indeed presupposes, a particular moral viewpoint. His analysis implicitly assumes the existence of patriarchy and gerontocracy, since the delayed marriage pattern which he seeks to support and maintain could not operate effectively without a system of patriarchal households. In turn, this system of household poker requires a powerful sexual morality advocating the benefits of delayed sexual gratification and this morality was grounded in Christian theology. Malthus provides two arguments against 'vice'. First, moral deviation in the form of homosexuality, abortion and masturbation is simply contrary to Christian teaching, but such an argument is not entirely persuasive, especially for anyone who simply does not accept traditional Christian values. Malthus had a second line of argument which could be described as ethical utilitarianism: we will be happier in marriage if we arrive at that condition with our passions intact and our sexual energies undiluted. Sexual asceticism before wedlock is a period of moral accumulation prior to consumption within marriage. It was for this reason that masturbation came to be seen as an unproductive activity and a wasteful luxury of the morally idle.

Masturbation became an object of severe moral condemnation in the second half of the eighteenth century (Shorter, 1977). In previous centuries, there was often a relaxed attitude on the part of parents towards juvenile masturbation; indeed, some medical treatises encourage moderate masturbation as a method of achieving a balance within the body's fluids. One indication of a change in attitudes was the anonymous publication of *Onania or the Heinous Sin of Self-pollution* in 1710, which became a widely read tract. The author argued that a variety of maladies, both physical and moral, resulted from this practice. In 1758, Dr Simon-André Tissot published his famous medical treatise on onanism, suggesting both that it resulted in dire physical consequences and that it was largely incurable (Stone, 1979). In France and Germany, similar tracts appeared as in, for example, S.G. Vogel's *Unterricht für Elten* of 1786, in which infibulation of the foreskin was recommended as one cure for masturbation. By the nineteenth century, there emerged a cluster of medical categories – primarily 'masturbatory insanity' and 'spermatorrhoea' – to classify the negative consequences of 'unproductive' sexuality (Engelhardt, 1974). Masturbation was held to be responsible for 'headache, backache, acne, indigestion, blindness, deafness, epilepsy and, finally, death' (Skultans, 1979: 73).

There is no evidence of the 'real' incidence of masturbation in pre-modern societies; what we do possess is some impressionistic evidence about the level of anxiety expressed by parents, doctors and clergy about its undesirable consequences. What is the explanation for this moral panic? One argument suggests that the more male children from the middle class left home to attend boarding schools, the more parents felt their loss of control over the moral development of their offspring. In the new public schools of England, it was feared that children would come increasingly under the dubious moral influence of their peers and their school-masters (Ariès, 1962). This change in childhood training was also associated with a shift towards an urban life-style (Shorter, 1977), but it was also connected with a new emphasis, especially in Protestant societies, on the fundamental importance of character-training in children (Grylls, 1978). Foucault (1981) regards the increased interest in masturbation in the nineteenth century as part of a general medicalization of the urban population, which came increasingly under the surveillance of medical institutions and professionals. Perhaps the most promising explanation is provided by L. Stone (1979), who argues that in the middle class parental anxiety may have been encouraged by the rising median age of marriage [and] rising fears that masturbation was on the increase. More and more men were spending a longer and longer part of their sexually mature years with no other outlet for their libido but masturbation or prostitution. For a longer historical standpoint, masturbation had always been regarded, at least in official and orthodox circles, as a major sin in both Christianity and Judaism (Taylor, 1953). In England, the Protestant Reformation brought with it not only a greater emphasis on personal sin, but a new view of the importance of childhood training and the duties of fatherhood. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, however, patriarchal control over the household was to some extent weakened by the doctrine of individualism, the growth of public schooling and the slow decline of arranged marriages, which were inconsistent with the Puritan notion of individual responsibility. The horror over masturbation was a defensive reaction against what was perceived as a diminution of parental authority. In addition, and contrary to L. Stone (1979: 321), there was a close symbolic parallel between wasted seed and wasted capital. 'Self-pollution' was a secret and deviant practice which was a product of the control over reproduction under a system of monogamy and late marriage. It was also, within the Malthusian scheme of population control, a denial of character-building asceticism, which was regarded as a necessary adjunct of successful capital accumulation.

Restraint

The reproduction of population has been in traditional European societies controlled by a variety of institutional means and especially by monogamy, celibacy, delayed marriage and patriarchy. The weakness of Malthus's

argument, apart from its dubious moral basis, was that it often failed to examine the relationship between social class and reproduction. While all societies have to reproduce themselves, Engels (n.d.) in *The Origin of the Family* saw more clearly than Malthus that the working class reproduces labour, and the ruling class, inheritors of capital. In a system of primogeniture, the ruling class demands, at the personal level, a number of ascetic restraints over the sexuality of the household members in the interests of capital accumulation and conservation. The sexuality and reproduction of labour, at least in early capitalism, was restrained by Malthusian checks, especially disease and poverty. Capitalism is, however, a combination of contradictory forces, as Marx constantly asserted. Individual capitalists have a strong interest in the health, reliability and discipline of their own workers – hence the capitalist’s tolerance, if not enthusiasm, for evangelical Protestantism (Pope, 1942; Thompson, 1963). Individual capitalists do not, however, want the burden of Poor Laws, asylums and welfare taxation – hence the capitalist’s interest in a reserve army of labour and migrant workers. The brutal simplicity of Malthus’s argument is thus apparent: where workers fail to exercise ‘moral restraint’ over their reproductive potential, they will be driven by poverty and misery to restrain their reproduction. The significance and meaning of the relationship between asceticism and capitalism are thus different for different social classes.

Max Weber’s account (1930) of the connection between religious asceticism and capitalism is notorious, and equally subject to unflagging criticism (Eisenstadt, 1968; Marshall, 1982). Weber’s thesis has often been rejected out of hand by Marxist critics as a myth which suggests that thrift is the origin of accumulation (Hindess and Hirst, 1975). This myth had been wholly destroyed by Marx’s argument that primitive accumulation had been achieved by violence, especially in the form of enclosures which forced the peasant off the land. Against this criticism, it can be argued that Weber’s Protestant ethic thesis presupposes the separation of the worker from the means of production as a necessary requirement of capitalism (Turner, 1981). Weber then asks, assuming the alienation of the worker from productive means, what else contributed to capitalist growth by encouraging investment, limiting consumption and disciplining workers? The answer was that Protestantism through the idea of the ‘calling’ and ascetic disciplines brought about the origins of a process of rationalization that transformed European industrial culture. While Weber is often charged with a naive view of the connection between capitalist discipline and ascetic restraints, similar perspectives have also been put forward by Marxists. Marx in the Paris Manuscripts charged political economy with adopting self-renunciation as its basic thesis and argued that the theory of population rested ultimately on ascetic principles:

If the worker is ‘ethical’ he will be sparing in procreation. (Mill suggests public acclaim for those who prove themselves continent in their sexual relations, and

public rebuke for those who sin against such barrenness of marriage. ... Is not this the ethics, the teaching of asceticism?) The production of people appears as public misery. (Marx, 1970: 152)

In the *Prison Notebooks*, Antonio Gramsci suggested that Protestantism in America, by achieving new standards of disciplined and regulated work, had paved the way for modern managerial techniques in Taylorism and Fordism. These managerial methods suppressed the 'animality' of man, training him for the regular disciplines of factory life. The interesting feature of Protestantism was that it involved self-discipline and subjective coercion, rather than being an ideology enforced upon workers. Protestantism brought about a rational ordering of the body which was thus protected from the disruptions of desire in the interests of continuous factory production. Where the church failed to provide this puritanical discipline, the state filled the moral gap:

The struggle against alcohol, the most dangerous agent of destruction of labouring power becomes a function of the state. It is possible for other 'puritanical' struggles as well to become functions of the state if private initiative of the industrialists proves insufficient or if a moral crisis breaks out among the working masses. (Gramsci, 1971: 303–4)

Gramsci treated the ascetic ordering of the body not only as a requirement of stable capitalist production, but as the moral origin of a process of industrial rationalization culminating in Taylorism and scientific management.

The real weakness of Weber's analysis of asceticism was that it failed to consider the distribution of ascetic practices by class and gender. This theoretical neglect is partly illustrated by the relationship between consumption and production. While Marx attempted to locate the crisis of capitalism *in* the production of commodities, the completion of the circuit of commodity-capital by consumption was also necessary for the realization of surplus-value. In the so-called under-consumptionist theory of capitalism, the crisis of the capitalist mode of production results from the fact that the demand for commodities is depressed by low wages. Against the under-consumptionists, it can be argued that consumption takes place when capitalists buy commodities such as machinery for productive purposes as part of their investment in constant capital (Mandel, 1962). There is individual consumption by workers, but this is merely to reproduce their labour-power through the purchase of clothing and food. Marx took the view that 'All the capitalist cares for, is to reduce the labourer's individual consumption as far as possible to what is strictly necessary' (1974, vol. 1: 537). This argument against the importance of individual consumption appears, however, to be static and historically implausible, since it neglects the expansion in the productive capacity of capitalism through technical changes, improved management and the struggle of the working class to increase wages. Consumption in capitalism can either be confined to a narrow section of society (a 'consumption class') or be expanded through mass production to all classes (Hymer, 1972). This claim

is not to deny that there is great inequality in consumption capacity or that the export of commodities plays a major part in the realization of surplus-value. The implication is that, in addition to ascetic denial of immediate consumption by capitalists in order to accumulate through further investment in productive capital, there must also be hedonistic consumption of goods if surplus-value is to be realized. It is this contradiction between hedonistic consumption and ascetic production which Weber failed to consider as a requirement of continuous capitalist development.

In the nineteenth century, consumption was restricted to a 'leisure class', but in the twentieth century a number of important changes took place which facilitated the development of mass consumption. In the middle of the nineteenth century, the distributive system was underdeveloped and lagged behind the system of industrial production (Jeffrey, 1954). The rise of consumerism presupposes an urban environment, a mass public, advertising and the development of rationalized distribution in the form of the department store. In Britain in the 1880s most of the conditions were eventually provided by the transformation of retailing and distribution, along with the growth of advertising magazines. Other changes also had to take place in production such as the standardization of commodities, which in turn made the advertising of goods feasible in a context where commodities were replicated on a mass scale. If the early department store played an important part in the development of a commercialized bourgeois culture, the supermarket has completed this process of rationalization in the distributive system by making commodities available to a mass market of consumers (Miller, 1981; Pasdermajian, 1954). Such a market context required asceticism at the place of production in terms of a Tayloristic management of the labour process, but at the point of consumption it required a new life-style, embodied in the ethic of calculating hedonism, and a new personality type, the narcissistic person. Late capitalism thus involves a contradictory combination of asceticism and hedonism, which are spatially differentiated between the factory and the home.

Weber argued that there was an elective affinity between Protestant asceticism and the spirit of capitalism as exhibited in the works of Benjamin Franklin. The notion that 'time is money' was the secular counterpart to the Protestant concern that idle hands make easy work for the Devil. While this relationship is plausible, there is also ample evidence that individual capitalists in their personal lives did not in fact conform to this ethic. Even Benjamin Franklin appears to have diverged massively from this ascetic code (Kolko, 1961). Furthermore, when Weber referred to 'capitalists' he was of course considering male capitalists. It is, therefore, important to examine the role of social restraints of an ascetic nature on the body of women in the period of early capitalism (Smith-Rosenberg, 1978). As in feudalism, early capitalism required widespread restraints on female sexuality, especially among bourgeois women, to secure the stability of the system of property distribution. The nature of these restraints is dramatically illustrated by the history of female hysteria in the nineteenth century.

The Victorian notion of the 'hysterical woman' and earlier diagnostic labels such as 'melancholy' and 'vapours' are to be explained in terms of the contradictory social pressures on women. The term 'hysteria' is derived from the Greek word *hystera* or 'womb', since the cause of hysteria in classical medicine was thought to be the under-employment of the womb. In Egyptian medicine, the womb was thought to dry out unless the woman was regularly pregnant, and, by floating upwards in the body, caused pressure to build up on the brain. In Galenic medicine, the female seed becomes corrupt if it is not fertilized and this putrefaction produces the hysterical outburst (Veith, 1965). In the seventeenth century 'melancholy' was considered to have a similar aetiology. For example, Robert Burton in *The Anatomy of Melancholy* of 1621 noted that working women rarely suffered from melancholy, while wealthy but unmarried women were commonly oppressed by the malady. His solution was marriage, religion and suitable occupations, such as charitable pursuits among the poor. What we might call the lazy womb as a physiological state was thus correlated with the lazy person as a moral condition, prevalent among certain classes of women. The social restraints of marriage were required to promote the mental stability and personal happiness of women. Women were, however, caught in a contradictory set of circumstances. They were regarded as overcharged with sexual energies, but marriage, as the only legitimate outlet for their sexuality, was often delayed within the European marriage pattern. In addition, those women who delayed marriage in the late Victorian period in order to follow a career in teaching or nursing were assumed to be especially exposed to the threat of hysterical breakdown. While parents worried about masturbatory insanity in boys, there was also anxiety about the dangers of female masturbation in a system of delayed marriage. Both masturbation and hysteria had a common root in the spoiled child: 'Petted and spoiled by her parents, waited upon hand and foot by servants, she had never been taught to exercise self-control or to curb her emotions and desires' (Smith-Rosenberg, 1972: 667). The answer to the sickness lay in self-discipline and good works under the watchful regime of parental restraint.

Once inside marriage, however, women were thought to be sexually underdeveloped, if not frigid, and it was this situation which drove men to prostitutes, while also excusing their behaviour. The transformation of the passions in women from adolescence to marriage was absolute, albeit somewhat miraculous. While during pregnancy they avoided the horrors of hysteria, women were confined to a private domestic sphere, where isolation and the burden of children brought on new forms of depression. The problem was that men were both necessary for female happiness and, through endless pregnancies, the cause of their distress. In the words of a more recent study of sexuality, we are reliably informed, by a man, that masturbation in women 'is always abnormal' and that 'the woman's sexuality remains dormant until it is awakened by a man' (Schwarz, 1949: 43). Of course, this also had to be the 'Right Man' rather than any man, since a woman had to accumulate her energies for lawful procreation. Thus, hysteria

as part of a medical ideology of true womanliness had the social function of keeping women in their place, that is, the privacy of the domestic sphere away from the dangers of public life.

Regulation

It is difficult to separate the problems of reproduction and restraint from the growth of an urban society in which populations were regulated in social space. From the eighteenth century onwards, urbanism was seen increasingly as a threat to culture, especially to the dominant culture of the elite. The growth of industrial cities involved the collapse of the traditional system of 'apparential ordering' whereby persons had been defined by the visibility of fixed status (Lofland, 1973). The techniques of regulation came, in social theory, to be bound up with questions of interpersonal intimacy and social anonymity, which in turn gave rise to a new input into the traditional Hobbesian social contract. The nature of population densities and their impact on character-structure became a linking theme in French social theory from Rousseau to Lévi-Strauss.

Unlike Hobbes, Rousseau's account of civil society was much exercised by the problems of urban existence. In Rousseau's general philosophy, human solitariness was taken to be a basic moral principle which provided the normative perspective for his treatments of nature, education and religion. The negative effect of urban crowding was to make men too dependent on the opinion of others, and their proper self-respect (*amour de soi*) degenerates into selfishness (*amour-propre*). In the discourse 'On the origin and foundation of the inequality of mankind', Rousseau sought to draw a clear contrast between the autonomous savage ('solitary, indolent and perpetually accompanied by danger') in a state of nature with urban man in civil society:

Amour-propre is a purely relative and factitious feeling, which arises in the state of society, leads each individual to make more of himself than of any other, causes all the mutual damage men inflict one on another ... in the true state of nature, *amour-propre* did not exist; for each man regarded himself as the only observer of his actions, the only being in the universe who took any interest in him, and the sole judge of his deserts ... he could know neither hatred nor the desire for revenge, since these passions can spring only from a sense of injury. (Rousseau, 1973: 66n)

The problem of society is the problem of public comparisons and our dependence on social rather than personal reputation. Entry into society, especially into a city existence, obliterates pity which is mankind's only 'natural virtue'. The more people live in the company of others, the more selfish their behaviour becomes, since urbanization undermines natural compassion. In short, Rousseau argued that 'In proportion as the human race grew more numerous, men's cares increased' (1973: 77). Troubles accumulate with the accumulation of men in urban space.

This inverse relationship between the quality of moral life and the quantity of urban bodies was also the basis of Rousseau's views on the theatre in the controversy with M. d'Alembert. In Rousseau's letter on the theatre, he was concerned to contrast the effects of theatrical performances in Geneva and Paris. In the urban environment of Paris, where the citizens are already corrupted by *amour-propre*, the theatre functions as part of state policy to entertain citizens who have nothing more positive to do with their civil liberties. By contrast, in the small republic of Geneva, the theatre must necessarily corrupt free men by exposing them to 'civilization'. In the large city 'everything is judged by appearance because there is no leisure to examine anything' (Rousseau, 1960: 59). Because the citizens are contaminated by selfishness, reputational worth rather than personal value becomes the sole criterion of personal stature. The theatre encourages reputational prestige, especially among women who adorn their bodies in a competitive struggle for public attention. In the crowded spaces of urban society, interpersonal familiarity breeds contempt. This theme was the dominant aspect of Rousseau's final publication, namely *Reveries of the Solitary Walker* (1979). In the ninth walk, Rousseau observed that when strangers first meet there is a formal courtesy expressed between them, but as these strangers become more familiar, civility begins to disappear. Intimacy and respect seem mutually exclusive. Public formalities appear to be necessary in the densely populated spaces of the industrial city, but they break down under the pressure of reputational displays and false selfishness. The innocence of free space disappears with the emergence of urban society; the transition from

nature to culture depended on demographic increase, but the latter did not produce a direct effect, as a natural cause. First it forced men to diversify their modes of livelihood, in order to exist in different environments, and also to multiply their relations with nature. (Lévi-Strauss, 1969: 173)

The density of populations produces an extension and intensification of the social division of labour, which in turn binds people together in reciprocal relations, thereby creating greater mutual dependency.

These themes in Rousseau's view of the state of nature were reproduced in Durkheim's analysis of the division of labour (1964) and also in the romantic perspective of Lévi-Strauss's *Tristes Tropiques* (1976). Lévi-Strauss's autobiographical commentary on anthropology can be read as a Rousseau-like analysis of the consequences of Western, urban culture on primitive simplicity. In his first encounter with the West Indies, he observed 'This was not the first occasion on which I have encountered those outbreaks of stupidity, hatred and credulousness which social groups secrete like pus when they begin to be short of space' (Lévi-Strauss, 1976: 33). At a later stage, he was forced to note the distinction between the solitude of the South American forests and the human misery which characterized the densely populated space of Indian cities. The cities of the Indian subcontinent secreted 'Filth, chaos, promiscuity, congestion, ruins, huts,

mud, dirt, dung, urine, pus, humours, secretions and running sores' (1976: 169). For Durkheim, population density and the division of labour result in a society based on reciprocity (organic solidarity) in which the individual is less subject to collective culture (*conscience collective*). For Rousseau and Lévi-Strauss, urbanization and population density undermine the moral coherence and dignity of the individual. In this respect they articulated a persistent *motif* of nineteenth-century social thought, namely an anxiety about the moral consequences of urbanization.

The Hobbesian solution to the problem of order in the theory of the social contract started out from the premise of the materiality of single bodies; the sociological problem here is that of the multiplicity of bodies in an urban environment in which interpersonal moral checks are thought to have collapsed. In Rousseau's terms, urban familiarity engenders moral contempt. My argument is that the 'solution' to this dilemma can be seen in terms of Foucault's 'anatomy-politics of the human body' and the 'bio-politics of the population' (Foucault, 1981: 139). Urban bodies were politically dangerous without the web of institutional regulation and the micro-disciplines of control. The surveillance and supervision of urban populations were achieved through regulation and classification, which made possible the centralized registration of bodies for policing under a system of panopticism (Foucault, 1979). In both Weber and Foucault, there is the notion that populations become progressively subordinated to rational disciplines under a process of bureaucratization and rationalization. The dangers of urban space nevertheless remained an ever-present reality for nineteenth-century liberalism: 'Appalled at the ethic of a crowded industrialized society, with its "trampling" and "elbowing", and dismayed at the ugliness of urbanized civilization, Mill sought comfort in solitude and communion with nature' (Wolin, 1961: 323). Demographic pressures, economic scarcity and political instability were forces which were concentrated in the narrow streets of the European cities.

These anxieties were in particular focused on middle-class women, who were seen to be especially exposed to the sexual dangers of urban space. Although Rousseau had strong views on individual freedom – 'Man is born free; and everywhere he is in chains' (Rousseau, 1973: 1165) – he assumed that women, as guardians of private morals, would be securely located in the domestic sphere (Okin, 1980). Women were especially susceptible to the dangers of false self-regard; as we have seen, theatres encouraged women to decorate their bodies in reputational competitions. In the city, new dangers abounded: infatuations, insults, abduction and moral degradation. The woman who stayed at home away from such dangers and temptations was both displaying the economic status of her husband and proclaiming her moral innocence:

Women appearing in the streets alone 'had to be' women who went working of necessity, women whose husbands could not provide for their families singlehandedly; such women could not possibly be decent. ... Her domesticity demonstrated her economic and erotic dependence on her husband, and this in

turn proved that he could provide for her material and erotic needs. (de Swaan, 1981: 363)

When the conditions which made the streets safe for women – street lighting, a police force, reduction in street violence – had been developed by the end of the nineteenth century, male anxiety about female independence necessarily increased. At this point, the first coherent medical description of agoraphobia appeared in 1872. The agoraphobic syndrome has not changed since the 1870s, being simply defined in terms of an anxiety about leaving the home, visiting shops, travelling alone or entering crowded spaces. In Freudian terms, the agoraphobic fears sexual seduction and represses libidinous interests in strangers. Agoraphobia in wives expresses the anxiety of husbands with regard to their control over the domestic household, but it also expresses the wife's dependence on the security and status of the bourgeois family setting. There is, therefore, a certain degree of collusion between partners as to the symbolic significance of the 'illness', which is reinforced by a professional interest in the reality of the complaint on the part of psychotherapists. The complaint both expressed female dependency and reproduced it. Fear of the marketplace had now been successfully converted into a medical condition, which legitimated the power relationships of the household.

Urbanization threatened the code of impersonal *civilité* with shallow intimacies, unregulated by respect for status and position. Paradoxically, the growth of intimacy entails a decline in sociability (Sennett, 1974). The courtly tradition of manners had permitted communal sociability between strangers by discouraging selfish expressions of intimate behaviour; intimacies are socially exclusive, but also express lack of genuine feeling (Weitman, 1970). By contrast, a secular urban society generates a cult of intimacy and affectivity between strangers which offsets the threat of anonymity and which attempts to deal with public space by replacing courtly values of impersonal *civilité* (Elias, 1978). In the nineteenth century, anxieties about seductive intimacies between anonymous strangers found their symbolic expression in female agoraphobia (Sontag, 1978). As women from the middle classes entered public society in the twentieth century with the growing demand for labour in the war-time crisis of Western capitalism, 'female complaints' became increasingly presentational and symbolic of anxieties about the surface of the body. For example, dietary practices were no longer aimed at controlling passions within a religio-medical framework; they are now aids to self-presentation in a context where ageing is no longer expected to preclude our capacity for presenting a good face.

Representation

In pre-modern societies the person was housed in the *persona*, a public mask which was impersonal and objective (Mauss, 1979). Personality was

objectified in the external marks of status and insignia. In feudal times, personhood and dignity came to reside in a man's shield, which was a privilege indicating class position. With the development of the surcoat, lambrequin and closed helmet, heraldic signs came to stand for distinction and were marks of identification of both person and status (Fox-Davies, 1909). In such a society, the moral value of a person was embraced by the notion of 'honour' which was embedded in institutional roles so that personal and social symbols coincided. This world of honour was transformed by the development of capitalism. In England, the aristocracy was largely demilitarized by the seventeenth century and, with the enclosure movement, was transformed into an agrarian capitalist class: 'The idiosyncrasies of the English landowning class in the epoch of Absolutism were thus to be historically interlocked: it was unusually civilian in background, commercial in occupation and commoner in rank' (Anderson, 1974: 127). The hierarchical concept of honour by inheritance was gradually replaced by the notion of the gentleman as the product of education. The 'honourable gent' was urban, commercial and non-military; his status was achieved, but the commercial background was clothed with the culture of a private education (Ossowska, 1971). With the development of capitalism, formal differences on the basis of status within an hierarchical system have been overtaken, at least in principle, by differences of merit and achievement so that personal worth can no longer be invested in external signs. In practice, status symbols denoting personal worth – in housing, speech, dress and other consumption patterns – persist, but these symbols are not exclusive rights with the backing of legal entitlement. Personal moral status has become more fluid, open and flexible; the modern personality now has dignity rather than honour: 'The concept of honour implies that identity is essentially, or at least importantly, linked to institutional roles. The modern concept of dignity, by contrast, implies that identity is essentially independent of institutional roles' (Berger, 1974: 84). The self is no longer located in heraldry, but has to be constantly constituted in face-to-face interactions, because consumerism and the mass market have liquidated, or at least blurred, the exterior marks of social and personal difference.

The extension of the franchise and the growth of mass consumer markets have facilitated the disappearance of ascriptive signs of personal value. Although hierarchical differences at work are crucially important for personal status, mass entertainment and the leisure market are relatively free of social exclusion based on class. The commercialization of sport has reduced traditional class differences both within and between particular sporting activities. In leisure styles, the universality of jeans and T-shirts does not remove class distinctions, but it does mask them behind the informality of dress. Variations between societies are clearly important. The English bowler hat is still symbolic of class and personality, whereas the Australian summer enforces a certain stylistic egalitarianism: 'there is a real sense in which the absence of clearly visible and unambiguous

marks of inferior status has made the enforcement of an all-pervasive deference system almost impossible to sustain outside the immediate work situation' (Parkin, 1979: 69). Self and the presentation of self become dependent on style and fashion rather than on fixed symbols of class or hierarchical status. Urban space becomes a competitive arena for presentational conflicts based on commercialized fashions and life-styles. There is a sense in which the self becomes a commodity with an appropriate package, because we no longer define ourselves exclusively in terms of blood or breeding.

This world of the performing self has been theoretically encapsulated in a number of streams of American sociology, particularly in so-called symbolic interactionism. Sociological awareness of the new personality structure of consumer society can be traced back to a number of classic texts. The concept of the social self in the American tradition of sociology is redolent of the naked space of consumer society. In *Human Nature and the Social Order*, Cooley (1964) spoke of the 'looking glass self' which cannot exist outside the gaze of others; our appearance in the mirror of others' responses was seen to be not only the basis of personal esteem, but constitutive of the self. Within social interactionism, the self and our public appearance are not so much conjoined but merged (G. Stone, 1962). The importance of the presentational self can be charted in Whyte's 'organization man' (1956), Fromm's 'market-oriented personality' (1941) and Riesman's 'other-directed personality' (1950). The tradition culminates in the contemporary debate on the 'narcissistic personality' (Lasch, 1979). The theme of these commentaries on American life is essentially Rousseauist: suburban America produces what Riesman called the 'lonely crowd' within which egoistic actions are draped in a false intimacy. My argument is that these texts are simultaneously diagnostic and symptomatic – they grasp the social disease of self-regarding intimacy while also expressing it. This feature of American sociology found its epitome in Goffman's compendium of interactionist concepts – 'face-work', 'deference and demeanor', 'stigma' and 'expression games' (Goffman, 1968, 1970, 1972).

Goffman's most influential work was *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959). In Goffmanesque society, social relations constitute a stage, upon which the social actor presents a performance either individually or in the company of a team. These social performances are threatened by the possibility of perpetual failure; performances may be disrupted by forgotten lines, embarrassment, misinformation and discrepancy. The ritual order of everyday encounters is precarious and in need of constant repair. In terms of the Hobbesian problem of order, social actors are primarily motivated by self-regard and by the desire to maintain their 'face' at all costs; order exists in so far as social actors seek to avoid stigmatization and embarrassment in public gatherings. Social life is a game in which there is little scope for trust, since all human action is simply bluff and counter-bluff. Survival in this competitive world of social espionage hinges simply on the ability to select the most advantageous set of interpersonal tactics. Goffman's dramaturgical

model is thus both a mode of understanding the new middle class and a reflection of its values:

The dramaturgical model reflects the new world, in which a stratum of the middle class no longer believes that hard work is useful or that success depends upon diligent application. In this new world there is a keen sense of the irrationality of the relationship between individual achievement and the magnitude of reward, between actual contribution and social reputation. It is the world of the big-priced Hollywood star and of the market for stocks, whose prices bear little relation to their earnings. (Gouldner, 1971: 381)

Society as theatre is thus Rousseau's vision of urban *amour-propre* taken to its logical conclusion – a society in which reality becomes entirely representational.

Social success depends on an ability to manage the self by the adoption of appropriate interpersonal skills and success hinges crucially on the presentation of an acceptable image. Image-management and image-creation become decisive, not only for political careers, but in the organization of everyday life. In turn, successful images require successful bodies, which have been trained, disciplined and orchestrated to enhance our personal value. A new service sector of dieticians, cosmetologists and plastic surgeons has sprung up to augment the existing body-work professions of dentistry, hairdressing and chiropody. In the managerial class, in order to be successful it is also important to look successful, because the body of the manager is symbolic of the corporation. The new ethic of managerial athleticism is thus the contemporary version of the Protestant ethic, but, fanned by the winds of consumerism, this ethic has become widespread throughout the class system as a life-style to be emulated. The commodified body has become the focus of a keep-fit industry, backed up by fibre diets, leisure centres, slimming manuals and outdoor sports. Capitalism has commodified hedonism and embraced eudemonism as a central value:

The 'revolution in manners and morals', which took shape in the twenties when capitalism began to outgrow its dependence on the work ethic, has eroded family authority, undermined sexual repression and set up in their place a permissive hedonistic morality tolerant of self-expression and the fulfilment of 'creative potential'. (Lasch, 1979: 45)

The new hedonism does, however, have peculiar features. It is not oppositional, being perfectly geared into the market requirements of advanced capitalism; it is heavily skewed towards the new middle class; it is also compatible with asceticism. Hedonistic fascination with the body exists to enhance competitive performance. We jog, slim and sleep not for their intrinsic enjoyment, but to improve our chances at sex, work and longevity. The new asceticism of competitive social relations exists to create desire – desire which is subordinated to the rationalization of the body as the final triumph of capitalist development. Obesity has become irrational.

All illness is social illness. At a trivial level, we know that stress is an important element in the aetiology of much chronic illness and that stress is the

product of the temporal rhythms of modern societies; social stress results in peptic ulcers (Dossey, 1982). Illness also has social consequences in the form of unemployment and domestic disruption, but at a more fundamental level social processes constitute illness, which is a medical classification of a range of signs and symptoms (King, 1954). The meaning of illness reflects social anxieties about patterns of social behaviour which are deemed acceptable or otherwise from the point of view of dominant social groups. It has been argued that onanism and spermatorrhoea were medical categories which expressed the anxieties of parents whose authority over dependents was being questioned by new social arrangements. Hysteria was a metaphor of the social subordination of women, especially middle-class women who were attempting to express their individual independence through professional employment. Agoraphobia symbolized the uncertainty of urban space; fear of the market kept women at home, but also confirmed the husband's economic capacity to maintain a domesticated wife. If the argument is correct that in late capitalism there is for the individual a representational crisis of self-management, then we might expect, especially for women, the emergence of a presentational illness. In Goffman's dramaturgical metaphor, the characteristic illness for women should be bound up with the anxieties of face-work; it is anorexia nervosa which most dramatically expresses the ambiguities of female gender in contemporary Western societies. While it would be futile to deny that anorexia has psychological and physiological features, it also has a complex sociological aetiology and is deeply expressive of the modern view of beauty as thinness (Polhemus, 1978).

While I have attempted to separate certain illnesses in terms of reproduction, restraint, regulation and representation, the illnesses of women have one important thing in common – they are, at least sociologically, products of dependency. Female sickness – hysteria, depression, melancholy, agoraphobia, anorexia – is ultimately a psychosomatic expression of emotional and sexual anxieties which are built into the separation of the public world of authority and the private world of feeling (Heller, 1979). Masturbatory insanity and hysteria are not 'diseases' but deviant behaviour which express a crisis of delayed time: the problem of waiting for maturity in the transition from one household to another. Agoraphobia and anorexia are expressive of the anxiety of congested space. The agoraphobic suffers from protective patriarchy, the anorexic from protective parenting in the confines of the privatized family. As diagnostic categories, these illnesses also express male anxieties about the loss of control over dependants as women left the household for work and were allegedly exposed to public seductions.

The Hobbesian problem of order was historically based on a unitary concept of the body. The social contract was between men who, out of an interest in self-preservation, surrendered individual rights to the state, which existed to enforce social peace. However, the regime of political society also requires a regimen of bodies and in particular a government of bodies which are defined by their multiplicity and diversity. The Hobbesian

problem is overtly an analysis of the proper relationship between desire and reason, or more precisely between sexuality and instrumental rationality. This problem in turn can be restated as the proper relationship between men as bearers of public reason and women as embodiments of private emotion. When expressed in this fashion, it is heuristically useful to identify four sub-issues within the general problem of order. The value of the model is that it brings into focus the fact that all social structures which institutionalize inequality and dependency are fought out at the level of a micro-politics of deviance and disease. Because the body is the most potent metaphor of society, it is not surprising that disease is the most salient metaphor of structural crisis. All disease is disorder – metaphorically, literally, socially and politically.

Eve's Body

Of Man's First Disobedience, and the Fruit Of that Forbidden Tree, whose mortal taste Brought Death into the World, and all our woe, With Loss of Eden

Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Book 1

My argument is that any sociology of the body will hinge ultimately on the nature of the sexual and emotional division of labour. The sociology of the body turns out to be crucially a sociological study of the control of sexuality, specifically female sexuality, by men exercising patriarchal power. There are two conventional explanations of the social subordination of women, which turn out, on closer inspection, to be in fact one argument. The first may be called the nature/culture argument and the second, the property argument. One feminist account of the universality of patriarchy as a system of power relations of men over women is that, because of their reproductive role in human societies, women are associated with nature rather than culture and hence have a pre-social or sub-social status. Women have not, as it were, made the transition from animality to culture, because they are still tied to nature through their sexuality and fertility. The universality of women's subordinate status in society is thus explained by the universality of women's reproductive functions. The subordination of women is not essentially a consequence of physiology, but of the cultural interpretation of female reproductivity as denoting an unbreakable link with nature. The distinction between 'nature' and 'culture' is, of course, itself a cultural product. It is a classificatory scheme which allocates women to an inferior 'natural' category and men to a superior 'social' category.

Nature/Culture Argument

The result of this association with nature is that men are seen to be liberated from natural functions in order to occupy themselves with higher status activities, namely the creation of a cultural, symbolic environment (Ortner, 1974). In this division of labour, men create enduring symbols, while women reproduce perishable bodies. The social roles of women come as a consequence to be seen as inferior to the social roles performed by men. The final step in the argument is that women are allocated and trained into a psychic structure ('maternal instincts', 'affection' and 'emotions')

which is sharply opposed to the psychic space ('reason', 'reasonableness' and 'reliability') of men. This dichotomy between reason and desire is then associated with a further dichotomy between public and private space, such that women occupy the domestic world of private emotions and affections.

The nature/culture argument is clearly powerful and does offer a plausible explanation of the universality of patriarchal domination of men over women. The argument, however, suffers from a number of difficulties. In pre-modern societies, patriarchy typically involves the exercise of power by adult males over women, children and other dependent men. In Old Testament patriarchy, the tribal patriarch dominated both his wives and sons. To take a more contemporary illustration, Crapanzano (1973) provides an interesting analysis of the ambiguities in the social status of young men in a North African context. While men dominate women, it is also the case that fathers dominate their sons. Since masculine identity is conceived in terms of sexual strength, power over women and political dominance, unmarried males are forced into dependent social roles which are in many respects parallel to female roles. The consequence of this social location is that young men have a quasi-feminine personality. The psychosomatic illnesses which these young men experience are symbolic of their uncertain social status and are interpreted as consequences of spirit-possession by female demons (*jinn*). In empirical terms, it is difficult to separate out patriarchy from gerontocracy, namely the political dominance of male elders over household members of all generations and sexes. The early history of colonial America would be a further illustration of the employment of an ideology of biblical patriarchalism to buttress a system of gerontocratic government (Fischer, 1977). One solution for the nature/culture argument would be to claim that dependent men are, alongside women, identified with nature, but such a solution would weaken the original neatness of the thesis. In addition, it would be difficult to see in what sense young men are close to or part of nature.

A second weakness of the argument is precisely its generality (McDonough and Harrison, 1978). It is difficult to believe that societies have timelessly and universally interpreted women in the same nature/culture dichotomy. One alternative to this dichotomy was, for example, the notion that women were unnatural or monstrous creations and thus located somewhere between nature and culture. Aristotle regarded women as deviations in nature, but this Aristotelian view was often taken further to suggest that women were monsters outside nature (MacLean, 1980). Furthermore, it is not always the case that women are regarded as especially important in reproduction. I shall amplify this point later, but it is interesting to note that in one of the major mediaeval texts on reproduction – Giles of Rome's *De formatione corporis humani in utero* – it is specifically denied that the woman has any active part in the production of men. It is the male seed which is alone generative (Hewson, 1975). If women were not thought to be important in reproduction, how could they be thought to be close to nature?

The third weakness of the nature/culture argument is that while it may explain the origins of patriarchal attitudes, it is difficult to see how it could explain the maintenance and continuity of these attitudes. The nature/culture dichotomy becomes increasingly blurred and remote in societies characterized by urbanization, secularization and scientific medicine. 'Nature' is continuously and effectively appropriated by modern cultures. Advances in genetic technology – embryo transplants, sperm banks, artificial insemination, sterilization, contraception and prophylactic hysterectomy – mean that culture massively intervenes in natural processes. Indeed, what would count as 'natural reproduction' becomes increasingly uncertain and ultimately reproduction may pass entirely out of the realm of nature into the realm of culture. Women become increasingly separated from 'nature' by the intervention of 'culture' in the reproductive process.

The Property Argument

The property argument suggests that patriarchal attitudes are an ideological outcrop of a more basic economic requirement, that is the regular distribution of property through legitimate heirs. Behind patriarchy, there lies the problem of paternity, namely the flow of property between generations according to male inheritance. This control of wealth through kinship requires both the control of wives and the control of children. The property argument is thus more pertinent to the explanation of patriarchy as simultaneously the control of wives and the control of dependent males. In pre-modern societies, women are seen as a potential threat to the solidarity of the kinship group, because there can be no absolute guarantee that the children they bear actually belong to the group. Given the presence of an incest taboo, men cannot take wives from their immediate kin. Because women are exchanged between families, the actual paternity of children is always open to a margin of doubt. As I shall show shortly, the practice of slaughtering all first-born males is at least one solution to this issue of legitimate offspring. This argument does assume, admittedly, the salience of biological over social fatherhood, but the emphasis on 'true' biological fatherhood does appear to be a social answer to the requirement of property distribution without competition from a variety of claimants who may not be genuine members of the kin. In a situation of economic scarcity, the cohesion of the household and its control over property are enhanced by the absence of sexual rivalries and disputes over paternity and legitimacy:

Nowhere do we find unregulated, amorphous sexual promiscuity within the house, even if sexual relations between siblings are a recognized institution; at least nowhere on a normative basis. ... Subsequent normative elaboration was obviously in the interest of safeguarding solidarity and domestic peace in the face of jealousies. ... As a rule, then, a man acquires exclusive sexual rights over a woman when he takes her into his house or enters her house if his means are insufficient. (Weber, 1978, vol. 1: 364)

Patriarchal attitudes to women and sexual control over them are political and ideological arrangements which are based upon property distribution through particular forms of kinship relations. However, patriarchy as a power relationship also extends over younger men (especially first-born sons) whose sexuality must be controlled in the interests of household solidarity and economic stability. On this basis, it is clear that these two arguments about the universality of patriarchy could be combined, because the association of women with nature (and therefore with inferior status) then becomes a basis for legitimation of patriarchal control of property.

Patriarchal Religions

Ideologies relating to the 'natural' character of women or to their need for protection can be treated as social resources which are mobilized by social groups, especially gerontocratic elites, to subordinate women, children and young men in the interests of property relations. These property relations within the traditional household form the economic basis of sexual ideology and interpersonal power. Interestingly enough, it is Christianity which, in the West, has formed the basis of patriarchal ideologies in both feudalism and early capitalism (Abercrombie et al., 1980; Turner, 1983). This connection between Christian theology and patriarchal power has been frequently noted. For example,

Christian ideology has contributed no little to the oppression of woman. ... [women] could take only a secondary place as participants in worship, the 'deaconesses' were authorized to carry out only such lay tasks as caring for the sick and aiding the poor. And if marriage was held to be an institution demanding mutual fidelity, it seemed obvious that the wife should be totally subordinate to her husband. (de Beauvoir, 1972: 128)

'Patriarchal religion' has thus been regarded as a major basis for the socialization of women into subservient and submissive roles (Millett, 1977; Seltman, 1956). While there is much justification for this interpretation, even in contemporary societies (Mercer, 1975), it is important to recognize that paternalism and patriarchy are systems of belief and practice which are located in the dynamics of particular household structures and that these households are determined by particular economic requirements. Unless this position is adopted, patriarchy appears to be a universal, free-floating essence which cannot be, as it were, tied down sociologically. It is equally important to recognize that the Christian doctrine was the product of several rather different traditions which were not fully crystallized into a coherent view of patriarchy until the institutionalization of casuistical theology in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

The Christian view of women grew out of three sources: ancient Judaism, the Essene sect and Greek culture. Jewish society in Old Testament times was a confederation of tribes, bound together by a covenant with the one God Yahweh. Jewish tribes were collections of families claiming real or

fictive descent from an ancestor or patriarch. These families were often polygamous. In Judges and Deuteronomy it was recognized as a legal fact that men would acquire many wives and concubines within the family. In later periods the Talmud attempted to fix the number of wives appropriate for different classes; kings were allowed up to 18, while a subject had only four (de Vaux, 1961). The principal role of the wife was to be fruitful and multiply, and thus part of the pressure to acquire additional wives was associated with barrenness or low fertility. Similarly a wife who gave birth to only female children would also be regarded as unsatisfactory. An unmarried woman was under the authority of her father, just as the married woman was under the authority of the husband. The husband was the master (*ba'al*) of the wife in the same way that he was *ba'al* over the fields. It is clear, therefore, that women as productive bodies were possessions of the head of the household alongside other possessions: servants, ox, ass and dwelling place. Although women had low status within the group, they were crucial to the reproduction of the family and the tribe. Further, since the tribe had a sacred status within a legal contract with God, the 'purity' of reproduction within the group came to depend on the purity of the women. With the break-up of the confederacy and the diaspora of the Jewish people, this requirement for pure Jewish reproduction was actually enhanced. Ultimately, to be Jewish was to have a Jewish mother (Yuval-Davis, 1980).

The moral coherence of the tribe was the guarantee of its social solidarity and these conditions were rooted in the sexual purity and fidelity of women. It is not surprising, therefore, that the regulation of women was strict to the point of brutality. Adultery between a man and a married woman was a property crime, that is, an infringement of the property rights of the injured husband. Such crimes were punished by death through stoning or burning. However, while men and women were encouraged to be faithful, a man taking a prostitute was regarded as dissipating his strength and wealth rather than his moral value since prostitution was not an invasion of property rights. This system of religious norms governing women's bodies expressed three group interests: the perpetuation of the family line, the conservation of domestic property and the preservation of the ancestral inheritance. These three interests necessarily dominated Jewish attitudes to children. Sterility in women was regarded as a divine punishment and this notion was combined with the belief that having numerous sons was the symbol of patriarchal power. Among the male offspring, the eldest child was the most important, since he would become the head of the household and inherit the major share of the family property. At various points in the Old Testament, the principle of primogeniture was overruled by favouritism – Abel and Cain, Jacob and Esau. In the biblical story of Joseph and the coat of many colours, where Joseph was the son of Jacob's old age, we see the principle of ultimogeniture (inheritance by the last-born male child) in operation. These instances were, however, exceptions to the general rule of preference for first-born males.

This system of primogeniture under patriarchal domination did require confidence in legitimate paternity which was often difficult to guarantee. In a society where the precise facts of conception, gestation and reproduction were not clearly understood, there was always 'reasonable' doubt as to the paternity of first-born children. The patriarch could never be entirely certain that wives entering the household as young brides from other families were not already pregnant. In such a case, 'his' children would in fact be somebody else's. It would thus be possible for another family head to claim rights to property as a biological father. The themes of paternity and infanticide were consequently important to much of the mythology of the Old Testament world. The story of the patriarch Abram in many respects provides a summary of these themes. Abram's wife Sarai failed to provide children because of her barrenness and instead offered her Egyptian handmaiden Hagar as a concubine through whom Abram fathered a child called Ishmael. God then formed a covenant with Abram and this contract was symbolized by the circumcision of Abram and all the men of the tribe. Abram and Sarai changed their names to Abraham and Sarah. Furthermore, the covenant was validated by the fact that Sarah in extreme old age gave birth to a son called Isaac. As a test of the covenant God instructed Abraham to sacrifice Isaac by burning, but an angel intervened once Abraham had proved his willingness to slay his own son. With the death of Sarah, Abraham took another wife who provided him with many children.

The conventional interpretation of the circumcision ritual was that it was originally an initiation into marriage, but in Judaism it was a sign of incorporation into the group and hence into an alliance with Yahweh (de Vaux, 1961). Since Abraham meant 'the father of a multitude', the circumcision rite also stood for the willingness of other tribes to join in a covenant with God and the people of Israel (Epstein, 1959). The rite became a sign of inclusion and of exclusion (Douglas, 1970). There was, however, an alternative interpretation which suggested that circumcision was a symbolic alternative to infanticide. Because there was a suspicion that first-born male children may have been the product of sexual encounters prior to marriage between the wife and another father, one solution to this anxiety was to slaughter all such offspring. It has been suggested that the 'essence of Judaism and Christianity is the management of the infanticidal impulse' (Bakan, 1974: 208). Circumcision was symbolic of the slaughter of children by the knife; baptism, of drowning in water. In the circumcision rite, the 'children' of Yahweh as Father of the people were accepted into the community and the infanticide impulse was redirected, just as Abraham's intention to sacrifice Isaac was deflected to the ram. In psychoanalytic terms, circumcision was the reverse side of the Oedipus complex and the incest taboo. While Freud's view of religious practice in *Totem and Taboo* (1960) has been justifiably subject to criticism (Breger, 1981; Wollheim, 1971), Freud's clinical data importantly indicated the ambiguity of emotions and relationships between father and son, just as the circumcision rite pointed covertly to the ambiguity in the attitude of patriarchs to first-born males.

My argument is that one source of Christian ideology of women is to be located in Judaic social organization and in Jewish ritual. In Christianity, the inclusionary rite of circumcision was transferred to that of baptism, but there was also a transference of sacrificial and patriarchal symbolism. The vengeful God of the Old Testament was gradually transformed into the merciful Father of Christianity and the sins of men were expunged by Christ the Sacrificial Lamb. Freud's interpretation of Christian mythology is interesting, if not wholly convincing:

In the Christian doctrine, therefore, men were acknowledging in the most undisguised manner the guilty primaeval deed, since they found the fullest atonement for it in the sacrifice of this one son. ... A son-religion displaced the father-religion. As a sign of this substitution the ancient totem meal was revived in the form of communion, in which the company of brothers consumed the flesh and blood of the son – no longer the father – obtained sanctity thereby and identified themselves with him. (Freud, 1960: 154)

As Breger (1981) points out, this interpretation by Freud presents a world in which women are strangely absent: it is a society of fathers, sons and brothers in which no space is allowed for mothers, daughters and sisters. In order to understand the place of women in Christian mythology and cosmology we will have to turn from this ancient Judaic world to examine the impact of the Essene sect on the Christian treatment of the problem of reproduction and sexuality.

The Essenes were an ascetic Jewish sect which existed during the time of Christ and which came to an end with the suppression of the Jewish revolt in AD 70. Contemporary understanding of the importance of this sect has been greatly assisted by the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls at Qumran between 1947 and 1956 (Allegro, 1964, 1968; Dupont-Sommer, 1961). These Scrolls have given rise to various acrimonious debates about the relationship between the Essene sect and early Christianity. Most of these issues are not germane to my argument. The gist of the matter is that the Qumran sect, in its teachings and practices, anticipated much of the eschatological doctrinal core of early Christianity and in particular established an essentially negative attitude towards women as obstacles to the religious life. Essenism involved the sharing of communal property and the rejection of individual possession as unholy; it espoused a commitment to the fellowship of the human race, while expressing bitter hatred against its immediate enemies. The Essenes practised baptism and, while waiting in communal purity, prayed for the arrival of the teacher of Righteousness, who, through struggling against the Wicked Priest and the Man of Untruth, would lead the community out of danger and restore the kingdom of God. During the period of preparation for the coming Messiah, the purity of the community depended on a strict regulation of sexual practices and the Scrolls spoke harshly about the temptations of the flesh and the seductive power of women. The Scrolls suggested that the lowly and dangerous status of women was connected with their reproductive role and hence with their closeness to nature. In this respect, the Essenes

merely followed the traditional Jewish idea that menstruation created ritual impurity. However, they took this attitude further in regarding celibacy as a religiously prescribed institution. The adoption by Jesus of celibacy at least after his reception of the Holy Spirit, may indicate the influence of Essenism on Christian practice. An alternative interpretation is that in the Jewish religious tradition generally, it was held that prophecy was incompatible with marriage since the prophet must hold himself in readiness to receive the message of God (Vermes, 1976). The impact of both Essenism and Judaism on early Christian teaching was to define women as dangerous because of their natural impurity and to treat women as requiring close patriarchal supervision in the interest of legitimate property inheritance.

This negative view of women in early Christianity was amplified and mediated by the Greek context of Pauline theology and by the Greek reception of the New Testament. Paul's attitude to women has been frequently commented on in feminist literature (Figs, 1978; Mercer, 1975). Paul's discussion of sexuality and marriage in the First Epistle to the Corinthians has become notorious as an illustration of sexism:

It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. ... I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, it is good for them if they abide even as I. But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn. (1 Corinthians 7)

Similarly, when Paul was commenting on spiritual gifts, especially the gift of tongues, he recommended that 'women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law' (1 Corinthians 14: 34). One justification for his negative view of women was derived from the Adamic myth in which the origin 'of all our woe' was located in the disobedience of Eve: 'For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression' (1 Timothy 2). In selecting celibacy as a necessary basis for his calling as an apostle, Paul followed a traditional position in which religious vocations were incompatible with marriage, but Paul extended this belief over the whole community. The primary justification for marriage became a defence against fornication, because it was better to marry than to burn. Marriage was not so much a positive activity in itself but more the last line of defence against natural desire.

The Judaic view of women which was present in Paul's theology was reinforced in early Christianity by Aristotelian philosophy. Judaic Christianity, like the Essene sect, was primarily concerned with eschatology, not with rhetoric, but once Christianity developed in Greece it was forced increasingly to express belief within the garment of Greek philosophy. Eventually the Christian church itself became a hellenizing force by spreading to the urban commercial centres of the Mediterranean world. Christianity adopted

the logic and the social organization of the classical world, and hence took over its attitude to women. In Aristotle's philosophy the moral value of a person was defined by his function in society and, since he assumed that women were basically domestic workers alongside domestic slaves, their moral value was far below that of men (Okin, 1980). Because the privacy of the domestic sphere was regarded as deprivation by contrast to the freedom and rationality of the public sphere of politics, women were associated with necessity and toil. To be private was to be deprived and as a result women were not entirely suitable as companions for men. To understand this social arrangement, it is important to recognize that the idea of contest was central to classical life. Men were involved in two competitive spheres: of the body (sport) and of the mind (politics); women had no place in either. As a consequence, men sought fraternal contacts through homosexuality or through the system of courtesans (*hetairai*) (Gouldner, 1967). The validation of the male self thus took place outside the domestic sphere, leaving women locked within social roles of service and reproduction. While Paul condemned women to silence because of their association with seduction, the Greeks removed women from the world of discursive combat because their domestic character robbed them of public rationality.

Although under Roman law the position of women in society was somewhat alleviated (de Beauvoir, 1972), hellenized Christianity provided a powerful doctrine to legitimize the subordination of women both in society and in the church. This negative view of women was, I have suggested, closely connected with the nature of property distribution within the household, which was in turn associated with problems of paternity. The attempt to explain women's social exclusion in terms of their association with nature is secondary to these economic and political determinations. At the level of theology, however, the 'problem' of women was formulated in terms of the search for a rational solution to salvation. These ancient anxieties about women which grew out of the myth of Eve's seduction were increasingly formulated into an intellectualized theology and increasingly institutionalized in monasticism, celibacy and a priestly monopoly. Different religions can be conceived as distinctive salvational practices, but any rigorous attempt to achieve salvation must in Weber's view involve some solution to the irrational, excluded or sublimated, otherwise it conflicts with both the mystical and the ascetic path towards personal salvation. For Weber Christianity 'went beyond all other religions in the limitations imposed upon permissible and legitimate sexuality' (1966: 239).

It is sometimes suggested that this problem of sexuality in Christianity split the female personality into diametrically opposed halves – either the harlot or the pure mother. Equally Christianity fractured love into *agape* or *eros*:

In the Christian religion one finds what amounts to a total separation of spiritual and physical love, a renunciation of sexuality which is almost homosexual in

its sentimental evocation of the pure mother figure and its emphasis on the union and companionship of a select band of brothers, the twelve Apostles. (Figs, 1978: 55)

It would be more correct to say that in Christendom there emerged a division of reproductive activity which divided the society into an elite which renounced sexuality and a mass which bore the burden of reproduction. This division cut across gender since both monks and nuns became virtuosi of spiritual love. There developed an exchange relationship between this spiritual elite and the mass which shouldered the necessary evil of reproduction. The elite performed a spiritual labour on behalf of those enmeshed in the duties of the flesh. These vicarious duties of the spiritual elite compensated for the dangers of reproduction which, while necessary, also gratified desire.

The Feudal System

While this division provided a 'solution' for the necessity of reproduction, the orthodox system of Christian moral teaching never entirely matched the demographic and social requirements of household reproduction among the dominant class. This lack of perfect fit is well illustrated by the requirements of feudalism. In the feudal system the accumulation of property in land presupposed a system of successful marriage alliances and the continuity of property between father and son. In turn, this system was aided by the presence of a powerful doctrine of sexual behaviour in mediaeval Catholic doctrine. The stability of inheritance under either primogeniture or unigeniture was backed up by religious teaching which demanded female chastity, virginity in daughters, and filial piety and duty among disprivileged siblings. The feudal system, while demanding pure wives, also required maximum fertility to guarantee male succession. In many respects Catholicism answered both requirements ideologically by elevating the notion of the pure mother, while also encouraging the biblical imperative to 'go forth and multiply'. The regular confession of women and the requirement of priestly control over confession which developed rapidly in the thirteenth century provided a powerful religious apparatus for the control of aristocratic women by lords through the intermediary of the priest (Foucault, 1981). The primary aim of confession was to protect orthodox belief and practice from heresy; the reform of the confessional in the thirteenth century was part of a wider reorganization of the church which was endangered by a variety of heresies and controversies. Confession sought to bring about public coherence and stability through the internal action of the individual 'court of conscience' (Hepworth and Turner, 1982). Although these confessional reforms may not have had the desired effect on the population as a whole, women within the dominant class were especially 'exposed' to the spiritual direction of the father confessor. The whole ritualistic and liturgical structure of the church gave formal backing to

the moral theology of the Catholic Church which, at the level of the feudal household, encouraged female submissiveness combined with maximum fertility. In principle, Catholic sexual teaching in the Middle Ages could thus be thought to be perfectly compatible with the economic requirements of feudalism.

There were, however, two permanent problems in the feudal system of monogamous unions and inheritance by primogeniture which conflicted with orthodox religious teaching. As we have seen, under the polygamous system of Old Testament patriarchy barren wives presented no major difficulty since they could be supplemented by additional women. Monogamy in feudalism presented a threat to inheritance in the case of barren wives, wives who produced daughters or in situations where the male offspring died before their fathers. The mediaeval marriage system tended as a result to produce two contrasting patterns of family organization – the ecclesiastical and lay systems (Duby, 1978). The importance of the lay system was that it permitted the repudiation of barren wives; these repudiations were often legitimated by questionable appeals to incestuous unions. There was, as a result, a conflict between the economic importance of fertile wives and the religious requirement of life-long monogamy and fidelity. Thus the religious ideology gave only partial support to the economic interests of a patriarchal system.

The other tension in the feudal system was the social dislocation of unattached 'youths', namely the surplus population of younger sons of powerful feudal families. These younger sons found it difficult to form marriage contracts with women of their own class, because they could not inherit adequate entitlement to land. They formed instead casual alliances with household concubines or with peasant women or held adulterous aspirations towards married women. Their behaviour, unlike the ideal behaviour of the first-born male, was regarded as 'unruly' and hence they retained the title of 'youth' irrespective of their actual age and status. What defines 'youth' is not age, but the absence of binding commitments resulting from their precarious location in the social system (Davis, 1971; Smith, 1973). These 'youths' found an outlet for their passions in tournaments, war, chivalry and escapades. There was no space for such men within the church's view of the world which, for example, did not endorse tournaments or unregulated military adventures. One interesting feature of the unrestrained sexuality of these 'youths' is that it emphasized the fact that, at its basis, the marriage relationship was essentially an economic contract and hence marriage was somewhat remote from sexual love, affection and desire. It is for this reason that the 'youth' of mediaeval society have often been regarded as the main social carriers of courtly love which was in part an alternative to the dominant religious model of asexual love.

Courtly love as an ideal emerged towards the end of the eleventh century in Languedoc and developed as a dominant model of much mediaeval literature, achieving its apogee in *Le Roman de la Rose*. This tradition of sexual passion is associated with a class of landless, unattached knights

for whom the lady of the castle represented an ideal, if distant, object of their love. The main themes of courtly love poetry were humility, courtesy, adultery and the religion of love. As Lewis (1936) points out, these themes indicate a certain feudalization of love since they reflect the hierarchical court structure of feudal society. Romantic passion was channelled through the hierarchical status organization and directed upwards from the landless knight to the ladies of the court. Such love was expressed in terms of chivalry and courtesy, embracing a new etiquette of interpersonal manners. These romantic attachments tended to be adulterous precisely because these knights were excluded from appropriate marriages. The themes of courtly love poetry tended to be anti-Christian and there evolved a religion of love which was a parody of the central Christian virtues of chastity and virginity. This poetic tradition, at least by implication, recognized that marriage had nothing to do with love and that romantic attachments could only be located outside wedlock. This interpretation of the poetic tradition of romantic love has been challenged by Robertson (1980) because, in the case of Chaucer, romantic love was seen to be destructive of the social fabric in which the stability of the family was the ultimate foundation of the stability of society. In some respects, however, Robertson's correction of the thesis of Lewis only serves to reinforce the point that courtly love was an oppositional tradition which recognized that the patriarchal organization of the household was an economic arrangement that precluded companionate marriage and attachment based on sentiment.

It has been argued that the household structure of mediaeval society required an ideology which enforced standards of fidelity and chastity in women as the basis for a system of inheritance based on male supremacy. This patriarchal system was a form of household power which subordinated both men and women to gerontocracy in the interests of property conservation. To some extent Catholic moral theology was perfectly suited to these requirements, but the economic pattern of the household also gave rise to domestic concubinage, a stratum of riotous youth and an oppositional tradition of love poetry. It was partly out of this oppositional romanticism that a new appreciation of the individuality and subjectivity of women began to emerge, which was incompatible with much of the traditional conceptualization of women in society.

Individualism

The social role of 'youth' in pre-modern society is important because it reinforces the argument that patriarchy is a system of domestic power which is exercised over both men and women of all age groups. The 'youth' is not a whole person, equipped with responsibilities and social power, because he is removed from control over property. It could not be argued that 'youth' as a social category was somehow close to nature and therefore

not part of the cultural core of society. These men were excluded from social status and power by virtue of their exclusion from property. On the other hand, this group of propertyless males had certain freedoms which were, at least normatively, proscribed to male first-born heirs. The eldest son in principle had to conserve his body so that his seed could be the carrier of household property and political power. In addition, the cultivation of courtly love poetry, especially in the troubadour tradition, resulted in a new conception of woman as a person capable of individual sentiment, affection and education. The love poem elevated the married woman above the previous conception of her as an entity whose value was defined by the capacity to spawn male offspring. While individualism is typically associated with capitalist society, there were forms of individualism which developed in court society during the Renaissance and these forms of self-consciousness were incompatible with the social rigidity imposed by the patriarchal household.

The cultivation of the self-conscious individual was an effect of growing mercantile urbanism, the troubadour conception of individualized emotions, university culture and the autonomy of city life (Chenu, 1969). With the emergence of Renaissance culture in the fifteenth century, powerful women within the court circles of the major Italian towns began to assert greater personal autonomy and individuality against traditional patriarchal control (Heller, 1978). In his classic study of the Renaissance, Burckhardt (1960) also wrote about the growing eminence and individuality of women in the context of aristocratic Italy. Women played a major role in setting the cultural tone and ambience; they became respected for their learning and culture as equals alongside men. It is important, however, not to overstate this argument about the freedoms of Renaissance women. The argument applies to a small elite of women within the court, and the equality enjoyed by them has to be set against the background of marriages which were contractual and economic rather than companionate and affectionate. Indeed, part of the 'freedom' enjoyed by these women to engage in romantic and adulterous alliances was explained by the restraints of the conventional marriage:

After the briefest acquaintance with her future husband, the young wife quits the convent or the paternal roof to enter upon a world in which her character begins to develop rapidly. The rights of the husband are for this reason conditional, and even the man who regards them in the light of a '*ius quaesitum*' thinks only of the outward conditions of the contract, not of the affections. (Burckhardt, 1960: 270)

Although there was considerable sexual licence in such a context, a woman who lost her 'honour' in a flagrant and public way was often subject to violent and bloody punishment, as was her lover. The 'honour' of the family was of vital interest not only to husbands but also to brothers and uncles. Hence the 'freedom' of these elite women was hedged around by threats of physical violence and social stigma, since honour was not an elastic commodity.

It is often held that the Reformation shattered the traditional Catholic mediaeval world in which the family was based on an economic contract and affectionate love was to be discovered separately and illicitly. The Reformation did not make the body clean, but it did in many respects transform the nature of family life and sexuality. The Puritan revolution dismissed the confessor from his traditional position of authority within the family circle, making the husband pre-eminently responsible for the nature of everyday family life. At the same time, celibacy and the priestly calling became less important in the scale of religious values, as domesticity itself became a lay vocation. Religious education became increasingly domesticated as parents assumed duties previously dominated by ecclesiastical authorities (Zaretsky, 1976). Thus, the Puritan revolution 'by reducing the authority of the priest in society, simultaneously elevated the authority of lay heads of households' (Hill, 1964: 43). However, Puritanism had very paradoxical consequences for both women and children. Children were regarded as unreformed bearers of original sin, who therefore required intensive indoctrination and meticulous supervision. The Calvinistic ideal embraced the notions of ingrained infantile depravity and juvenile frivolity, mitigated by instant conversions and precocious saints (Grylls, 1978). The adolescent body became highly charged with strong forces of damnation and salvation, constrained by the power of individual conscience under the prompting of the church. Fathers had a new incentive to secure the compliance of their children against the overwhelming facts of original sinfulness. The aim of child training was to break the recalcitrant will of the infant (Stone, 1979).

In the same period, while women gained a certain religious status within the household, they also lost a certain degree of control over domestic arrangements, such as the celebration of traditional religious festivals within the home. There appear to be three reasons for the decline of status for wives in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. The diminution of the importance of kinship left the wife more at the mercy of her husband within the home; the decline of Catholicism meant that women could no longer appeal to the cult of Mary as an expression of the religious significance of women; and legal changes reduced the rights of wives in relation to domestic property (Stone, 1979).

Witchcraft

The Protestant Reformation also had the unintended consequence of exposing women more profoundly to witchcraft accusations. Protestantism removed much of the protective veil of ritual and magical practices which had protected the mediaeval lay person from evil and witchcraft. Puritanism proscribed the use of holy water and holy wells, denied much of the instrumental effectivity of prayer, diminished the importance of sacraments, frowned upon the churching of women and abolished the semi-magical

practices of a previous era (Thomas, 1971). The result was that the lay person had no protective counter-magic with which to ward off the threats of witchcraft, evil and the devil. While the Reformation affirmed strenuously the omnipresence of evil, it took away the protection offered by the priest, the sign of the cross, holy water and holy places (Thomas, 1970). The paradoxical result was that, from the middle of the sixteenth century, evil in the shape of witches appeared to be everywhere (Trevor-Roper, 1967). In particular, women were held to be the principal accomplices with the devil in the crime of witchcraft. Women were regarded as more irrational, emotional and impressionable than men, and hence more susceptible to satanic temptation. This view of women was typically backed up by an appeal to the mythology of Genesis and the fall of Adam, as in the case of the *Daemonologie* of James Stuart (later James I of England) in 1597. It is not surprising, therefore, that in the period from 1563 to 1727 between 70 and 90 per cent of witchcraft suspects in northern Europe were women (McLachlan and Swales, 1980). While women were normally suspected of a pact with the devil involving sexual intercourse, this sexual theme was absent in the case of male suspects. The problem of female witchcraft suggests that men did treat women as pre-social creatures, whose lives were more determined by 'natural' (or 'unnatural') passions than by culture. The nature of the household and property in Puritan Britain still played an important part in the distribution of witchcraft by making old, dependent women more likely to be suspected of witchcraft practices. In Britain, changes in the traditional system of mutual charity at the village level had made dependent women, especially widows, particularly vulnerable to economic hardship. These women became a burden on the community and

[t]he conflict between resentment and a sense of obligation produced the ambivalence which made it possible for men to turn begging women brusquely from the door and yet to suffer torments of conscience after having done so. This ensuing guilt was fertile ground of witchcraft accusation. (Thomas, 1970: 67)

Women who had become detached from the supportive framework of the household unit were thus forced to rely on neighbours rather than their kinfolk for aid and support. Like 'youths' detached from the social structure by their lack of property, these unattached widows were seen to be socially dangerous to the public order. It was not women as such who were accused, but women who had fallen outside the ambit of patriarchal society. The rule seems to be: 'No property, no personality'.

I have argued that the Puritan revolution had very contradictory consequences for both women and children. While family life rather than the church became a more central focus of social concern and while the importance of the family for political life was constantly affirmed, the status of women in society was also to some extent restricted. Although it is possible to detect these shifts in the role of women through various historical

periods, the implication of the property argument is that women's social position cannot radically change without a fundamental reorganization of the relationship between male authority, property and household. The question of divorce and the legal rights of women over property are thus crucial considerations in any sociological analysis of patriarchy. In this respect, John Milton's discussion of divorce perfectly illustrates the ambiguities of the Puritan attitude to women, but also anticipates changes in the social location of women with the rise of 'possessive individualism' and industrial capitalism.

By placing a new emphasis on the religious nature of the marriage tie and by treating marriage as a union freely entered into by man and wife, the Reformation also brought to the foreground the whole issue of the dissolubility of marriage. Despite the stress on the importance of freedom of conscience and religious individualism, the Reformation made divorce unacceptable as a solution to an unhappy marriage. By making marriage a vocation equivalent to traditional religious vocations, Puritanism made alternatives to divorce – adultery, homosexuality, prostitution – equally unthinkable. Puritanism, in short, offered no escape from a marriage which was basically Christian but also unhappy. This was precisely the dilemma of John Milton who, at the age 34 years, precipitately married Mary Powell, the 16-year-old daughter of a royalist family from Oxfordshire. The couple were emotionally and intellectually incompatible, and Mary Milton soon returned to her parents. Partly as a response to his own experience, Milton published a series of pamphlets on divorce between 1643 and 1645 in which he attempted to present a moral argument in favour of the dissolubility of marriage within a Christian framework.

An Argument for Divorce

The main point of Milton's defence of divorce was that marriage is not primarily about reproduction but about companionship and where this emotional mutuality fails divorce is a reasonable solution to marriages which have become empty and painful. His main target then was not 'the idealism of Catholic doctrine' but 'the realism of Catholic mediaeval practice' (Grierson, 1956: 53) which, in the absence of divorce, covertly accepted adultery as 'a fact of life'. For Milton, the worst condition in life was loneliness and he treated matrimony as one of the basic social provisions for companionship. The union of man and woman was not primarily sexual, but existed 'to comfort and refresh him against the evil of solitary life' (Milton, 1959: 235). The idea of marriage as a necessary evil and a concession to the flesh was the construct of mediaeval Catholicism and not a necessary element of Christian theology. Milton did not argue in favour of 'licence and levity' but argued that 'Some conscionable and tender pitty might be had of those who had unwarily in a thing they never practiz'd before, made themselves the bondmen of a luckless and helples

matrimony' (Milton, 1959: 240). In the absence of divorce, men would comfort themselves at the stews or in their neighbour's bed. Marriage ought to be based upon the free and amicable communion of minds and thus it is cruelty to force together persons who find, after marriage, that they are incompatible. This cruelty is not unlike 'the custom that some parents and guardians have of forcing marriages' (Milton, 1959: 275). While Milton produced a strong humanistic argument in favour of companionate marriage, his analysis of divorce proved to be difficult to reconcile with the Reformation view of marriage as a life-long commitment. As a result, Milton came increasingly into conflict with Parliament and the Presbyterians, and was forced to defend other aspects of his position, such as the importance of freedom of communication, in the *Areopagitica* of 1644.

Milton's view on marriage and divorce pinpointed the contradictions within Puritanism as a whole. Milton, along with other Puritans, was committed to the importance of filial duty and parental authority, while also believing that parents had no right to select marriage partners for their offspring. Milton had a profound commitment to individual freedom and the liberty of conscience, while also believing that the state and the church should be responsible for the education and moral development of the individual. Milton held that the primary justification for marriage was intellectual companionship, while also believing that it was the right of the husband to decide whether the marriage was providing companionship. Divorce was to exist as a method by which husbands, who found their wives no longer acceptable as companions, could dissolve the marriage. Milton presupposed much of the traditional framework of gerontocracy and patriarchy, while also pressing forward an argument which presupposed individualism. The antinomies in Milton's thought thus reflected the disjunctures of the period. The first half of the seventeenth century saw the statement of a clear political theory connecting the absolute right of kings with the absolute right of husbands within the patriarchal household, but this period also saw the origins of social contract theory and individualism which were incompatible with the theory of patriarchal powers. Milton's view of divorce, while being in many respects limited and traditional, represented a turning point in the relationship between power, property and patriarchy.

In this chapter I have examined the broad religious background to patriarchal ideology which regards women as by nature emotional, irrational and unstable. This religious view suggests that women's natural passions are more potent than their powers of reason: Eve's body governs Eve's mind. The history of Christian attitudes towards women is thus powerful evidence of the validity of the feminist argument that women are subordinated in society by an ideology which treats women as closer to nature than to culture. What supports this patriarchal ideology is, however, the control of property within the household, so that, in practice, it is difficult to separate patriarchy and gerontocracy. Women were subordinated, but they were subordinated alongside other

dependents of both sexes. The ideological control of women and 'youth' is grounded in the control of property. Once household property becomes less essential to the maintenance of society divorce becomes possible and readily available. Changes in the nature of property and the household are thus the material basis for changes in social relations between men and women. Patriarchy as a result is weakened and transformed into 'patrism'.

The End of Patriarchy?

The Dominant Ideology Thesis

Marxism is often taken to argue that the institutions, culture and social practices of a society stand in a necessary or determinant relationship to the dominant mode of production. This position could at least be taken as an unobjectionable implication of a strict interpretation of historical materialism. It is well known, however, that in practice it has proved notoriously difficult to demonstrate both theoretically and empirically that any particular ideology, such as 'individualism', stands in a necessary connection with the capitalist mode of production and even more difficult to demonstrate that an ideology is dominant in capitalist society. *The Dominant Ideology Thesis* (Abercrombie et al., 1980) has been criticized on a number of grounds, not least of which is that the book failed to consider sexism and patriarchy, among other forces, as playing a crucial ideological function in capitalism. In this chapter it is argued that capitalism, far from requiring patriarchal domination, actually undermines patriarchal power by transforming the nature of the household unit. In so far as patriarchy survives, it is largely a defensive ideological reaction against socio-economic changes which erode male dominance in both the public and private spheres. An implicit theme of this presentation is that the transition from early to late capitalism is more important in the transformation of the household unit than the transition from feudalism to capitalism (Turner, 1981). One further consequence of this assessment of the theory of patriarchy is that it would be difficult to claim that both patriarchal and individualist ideologies are dominant within capitalism, since it is shown that these are, in fact, mutually incompatible.

The concept of 'patriarchy' has become central to feminist theory, especially since the publication of Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics* (1977) in 1969, where the notion of patriarchal power played a major analytical role. The analysis of patriarchy is clearly important for the development of feminist politics, but it equally raises major issues for both Marxism and sociology. At the nub of these issues lies the question of economic determinism. Defined simply as the domination and subordination of women by men, patriarchy as a power structure appears to exist under a variety of modes of production – slavery, feudalism and capitalism. While it has a specific relationship to the household and to capitalism, it exists outside the household and often persists despite changes in the form and

function of the household. Patriarchy predates capitalism and the theory of patriarchal authority can be found in the political writings of Plato and Aristotle, but it is also present in Locke, Rousseau and Mill (Okin, 1980). In Western culture, patriarchal authority found clear ideological support in the Christian view of women as morally evil, but it is equally present in so-called oriental religions. The very ubiquity of patriarchalism in social time and space makes the possibility of a definite detailed causal explanation appear remote. In this chapter I shall not attempt to 'solve' the analytical puzzle of patriarchy, but I want to suggest that any theoretical conundrum in sociology may be illuminated by a preliminary exercise in the sociology of knowledge, namely by an examination of the social context of the theory itself. It also seems valid to make a distinction between patriarchy as a theory and as a social practice, before attempting to connect these sociologically.

Patriarchalism

The idea that the family is the origin of society and its main source of stability made its appearance with the dawn of Western political philosophy. The specific theory of patriarchal power, however, is to be located in the English constitutional crisis of the seventeenth century and with the political writings of Sir Robert Filmer who died in 1653 and whose *Patriarcha: A Defence of the Natural Power of Kings against the Unnatural Liberty of the People*, written around 1640, was published posthumously in 1680. It is often argued that Filmer, a member of the Kentish gentry, is remembered in political thought largely because John Locke's *Two Treatises of Government* attacked Filmer's defence of royal absolutism. The general background to Filmerism was the contest between the doctrine of the divine right of kings as set forth, for example, by James Stuart in the *Trew Law of Free Monarchies* in 1598, and the contractualist theories of writers like Thomas Hobbes in the *Leviathan* of 1651. In his study of Filmerism, Gordon Schochet (1975) identified three general circumstances which contributed to the emergence of a specific patriarchal theory of political authority.

One immediate cause of the rise of an articulate patriarchal theory was the ideological threat posed by contractualism. Patriarchy was the traditional political world-view but before the seventeenth century this was largely taken for granted. The Fifth Commandment – honour thy parents – was part of the standard catechism for children in the Church of England and in politics it was assumed that the family was the root of all secondary social institutions since it was the family which provided the institutional linkage between the individual and the public sphere. States and empires were simply enlargements of the household in which they had their historical origins. Political institutions were natural, not man-made conventions, since political life had its inception within the household which was a natural environment. The articulation of patriarchalism can thus be

seen as partly a defensive reaction to alternative contractualist theories which made a clearer distinction between social and political institutions and which regarded human institutions, especially political ones, as conventions and therefore capable of change. A second aspect of the growth of Filmerism was a new conception of the family which grew out of the English Reformation. Celibacy ceased to be the norm of a true religious vocation and there was a greater theological emphasis on the religious values and duties of family life, especially fatherhood. Marriage and the rearing of children were more highly valued by contrast with virginity. Fatherhood became a vocation, replacing the fatherhood of the Catholic priest. In addition, fathers within the household now had absolute power since they were no longer under the control of the priest. The parallel between domestic and political absolutism now became obvious. The political doctrine of patriarchalism actually fitted the daily experience of typical Elizabethan and Stuart households. The so-called 'extended family' of the period typically consisted of a married couple, their unmarried children, domestic servants and apprentices. Given these demographic characteristics, the presence of grandparents in the household was unusual (Laslett, 1968). The family was essentially a two-generation unit, but it had a group of domestic servants living under the same roof. In other words, the patriarchal authority of the head of the household extended over a heterogeneous collection of individuals, both male and female. Subordinate male domestics were thus subject to patriarchy as much as the patriarch's wife and children. The household as a rigid, authoritarian structure matched the hierarchical organization of the public realm, making the analogy between domestic and political fatherhood highly plausible. Finally, Schochet argues that the dominance of what he calls a genetic theory of politics against a teleological view made it possible to derive political obligation from an account of the origins of society. The evolution of society does not, from a genetic point of view, provide norms for political action, since the norms of a political order can only be discovered in its origins. This anti-historical view of the political community made it possible for writers like Filmer to establish the basis of the authority of the Stuart monarchy on biblical patriarchy, especially the absolute authority of Adam.

As a political doctrine, patriarchalism can be said to have three components. There is first anthropological patriarchalism which attempted to provide a description of how the family was expanded by population growth, territorial extension and conquest to become a state. In other words, a description of how patriarchalism becomes patrimonialism. When this description was combined with a genetic theory, it was possible to link this distinction to some moral doctrine that the origins of an institution were authoritative with respect to future commitments. Geneticism made it possible to move from 'is' to 'ought', from description to moral evaluation. The second component of patriarchalism, moral patriarchy, follows directly from this transition from description to evaluation. Political obedience was justified on the ground that political authority had originally belonged to

fathers and this argument was normally supported by the evidence of the Old Testament. Divine right absolutism was thus sanctioned on the grounds that it was the first form of government in the Genesis account of the origins of human society. Thirdly, there is what Schochet simply calls 'ideological patriarchy' which employed the fatherly image as the basis for all forms of authority, including kings, fathers, magistrates, teachers and masters. Ideological patriarchy was not particularly dependent on a genetic theory of origins. The argument was simply that God had commanded obedience to fathers and by extension to kings who were fathers of the realm.

Filmer's doctrine of patriarchy was in two parts – a critique of Hobbesianism, especially the idea of a state of nature and a social contract, and a positive affirmation of all three components of the patriarchal theory of authority. Filmer's logical argument can be summarized as follows:

1. Familial authority is natural, divinely sanctioned, and – in its pristine form – absolute and unlimited.
2. Political power is identical to the power of fathers. Therefore, political power is natural, divinely sanctioned, and – because it enjoys the ancient and original rights of fatherhood – absolute and unlimited. (Schochet, 1975: 269)

While Filmerism was obviously appealing as a theory of household and political absolutism, it was equally widely attacked by Locke, Rousseau and the Scottish Enlightenment philosophers. Locke emphasized the reciprocity not hierarchy of domestic obligations, rejected absolutism and argued for limited powers. For Rousseau, there was a major distinction to be made between the private and the public economy; the metaphor of fatherly powers provided no basis of kingly authority. For the Scottish commonsense philosophers, historical research emphasized the relativity of human arrangements and there was, for writers like Hume, an unbridgeable gap between 'is' and 'ought'.

Schochet argues that patriarchy as a meaningful political ideology went into rapid decline after 1690. The causes of this decline were two-fold. First, the restoration of the Stuart monarchy and the revolution of 1688 made the claims of the theory of the divine right of kings factually difficult to support. Contractualism appeared to fit the facts of political life more directly and neatly. Secondly, the dominant political doctrine from Locke onwards was individualism and with it a bundle of political beliefs – separation of powers, limited government and private property rights – which were incompatible with absolutism. Individualism as a political doctrine which invests rights in persons *qua* persons thus appears to be incompatible with patriarchy which invests rights in men *qua* fathers. It is well known of course that Locke's individualism was possessive (Macpherson, 1962) and invested rights in persons who already enjoyed property rights. One solution for liberal individualism in practice was to regard women as non persons, with the result that liberal philosophers like

Mill remained consistently inconsistent with respect to the rights of women and children. Prior to the Matrimonial Causes Acts of the late nineteenth century, on entry into marriage women were no longer legal persons. Schochet's argument, however, implies that, in so far as individualism is a doctrine specific to capitalism, the growth of capitalist individualism ought in theory to be incompatible with the continuance of patriarchy. The implication is that patriarchy is a traditional theory of authority which would appear archaic in a society characterized by individualism, secular values and legal-rationalism. For example, to take a theory like that of Lucien Goldmann, the growth of exchange relationships under capitalism creates a system of values centred on the individual, freedom and universalism (Goldmann, 1973). In principle, we would expect a society based on commodity-exchange between individuals to limit or undermine patriarchy based on a system of the exchange of use-values within the household. I return to this point shortly.

Filmerism is obviously a primitive, if not vulgar, form of patriarchy, but a study of Filmerism is instructive for an analysis of the survival of patriarchy in capitalism. While the family had been from Greek philosophy onwards regarded as the principal source of social stability, the specific doctrine of patriarchal authority is the product of a crisis of English political absolutism (Anderson, 1974) in the period prior to the bourgeois political revolution of 1688. It was a defensive theory of kingship, but it was specifically part of the Protestant revolution which regarded priests as an interference in the natural rights of fathers. Patriarchy as a theory of male authority emerged during a period of repressive sexual norms, consequent upon the rigidity of Protestant theology with respect to female sexuality (Stone, 1979). The political demise of patriarchy as a theory of political obligation corresponds with the rise of industrial capitalism, the dominant ideology of which was supposedly individualism, *laissez-faire* economics and the nightwatchman state. It might be more accurate to say that capitalism required limited individualism, since in practice it excluded women from citizenship. There are nevertheless a variety of social changes which accompanied capitalism – the secularization of society; the decline of natural law theory; the availability of contraception; the decline of the extended family, particularly the erosion of domestic servants – which would appear to be incompatible with patriarchalism. In this respect, it would be possible to regard feminism as a movement to establish citizenship for women which followed socialism as an attempt to secure citizenship for working-class men and therefore as a usurpational movement against social closure within the market place (Parkin, 1979). The restrictions on that struggle against social closure would therefore appear to be the topic of modern patriarchy. Before coming to that argument I want to explore a more recent sociological account of patriarchy, namely that presented in *Economy and Society* by Max Weber (1978). One reason for this is that Weber is one of the few classical sociologists to use the term persistently as part of a theory of traditional authority. Furthermore, Weber's sociology raises in

an acute form the whole debate about the relative autonomy of economic and political power.

Weber on Patriarchy

The discussion of patriarchy is located in Weber's formal analysis of the household economy and, more particularly, in his conceptualization of domination, where patriarchalism is the 'pure type' of traditional domination. Patriarchy is defined simply as the personal power of a master over his subjects (wife, children and servants) within the household. The authority of the patriarch is grounded in the norm of filial piety, reinforced by propinquity and the daily routines of common life. Patriarchy emerges out of, and creates, interpersonal dependency:

The woman is dependent because of the normal superiority of the physical and intellectual energies of the male, and the child because of his objective helplessness, the grown-up because of habituation, the persistent influence of education and the effect of firmly rooted memories from childhood and adolescence, and the servant because from childhood on the facts of life have taught him that he lacks protection outside the master's power sphere and that he must submit to him to gain that protection. (Weber, 1978, vol. 2: 1007)

The authority of the master is customary and traditional, and these norms are typically backed up by an appeal to the sacred. However, it is interesting to note that his daily authority is located in a variety of sources – the alleged weakness of women and children, habituation, ideology and the powerlessness of the servant outside the household. Furthermore, patriarchal power is limited and uncertain, rather than absolute and unquestioned.

The patriarch's power is checked by custom and tradition. It is in principle difficult for the patriarch to appeal to tradition as the basis of his own authority while also systematically overriding tradition in order to exploit openly his subjects. A second source of political weakness lies in the simple fact that the patriarch is greatly outnumbered by his dependents who may collectively seek to oppose his power. In addition, when the family or household is extended by natural expansion or conquest, patriarchal power is converted into patrimonialism which Weber defines as 'a special case of patriarchal domination – domestic authority decentralized through assignment of land and sometimes of equipment to sons of the house or other dependents' (Weber, 1978, vol. 2: 1010). Because of the extended nature of this control through decentralization, reciprocal rather than dependent relations become central, which results in a further limitation on the direct, unlimited power of the original patriarch. The picture that emerges from Weber's account of patriarchy is not that it is permanent and unchallenged, but rather that the master is caught in an uncertain and potentially conflictual relationship with his subordinates.

What is also obvious from Weber's formal sociology is that patriarchy and patrimonialism are pre-modern forms of domination which were characteristic of traditional societies before the emergence with capitalism of legal-rational authority. Weber argues that the sexual relationship between men and women can only become the basis for social action when it is transformed into a specific economic organization, namely the household. This unit came into existence for the organized and collective cultivation of soil. The household in this sense is not, for example, characteristic of nomadism. The household which is based on patriarchal authority exists for the satisfaction of its members and defence against the outside social order. It implies a certain solidarity and household communism for the consumption of goods and services, and this solidarity ruled out inheritance on an individual basis. The maintenance of household solidarity also required sexual regulation of its members 'in the interest of safeguarding solidarity and domestic peace' (Weber, 1978, vol. 1: 364). Sexual regulation led to a situation where heads of households held exclusive sexual rights over their women, although Weber notes that the exclusivity of sexual relations is highly precarious. In short, the household as an economic unit existed for collective production and reproduction, and Weber derives most of the features of the household, such as patriarchy, traditional authority, decentralization and sexual exclusiveness from this central fact of economic survival.

Patriarchy, we might argue, was the political structure which sat logically on the economic base of the household. It follows that the dissolution of the traditional household undermines the economic base which supported the patriarchal superstructure. This argument appears to be the one taken by Weber in his analysis of the impact of capitalism on the traditional domestic economy. The division of labour and the rise of individualism tend to break up the original solidarity of the household as the individual comes to 'shape his life as an individual and to enjoy the fruits of his own abilities and labor as he himself wishes' (Weber, 1978, vol. 1: 375). The individual in capitalism relies less on the household and kin for protection because the state assumes these functions. The household and workplace become ecologically separated and the household ceases to be a unit of common production, becoming instead a unit of common consumption:

Moreover the individual receives his entire education increasingly from outside his home and by means which are supplied by various enterprises: schools, bookstores, theatres, concert halls, clubs, meetings, etc. He can no longer regard the household as the bearer of those cultural values in whose service he places himself. (Weber, 1978, vol. 1: 375)

The household is no longer a unit of production and is replaced by the firm, which is increasingly detached from any kinship basis and operates according to bureaucratic, legal-rational norms rather than by tradition. The implication of this account of the transformation of the pre-modern household must be that patriarchy is weakened by the decline in the size

of the household, the rise of individualistic values, the transformation of traditional authority and the disenchantment of religious values. One other implication is, however, that the demise of patriarchy is limited by the fact that the household remained a unit for consumption and reproduction, with women excluded from the public domain by their allocation to the functions of reproduction. How this exclusion could be legitimated in the absence of general values (either of a religious or natural law variety) remains obscure and Weber has nothing to say on this issue.

There are a number of general comments to be made on Weber's theory of patriarchal power. First, Weber associated patriarchy with gerontocracy as a prime illustration of traditional authority or more strictly domination, and therefore it is evident that patriarchal power is pre-modern. Secondly, the discussion of patriarchy is merely a prelude to a more central concern of Weber's, namely the contrast between patrimonialism and feudalism in relation to the transition to capitalism. Weber's notion that the patrimonial state is an extended and enlarged version of the patriarchal household appears to resemble the Filmeristic anthropological description of how one gets from fatherhood to kingship. Thirdly, in contrast to Filmerism, Weber does not want in principle to derive any normative conclusions from either the origins or transformation of patriarchalism, although in practice his analysis does contain many evaluative assumptions – such as the natural superiority of the physical and intellectual energies of men over women. Fourthly, patriarchy is a relationship of domination over both women *and* men; male servants are subordinated to the master alongside subservient women and children. Fifthly, Weber's sociology is organized round two questions (ownership of the means of violence/ownership of the means of production); the relationship between violence (which is the real focus of political power) and the production of economic goods is variable. However, in his account of the household it appears that the economic relations of production determine the form of politics. For example, the transformation of the household by the external forces of capitalist development must undermine the traditional authority of the master/patriarch. Since the household is no longer a productive unit, the importance of conserving familial wealth for future investment becomes less significant with the development of banking, long-term credit and the autonomy of the company from kin control.

Engels on Patriarchy

It is interesting to contrast Weber's view with that of Engels (n.d.) in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*. In this study of the family, Engels presented an unambiguously evolutionary view of the development of the family: under savagery, there was group marriage; under barbarism, pairing marriage; for civilization, that is capitalism, there was monogamy, supplemented by prostitution and adultery.

Monogamy, primogeniture and the subordination of women all correspond to the emergence of private property in capitalism. The need to control women under a system of patriarchy is an effect of the need to control property under primogeniture (Abercrombie et al., 1980). For Engels patriarchy is not undermined or reinforced by capitalist relations. However, Engels was able to add to this position an analysis of class which was largely absent from Weber. Under capitalism, the function of the working-class household is the reproduction of labour; the function of the capitalist household is the reproduction of capital. However, Engels also recognized that the growth of Protestant individualism undermined the idea of the family as an economic contract and created a space within which women could experience some liberation of individuality. Once again we come up against the argument that in so far as capitalism fosters individualism, it generates a doctrine that it is, at least in principle, incompatible with the traditional claims of patriarchal authority. The idea of romantic love as the basis of the choice of marriage partners within an individualistic culture would appear to be incompatible with the idea that patriarchal preference should be the basis of marriage. Engels solved this by arguing that paradoxically the bourgeoisie was still committed to the antique doctrine that choice was not a suitable basis for marriage, while the proletariat had in practice adhered to the notion of individual choice on the basis of affection as the criterion of a marital relationship. Despite the differences between Marxism and Weberian sociology, there is one common element – namely that individualism is corrosive of patriarchal absolutism and that the former is the product of capitalism. Unfortunately it is very difficult to give an exact periodization of individualism (Turner, 1983). For those writers who locate individualism in Renaissance culture, the autonomy of women from patriarchal structures is to be located in the autonomy given to aristocratic women within the aristocratic courts of Renaissance Europe (Heller, 1978). Despite these difficulties of interpretation, there is some agreement that in many respects capitalism and patriarchy are incompatible. The decline of the household as a productive unit, the growth of individualism, the emergence of universalistic values and the division of labour should undermine traditional patriarchy as a dominant theme of traditional power. At least formally, capitalism is not based on ascriptive values (Parsons, 1951). Just as city air made the peasant free, so in theory capitalism should undermine the traditional domination of women by heads of households.

Weber's contribution to the contemporary feminist debate about patriarchy thus appears to be the argument that (1) patriarchy is rooted in pre-modern economic structures of the agrarian household, and (2) capitalism begins to undermine patriarchy by converting the household into a unit of consumption via the ideological agency of individualism. There is, however, an equally important Weberian version of patriarchy which comes from his concept of social closure. By this term, Weber meant any practice which was aimed at the monopolization of social rewards by a group of eligibles

against outsiders. Such exclusionary practices could be based on almost any criterion – age, sex, ethnicity, religion, language, nationality or colour. Weber suggested that almost any human characteristic could be seized upon as a suitable basis for defining exclusion; the criteria for the exercise of domination would thus appear to be entirely arbitrary. Such a theoretical position seems untenable and Parkin (1979) has suggested that exclusionary criteria are never arbitrary. Exclusionary criteria emerge because the state has already given some sanction to their selection. For example, he argues that ethnicity as a criterion of exclusion arises because ethnic groups have already suffered disabilities through conquest or forced migration and their inferior status has already been acknowledged by law. In the case of women, he suggests that their current exclusion is an effect of historical forces, namely their second-class status in law.

I have attempted to identify two possible views of the position of women in society from a Weberian perspective, namely patriarchy and social closure. It seems to me that in Weber's sociology it would be possible to see these two in historical sequence. First, capitalism weakens patriarchy by transforming the household as an economic unit, but secondly, social exclusion of women continues because the long history of patriarchy backed up by state legislation of matrimony provides the foundation for the contemporary subordination of women.

Feminist Theory

On the face of it, the feminist analysis of patriarchy looks very different from that of Weber. The feminist argument is that the development of capitalism did indeed separate the home and the economy as the household ceased to be a unit of production. Capitalism, however, maintains patriarchy for three interconnected reasons (Kuhn and Wolpe, 1978; Rosaldo and Lamphere, 1974). Firstly, it is in the interests of capital to support the unity of the family because the household is the primary unit of consumption. For Filmer the unity of the family was primarily of political significance; for feminists it is the location of the family within the circuit of commodities which appears essential. Secondly, women are locked in the private space of the household because women continue to have crucial reproductive functions for capitalism in providing fresh labour. This reproductive function is reinforced by patriarchal ideologies which claim that women, to quote Weber, lack the physical and intellectual energies of men. It is thus 'natural' for women to stay at home and have children because they are crucial for the mothering and nurturing of men. Thirdly, women cheapen the cost of labour for capital since their servicing of men is unpaid labour. Patriarchy is thus an effect of capitalism while also being a condition of its existence.

The argument I wish to present is that the model of the household which lies behind this analysis is relevant to early but not to late capitalism.

The model assumes that: (1) the household is a unit of consumption in which women produce use-values which are collectively consumed by the family; (2) women are largely and exclusively relegated to the domestic sphere; (3) bourgeois women reproduce eligible heirs and are therefore subordinated by various legal and religious ideologies; and (4) working-class women reproduce labour. My argument is simply that these features are not necessary requirements of capitalism, but historically contingent and variable. It follows that patriarchy is not a necessary requirement of capitalism and that Weber is at least partly correct in arguing that some aspects of capitalism actually undermine patriarchy. Furthermore, patriarchy is now a defensive or reactive ideology which seeks to maintain a socio-economic situation which has been significantly eroded. Much of the feminist argument appears to hinge on the reproductive role of women within the family, but this is a one-sided and static characterization of women's position. It is obvious that one peculiarity of women's social location is their contradictory role as domestic labourers and workers in the economy: they produce both use-values and exchange-values when they enter the external labour force (Gardiner, 1975). The crisis of the First World War and the economic boom of the 1950s and 1960s created new demands for labour and drew women into the employment market in large numbers. In Britain, for example, the percentage of married women in the work-force increased dramatically from 10 per cent in 1921 to 49 per cent in 1976. Much of the radicalism of twentieth-century feminism can be traced back to this experience of female industrialization. Women in Britain came to play an important part in a series of industrial disputes, as a result of which they became increasingly aware of the ineffectual role of male-dominated unions in promoting equality between men and women in the work-place. By industrializing women, capitalism also radicalized them. Two further comments can be attached to this rather obvious point. At the same time that women were entering the work-force in the post-war period, most capitalist societies were also becoming increasingly dependent on guest-workers from the colonial periphery. In the 1970s, 15 per cent of the manual labour force in Britain and Germany were migrants; in France, Switzerland and Belgium, 25 per cent of the industrial work-force were foreign workers. The position of the guest-workers is not unlike that of women as a whole. They cheapen the cost of labour because they are produced outside the core capitalist states, so that the periphery bears the cost of reproduction. Furthermore, since they occupy typically unskilled or low-status positions in the economy, and often enter on a contract basis, they can be returned to the periphery, thus reducing the cost of welfare, unemployment and other benefits. The extent of the use of migrant, especially contract workers, does raise the question of whether capitalism is so dependent on indigenous women as reproducers of labour. At least in principle, capitalism could operate on the basis of a very low internal fertility rate and relatively high rates of migrant labour inputs. Such a situation in which the periphery makes a major contribution to labour replacement was characteristic of

the 1970s in Europe. Given inflation and stagnation, capitalism appears to be moving to a situation of permanent high unemployment, reinforced by rapid advances in key economic areas based on modern technology which are not labour intensive, low fertility and a declining use of guest-workers on a contract basis, combined with the export of technology to the periphery where wage costs remain low. In terms of employment the decline in heavy industry, typically dominated by men, especially ship-building, mining and the car industry, means that working-class men are being rapidly returned to the unproductive domestic sphere. The indications are that men will be increasingly confined to households in which the structural bases of patriarchy are, if not undermined, at least threatened. Where patriarchal values protect them from domestic labour, they will neither produce use-values nor exchange-values.

The Household in Capitalism

In addition to these changes in the nature of employment, the whole character of the family unit in late capitalism has changed fundamentally. The statistics published by the American population census of 1980 give some idea of the speed of change within the household unit over a period of 10 years. While the census reported that 97.5 per cent of Americans live in households, this category is very heterogeneous. Family households are defined as two or more persons living together and related by birth or marriage. Non-family households include two or more unrelated persons, but this also includes 'single-person households' of the non-familial variety. Between 1970 and 1980, the number of non-family households increased from 18.8 to 26.1 per cent. The average size of all households declined from 3.14 to 2.75 persons. While the number of married couples rose by only 7.7 per cent, families with unmarried heads increased by 52.3 per cent. Non-familial households were broken down as shown in Table 6.1.

In America while there were some 15 million new households created between 1970 and 1980, only 22 per cent of that growth came from couples who were married. Somewhat similar figures could be given for other societies. In Australia, where there has historically been an imbalance in the sex ratio producing a relatively low rate of marriage, in the 1980s one-third of all households was defined as a 'singles household', that is, the never married, *de facto* marriages, widowed, divorced and separated (Staples, 1982). Between 1969 and 1981, the number of one-parent families doubled, and by 1981 almost 13 per cent of families with children were one-parent families (Harper, 1982). On the basis of his comparative and historical study

Table 6.1

The men living together	25.1%
Two women living together	19.2%
Mixed sex units	55.8%

of the family, Shorter (1977) argued that the modern family is characterized by a widening generation gap, increased instability and the demolition of the 'nest notion' of nuclear family life. He concluded:

The nuclear family is crumbling – to be replaced I think, by the free-floating couple, a marital dyad subject to dramatic fissions and fusions, and without the orbiting satellites of pubertal children, close friends, or neighbours ... just the relatives, hovering in the background, friendly smiles on their faces. (Shorter, 1977: 273)

I argued that the rise of Filmerism was a defensive reaction against the bourgeois theory of the social contract and the political rights of individuals in favour of the 'natural' authority of kings as fathers. While Filmerism was made increasingly less credible after 1688 in the new climate of individualism, patriarchy as such could survive on the economic back of the traditional household. From both a Weberian and a Marxist perspective, however, patriarchy would be undermined by the impact of capitalist relations on the unity of traditional family life. In early capitalism, the family was transformed into a unit of consumption and came to dominate the private domain of emotion, leisure and privacy. Since women were progressively excluded from the marketplace, their inferior status in society was reinforced by their reproductive functions. As women began in the twentieth century to move into the labour market, they suffered a double exploitation as unpaid producers of use-values in the home and low-paid producers of exchange-values in the economy. However, within a longer perspective, women became increasingly radicalized as workers (despite the fact that their oppositional ideology was often underdeveloped, fragmented and individualist), since the possibility of organizing women outside the isolation of the home was increased. At the same time, the traditional household was being fundamentally dismantled. Although there are many counter-arguments (for example, the rates of remarriage are still very high), the household unit of parents and two children, with the husband in more or less permanent employment and the wife confined to the home, is rapidly becoming part of the mythological, nostalgic heritage of capitalism.

There is a sort of parallel between seventeenth-century Filmerism and contemporary patriarchy, namely that they are both defensive and backward looking in circumstances where much of the basis for domination in terms of physiological differences has been eroded. Women do, of course, experience second-class citizenship, closure from elite professional positions, everyday sexism and petty discrimination, but they also have much of the legal, political and ideological machinery by which that discrimination can be successfully challenged. Men do, of course, have the experience of preferential treatment in securing house loans, jobs, promotion and other social benefits as men, but they also find themselves persistently outflanked by female employment, anti-discrimination legislation and by feminist ideology which appeals to precisely that bastion of the dominant ideology, namely

individualism, which is supposed to give them possessive rights. Patriarchy as ideology is thus a defensive reaction by men in a society where marriage and the marriage contract no longer give them dominance in the household or in the market. Anti-patriarchy is a usurpational tactic of women to remove the historical barrier of patriarchal social closure in societies where individual citizenship is formally regarded as a universal right. The ideology of possessive individualism can be turned against bourgeois patriarchy just as it was against aristocratic Filmerism. As Marx noted:

The bourgeoisie recognised that all the weapons which had been forged against feudalism could have their points turned against itself; that all the means of education which it had created were rebels against its own civilization. ... It has become aware that all the so-called civil liberties and instruments of progress were menaces to its own class dominion, which was threatened alike at the social base and at the political apex – that is to say, they had become ‘socialistic’.
(1926: 73)

That is, like the critics of Filmerism, women appeal to the universal rights of citizenship and individualism against the ‘natural’ rights of fatherhood, but these claims are at least in part successful because the economic roots of patriarchy in the traditional household have been contaminated by capitalism itself. What remains of patriarchy is a mere vestige of power, an arcane contingency on the outer shell of capitalist society. Capitalism produces patriarchalism by reaping the advantages of cheap labour and unpaid domestic services within the household; it also destroys patriarchy by creating, at least formally, universalistic values and individualism, and, through the demand for labour, draws women into the labour force, radicalizing their consciousness and undermining the nuclear family as an emotional nest. As Marx persistently commented, capitalism is the most revolutionary and progressive movement in human history, because it is forced to revolutionize constantly the whole economic basis of society. This paradoxically radical nature of capitalism partly explains why it is that patriarchalism is part of the world we have lost:

Every relationship in our world which can be seen to affect our economic life is open to change, is expected indeed to change of itself or if it does not, to be changed, made better, by an omniscient authority. This makes for a less stable social world, though it is only one of the features of our society which impels us all in that direction. All industrial societies, we may suppose, are far less stable than their predecessors. They lack the extraordinarily cohesive influence which familial relationships carry with them, that power of reconciling the frustrated and discontented by emotional means. Social revolution, meaning an irreversible changing of the pattern of social relationships, never happened in traditional, patriarchal, preindustrial human society. (Laslett, 1968: 4)

Laslett goes on to note, however, that it was precisely this closeness and hierarchy of the Stuart household that produced the interpersonal social violence portrayed in the dramas of Shakespeare. One indication of the gap between our world of psychologically mobile narcissistic personalities and the structurally rigid dramas of Shakespeare’s society may be illustrated by

a comparison between *King Lear* or *The Tempest* and the fluid complexity of Eliot, Pinter and Beckett.

Women still experience sexism in everyday life, but this is a defunct patriarchalism, an interpersonal strategy of dominance on the part of men who find their traditional sources of power increasingly open to doubt. Their sexist patriarchalism is a defensive response of a crisis of identities in a society where machismo values are brought into question by permissive state legislation on homosexuality, children's rights and women's liberation. Genuine gerontocracy along with real patriarchalism is dead for the simple reason that there are no patriarchs. What remains is an intensification of the ideological struggle for citizenship, which results in global unevenness. It may be that the core capitalist states will come to depend on the continuity of patriarchy in the periphery, where, for example, militant Islam has shorn up patriarchalism. Where the organic composition of capital is favourable, these peripheral, patriarchal societies will offer profitable investment, cheap commodities and fresh labour (Turner, 1984a). Capitalism thus liquidates patriarchy, only to witness its ideological reconstitution on the outskirts of the global economy.

Patrim

In race relations theory (Banton, 1967) it is common to make a distinction between racism as a collection of prejudicial attitudes and racism as a social system in which certain social groups are suppressed and exploited through the operation of the market, political structures and the law. Prejudicial racism may be widespread in a society in which minority or migrant groups are formally protected by law. In principle, institutional racism could exist in a society where in everyday circumstances minority groups were not the target of racist attitudes. In practice, one would expect a system of institutionalized racism to foster racist prejudice in interpersonal relations. Thus, it would be reasonable to argue that societies like Britain and Australia are not characterized by institutional racism because the law and political system are relatively open and universalistic. However, Britain and Australia are racist in the sense that very prejudicial attitudes towards minority ethnic groups are widespread in social relations. I want to suggest that a similar distinction is helpful in the analysis of sexual conflict and gender relations. Institutionalized sexual inequality is traditional patriarchy, whereby on the basis of sexual characteristics people are excluded from economic roles, social status, political power and legal identity. Patriarchy involves the systematic social closure of women from the public sphere by legal, political and economic arrangements which operate in favour of men. As I have suggested, however, it is difficult to separate patriarchy from gerontocracy and thus institutionalized inequality on the basis of sex typically includes the hierarchical structure of age groups. Patriarchy subordinates women alongside children; indeed in terms of dress and fashion women are often

encouraged to adopt childlike garments which distinguish them from the 'adult' attire of men. Patriarchy is an objective social structure which is maintained and constituted by a complex system of legal regulations, political organization and economic arrangements.

Patrism is analytically equivalent to subjective racism because it involves prejudicial beliefs and practices of men towards women without the systematic backing of law and politics. In terms of taxation arrangements, banking facilities and the availability of credit arrangements, it is no doubt the case that women still experience institutions which approximate to patriarchy, but such inequalities are under attack and are generally regarded as discriminatory and incompatible with existing democratic arrangements. A comprehensive system of institutionalized patriarchy no longer exists in the majority of industrial capitalist societies, where the legal, political, religious and economic restraints on women have been largely dismantled.

The collapse of patriarchy has left behind it widespread patrism which is a culture of discriminatory, prejudicial and paternalistic beliefs about the inferiority of women. The implication of my argument is that patrism is expanding precisely because of the institutional shrinkage of patriarchy, which has left men in a contracting power position. Men as a whole can no longer depend on the law to buttress their dominance within the public and private spheres. Institutionalized patriarchy has crumbled along with the traditional family unit and the patristic attitude of men towards women becomes more prejudicial and defensive precisely because women are now often equipped with a powerful ideological critique of traditional patriarchy. Sexual conflict is now more pronounced as a result of defensive patrism and offensive feminism in a period where the institutionalized supports for the sexual division of labour are in a state of advanced decay.

The Disciplines

Foucault, Language, Desire

In structuralism, much of the recent interest in desire and its negation in discipline finds a location in the work of Michel Foucault, especially in his *The History of Sexuality* (1981). Behind Foucault lies Nietzsche, and the constant references to Nietzsche among the so-called New Philosophers of the Right are not occasioned simply by Nietzsche's theory of language, but by his conceptual distinction between Apollo and Dionysus – between the discipline of form and the transformation of ecstasy. In short, contemporary debates in structuralism, especially in the reappraisal of the Freudian conception of the struggle between id and superego, reflect an ancient conflict in Western culture between reason and desire. In this ancient dichotomy, social stability rests on the subordination of the desires of the body by the reason of the mind, through such institutions as the family, the church and the state. In this view, civilization is abstinence, requiring the denial of the flesh and the control of emotion. The ascetic practices of Protestantism transferred the denials of the monastery into the everyday life of the family, the school and the factory. The history of modern societies can be seen as the rationalization of this ascetic process through various sciences of the body. The work of Foucault makes a massive contribution to our understanding of this process, namely the applications of institutionalized power through rational knowledge to the life of populations and persons. Since Foucault has been important in providing a general framework for this sociology of the body, it is time to confront Foucault head-on, since he is more than a frontispiece. Interpretations of Foucault are legion (Chua, 1981; Kurzweil, 1980; Sturrock, 1979). The aim of this chapter is not to add to the industry of interpretation, but to suggest a particular view of Foucault in order to offer an application to a particular field, namely the science of dietetics.

Foucault derives a variety of positions from Nietzsche. First, there is irony. There is a characteristic argument in Nietzsche that most of the (Christian) values we regard as 'good' – charity, mercy, kindness – are the historical products of 'bad' motives and circumstances – cowardice, weakness, hypocrisy. In *The Anti-Christ*, Nietzsche argued that the Christian virtues were the result of resentment experienced by a slave population as an expression of revolt against the dominant manly virtues of strength and courage. Christian virtue was merely suppressed violence. Foucault's work is also grounded in this historic irony. The sciences which seek to improve the

human condition through liberal values – psychiatry, sociology, penology, biology – are themselves inextricably expressions of domination; they seek to know in order to organize. History is merely the contingent struggle of groups caught up in a will to power:

The domination of certain men over others leads to the differentiation of values; class domination generates the idea of liberty; and the forceful appropriation of things necessary to survival and the imposition of a duration not intrinsic to them account for the origin of logic. (Foucault, 1977a: 150)

Knowledge, which promises liberty, has its origin in power.

Secondly, Foucault shares with Nietzsche a distrust of the pretence of reason, especially Cartesianism and the positivist sciences such as Darwinistic biology. Descartes suppressed insanity as a necessary requirement for reason itself (Derrida, 1978). Dreams and madness are both forms of error, but they stand in a different relationship to truth. Whether or not I am dreaming, $2 + 2 = 4$, but reason in order to exist must expel the possibility of madness. Men may be mad, but thought itself cannot be. Descartes thus stood at a peculiar conjuncture where the possibility of ‘unreasonable Reason’ and ‘reasonable Unreason’ disappeared (Sheridan, 1980: 23). For Foucault, the cognitive suppression of madness by Cartesianism corresponds to the institutional suppression and internment of the insane in the asylum (Foucault, 1967). *Ratio* is thus grounded in a particular type of violence and develops through a rationalization of society which involves the detailed, systematic control of the individual.

Thirdly, Foucault’s debt to Nietzsche’s historical perspective is explicitly documented (Foucault, 1977a). Nietzsche’s concept of ‘genealogy’ is, for Foucault, the negation of all teleological, progressive and evolutionary conceptions of history, which regard human society as shaped by the march of humane values, reason and progress. By contrast, Foucauldian history is a series of accidental ruptures, brought about by chance, struggle and contingent conjunctures. In this history,

[h]umanity does not gradually progress from combat to combat until it arrives at universal reciprocity, where the rule of law finally replaces warfare; humanity installs each of its violences in a system of rules and thus proceeds from domination to domination. (Foucault, 1977a: 151)

Thus, in *Madness and Civilization* (1967) and *Discipline and Punish*, (1979) Foucault rejected the official histories of psychiatry and criminology whereby reason and freedom finally banished traditional errors and violences committed against the mad and the poor. These new knowledges of the insane involved an extension of institutionalized power, permitting a surveillance of the body through the discourses and practices of psychiatry, criminology and penology. Foucault’s reading of history offers no consolations; history is mere chance since

[n]othing in man – not even his body – is sufficiently stable to serve as the basis for self-recognition or for understanding other men. The traditional devices

for constructing a comprehensive view of history and for retracing the past as a patient and continuous development must be systematically dismantled. (Foucault, 1977a: 153)

History is relativized and rationalist perspectivism rejected. What is strange and unfamiliar in human history and society cannot be made familiar by the consoling efforts of historians, whose 'refamiliarization' of history attempts to show that bizarre practices, once correctly understood, are reasonable and hence express the universality of the human essence. There is no unity to the human essence, which is merely the arbitrary construct of language. For Foucault, the unfamiliar is unfamiliar and cannot be domesticated by notions of evolution or universalism. History writing is itself a form of conceptual violence, since it imposes a false uniformity on events, people and places in terms of historical discourse which is, like all language, an arbitrary system of signs.

The Accumulation of Men

Despite Foucault's explicit rejection of the notion of historical trends and uniform developments, there is a strong historical theme uniting his various studies of power/knowledge. Despite his hostility to systematic theorizing, there is a 'theory' which offers a causal explanation of the modern world. This theory is primarily focused on the demographic (a theory of populations) and the physiological (a theory of the body). The 'key' to Foucault's own discourse occurs in a contribution to the history of the modern hospital where he explains the transformation of eighteenth-century medicine from charitable aid to a policing of health.

It arguably concerns the economic-political effects of the accumulation of men. The great eighteenth-century demographic upswing in Western Europe, the necessity for co-ordinating and integrating it into the apparatus of production and the urgency of controlling it with finer and more adequate power mechanisms cause 'population', with its numerical variables of space and chronology, longevity and health, to emerge not only as a problem but as an object of surveillance, analysis, intervention, modification, etc. ... Within this set of problems, the 'body' – the body of individuals and the body of populations – appears as the bearer of new variables, not merely as between the scarce and the numerous, the submissive and the restive, rich and poor, healthy and sick, strong and weak, but also as between the more or less utilisable, more or less amenable to profitable investment, those with greater or lesser prospects of survival, death and illness, and with more or less capacity for being usefully trained. (Foucault, 1980a: 171–2)

The rationalization of Western society in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries found a new object of exploration and control – the human body itself. The spread of scientific and techno-rational procedures, having gained a foothold in technology and consciousness, latched onto a new terrain, the body of individuals and the body of populations. The institutionalization of the body in what Foucault calls 'panopticism' made

possible a statistics of populations and new practices of quantification in clinical medicine, demography, eugenics, penology, criminology and sociology.

It is population pressure which provides the central motif of Foucault's historical commentaries, because it is this factor which stands behind the expansion and development of new regimes and regimens of control – a profusion of taxonomies, tables, examinations, drills, dressage, chrestomathies, surveys, samples and censuses. The pressure of men in urban space necessitates a new institutional order of prisons, asylums, clinics, factories and schools in which accumulated bodies can be made serviceable and safe. In Foucault's own stylistic conventions, this theme is linked to metaphors of space in knowledge and society – site, domain, position, landscape, terrain, horizon and archipelago. Just as the space of knowledge experiences accumulations of new discourses, so the social space is littered with bodies and the institutions which are designed to control them. Hence Bentham's panopticon scheme becomes the principal model for the detailed organization of political scrutiny over the bodies of both deviants and citizens. The appeal to morality and the deployment of the church are no longer sufficient for the control of individual desire; it becomes necessary to encompass urban populations with new institutions of surveillance and inspection.

Foucault is not a systematic theorist. It does appear, however, that most of his historical examples of disciplines hinge on two crucial events – the social reorganization of France following the Revolution and the social effects of population pressure in the city. The result was a policing of society which in turn was a condition for capitalist expansion; these regulatory controls of population were

an indispensable element in the development of capitalism; the latter would not have been possible without the controlled insertion of bodies into the machinery of production and the adjustment of the phenomena of population to economic processes. But this was not all it required; it also needed the growth of both these factors, their reinforcement as well as their availability and docility; it had to have methods of power capable of optimizing forces, aptitudes, and life in general without at the same time making them more difficult to govern. (Foucault, 1981: 141)

Capital could profit from the accumulation of men and the enlargement of markets only when the health and docility of the population had been made possible by a network of regulations and controls.

The centrality of population pressures to Foucault's analysis of the nature of the modern world can be illustrated by reference to a student of Foucault, Jacques Donzelot, whose *The Policing of Families* (1979) brings out specifically the historical demography within the Foucauldian perspective. Essentially what Donzelot seeks to show is that, faced by the crisis of an unregulated urban working class, new alliances were formed in nineteenth-century France between the family and the state, between medicine and the household, and thus between the doctor and the wife.

The increase in urban poverty and illegitimacy called for a new social economy, but at the same time

criticism was aimed at the organization of the body with a view to strictly wasteful use of it through the refinement of methods that made the body into a pure pleasure principle: in other words, what was lacking was an economy of the body. (Donzelot, 1979: 12–13)

The regulation of the social body had to be premised on new principles of domestic organization in order to achieve a regulation of the body of individuals. While George Cheyne in Britain was drawing attention to the destruction of the aristocratic body, and hence the personnel of government, by the luxuries made possible by colonial growth, it was also evident in France that the peasantry enjoyed more robust constitutions than their masters, because, despite their poor diet, they had regular exercise. Yet this reserve of able peasant bodies was being corrupted by the move to the city where pauperism converted them into a political threat and undermined their natural healthiness. The solution to these problems involved a reduction of the social costs of reproduction, the location of medical knowledge within the family and the reorganization of the family along guidelines suggested by the domestic sciences. This involved a medicalization of society through the agency of the reconstituted family, namely the weakening of traditional patriarchy by an alliance between mothers and doctors:

The strategy of familializing the popular strata in the second half of the nineteenth century rested mainly on the women, therefore, and added a number of tools and allies for her use: primary education, instruction in domestic hygiene, the establishment of the workers' garden plots, and Sunday holidays (a family holiday, in contrast to the Monday holiday, which was traditionally taken up with drinking sessions). But the main instrument she received was 'social' housing. In practice, the woman was brought out of the convent so that she would bring the man out of the cabaret. (Donzelot, 1979: 409)

The family became the site where individuals are formed and trained by the new sciences of the hearth – how to eat, sleep, dress and conduct oneself – and where decentralized political power is to be located for the reform of populations. The family became the locus of rationalization and personal asceticism.

My argument is that, while Foucault rejects any notion of historical logic or teleology, in practice the unifying theme of his work is the rationalization of the body and the rationalization of populations by new combinations of power and knowledge. Furthermore, this rationalization is an effect of population densities which threatened the political order of society in the nineteenth century. There is an important convergence, therefore, between the Weberian perspective on the rationalization of society through the imposition of scientific practices at every point of human life and Foucault's interest in disciplines as the subordination and co-ordination of desire. This convergence can be seen in the discussion of the utilization of medical

science to control bodies and populations in Foucault and Donzelot. It is also evident in the relationship between asceticism and capitalism.

Asceticism

For both Weber and Foucault, religious models of thought and practice provide one historical location for the growth and spread of the rational surveillance of human populations. In *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Weber (1930) argued that the disciplines of the monastery were transferred to the home and the factory, where every believer was expected to exert ascetic control over his daily life. Protestantism meant that, since all domestic and public activities had become a 'calling', the lay person could no longer depend upon the priest to perform vicariously such religious duties. Everyday life came under the scrutiny of individual consciousness and as the individual became liberated from the authority of the priest so he also became more subordinated to detailed regulations. Protestantism destroyed any possibility of depending on magical or ritualistic means of salvation, such as the Christian sacraments, and forced the individual to organize his everyday life in terms of rational pursuits within a secular calling. This was, so to speak, the spiritual origin of a rationalized culture in capitalist society, which came to be reinforced by the factory system, modern forms of bureaucracy and the regulation of the state. For Weber, the disenchanted world of modern capitalism is one which rules out spontaneous and individualistic beliefs and practices, because life becomes increasingly subordinated to bureaucratic plans, to organized codes of behaviour, and to a network of regimens that extend to the most private spheres of life, including our pleasures.

There is an implicit argument in Weber that the regulation of passions under monasticism was, with the Protestant Reformation, reassembled in the Protestant household under the patriarchal authority of the husband, who dismissed from the intimacy of the hearth, as it were, the priest as confessor of the wife. The restraint of passions, especially sexual passions, within the home now came to depend on the exercise of the Protestant consciousness in conjunction with the rigours of one's calling in the world. Because 'time is money', idle hands are sinful. Sexuality is pre-eminently wasted time, unless it is geared to reproduction, but this must be achieved without pleasures:

The sexual asceticism of Puritanism differs only in degree, not in fundamental principle, from that of monasticism: and on account of the Puritan conception of marriage, its practical influence is more far-reaching than that of the latter. For sexual intercourse is permitted, even within marriage, only as the means willed by God for the increase of His glory according to the commandment, 'Be fruitful and multiply'. Along with a moderate vegetable diet and cold baths, the same prescription is given for all sexual temptations as is used against religious doubts and a sense of moral unworthiness: 'Work hard in your calling'. (Weber, 1930: 158-9)

In modern parlance, the free play of desire is sublimated in the routines of work. With the secularization of culture, these religious norms of work are gradually replaced by the profane disciplines of the factory with Taylorism and Fordism. A similar argument is to be found in Foucault's account of the rise of disciplined bodies.

Foucault recognizes that the disciplines of the body in Benthamite panopticism were anticipated by the monastery. However, there is an important difference since, while monasticism required a renunciation of the body, the modern disciplines of capitalist society require utility. Panoptic disciplines produce an intensification of aptitudes and abilities, while they also increase subordination by self-controlled mastery of the body (Foucault, 1979: 137). This was the new asceticism and it was developed at precisely that point in the history of Western populations when the traditional threat of death from epidemics and plagues began to recede. The accumulation of men and of capital were intimately related; the two processes cannot be separated. The accumulation of men would not have been possible without an increase in capital to sustain that demographic explosion. Similarly, the techniques which developed for the control of useful bodies accelerated the accumulation of capital (Foucault, 1979: 221). The new techniques of discipline were essential for the organization of factories. The development of capitalism 'would not have been possible without the controlled insertion of bodies into the machinery of production and the adjustment of the phenomena of population to economic processes (Foucault, 1981: 141). While Foucault does not assume that asceticism produced capitalism, he does recognize that the transformation of monastic into factory disciplines was an important feature of the accumulation of capital. The ascetic practices of individual bodies were thus closely related to the accumulation of men in the eighteenth-century origins of capitalism. In the same manner, Weber argued that a surplus population which can be hired cheaply is a necessary requirement for the development of capitalism (Weber, 1930: 61), but he also argued that this population had to be disciplined to make it serviceable.

Dietary Management

In this chapter, I wish to illustrate these arguments in Weber and Foucault through an analysis of the history of dietetic management. There are two aspects to this illustration. First, diet becomes, with the growth of capitalism, increasingly secularized and this involves, as Foucault suggests, a shift from renunciation to utilization. Secondly, there is a shift from the control of aristocratic bodies to working bodies, which also corresponds to a change in objectives from longevity to utility. While this argument is primarily concerned with the debate concerning disciplines in capitalist society, it has to be recognized that diet is one of the oldest components of any medical regimen. The term 'diet' comes from the Greek '*diaita*', meaning a

mode of life. As a regulation of life, it has the more specific medical meaning of eating according to prescribed rules. There is a second meaning of 'diet' which is a political assembly of princes for the purpose of legislation and administration. This second meaning comes from the Latin word '*dies*' or 'day', because political diets met on specified days and were thus regulated by a calendar. Diet is either a regulation of the individual body or a regulation of the body politic. The term 'regimen' also has this double implication. It is derived from '*regere*' or 'rule' and, as a medical term, means a therapeutic system, typically involving diet, but regimen is also a system of government as in 'regimentation' or 'regime'. We can see, therefore, that 'diet' and 'regimen' both apply to the government of the body and the government of citizens. This etymological argument further reinforces the argument that metaphors of health and illness are persistent metaphors of social organization (Sontag, 1978).

The medical regimen in classical Greece largely consisted of diet as a mode of regulated living. Diet, of course, was also a recurrent feature of any mode of religious life in Christianity. It was one of the basic elements of asceticism as a regimen for the control of desires. Fasting was a basic element in Roman Catholic asceticism but it also clearly survived in Protestantism. William James (1929) recognized temperance in the use of meat and drink as a basic characteristic of all religious asceticism and, to illustrate its presence in Protestantism, quotes from the life of John Cennick, who was the first lay preacher in Methodism:

He fasted long and often, and prayed nine times a day. Fancying dry bread too great an indulgence for so great a sinner as himself, he began to feed on potatoes, acorns, crabs, and grass; and often wished that he could live on roots and herbs. (James, 1929: 301–2)

Protestantism took monastic renunciation into the world of the lay person; it did not dismantle these traditional religious practices. Ascetic disciplines in both Catholicism and Protestantism were a system of rules of conduct to control the flesh by starvation and renunciation. Asceticism as a term comes from '*asketes*' (monk) and '*askeo*' (exercise): it is a regulated practice or regimen of the body. Although the Reformation in general transferred asceticism from the monastery to the home, there was also an important continuity between Catholic and Protestant disciplinary methods. In order to understand the history of diet for the laity, it is important to state one obvious but important point. Given the uncertainty of food supplies, and given the absence of any great variety in the availability of food for the peasantry through the mediaeval period, early dietaries were primarily directed at the upper classes of landlords and merchants. Although in the twelfth century the reign of King Henry I was a period of expansion in medical knowledge and technique, the king himself died of dietary mismanagement. Ignoring his physician's advice for weight control, Henry feasted on lampreys and died from the resulting ill humours in Normandy in 1135: 'Despite the removal of his intestines, brains, and eyes for separate

burial at Rouen and the salting of the rest of his body for transport to entombment at Reading Abbey, his corpse still fouled the air' (Kealey, 1981: 117). The regulation of royal bodies was seen to be in the interests of the social body; peasants were expendable. More precisely, food supplies for the peasantry between 1350 and 1550 were adequate, but there was a long-term decline, especially in the production of meat, until the middle of the nineteenth century. Thus, after

the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries only a few privileged people in Europe ate luxuriously. They consumed huge quantities of rare dishes. What was left went to their servants, and what was left after that was sold to food-dealers, even if it had gone rotten. (Braudel, 1974: 1136)

The popular dietaries of this period of upper-class luxury were pious tracts directed towards the class threatened by over-eating, gastronomic diversity, obesity and alcoholic poisoning.

Two important figures in the history of dietetics for the aristocracy were Leonard Lessius (1554–1623), the author of the *Hygiasticon, or the Right Course of Preserving Life and Health unto Extreme Old Age*, and Luigi Cornaro (1464–1566), the author of *Trattato della vita sobria* (1558), which was translated by George Herbert in 1634. Diseases are frequently interpreted as manifestations of a deeper malaise in the social structure. Just as cancer is often regarded as a 'disease of civilization' (Inglis, 1981), so obesity in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was regarded as a physical manifestation of the flabbiness of the social system, especially as it impinged upon the lifestyle of the rich. The disorders to which Cornaro drew attention were the 'bad customs' of the time, namely 'the first, flattery and ceremoniousness; the second, Lutheranism, which some have most preposterously embraced; the third, intemperance' (Cornaro, 1776: 14). Cornaro, who was an Italian nobleman from Venice, saw the corruption of Italian cultured society by the Reformation, the falsity of court life and indulgence as leading necessarily to the corruption of the body. The solution to social and physiological pathology was to be sought in the government of the body through diet and discipline. Dieting, especially among the rich, was the main guarantee of health, mental stability and reason. A life founded on temperance and sobriety was the principal defence against the aristocratic affliction of melancholy and the disruptive effects of passion on reason. For Cornaro, therefore, the discipline of diet was formulated within a religious framework as the antidote to the temptations of the flesh. Cornaro and Lessius came to have a long-term significance for the development of a medico-religious discourse concerning the physical, personal and social benefits of dietary management.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, England was renowned for the melancholic disposition of its inhabitants; a special term was coined – 'the English malady' – to describe the prevalence of this national sickness (Skultans, 1979). The condition was diagnosed by a variety of moralists, but it was Robert Burton's *The Anatomy of Melancholy* that came to provide a

dominant and lasting perspective on this national complaint. It is particularly important to note that Burton (1576–1640) was a divine, who, like Cornaro, saw the diseases of the mind as symptomatic of social pathology. One of the central themes of *The Anatomy*, published in 1621, was that idleness was the main cause of social and mental disorder. Burton saw the decay of England in idleness ‘by reason of which we have many swarms of rogues, and beggars, thieves, drunkards and discontented persons’ (Burton, 1927: 49). Burton distinguished between three types of idleness, namely the voluntary idleness of rogues, the idleness that accompanied noble status, and the enforced idleness of the religious. It was the leisurely and idle character of noble existence which particularly concerned Burton and it was to the gentry that his book was specifically addressed, since ‘idleness (the badge of gentry)’ was ‘the nurse of naughtiness’ (Burton, 1927: 158). In particular, idleness became the social symbol of wealth, while wealth provided the means of extravagant diets and the absence of labour. The rich ‘feed liberally, fare well, want exercise, action, employment (for to work, I say, they may not abide) and company to the desires, and thence their bodies become full of gross humours, wind, crudities; their minds disquieted, dull, heavy’ (Burton, 1927: 160).

The combination of leisure and luxury had especially damaging consequences for unmarried women in the gentry class and Burton noted that, while serving women rarely suffered from melancholy, noble women were the principal victims of the English malady. Virginity and nobility both led to idleness and isolation, and hence to melancholy. The cure for this condition was marriage, diet, exercise and religion. When these failed to produce the remedy of unruly desires, Burton recommended ‘labour and exercise, strict diet, rigour and threats’ (Burton, 1927: 273). The government of female bodies was thus linked via patriarchy with the government of the household. Since Burton saw a great affinity ‘betwixt a political and economical body’ (Burton, 1927: 63), his dietary was necessarily a political treatise. Society presupposed a hierarchy of political control, descending from the state, through the patriarchal household, to the body and desires.

Many of Burton’s anxieties and solutions were reproduced in the following century in the dietetics of George Cheyne, who noted that the expansion of trade and the growth of mercantile wealth brought exotic and rich foods into the market place. The result of these civilized luxuries was to ‘provoke the Appetites, Senses and Passions in the most exquisite and volumptuous Appetite’ (Cheyne, 1733: 49). Cheyne’s medical discourses were primarily addressed to the urban, idle rich, who were the most exposed to the moral danger of strong drinks and exotic foods. The sedentarized life of London and Bath provided a sharp contrast with the natural vigour of primitive man: ‘When Mankind was simple, plain, honest and frugal, there were few or no diseases. Temperence, Exercise, Hunting, Labour and industry kept the Juices Sweet and the Soldis brac’d’ (Cheyne, 1733: 174). In order to reduce the destructive impact of affluence on the digestive system, Cheyne recommended, especially for sedentarized merchants and professional men,

a strict diet, regular evacuation, exercise on horseback and ‘a Vomit that can work briskly’ (Cheyne, 1740: xlvii). Cheyne’s dietary regimen was intended to subordinate the passions of the urban rich which had been inflamed by excessive consumption of exotic food and drink.

While Cheyne was heavily influenced by Cartesianism and the iatro-mathematics of the Leyden school of medicine, he regarded diet, exercise and regularity as moral activities which promoted the control of unruly passions. It is, therefore, not surprising that his views were highly congenial to the religious outlook of John Wesley and the early Methodists. Cheyne’s dietary regulation was easily incorporated within the Methodist code of ascetic behaviour and Wesley used much of Cheyne’s medico-morality as the basis of his own *Primitive Physick* of 1752. Wesley also recommended Cheyne’s *Essay of Health and Long Life* to his mother in 1724, partly because it was ‘chiefly directed to studious and sedentary persons’. It can thus be argued that the traditional norm of fasting as an ascetic practice within the monastery was gradually transformed by the Protestant dietaries of Burton, Cheyne and Wesley into a suitable exercise of regulation for the laity and that the elitist dietetics of Burton eventually reached the working class via the popular views of Wesley and the Methodist chapels. The dietary regimen of the monastery infiltrated the secular household via the Nonconformist chapels and meeting houses. This invasion of dietary management into the home was eventually combined with the broader movement of general hygiene for the working-class family under the auspices of the medical profession. It represented a rationalization and secularization of food which ceased to be a stimulant of desire and became instead, under scientific dietetics, a condition of efficient labour. The vocabulary of passions, desires and humours was replaced by the discourse of calories and proteins. The dietary requirements of specific categories of people became increasingly detailed and rationalized. Whereas writers like Cheyne used very general classifications – the idle, the gentry and sedentary scholar – dietetics now came to analyse the requirements of prisoners, workers, pregnant women, the schoolchild and the athlete. Each illness had its specific diet – pulmonary tuberculosis, diabetes, allergic diseases and rheumatism (Rolleston and Moncrieff, 1939) required individualized dietary regimens. Diets became specific to persons individuated by age, class, sex and condition. My argument is therefore that dietary disciplines of the body in the nineteenth century became progressively individuated, secularized and rational. With this process, the idea of diet as a control of the soul in the subordination of desire gradually disappeared.

Table Practices

It has been argued that one feature of the incorporation of physiology into society takes place by dietary management of the body. Diet is a cultural practice regulating quantities and types of food for designated

categories of person. Both what and how we eat are culturally constituted by practices and beliefs. In discussing dietary changes in society, it is also important therefore to consider the evolution of etiquette alongside the growth of individualized diets within a secular framework. The classic study of courtly table manners is Norbert Elias's *The Civilizing Process* (1978). We can trace the growth of civilization as a transition from a situation where eating is a communal activity with a minimal regulation of individual eating habits to a situation where eating is individualized and hedged around by taken-for-granted norms of correct behaviour. The process of civilization involves the control of emotions and expression through changes in expectations (such as norms regulating spitting at table) and in table equipment (such as the use of spoons and forks). With the rise in civility from the sixteenth century onwards, the communal bowl and the communal meal were gradually replaced by individualized patterns as indicated by the use of individual plates and eating utensils. Manners became more complex and differentiated. In the feudal courts, an elementary code was sufficient – do not blow your nose on the table-cloth, do not return half-eaten meat back to the communal dish, after spitting place your foot on the sputum. Eating practices became increasingly elaborate, specifying what type of fork, knife or spoon was appropriate for what type of dish. Eventually the spittoon and the vomitorium were removed since spitting and vomiting were no longer acceptable at table.

The civilization of the table involved the exercise of collective control over the play of emotions. Elias's discussion of changing attitudes towards knives at table is an important illustration of this phenomenon. In the Middle Ages, the upper stratum of warriors routinely carried knives on their persons and there were few inhibitions on the use of knives during eating. The principal norm was: do not clean your teeth with your knife. The knife is, of course, symbolic of death and pain. With the declining social importance of armed warriors, the knife retained its symbolic significance and there was an increasing regulation of its domestic uses:

it is the symbolic meaning of the instrument that leads, with the advancing internal pacification of society, to the preponderance of feelings of displeasure at the sight of it, and to the limitation and final exclusion of its use in society. (Elias, 1978: 123)

Knives at table were not to be pointed, especially at the face, and when passing a knife, the handle must be offered to your neighbour. As table customs became more 'polite', so symbols of emotions and passions had to be controlled or suppressed. With civilization, 'regulation and control of emotions intensifies. The commands and prohibitions surrounding the menacing instrument become ever more numerous and differentiated. Finally, the use of the threatening symbol is limited as far as possible' (Elias, 1978: 125). These changes in manners brought about an enhanced control of the individual by restraints which transformed the affective life of society and individuals. Manners which had been formulated for the control of

the court worked their way downwards through the middle class to become eventually the 'natural' behaviour of all classes. Eating with fingers, drinking soup without spoons or spitting on the floor became unacceptable for all social classes.

A parallel has been drawn between the development of diet as a secular science of consumption and of table manners as a process of civilization. The evolution of both entailed a regulation of desire, but their objects were rather different. Etiquette regulates the play of emotions within social groups by establishing norms of interpersonal behaviour. The traditional diet was directed at regulating physiological processes, which were seen to be the springs of irrational passions. In the disease metaphor of social pathology, unregulated appetites produced the unregulated society. There is, however, an important transition in the social significance of dieting from the eighteenth-century world of Cheyne to the modern world of mass consumption. In a consumer culture, the body assumes a new social and individual significance. It becomes the site of personal strategies of health. Jogging, slimming and keep-fit programmes are designed to promote health as the basis of the good life. These instrumental strategies of health are enthusiastically supported by the state as the principal basis of preventive medicine. However, in the absence of a coherent system of communal, religious values, there is no obvious answer to the question 'Health for what?'. In the world of Cornaro, Cheyne and Wesley, the individual exercised a stewardship over the body under the eye of God. The religious calling in the world included a responsibility for personal health as the basis for other achievements – the mastery of the soul and the passions. In a society where such religious notions play very little part in general culture, health becomes itself the justification for dieting. The modern location of dieting is almost the reverse of its eighteenth-century position. The purpose of the modern diet of consumer society is the production of desire – the preservation of life to enhance the enjoyment of pleasures, the increase of sexuality and the extension of enjoyments:

Within a consumer culture the body is proclaimed as a vehicle of pleasure: it is desirable and desiring and the closer the actual body approximates to the idealised images of youth, health, fitness and beauty, the higher its exchange-value. Consumer culture permits the unashamed display of the human body. (Featherstone, 1982: 21–2)

Whereas religio-medical dieting sought to achieve the control of the inner body – the digestive roots of passion – by purgation and restraint, the consumer diet seeks to enhance the surface of the body – the cosmetic signs of desirability – by the practices of body maintenance.

Throughout this study, I have been drawing attention to the play of words and the play on words: in particular, the political connotations of 'regimen', 'diet' and 'asceticism' have been considered at various stages. The ordering of the surface of the body provides an equally interesting case of the political implication of the notion of 'cosmetics' and the growth of a new science,

cosmetology being 'that branch of applied science which deals with the external embellishments of the person through the use of cosmetic products and treatments' (Wall, 1946: 28). 'Cosmetics' comes from '*kosmetikos*' or skilled in adorning and ordering the body. Wall (1946) suggests the term derives ultimately from '*kosmos*', as in the order, harmony and arrangement of the body. Cosmetics was an important aspect of Greek culture and medicine from an early time. Within the royal court, there was a group of specialists – the *kosmetai* – specifically responsible for the adornments of royal women. In addition, Galen's medical treatises included an outline of a medical science of cosmetics, based on an earlier work by Crito. From Greece the cosmetology of the body was transferred by Arab philosophers to Spain and Europe, where cosmetics was finally separated from surgery in the fourteenth century by Henri de Mondeville and Guy de Chauliac. Under Christianity, cosmetics meant vanity and adornments of the body were regarded as temptations. John Wesley regarded the wearing of ornaments as sufficient grounds for dismissing women from his chapels. In general, the whole Reformation movement regarded cosmetics as an idolatry of the flesh, but also associated such practices with idleness and an aristocratic way of life. While the Reformation brought the regimen of the internal body into the orbit of everyday asceticism, the ordering of the surface of the body was condemned as both irreligious and as a manifestation of aristocratic idleness. The association of leisure, idleness and aristocratic life-styles was brilliantly portrayed in Veblen's *The Theory of the Leisure Class* in 1899. Cosmetics, along with corsets, signified the absence of work and the ability to consume conspicuously. It was not until the nineteenth century that beauty culture became scientific and also became a standardized commodity for a mass market. A variety of changes took place, notably the development of massage on a scientific system in Peter Ling's *Manual of Swedish Movements* in 1813, the use of light and electricity for skin treatments, and the introduction of permanent waving. By the early part of the twentieth century, cosmetology had begun to be recognized in America as a distinctive area and 'cosmetic therapy' began to be covered by legislation in America from 1919. The regulation of the exterior of the body had assumed a scientific and rational status. Cosmetics became at the same time increasingly democratized and universal, moving from the leisure class downwards with the arrival of the mass market for standardized commodities. In Britain, rouge, lipstick and eye makeup ceased to be the stigmatic advertisement of the prostitute (Kern, 1975).

Cosmetics are a universal practice in human societies but their role in Western society is utterly different from their traditional use in pre-modern societies. Within a traditional social context, cosmetic decorations symbolized the incorporation of the individual within the social group and gave expression to common values and communal practices. Cosmetics communicate traditional symbols and signs; changes in personal cosmetics normally signify changes in social status, age of social membership. Female-body decorations signified a woman's changing personal status from puberty

through marriage to widowhood. By contrast, Western cosmetics are largely determined by commercialized fashion and by individualized sexuality. Cosmetics have lost their rootedness in the sacred cosmos which connected cosmetic therapy with medicine. Cosmetics have been secularized along with the secularization of society. Cosmetic decoration does signify sexuality, but sexual decorations have been standardized by the calculative hedonism which is required by mass production (Brain, 1979). Cosmetic practices are indicative of a new presentational self in a society where the self is no longer lodged in formal roles but has to be validated through a competitive public space.

The Critique of Foucault

The aim of Foucault's epistemology is to argue that objects of knowledge are not things-in-themselves but discursive objects which are the products of rules of discourse. Thus we have to understand 'diet' as the product of medico-religious discourses on the body and its functions; 'obesity' is not an empirical characteristic of unregulated bodies, but the effect of a language about bodies. Foucault's epistemology is a critique of empiricism and his position is derived extensively from contemporary discourse analysis (Chua, 1981). Although Foucault's approach provides a powerful perspective on medical discourse, it involves certain difficulties which it shares with structuralist analysis of discourse in general. Some forms of discourse analysis reduce the individual agent/speaker to the level of a socialized parrot, which must speak/perform in a determinate manner in accordance with the rules of language. There are alternatives to this form of structuralism which do not entirely obscure the role of human agency (Smart, 1982). Such an alternative was presented by V. Vološinov in *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* (1973). Against Ferdinand de Saussure, Volosinov sought to retain some notion of the autonomy and voluntarism of the speaker who 'orientates to language not as a system of invariant rules with which he must comply but as a field of possibilities which he is to utilize in concrete utterances in particular social contexts' (Bennett, 1979: 76). Discourses are not linguistic machines which routinely and invariably produce the same effects, but possible modes of social construction the consequences of which contain a large element of contingency. Foucault's analysis of knowledge/power tends to assume without analysis that discourse has general social effects. He assumes, for example, that simply because there was in mediaeval times a confessional discourse, all confessions were of a similar form and had similar consequences for individuals regardless of their gender and class (Hepworth and Turner, 1982). Despite Foucault's interest in power, knowledge is too frequently extracted from its social context, because discourse is assumed to operate almost independently of the social groups which are its primary carriers. By contrast, it is impossible to understand a dietary discourse outside the social context in which it was formed and

independently of the social groups which were simultaneously the targets and the bearers of discourse. Another way of expressing this criticism is to argue that there is always resistance to discourse – an argument which Foucault recognizes but frequently neglects. The contemporary notion of beauty as slimness has become the object of feminist criticism and of women's groups which simply reject such norms of beauty as commercialism (Chernin, 1981; Orbach, 1978). Foucault's theory of knowledge has in many respects the weaknesses which characterize any dominant ideology thesis; it conflates the question of the logic of discourse with the issue of its social effects. We cannot assume that because, for example, modern advertising is based on a discourse of cosmetics, that consumers invariably embrace its rules of production. Discourses are never uniform in their effects or unified in content. There are, in any case, a plurality of discourses with competing regimens of the body. Although Foucault has derived much from Nietzsche in terms of the argument that it is only by language that we can know anything and that different languages produce different knowledges, Foucault underplays two crucial features of Nietzsche's view of language. First, Nietzsche noted that the human animal is not only a sign-receiving animal but a sign-inventing animal too. Secondly, 'it was only as a social animal that man acquired self-consciousness' (Nietzsche, 1974: 299). Neither discourses nor disciplines are free-floating, autonomous practices, but deeply embedded features of social groups, economic classes and political organizations. Discourses, as Nietzsche noted, are themselves the social consequences of the endless struggle of social groups to realize their will and their potentialities.

Government of the Body

A Mode of Living

In Western thought, the human body is an ancient metaphor of political institutions, and was the dominant mode of theorizing political behaviour up to the seventeenth century when the doctrine of individual property rights was fully articulated. The metaphor of the body was particularly important in the theory of kingship. The king had two bodies, a material body which was subject to corruption and decay, and a spiritual body which was symbolic of the life of the community (Kantorowicz, 1957). Given the centrality of the king to the political continuity of society, the death of the king's mortal body did not involve the demise of the authority of his sacred body. Hence it was necessary to construct an effigy of the king which rested on top of the coffin that bore his mortal remains. Political authority was thus preserved within the fictional person of the king's effigy (Prestwich, 1980). An attack on the person of the king was thus an attack on sovereignty as such and violent retribution had to be taken against regicides (Foucault, 1979). The body was, however, used as a more general metaphor for the structure and function of society as a whole. The teleological purposiveness of the body was employed to legitimate political and social divisions in society:

Society, like the human body, is an organism composed of different members. Each member has its own function, prayer, or defence, or merchandise, or tilling the soil. Each must receive the means suited to its station, and must claim no more. (Tawney, 1938: 35–6)

The parallel between Christ's charismatic authority as head of the church and the king's institutionalized authority was obvious enough. The church was a body of believers, welded together by the grace of Christ and ruled by Episcopal powers. Like the king's body, the church was both a secular institution and a mystical body founded on the rock of faith. The body metaphor was thus a well-established feature of mediaeval thought and, although it was eventually replaced by the liberal discourse of individual rights, it survived in the so-called 'organic analogy' of early structural functionalism in the writing of Herbert Spencer, and it also survived in such legal notions as 'the corporation'.

The body/politics metaphor has enjoyed a widespread currency in such expressions as 'the body politic', 'the social body', 'the head of state' and

'the body of the church'. In this chapter, I want to extend this metaphor to consider the notions of 'the government of the body' and 'the anarchy of the body'. Having discussed the application of political discourse to the relationship between will and desire, I provide a theory of these controlling and anarchic functions through an exploration of the relationship between 'female diseases' and patriarchy.

In earlier publications (Turner, 1982a; 1982b), I have explored the concept of medical regimens as governments of the body with special reference to dietetics. In Greek medicine, diet (*diata* or 'mode of living') referred to the general conduct and organization of life, including forms of dress, behaviour and attitudes. In its more restricted sense of a mode of eating, diet was an essential element of the Greek medical *regimen*. A medical regimen is a set of rules or guidelines imposed upon a client to secure his or her well-being. When the body is conceived as an input-output system, the regimen restores the equilibrium of the body through a regimen of purges, fasting, sweating and diet. Regimen also, of course, has the somewhat antiquated meaning of 'government' and is the root of 'regime', and 'regiment'. The *diata* was a mode of living set within a particular government of the body by medical practices. We can envisage such regimens occurring along a voluntary/involuntary continuum. Voluntary governments involved a social contract between patient and doctor, whereby, in exchange for the medical fee, the patient contracted into a mode of living to achieve the restoration of health. Like other political contracts, the medical regimen involved a certain loss of self-will: the regimen works if it is followed. Involuntary regimens may be illustrated by enforced incarceration of the insane or the seclusion of lepers. Regimens imply therefore an element of choice and responsibility on the part of patients, but if we take a wider view of the whole process of nourishment of the body we need a more complex model.

Eating can be conceived as a fundamental 'body technique' (Mauss, 1979), that is, an activity which has a basic physiological function, but which is heavily mediated by culture. While feeding a child is an act of care and support, creating a bond between parents and child, it is also the imposition of a 'mode of living' (a regimen) on a subordinate. Gaining control over our own feeding patterns involves a growth in personal autonomy, and refusing to eat or engaging in forced vomiting is an act of rebellion. Although this regulation in symbolic terms is evidence of the operation of fundamental categories of thought (Lévi-Strauss, 1970), the mode of eating can also be seen as a site of familial politics. Thus there is the self-imposed diet as an illustration of a voluntary regimen and the body techniques which a child learns as the imposition of power across generations.

One might also think of the regimen imposed by nature on culture. Maturation and ageing are processes over which we have little direct control and which impose on us new modes of living. In old age and sickness, we 'naturally' require less to eat. These physiological processes are backed up by cultural expectations as to what is appropriate for

Table 8.1

	Involuntary	Voluntary
Internal	Physiological routines	Diet
External	Forced feeding	Medical regimens

different age groups or sexes. These contrasts suggest a property-space representation of the mode of living which may be voluntary/involuntary or externally/internally negotiated (see Table 8.1). 'Physiological routines' refer to 'natural' patterns of hunger and thirst which are imposed on us by our membership in nature. Clearly these routines are themselves partly negotiated, but there are limits beyond which we cannot stray. An internal voluntary mode of living would be simply a decision to reduce our calorie intake as a personal choice. Refusal to eat may also be an act of rebellion (as in the case of IRA suspects during Internment). Forced feeding is the opposite, namely an act of external terror being an invasion of the body. Medical regimens are voluntary, but also external, social contracts between parties as an exchange. In these examples, I am arguing that the body is a location for the exercise of will over desire. The achievement of personal control over diet is an act of will which enhances self-esteem, but it can also be imposed from without as a denial of will. The achievement or exclusion of certain modes of living can be suitably analysed by political metaphors of government – from dictatorship to anarchy.

The Orgy and the Fast

From a rational standpoint, the body has been traditionally conceived as the source of irrationality, as a threat to personal stability and social order. The sexuality of the body in particular is a threat to orderly succession and family authority. As we have seen in earlier chapters, much of Western cultural history has been seen as a pendulum swing between orgy and asceticism, the forces of Dionysus and Apollo. As Borges has observed:

The world we live in is a mistake, a clumsy parody. Mirrors and fatherhood, because they multiply and confirm the parody, are abominations. Revulsion is the cardinal virtue. Two ways (whose choice the Prophet left free) may lead us there: abstinence or the orgy, excess of the flesh or its denial. (1973: 83)

The orgy and the fast in many ways summarize much of the cultural history of Western Christian civilization. Orgiasticism has often been associated with political protest, while asceticism has been connected with restraint and control. Gouldner (1967) associated the Dionysian cults with the marginal, disprivileged groups in society (peasants, women and slaves). Most of these commentaries associated orgy and fast with the macro-politics of the social system. For example, Bakhtin (1968) connects peasant revolts with the role of festival as an oppositional force to the norms of individualism which were

Table 8.2

Culture	Nature
Orgy	Asceticism
Bulimia	Anorexia nervosa

set within the market in the work of Rabelais. However, in the modern world of consumerism, we can also think of two medical conditions – bulimia and anorexia nervosa – as two individualized forms of protest which employ the body as a medium of protest against the consumer-self (see Table 8.2). Orgy and asceticism are both culturally mediated ‘modes of living’ with a specific social significance. Orgiastic release is typically a protest against political controls. As we shall see in later chapters, the orgiastic festival of mediaeval Europe is clearly separated from modern calculating hedonism.

If orgy and asceticism are culturally mediated and social activities, bulimia and anorexia nervosa are individual solutions to social problems and they are more closely dominated by the routines of physiology. While both bulimia and anorexia are individually selected solutions to familial crises, they have unintended physiological consequences over which, by definition, the individual has no control.

On Disease

The relationship between ‘disease’ and ‘illness’ raises a variety of basic questions about the cultural and social mediation of human physiology. From a logical point of view (Taylor, 1979), the term ‘disease’ has a specific technical sense referring to ‘configurations of pathological abnormalities’. By contrast, ‘illness’ refers to clinical manifestations which can be regarded as either symptoms (subjective sensations) or signs (objective findings discovered by an expert observer) (Feinstein, 1967). It follows that illness has an irreducible social component involving subjective responses of patients and diagnostic judgements of professionals. Both of these are clearly subject to social determinations (Bloor, 1976). The social constitution of illness as a classification has been expressed strongly in the case of mental illness by Morgan (1975) who argued that, while ‘disease’ refers to all living species, ‘illness’ exists only in society. This notion of the essentially social character of illness can be further extended by reference to the ‘sick role’ (Parsons, 1951) or ‘illness behaviour’ (Mechanic and Volkart, 1961). Illness can be regarded as deviant behaviour, but it is heavily structured by cultural categories which legitimate or normalize deviance as a medical condition. Clearly not all persons experiencing illness symptoms seek out professional medical help. Once a sick role is adopted the management of illness is subsequently held to be the mutual responsibility of both patient and physician. These mutual responsibilities form the basic element of a medical system.

What is missing in medical sociology is the recognition that the search for the social and/or physiological aetiology of disease and illness locks into a deeper and more persistent set of theoretical issues which links together philosophy and sociology. The concept of illness in particular brings together three fundamental debates which have shaped sociology from its inception, namely the relationships between nature and culture, individual and society, and mind and body. It is sometimes implied that only a peculiar class of illnesses actually raise these issues, namely those which are referred to as 'psychosomatic illnesses'. From a sociological point of view, it is difficult to accept even this notion, since to have any illness is the effect of diagnostic processes and professional judgements, which are in turn the outcome of historical and social determinations. From a Foucauldian perspective, the labels of scientific medical practice are not statements about 'real' disease entities, but effects of power-knowledge and products of specific discourses (Foucault, 1967). Thus, even death, that final arbiter of physiology, is a social category and not an innocent medical tag (Ariès, 1974). Although the truth or falsity of propositions may be independent of their social context, there are no beliefs which do not have social causes. Medical beliefs are thus proper objects of a sociology of knowledge.

Man is What He Eats

It has been suggested that enquiries within medical sociology often mask deeper issues within traditional philosophical debates. One exception to this claim is *Awakenings* in which Sacks (1976) explores the sequelae of Parkinsonism via Leibniz's theodicy. In this chapter, I argue that anorexia nervosa perfectly illustrates the underlying philosophical bases of sociology (individual/society, nature/culture, mind/body). To develop this illustration, anorexia is located within a theme which emerged in early Marxism through the medium of Feuerbach's sensualist epistemology under the slogan 'Man is what he eats' (Cherno, 1962–3). While these philosophical issues are endemic to medical sociology, anorexia is peculiarly suited to my argument.

There is some agreement (Kalucy et al., 1977; Palmer, 1980) that the first clinical descriptions of anorexia nervosa appeared in France and England in the late 1860s. In England, Sir William Gull delivered an address at Oxford in 1868 on the characteristics of anorexia, which he elaborated in 1873 by describing the case of Miss A. (Gull, 1874). In the late 1880s, the work of Charcot in Paris suggested that anorexia was one feature of the hysterical syndrome (Charcot, 1889), and this theme was further elaborated in the work of Freud and Breuer in the 1890s in their analyses of Frau Emmy von N. and Fraulein Anna O. (Freud and Breuer, 1974). The historical specificity of the eruption of anorexia in the late nineteenth century suggests a connection with Foucault's idea of the 'hysterization' of women's bodies (Foucault, 1981) and the peculiar conjunction of social structures which produced

a crisis in middle-class, urban family life (Janik and Toulmin, 1973). This conjunction of circumstances was combined with a specific interest in family organization by the medical profession (Donzelot, 1979).

Like hysteria, anorexia is clinically almost entirely an illness specific to women. It is estimated that only one in ten 'victims' of anorexia nervosa is male (Palmer, 1980). The gender specificity of the illness is also suggested by the temporal nature of its onset, namely in the period between puberty and menopause. More precisely anorexia typically develops at the age of 15 and most cases are identified before the age of 25. In short, the illness is characteristic of young women. There is also evidence that 'anorexia nervosa' is becoming an increasingly popular diagnostic label amongst medical professionals, which is indicated in the increased prevalence of the illness (Crisp et al., 1976). Much of the literature on the illness has been motivated by a feminist critique of the position of women in society in relation to both the sexual division of labour and the patriarchal system of professional medicine. In this view, women are peculiarly subject to the contradictory expectations of beauty in a consumer society where male criteria of aesthetics predominate (Chernin, 1981). Anorexia raises the question of whether the human body – its size, weight, gestures and deportment – is shaped in accordance with cultural criteria of appropriateness. In this regard, Mauss's notion of 'body techniques' as 'the ways in which from society to society men know how to use their bodies' (Mauss, 1979: 97) is of major importance.

Medical definitions of anorexia nervosa indicate the uncertain and complex nature of the illness. Anorexia appears to hover insecurely within a nosological map; it is partly a disease and partly an illness. Feighner (1972) identified a cluster of clinical signs and symptoms as necessary for the diagnosis of anorexia nervosa: (1) age of onset prior to 25 years; (2) at least 25 per cent loss of original body weight; (3) a distorted attitude towards food and eating; (4) no known prior medical illness which could account for anorexia; (5) no other known primary affective psychiatric disorders; (6) at least two of the following – amenorrhoea, lanugo, bradycardia, overactivity, bulimia and vomiting. Because weight loss and menstruation problems may be absent and sporadic in anorexic patients, some authors have suggested 'dietary chaos syndrome' as a more appropriate diagnostic label (Palmer, 1979). Alternatively, Bruch (1978), Crisp and Toms (1972) and Russell (1970) have adopted entirely psychological criteria for diagnosis, namely the relentless pursuit of thinness associated with a fear of fatness. From a sociological point of view, what appears significant about anorexia is that it is impossible to detach it from a social aetiology, criteria of social deviance and social symbolism. Some of the more promising interpretations of anorexia perceive it in terms of a struggle within the middle-class family, where over-protected daughters seek greater control over their bodies and therefore their lives (Bruch, 1978). There is a sense, therefore, in which girls 'choose' anorexia as a deliberate personal strategy of autonomy. The so-called 'control paradox' of anorexia can often be seen in near-religious terms as with

asceticism, that is, 'an attempt to attain spirituality or goodness' (Lawrence, 1979: 96) through the subordination of the flesh. Yet the deeper paradox of anorexia is that this attempt to control the body results in its dominance – food, eating, vomiting, slimming become all-consuming passions. Within a broader cultural perspective, the asceticism of Buddhist practice selected a middle way between extreme asceticism and hedonism. Mogul (1980) comparing the asceticism of Gautama Buddha and the modern anorexic noted that mortification of the body leads, not to personal freedom from its needs, but to mental enslavement.

The sexual symbolism of anorexia is equally contradictory. Autobiographical accounts by anorexic women indicate that extreme slimming is associated in puberty with a rejection of sexuality through the suppression of menstruation. Obedience to parental controls with regard to moral purity may also be involved in this rejection of boyfriends, sexual maturity and sexual experience. At the same time, our current cultural norms of female beauty emphasize slimness and slenderness in contrast to the weighty matrons of Rubens and Rembrandt. While denying the physiology of her sexuality, the anorexic woman conforms to the accepted standards of female attractiveness (Orbach, 1978). Whereas Christian asceticism aimed to liberate the soul by subordinating the flesh, the body maintenance theme of modern consumerism aims at enhancing pleasures. The thin body is better equipped for desire. By denying her sexuality as a personal choice, the anorexic accepts, or at least conforms to, an ethic of consumer sexuality. It is interesting to note, therefore, that ballerinas who are an epitome of sexual attractiveness are, as a subculture, also commonly anorexic (Druss and Silverman, 1979).

The paradoxes of anorexia reproduce, to use a phrase from Lukács (1971), the antinomies of bourgeois thought. As I shall argue more fully shortly, it is a search for individual freedom and individuation from the 'golden cage' of the middle-class, over-protective family and a quest through the rigours of secular asceticism for personal perfectability. At the same time, it is over-determined by the culture of narcissism, consumerism and the patristic norms of slender femininity. It is an act of adolescent rebellion against parental control, but it ends in physical enslavement to the body – a rebellion that often ends in death. This individual act of self-assertion ironically reproduces the conventional social criteria of youthful female beauty. Anorexia can be seen as an exercise of mind over body, of culture over nature. Yet the loss of weight, deformities of bone structure, loss of menstruation, hyperactivity, malnutrition, hypersthenia and anaemia are consequences which cannot be readily controlled. This is the reassertion of natural over cultural processes. Anorexia can thus be meaningfully described as a 'psychosemantic fallacy'; it is

a disease in which the concept of the whole person is so confused, so dialectically divided, that 'I' can at the same time be choosing to live, as the self, and choosing to die, as the body, however unconscious those choices may be ... both suicide of the schizoid type and anorexia nervosa involve a denial of reality which depends

upon an acceptance of a split between self and body, and is only possible through paradox. (MacLeod, 1981: 88)

What I want to suggest in this chapter is that to achieve a wider and a firmer theoretical grasp of these paradoxes, it may be valuable to reconsider some issues relating to the nature–culture contrast in the debate between Marxists and Feuerbachians.

Sensualism

Feuerbach's critical criticism is now largely remembered as simply the point of departure for Marx's early attempt to develop a theory of *praxis*. Both Marx and Engels embraced Feuerbach's critique of religion as the starting point of all criticism because it represented an advance on French materialism which they regarded as mechanical and static. Marx came to reject Feuerbach because Feuerbachian criticism remained purely cognitive and contemplative, that is, the overcoming of human alienation was to be achieved merely by passive cognition not by practice. Thus in the first of the 'Theses on Feuerbach' we read that

Feuerbach wants sense objects really distinct from the objects of thought, but he does not conceive human activity itself as *objective (gegenstandliche)* activity. Hence, in the *Essence of Christianity*, he regards the theoretical attitude as the only genuinely human attitude, while practice is conceived and fixed only in its dirty, Jewish manifestation. Hence he does not grasp the significance of 'revolutionary' or 'practical-critical' activity. (Marx, 1976: 61–2)

Feuerbach was criticized by Engels for replacing the revolutionary emancipation of the proletariat with the liberation of people through love. Thus, for Feuerbach, 'sexual love finally becomes one of the highest forms, if not the highest form, of the practice of his new religion' (Engels, 1976: 29). Feuerbach's sensualism was thus dismissed as cognitive, subjective and individualist. For Marx, the subject of the interchange between man and nature is the social collectivity which has a history and a specific form; it is not the individual sensuous being but the structured social collectivity within which individuals labour and reproduce (Hanfi, 1972).

As many commentators have since observed, the break between Marxist materialism and Feuerbachian anthropology was never as clean and neat as Engels wanted to suggest; furthermore, the break between Marx and Feuerbach diminished Marxism by eliminating any conception of people as sensual, emotional beings, as entities which paradoxically have bodies and are bodies. Marx's concept of *praxis* and dialectic as the solution to the mind/body dichotomy as expressed in the sterile opposition between mechanical materialism and active idealism, grew out of Feuerbach's project to liquidate the rationalist prejudice of Cartesianism which suppressed the emotional and passionate dimension of human existence. There is something odd in the view that Feuerbach's solution to the alienation of human essence in abstract theology was merely cognitive, given Feuerbach's view

that thinking and experiencing are united in sensuous practices. In part, this rejection of Feuerbach can be associated with an implicit asceticism, particularly in Engels, which rejected any argument in favour of the centrality of desire in human relationships as an example of the decadent utopianism of Charles Fourier (Beecher and Bienvenu, 1972). The idea that any revolutionary reconstruction of society would also have to entail a fulfilment or enhancement of human sensual satisfaction, particularly sexual enjoyment, largely disappeared from later Marxism: revolutionary asceticism became opposed to bourgeois corpulence (Schmidt, 1971). The body, to employ an Althusserian metaphor, ceased to be an object of Marxism's theoretical labour. The principal exception to this observation can be found in the work of Sebastiano Timpanaro (1970) for whom the frailty of human existence is represented in death as the final triumph of nature over history. The attempt to retrieve the passionate life of the body in modern social theory has occurred through neo-Freudianism in critical theory (Marcuse, 1969) and through Nietzsche in structuralism (Benoist, 1978).

My argument is that neither Marxism nor sociology has in recent times attempted to produce a theory of the body; it is unfortunate that this absence in social theory has been seized upon by the proponents of sociobiology which is largely reductionist in approach. To some extent, this is an oddity since both Marxism and sociology can be said, at a metatheoretical level, to have been constructed on the attempt to resolve the philosophical problem of mind/body. We have seen that the young Marx set out, via Feuerbach, to transcend mechanistic materialism which ultimately reduced conscious activity to physiology. Equally sociology can be seen as an attempt to transcend Kantian epistemology in which man is both an entity within nature (the phenomenal world) and an active member of a moral community (the noumenal world). Durkheim's analysis of totemism and Weber's interpretative sociology were both grounded in this Kantian problem. In the long run, any attempt to incorporate a theory of the body in mainstream sociology has, however, been regarded as the thin end of biological reductionism (Parsons, 1937).

In this chapter I am mainly concerned with a possible Marxist solution to this absence, through Feuerbach rather than with sociology. One Marxist solution could be located in the notions of 'practice' and 'contradiction'. Specifically my argument is that the body is both a means of labour and an object of labour; we realize ourselves through labour on our bodies and this labour on the body is a social practice. From this notion of body practices, my aim is to work towards the claim that illness is not simply an event that happens to the body, but, paradoxically, a choice. Before coming to this argument, it is important to examine further aspects of Feuerbach, particularly his later views on nutrition as the secret of the nature/culture separation.

In his later works, that is from 1848 to 1862, Feuerbach was preoccupied with the relationship between nature and human existence, and

in particular with the paradox that human beings are both in and of nature (Wartovsky, 1977). By redirecting the arguments of *The Essence of Christianity* through physiology, Feuerbach (1953) attempted to overcome the object/subject dichotomy by arguing that external nature becomes internal subjectivity through the incorporation of nature through eating. External reality is not given but acquired through sensuous practical activity. We are linked to external reality by our physiological needs, but this is an active linkage since external reality is literally appropriated and internalized by consumption. This dependence on nature was mythologized in religion as a dependence on the Father, but in his later work, under the influence of Jakob Moleschott's *Lehre der Nahrungsmittel* (Theory of Nutrition) of 1850, Feuerbach's original sensualism was converted into a specifically physiological doctrine. Men are the products of what they eat, so that Feuerbach's notion of sensuous practice was lost; human beings become the passive consequences of organic processes. These arguments were again employed in the analysis of religion where, in 'The Mystery of Sacrifice or man is what he eats' of 1862, Feuerbach (1970) noted the incorporation theme in all communal religious sacrifices. The origin of sacrifice lies in human dependence on external reality, but the result of sacrifice is a false sense of confidence and independence. It is easy to detect massive problems in Feuerbach's materialism and equally easy to illustrate its absurdity as when, quoting Moleschott, Feuerbach saw the consumption of beans as the solution to revolutionary transformations in Europe (Kamenka, 1970: 112). However, as most interpretations of Feuerbach indicate, it is possible to extract valid principles from his emphasis on sensuous activity. What Feuerbach never entirely lost sight of was the premise of *The Essence of Christianity* that man is not simply a cognitive being, but a sensuous, active agent both in relation to the external environment of nature and to the internal environment of his sensations and sensibility. Wartovsky observes this premise especially clearly in Feuerbach's attempt to overcome the mind-body identity:

The identity is not, reductively, that of the mind with the body, *as body*; nor of the body with the mind, *as mind*; rather the identity, or the unity, is the *totality itself* as a functional or organic one, that is as an *activity* of living, thinking, feeling, willing, whose organic condition is certainly a material or physical body, but only a body of a certain kind, the *acting* body, *whose externality is a relational one*, and that therefore cannot be reduced to a composite or aggregate physical thing except in death. (1977: 408)

We can thus stretch Feuerbach's rendering of Moleschott as being the idea that 'man is himself a product of his productive activity, that he creates himself in the labour of producing the means of his subsistence and in the social organization that assures this production and reproduction of species existence' (1977: 413).

What is generally absent in Feuerbach's sensualist materialism is any developed sense of the social conditions which are combined with, and a

condition of, physiological reproduction. Feuerbach takes a one-sided view of eating as an individual incorporation of nature but,

[i]n a fully two-sided dialectic, not only the eating of food, but the obtaining, the production and reproduction of the means of existence would have to be taken into consideration. The dialogue between my stomach and the world, in real activity, is mediated by the dialogue between production and consumption, the social dialogue of human praxis that Marx developed in his political economy. (Wartovsky, 1977: 416)

It is in this respect interesting, for example, to compare Feuerbach's view of sacrifice as alienated consciousness of dependency with those put forward by William Robertson Smith, Emile Durkheim and Marcel Mauss (Hubert and Mauss, 1964). For later sociologists, the explanation of sacrifice was to be found in its social not personal functions. Thus, the ritual sacrifice and consumption of the god created a bond between people and god, while at the same time producing a social bond within the group. Although Feuerbach's sensualist philosophy suffers from a variety of defects and failures, it is possible to extract an important core of ideas from his attempt to transcend certain traditional problems in philosophy.

Body Practices

In the following section I want to outline some general principles for the analysis of anorexia nervosa which follow from Feuerbach or are compatible with revisions of Feuerbach's approach. First, bodies are objects over which we labour – eating, sleeping, cleaning, dieting, exercising. These labours can be called body practices and they are both individual and collective. These practices tie us into the natural world, since our bodies are environments, while also locating us within a dense system of social norms and regulations. Much of the work of Erving Goffman, for example on face-work (1963), can be seen in this context. The body is a site of enormous symbolic work and symbolic production. Its deformities are stigmatic and stigmatizing, while at the same time its perfections, culturally defined, are objects of praise and admiration. Because of its symbolic potential, the body is also an object of regulation and control through asceticism, training or denial as I have argued in 'The government of the body' (Turner, 1982a). It is possible to trace this regulation of the body in public space as a civilizing process, as in Norbert Elias's analysis of etiquette (1978), or as a process of rationalization as in Michel Foucault's analysis of discipline (1979). However, following Feuerbach, I want to argue that the body is both an environment we practise on and also practise with. We labour on, in and with bodies.

Secondly, to emphasize an argument which is lacking in Feuerbach, our body maintenance creates social bonds, expresses social relations and reaffirms or denies them. While Robertson Smith's analysis of religious groups has often been criticized, he can be said to have expressed an

essential sociological insight into social bonding. For Smith, to understand religion we have to understand religious practice and to understand religious practice we have to consider its social effects; in particular, religious rituals create a social bond between their practitioners. There is an essential relationship between the sociology of religion and sociology as such. Religion or *religio* means to bind together. Sociology from *socius* is the study of fellowship, or more generally the processes that cement and corrode social relationships. Following this etymological line, the elementary forms of social relationships in society are exchange relationships between parents and offspring which through socialization create bonds of dependency. The most basic of these dependency relations is located in the exchange of food from parent to child that creates binding and obligation. To grow up is to achieve individualization through self-autonomy, especially control over personal body maintenance. Paternalistic authority grows out of, and is legitimated by, these dependency relations, which emerge directly out of these body-maintaining services rendered by parents to their offspring. Refusal to eat, vomiting and dietary disorders in this respect are precisely disorders. In the absence of language, vomiting on the living-room carpet is one clear statement of resistance to parental control. Similarly, refusing to eat is an opposition to parental feeding which gives the child some control over body functions.

Thirdly, as Wartovsky notes in his criticisms of the ahistorical nature of Feuerbach's attempt to translate sensualism into dietary materialism, this micro-politics of the body has to be set within the wider context of production and reproduction. I have suggested that Marxism has largely neglected the reproduction of bodies and population in favour of a primary concern for the production of commodities. It can be argued that Foucault has taken the problem of the reproduction of the body of individuals and the body of populations as a central focus of his philosophy of power/knowledge. More generally, structuralism has taken the conflict between power and desire as the crux of all forms of authority; the conflict between the id and the superego is thus a model of political struggles. There does appear to be at least a vague resemblance between Feuerbach's attack on Cartesian rationalism by asserting the primacy of sensuous need over theology and Foucault's attack on rationalist knowledge by asserting the autonomy of desire. To render these debates into a sociology of the body requires the recognition that it is the female body which, historically, is the focus of social control through knowledge and authority, because women produce men, while men control women and property as commodities. It can be argued that men control the distribution of property (under primogeniture for example) by controlling women ideologically (for example in the pre-modern doctrine of women as a deformity or secondary creation) through the institutional apparatus of the family and the state. Authority is thus legitimated through the denial of desire under a variety of paternalistic institutions (Sennett, 1980). My argument is that we should not see anorexia nervosa as an isolated epidemic of modern society, but rather treat it as part

of a complex collection of female disorders in the context of changes within Western society over at least the last 100 years.

Contradictions

The intention here is to take these three dimensions – choice, dependency and social context – to illustrate a series of contradictions within anorexia nervosa. Most of these illustrations are taken from the autobiographies of anorexics, backed up by qualitative clinical data. Various authors have concentrated on family background in the aetiology of anorexia. Two salient features have emerged from these studies, namely: (1) an overpowering, dominant mother involved in an excessively controlling relationship over the daughter where there is a contradictory emphasis on compliance, cleanliness and competition; and (2) inadequate preparation for adolescence because there are few opportunities for the individualization of the child, particularly for sexual and gender identity. In more detail, anorexic families are close knit, small (with an average of 2.8 children), and achievement orientated. There is a paucity of sons in such families, that is an estimated 66 per cent have daughters only. The mothers of anorexics tend to be themselves preoccupied with weight problems, their own careers and in general raise their children to satisfy their own interests (Bruch, 1978). There is a contradictory relationship between the emphasis on success and competition which requires some independence on the part of the child in the outer world of school and university, and the emphasis on obedience and compliance which subordinates the individuality of the child to that of the mother. Within the middle-class context of anorexia, the child is faced with the possibility of failure at school, inability to match parental expectations and the symbolic disobedience of educational failure. It is interesting therefore that the onset of anorexia often corresponds to entry into higher education. The title of Bruch's (1978) classic study of anorexia – *The Golden Cage* – perfectly captures the feeling of the anorexic daughter: 'She was like a sparrow in a golden cage, too plain and simple for the luxuries of her home, but also deprived of the freedom of doing what she truly wanted to do'. Self-chosen starvation provides the hope of escape from the cage, but it is a paradoxical bid for freedom.

By suppressing menstruation, the daughter suppresses sexuality and adopts a permanently childlike body and attitude to the mother. At one level, anorexia is a refusal to mature. At the same time, self-starvation gives an enormous sense of self-control via control of biological processes. Food refusal 'is a defence against the original fear of eating too much, of not having control, of giving in to their biological urges. ... This accumulation of power was giving her another kind of "weight"' (Bruch, 1978: 4–5). Sheila MacLeod's autobiography *The Art of Starvation* (1981) documents how the 'choice' of anorexia often brings with it an early feeling of elation and independence as the anorexic experiences the personal

pleasure of control through personal discipline. Anorexia is chosen as a defence against confusion between opposites – compliance/independence, maturity/childhood, sexuality/neutrality. While the anorexic cannot adequately control this exterior world of contradictions, she can at least control herself through the ascetic regime of anorexia; this is her peculiar, compelling path to self-hood. However, once anorexia has been chosen as a committed identity, there are aspects of bodily processes which then assert their own logic and autonomy on the newly independent self. It becomes increasingly difficult to control, interrupt or redirect the process of weight loss, absence of appetite, overactivity, insomnia and amenorrhoea. There may also be extensive dental decay and loss of teeth. The anorexic may also become locked into the contradictory cycle of starvation, bulimia, guilt and vomiting. In many respects this pattern of contradictory behaviour is reminiscent of a theological, moral disorder known in Catholic pastoral theology as scrupulosity. This refers to the obsessive behaviour of children who attempt to adhere to every detail of ritual and moral codes presented to them by authority figures (Hepworth and Turner, 1982). Because they set themselves impossible tasks of rigid conformity to rules, they must necessarily fall into sins which produce guilt and the desire to impose even stricter forms of conformity. They are involved in a moral spiral from which there is little escape. Similarly, the anorexic pattern of asceticism requires obligations which cannot be met so that lapses into self-indulgence are regarded as imperfections which drive the sufferer into further enforcements of the regimen. Thus, an initial act of governing the body to achieve identity and autonomy is replaced by an anarchy of the body which denies the will of the subject/victim whose response is an intensified programme of dieting and exercise.

A similar account of this process is to be found in Aimee Liu's *Solitaire* (1979). This autobiography also reflects the paradox of a government and anarchy of the body. Like MacLeod, Liu was a child acutely aware of her sense of powerlessness within a middle-class family which was socially successful. Dieting was her 'first totally independent exhibit of power' (Liu, 1979: 36). While a successful girl at school, Liu was overwhelmed by her personal sense of failure and inadequacy. Despite her attractive looks, she was horrified by sexuality partly as a result of sexual harassment as a child. Her control of menstruation was thus a triumph: 'My periods have stopped! I don't suppose the reprieve will last forever, but for the moment it delights me. And the more weight I lose, the flatter I become. It's wonderful, like crawling back into the body of a child' (1979: 41). Diet, then, is one of the few areas of personal control and discipline which young women from close, but competitive family environments can exercise as an act of personal autonomy: 'My diet is the one sector of my life over which I and I alone wield total control' (1979: 46–7). These two autobiographical accounts of anorexia are particularly interesting in terms of the dominance of a political discourse – control, rebellion, discipline, autonomy, choice – by which they attempt to render the physical experience of dieting.

Much of the contemporary literature on anorexia argues that it is, at least in part, caused by the prevalence of cultural norms advocating thinness as a personal value and that these norms in turn reflect the dominance of patriarchal values and patriarchal authority over women (Chernin, 1981; Lawrence, 1979; Orbach, 1978). While there is much to be said in favour of such an interpretation, the onset of anorexia is situated in a conflict over dependence and autonomy in the relationship between mother and daughter. In this context, the refusal to eat, however secretly that refusal is pursued, is an act of rebellion which breaks the social bonds created by nurturing. Some of the earliest accounts of the illness in Freud and Breuer's studies of hysteria drew attention to this aspect of rebellion. In the case of Frau Emmy von N., Freud's attempt to encourage her to eat reproduced the feelings of rebellion she had experienced as a child: 'the furious look she cast me convinced me that she was in open rebellion and that the situation was grave' (Freud and Breuer, 1974: 141). Frau Emmy reported that,

when I was a child, it often happened that out of naughtiness I refused to eat my meat at dinner. My mother was very severe about this and under threat of condign punishment I was obliged two hours later to eat the meat, which had been left standing on the same plate. (Freud and Breuer, 1974: 141)

In *The Art of Starvation*, MacLeod also emphasizes that the refusal to eat is especially potent as a rejection of the mother as the source of food and life: 'What better revenge can there be on an unfaithful mother who gives her body to another than to reject her, and with her the principle of nourishment, in becoming anorexic?' (MacLeod, 1981: 35). Anorexia thus transforms the previously compliant 'good girl' into a naughty but determined rebel. The rebellion is of course primarily a symbolic gesture which cuts off the nurturing bond which the girl experiences as bondage. This aspect of naughtiness is frequently commented on in the literature, but the significance of it is equally frequently lost.

Anorexia involves a power struggle within the family over food, with the parents attempting to force their daughter to eat. It is obviously difficult to force a child to eat, and in any case, the disobedient daughter can resort to secret or deviant tactics – vomiting and punitive exercises. As Bruch notes with respect to one of her anorexic patients, 'Formerly sweet, obedient and considerate, she became more and more demanding, obstinate, irritable and arrogant. There was constant arguing not only about what she should eat but about all other activities as well' (1978: 2).

The girl's search for individuation and autonomy is thus fought out in a political language of opposition to the bonding created between family members by the common table. The political metaphors of medical language are particularly interesting in this respect. A regimen is a government of the body, and the forms of eating imposed by parents on their children can thus be seen as an aspect of domestic government or a regime for the control of

bodies. Anorexia is not simply a disorder of metabolism, but a dis-order of social relations. Anorexia is an alternative, disruptive regimen, an anarchy within the domestic government. But, as I have already suggested, anorexia becomes an anarchy of the organic system which imposes its own logic and autonomy. The search for autonomy becomes an illness which imposes its political authority over the body of the victim.

It is interesting to compare anorexia nervosa with Durkheim's account of egoistic suicide. For Durkheim (1970) egoistic suicide appears to be subjectively the choice of an individual to terminate their life, but sociologically it is the product of the weakening or collapse of social bonds linking the individual to the social group and thereby exposing them to the destructive suicidal forces of an individualistic culture. By contrast, the suicide of anorexics appears to be, in part, the product of over-socialization, of social bonds within the family that create over-protective surveillance and discipline (Mannoni, 1973). The suicidal path of the anorexic can thus be interpreted as the result of too much rather than too little parenting, but since this over-socialization is brought about by the mother in a domestic government where the father is typically absent or weak, the anorexic household suffers from matriarchal not patriarchal control. This kind of argument appears therefore to depart from one interpretation of anorexia which regards the illness as a consequence of patriarchal values enforcing unworkable norms of slender beauty on women. The problem of female forms is further reinforced by a commercial capitalist system which promotes commodities by reference to a body aesthetic. The value of this feminist critique is that it locates anorexia within the context of the general position of women in society as an historical issue. In this respect, anorexia has to be seen, along with hysteria in the nineteenth century and depression in the twentieth, as an illness which gives expression to the structural limitations placed on women who are at the same time, especially in the middle class, expected to be successful in the public domain. To understand anorexia, therefore, it will not be sufficient to situate it simply within the space of the private household, since these private spaces are themselves determined by the wider structure of industrial society.

To return to Feuerbach, if we take him literally – Man is what he eats – we may wish to argue that Woman is what she looks like. A woman's form is symbolic of character. The obese woman is not simply fat, she is also out of control. The unrestrained body is a statement or a language about unrestrained morality. To control women's bodies is to control their personalities and represents an act of authority over the body in the interests of public order organized around male values of what is rational. There is a good argument for examining anorexia alongside a more general notion of the restraint of women's bodies. While it may appear to be a bizarre comparison, I want to conclude this discussion of the government of the body by an examination of the history of corsets in the nineteenth century.

Corsets

Tightlacing to achieve a constricted waistline dominated British fashion from the 1830s to the 1890s. The unrestricted body came to be regarded in this period as symbolic of moral licence; the loose body reflected loose morals. At the same time the corset was an emblem of a leisure class since a corseted woman was unable to perform manual labour. A number of pressures – moral, economic, status, fashion – forced or encouraged women to shape their bodies to fit these new norms of slenderness. The obvious interpretation of this development in fashion is that ‘the corset which debilitated and inhibited active movement was in effect a physical manifestation of women’s forced submission and dependence upon the male’ (Davies, 1982: 616). This was, however, a very paradoxical submission. It can be argued (Kunzle, 1982) that women also adopted corsets because they were a symbolic statement that they were not pregnant and possibly could not be pregnant. The corset is simultaneously an affirmation of female beauty and a denial of female sexuality. While Mel Davies (1982) supports the view that the corset was an instrument of male oppression, he also argues that the corset reduced the incidence of intercourse, limited exposure to conception and affected gestation and parturition. Davies suggests from medical evidence that the corset caused injury to the cervix often making coitus painful. He also argues that pressure on the abdominal viscera and particularly on the uterus in young women interfered with menstrual flows at puberty, resulting occasionally in amenorrhoea. Finally, he claims that the corset caused uterine problems which made miscarriages and foetal damage more common among women who were corseted. In short, the corset reduced the fertility of middle-class women by comparison with working-class women who were less constrained by corsets. Davies is thus primarily concerned with the demographic implications of the corset, but it is the contradictory symbolic significance of the corset which is most relevant for an analysis of the government of the body. The corset made women conform to a male, middle-class norm of feminine beauty, but it paradoxically reduced and restricted their sexuality by making them less available for coitus. Middle-class men found an outlet for desire among working-class prostitutes. Middle-class women thus conformed to two norms while being encased within their corsets: (1) the corset offered respectability and beauty; and (2) the corset denied desire. Given the contradictory symbolism of the corset, its relationship to twentieth-century anorexia becomes fairly obvious.

The nineteenth-century corset and the twentieth-century fad for slimness through regular dieting and exercise ensure that women conform to certain norms of beauty which are assumed to be attractive to men. In this sense they illustrate the submissive nature of women in a society organized around patriarchal values and institutions. Apparently women willingly accept these standards through choice because they apparently accept by socialization the notion that slimness is valuable and respectable. The slim body is a woman’s

way into a man's arms, heart and hearth. The corset at least was a necessary condition for success in the marriage market:

Loving parents now believed that their daughters' chances on the marriage market would be seriously impaired unless they had the correct rigidly upright posture, emaciated bodies, pallid complexion and languid airs, and were prepared to faint at the slightest provocation. The importance attached to these matters was a direct result of the decline of money and the rise of personal choice as the most important factor in the selection of a marriage partner. Girls were now competing with one another in an open market for success in which physical and personal attributes had to a considerable degree taken over the role previously played by the size of the dowry. (Stone, 1979: 284)

Today's slim woman is less likely to be looking for a marriage partner. Slimness is now, under the promotion of the food and drug industry, more geared to the narcissistic ends of personal happiness, social success and social acceptability. The slim body is no longer the product of either an ascetic drive for salvation or of the artificial aid of the corset; it is instead a specific feature of calculating hedonism as the ethic of late capitalism:

The instrumental strategies which body maintenance demands of the individual resonate with deep-seated features of consumer culture which encourage individuals to negotiate their social relationships and approach their free time activities with a calculating frame of mind. Self preservation depends upon the preservation of the body within a culture in which the body is the passport to all that is good in life. Health, youth, beauty, sex, fitness are the positive attributes which body care can achieve and preserve. (Featherstone, 1982: 26)

While slimness may be, for both men and women, the dominant norm of sexual attractiveness, slimness may also be ironically a denial of sexuality or, more specifically, of procreative functions and fertility. Corsets, jogging and anorexia have one important medical side-effect, namely that they suppress menstruation. We might say that anorexia is over-determined by these contradictory features of femininity. It is an attempt to deny sexuality and thereby to retain a childlike innocence by avoiding menstruation. Anorexics have unhappy and unwanted personal relationships with men, but in becoming slim they adhere to a norm which is assumed to be attractive to men. In the nineteenth century, the corset was the target of feminist reform, which regarded such constraints as against the laws of nature. Fashion was symptomatic of women's social and physical confinement (Leach, 1981). Dieting and exercising since the twentieth century are similarly associated both with a return to a more 'natural' life-style and with the social liberation of women. The right of women to jog in the streets without interference from men is a political right, symbolic of their freedom to operate within the public domain. At the same time, jogging and slimming, on the one hand, reduce medical costs and therefore can be regarded as a rationalization of the body in the interests of the state; on the other hand, jogging and slimming increase the sexual attractiveness of women in the interests of consumer culture. Jogging conforms to certain economic and cultural requirements of capitalist society, and it is also associated with a sense of personal freedom

on the part of women. Jogging and dieting thus illustrate two themes within Foucault's treatment of knowledge and power. First, at a subjective level they express an enhancement of personal liberty for women. Wearing corsets and jogging are not readily combined; however they are part of a general medicalization of society whereby surveillance and discipline are now self-imposed by the individual. Secondly, they represent a sexualization of society by which we are forced to be sexually acceptable in order to be socially acceptable. However, by becoming desirable we also suppress desire. Dieting was the principal means by which the mediaeval monastic orders controlled the passions in the interests of spirituality. The consumer regime of the modern period simultaneously stimulates and suppresses desire in the interests of increased consumption; the asceticism of diet is harnessed to the hedonism of consumption. The essential cultural contradiction of late capitalism lies here between the asceticism of production (the work ethic) and the hedonism of circulation (the ethic of personal private consumption).

Women's Complaints

In her study of English madness, Skultans argues that beliefs about the weakness of women and 'about feminine nature are relatively unchanging. For this reason it is not easy to relate beliefs about feminine nature to social and historical changes' (Skultans, 1979: 77). From this perspective, it is possible to interpret hysteria, melancholy, menopausal depression and menstrual tension as medical conditions which have 'real' symptoms, but at the same time are ideological constructions which signify the social, rather than the biological, vulnerability of women. Historically, hysteria and melancholy were not simply conditions of women, but specifically of middle-class women. They occurred according to medical opinion because the unmarried wealthy woman was unoccupied and hence prone to nervous disorders which had their physiological origin within the unoccupied womb. The virgin middle-class woman was thus both socially and physiologically 'lazy'. The remedy was marriage and prayer (Turner, 1981).

I have suggested a relationship between the aetiology and symptomatology of anorexia and the effects of tightlacing. Corsets emphasized the vulnerability and weakness of young women. A handbook on child-rearing by William Law in the eighteenth century noted that tightlacing made women 'Poor, pale, sickly, infirm creatures, vapoured through want of spirits' (quoted in Stone, 1979: 282). Dieting, purging and fasting in the anorexic produces similar sickly symptoms of undernourishment, but these are combined with delusions of fitness, activity and strength. While Skultans may be correct in arguing that it is difficult to relate beliefs about female frailty to social changes, because of their persistent character over many centuries, there are some important changes. Two of these are important for understanding anorexia, namely, the commercialization of diet and the

arrival of the consumer body. These commercial developments may have the effect of reinforcing the problematic status of women in capitalism. While there are greater opportunities in education and employment for middle-class women in contemporary society than was the case in the 1880s, women are notoriously under-represented in professional occupations. There is thus a contradiction between the achievement orientation within the home and the public restraints on female success outside the home. My argument is that anorexia belongs to a continuum of body practices which includes dieting, jogging, keep-fit and other forms of secular asceticism. Women's bodies thus become symbolically occupied while remaining economically unoccupied. Given the low fertility of women in the advanced capitalist societies, especially in the middle classes, the imagery of the unoccupied womb and the occupied body is symbolically pertinent to the case of the anorexic woman.

To write in this way is, however, to see the body as a thing, as an object which is the unactive target of social and cultural pressures. The point of Feuerbach's criticism of cognitive rationalism was to assert the indissolubility of the willing, acting, feeling, meaningful, sensuous person. In the case of the anorexic, their sense of the self cannot be detached from their sense of body – they are what they eat and what they do not eat. However, in choosing anorexia they become involved in a paradoxical dialectic which is both social and physiological. Through an act of disobedience, they reproduce the norm of female beauty. Their search for autonomy is fateful, resulting in the dominance of nature over culture. The fact that there are social and collective practices operating on the body of the anorexic should not detract from this political feature of anorexia as a domestic rebellion. Indeed, the general message of this perspective is that 'Addiction, obesity, starvation [anorexia nervosa] are political problems, not psychiatric: each condenses and expresses a contest between the individual and some other person or persons in his environment over the control of the individual's body' (Szasz, 1974: 93). To approach anorexia as a political phenomenon points to the intimate and necessary connections between the private and the public domain. In the original theory of patriarchy put forward by Sir Robert Filmer in the sixteenth century, the authority of the monarch was modelled on the authority of husbands over their families and on the theological interpretation of Adam's authority over Eve. Patriarchy as a social system requires this interpretation of private and public authority. Behind this theory of legitimate authority there lies an even more basic argument which is made evident in Richard Sennett's (1980) study of authority. Power presupposes a dichotomy between reason and desire which corresponds to the public and the private domain. The authority of men over women has been traditionally legitimized as the authority of reason over desire. Anorexia like other 'women's complaints' is part of a symbolic struggle against forms of authority and an attempt to resolve the contradictions of the female self, fractured by the dichotomies of reason and desire, public and private, body and self.

Calculating Hedonism

While anorexia is often described by psychiatrists as a medical puzzle, it is perhaps less of a puzzle when set within the framework of a late capitalist culture in which narcissism and consumerism are regarded as dominating features (Jacoby, 1980). The post-war increase in real wages, technical improvements in production, improvements in distribution with the development of the department store and mass advertising through television, created a vast mass consumer market for personal commodities. These changes were associated with a new personality type which sociologists have referred to as 'the performing self'. The new personality requires validation from audiences through successful performances of the self. The new self is a visible self and the body, suitably decorated and presented, came to symbolize overtly the status of the personal self. Identity became embodied in external performances. Obesity was the new stigma, suggesting sloth, lack of control and hence poor performance (Featherstone, 1982). The characteristics of the narcissistic personality, which sociologists see as especially prevalent amongst the professional middle classes, are as follows: self-love and an inability to form deep, emotional relationships with others; the quest for praise and validation from others; reluctance to involve in relations that are demanding, especially with children or the aged; a horror of ageing and physical deterioration. These are summarized by Lasch:

Chronically bored, restlessly in search of instantaneous intimacy – of emotional titillation without involvement and dependence – the narcissist is promiscuous and often pansexual as well. ... The bad images he has internalised also make him chronically uneasy about his health, and hypochondria in turn gives him a special affinity for therapy and for therapeutic groups and movements. (1980: 85–6)

To the extent that modern culture can be described as narcissistic in encouraging pseudo-liberation through consumption, therapy groups, the health cult and the norm of happiness, anorexic self-obsession with appearance may be simply an extreme version of modern narcissism. Anorexia is thus a neurotic version of a widespread 'mode of living' which is centred on jogging, keep-fit, healthy diets, weight-watching and calculating hedonism. Looking good and feeling fine are part of the new hedonism which dominates advertisements. While at work something of the traditional Protestant Ethic survives, in the private sphere there is a modern ethic of calculating hedonism. At the same time, the private sphere is increasingly an arena of the disciplined body, where jogging is a primary practice. Like anorexia, jogging is associated with obsessions about food, weight loss and personal control. Like anorexia too, jogging often results in amenorrhoea in women.

The narcissistic culture of modern capitalism is often seen to be evidence of the decline of patriarchal structures in the home and the work-place. Feminism, the decline of the economic centrality of the home as a production unit, the democratization of life-styles, and the employment

of women are all said to have weakened the traditional combination of male authority, gerontocracy, patriarchy and religion. Women under narcissism enjoy a pseudo-liberation from the family, only to be subordinated by the new culture of consumerism. In the case of anorexia, it is easy to argue that one aspect of its aetiology is a male conception of the beautiful woman as thin and athletic. However, anorexia often appears more as a rebellion against parental authority, especially the dominance asserted by the mother. While the particular family structure of the anorexic household can be said to be itself a product of patriarchal relations, these are highly mediated by the particular pattern of socialization characteristic of anorexic aetiology.

Disease and Disorder

One central issue in sociology is the idea that human beings are simultaneously part of nature and part of culture. Culture shapes and mediates nature, since what appears as 'natural' in one society is not so in another. It is 'natural' for respectable Japanese to spit in public, but not to blow their noses. Alternatively, we can argue that nature constitutes a limit on human agency, since, as part of a natural environment, we are subject to growth and decay. Reproduction is a requirement for human societies if they are to survive more than one generation. This limiting boundary is of course both uncertain and flexible, because the limits on human 'natural' capacity constantly change. Modern athletes set standards which were assumed to be impossible in previous sporting epochs. More interestingly, genetic engineering is reshaping and redefining what we take 'life' to be.

Most human societies have historically defined this boundary between the human and the inhuman in terms of rituals. For the sake of argument, these rituals may be classified as rituals of inclusion and rituals of exclusion (Hepworth and Turner, 1982). In traditional societies, the fact of birth is not an immediate guarantee of social membership; one has to be transferred from nature to culture by rituals of social inclusion. These typically include religious rituals of initiation: baptism, circumcision and scarification (Brain, 1979). These rituals of inclusion involve cultural work upon the body and their effect is to transform the natural body into a social entity with rights and status. This transformation is brought about by washing, burning and cutting; these transformative interventions are also associated with naming, since having a name is an institutional mark of social membership, but not necessarily of personhood. Being born is not an ultimate guarantee of cultural membership of society since infanticide was widely practised either implicitly or explicitly in most traditional subsistence societies. Slavery was another alternative and feminist theory claims that women never fully made it across the great divide that separates nature, monsters and unreason from the reality of culture and morality. There are other possibilities. To have a personal name is a good indication that one is a member of a human society. Although chairs and tables are cultural artefacts which embody human labour as commodities, they do not have personal names. Domestic dogs and cats, however, have bodies which have been transformed by human labour (breeding and training) and they are commodities which can be exchanged; they also have personal

names and we ascribe character to them. Dogs can be 'neurotic' and 'badly behaved'. Are domesticated dogs part of nature or culture? Indeed, are they persons?

To be born and to be embodied do not in themselves guarantee social membership. The transfer of bodies out of culture back to nature is equally ritualized by exclusionary practices. The dead are buried, cremated or embalmed; their persons are deconstructed by rituals which indicate that they are now to some extent once more 'natural'. Of course, in some cultures a person never dies and may have a capacity for reconstruction at the Day of Judgement. Some persons such as dead saints may continue to have major social roles to play centuries after their physical departure, while most societies have ghosts of one sort or another (Finucane, 1982). It is often argued that advances in modern medicine have made the division between life and death problematic, because the technical definition of death has changed with advances in medical technology (Veatch, 1976). The problem, however, is not simply technical, since there is an essential difference between medical death and 'social death'. Dying is a social process, involving changes in behaviour and a process of assessment which do not necessarily correspond to the physical process of body-death (Sudnow, 1967). Death, like birth, has to be socially organized and, in the modern hospital, is an outcome of team activities. These questions concerning birth, dying, personhood and social membership are indications of a generic issue which hinges on the relationship between nature and culture. The argument of this chapter is that the concept of 'disease' is the most sensitive indicator of the problematic quality of the nature/culture division and that an exploration of the nature of disease provides the best route into the question which lies behind this book as a whole: what is the body?

Disease versus Illness

In the philosophy of medicine, there has been considerable debate over the relationship between 'disease' and 'illness' (Agich, 1983). Part of my argument is that the uncertain relationship between these two concepts is a function of the paradoxical and contradictory relationship between nature and culture; the connection between the two is also related to the institutionalization of power and knowledge. We can express the problem initially by examining an expression in everyday language. Although we would have no difficulty with the sentence 'This apple is diseased', we would find it an odd use of the language for somebody to say 'This apple is ill' or 'This apple is sick'. Similarly, we might state that 'His lung is diseased', but rarely 'This person is diseased'. To have a 'diseased mind' is an expression used of some person whose behaviour falls completely outside the pale of normal human activity; such a person is a 'monster'. These everyday examples point to a position in medical philosophy which says that illness is an evaluative concept which is entirely social and practical; disease by contrast is a neutral

term referring to a disturbance in an organism or, more technically, to some atypical functional deficiency. This position which sharply distinguishes between illness and disease is best represented by Christopher Boorse (1975). Boorse contrasts 'normativism' and 'functionalism'. Thus, strong normativism argues that all judgements in the medical sciences are evaluative and lack any real descriptive content; weak normativism suggests that health judgements are a mixture of evaluative and descriptive statements. By contrast, functionalism, which Boorse supports, asserts that health and disease may be defined descriptively without reference to values in terms of natural functions which are present within the members of a species. In part, Boorse's argument rests on a distinction between theoretical and practical problems, that is, we should not confuse the practical problem of a doctor treating the illness of a patient in a clinic with the theoretical problem of a pathologist analysing a disease in a laboratory context (Feinstein, 1967; Margolis, 1976). On the basis of these arguments, Boorse (1976) came eventually to identify three separate types of 'unhealth'. These are disease, which refers to 'some deviation from a biological norm' (Boorse, 1976: 82), illness which is a personal experience of unhealth, and sickness, which is a social role expressing the public dimension of unhealth as in the concept of 'the sick role' (Parsons, 1975).

Normativism – the position that medical judgements are simply evaluative statements – has been dominant in anti-psychiatry and before turning to a critique of Boorse's defence of functionalism it is important to consider the problem of 'mental health'. It would, of course, be perfectly possible for a Boorsean functionalist to accept that concepts of mental dysfunction are wholly evaluative while rejecting normativism when applied to diseases of the body. One illustration of normativism as a critique of the concept of 'mental illness' would be labelling theory. Originally used in the sociology of deviance (Gibbs and Erickson, 1975), labelling theory has been extended to explain mental illness as stigmatized behaviour (Scheff, 1974). Psychiatric labels provide an official stamp on behaviour which is regarded as socially unacceptable in the wider society and the effect of these official labels is social exclusion. It is well known, however, that labelling theory cannot genuinely explain the causes of primary deviance; it merely gives a description of labels, stigma and secondary deviance (Gove, 1975). Furthermore, psychiatric labels tend to be used as a last resort when other explanations of deviant behaviour have been exhausted (Morgan, 1975). Although labelling theory has clear weaknesses, it has served a useful function as a critique of the medical model. In particular, labelling theory draws attention to the very different consequences for individual behaviour of different social labels: to call someone 'deviant' has very different consequences from calling them 'sick'. Hence the conversion of deviant categories becomes of special interest historically. Nineteenth-century inebriety was converted into the twentieth-century disease of alcoholism, while homosexuality as a sin was transformed via a disease category to simply a personal preference. Paedophilia may well become

a candidate for conversion (Taylor, 1981). In psychiatry, diagnostic labels and therapeutic regimes appear to be culturally relativistic and historically variable (Armstrong, 1983). It has proved difficult to locate mental illness within an organic category, since psychological disturbance appears to be a product of life stress and professional categorization (Inglis, 1981). The solution to the problem is to argue (Morgan, 1975) that while diseases can be defined by neutral biological criteria, illness is essentially social since it refers to undesirable deviation from accepted social norms of health and appropriate behaviour. Diseases belong inside nature; illnesses, inside culture. Human beings, because they are ambiguously located in both nature and culture, are subject to both diseases and illnesses. The implication of this position is that we sometimes misdescribe an illness as a disease and the solution is simply to get our categories correct.

We might agree that illness is essentially a cultural phenomenon, but can we agree that disease is simply a fact of nature and not itself subject to cultural processes? The difficulty is that 'disease' is as much contested as 'illness'. The concepts of 'illness' 'disease' and 'health' inevitably involve some judgement which ultimately rests on a criterion of statistical frequency or an ideal state. The 'average individual' does not exist and biological functions can be realized by very different means (Vacha, 1978). Disease is not a fact, but a relationship and the relationship is the product of classificatory processes: 'a disease pattern is a class, or niche in a framework. This framework is a means of approaching or organizing crude experience, that is, for dealing with every-day events in the most satisfactory way' (King, 1954: 201). The discovery of a new disease is not, according to this view, epistemologically equivalent to discovering a new butterfly; a new disease is the product of a shift in explanatory frameworks or the identification of a new niche. These changes in framework are linked to changes in institutionalized medicine and to the nature of medical power. The growth of the clinic, for example, meant that

[t]he whole relationship of signifier to signified, at every level of medical experience, is redistributed: between the symptoms that signify and the disease that is signified, between the description and what is described, between the event and what it prognosticates, between the lesion and the pain that it indicates. (Foucault, 1973: xix)

Disease is thus a system of signs which can be read and translated in a variety of ways.

The merit of Foucault's approach to medicine is that it recognizes that changes in the form of knowledge (of disease) are related to forms of power; the weakness of the philosophy of medicine is that it too frequently and too glibly separates the question 'What is disease?' from the question 'What is the function of medical knowledge in the context of medical professionalization?'. The language of disease involves judgement as to what is desirable and undesirable, and the medical profession has in modern society enormous institutional purchase on what is to count as the good life.

By relegating disease to nature, Boorse denies the impact of cultural values in medicine at all levels. However, '[t]he conceptual purity which is gained for theoretical health and disease on this account is purchased at the exorbitant price of excusing medicine from the concrete social-cultural world. But it is in this world that disease language functions' (Agich, 1983: 38). The conceptual purity is, in any case, ruled out on the grounds that the natural and cultural realms are interwoven and interlocked. The reality which human beings inhabit is socially constructed and that reality includes biology, which, although a limiting horizon, is still culturally constituted and socially transformed (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). To argue that disease is constituted by classification is thus to raise the question of the ontological status of the body itself.

One implication of Foucault's approach to the relationship between the order of things and the order of words is that the body is itself a cultural object which is the product of classification. This is the conclusion drawn by Armstrong in *The Political Anatomy of the Body*:

The reality of the body is only established by the observing eye that reads it. The atlas enables the anatomy student ... to see certain things and ignore others. In effect what the student sees is not the atlas as a representation of the body but the body as a representation of the atlas. (Armstrong, 1983: 2)

To approach disease sociologically, we have to combine the notions that (1) disease is a language, (2) the body is a representation and (3) medicine is a political practice. Disease is a social phenomenon, although there may be highly variable individual manifestations of it. All of these problems are, in my view, related to Durkheim's account of collective and individual representations, and we can approach the problem of disease and disorder by, at least initially, considering some contrasts between societies based on mechanical solidarity (where the notion of sacredness is paramount) and those based on organic solidarity (where the dominance of a *conscience collective* is brought into question). The concept of disease as separate from sin and deviance presupposes massive changes in the structure of human societies, namely that they are differentiated. Durkheim's account of the social division of labour is highly pertinent to the conceptualization of disease as a morally neutral entity.

On the Specialization of Sin, Disease and Deviance

There are two primary strands to Durkheim's sociology and these are the problems of knowledge and order. For Durkheim, the classificatory systems of societies are social facts, that is they have an external and coercive relationship to the individual. Thus, the sacred/profane dichotomy is a classificatory system which compels us to categorize phenomena into a specific division and directs our behaviour in a determinate fashion (Durkheim and Mauss, 1963). It is this sacred language which both interpellates, or calls forth, the individual and the society as subjects (Gane, 1983).

These classificatory schema have, however, to be related to different forms of moral solidarity within societies and Durkheim proposed a fundamental contrast between societies based on the moral authority of the *conscience collective* and those based on the moral reciprocity of the social division of labour (Durkheim, 1964). In the case of mechanical solidarity, there is no strong sense of individualism and the social division of labour is underdeveloped and minimal. In such a society, social integration is based upon a common culture and the *conscience collective* is embodied in, and expressed by, common rituals and practices. Society is experienced through common rituals as a sacred entity which has a life and character which stand over the individual; the sacred is experienced and apprehended as massive and extensive. There is also a clear and definite differentiation of sacred and profane realms, which are marked off by common rules, prohibitions and taboos. With the development of the social division of labour, there is a growing sense of the separateness and distinctiveness of the individual from the group as individuals become increasingly specialized and individuated. As a result, the *conscience collective* becomes weaker, attenuated and indeterminate. Religious beliefs and practices become less important in the social integration of societies and the sacred becomes diminished in stature, depth and intensity. Individuals are now bound to society and to each other by reciprocal obligations which emerge out of the economic division of labour.

This transition in social bases of knowledge and order can be illustrated by reference to Durkheim's view of legal change. Law provides a very clear index of social change, since law reproduces the basic forms of social solidarity. The core of legal phenomena is constituted by sanctions and thus the transition from mechanical to organic solidarity can be measured by changes in sanctions. In simple societies, the principal sanctions are repressive; in advanced societies, they are restitutive. Where the *conscience collective* is powerful, infringements against group norms are severely punished by social retribution on the individual offender by violent means. Because the judicial apparatus is minimal, it is society as a whole which exerts repressive retribution on the criminal. The result is that crime reinforces the sense of group solidarity because the crime and the punishment point to and emphasize shared social values. The state is thus the expression of the moral ascendancy of the group over the individual (Hunt, 1978). In societies based on organic solidarity, the law has a very different function; it exists to enforce contracts, to supervise reciprocal relations and to restore imbalances in exchange. Criminal law and repressive sanctions become less central to the integration of society.

As it stands, Durkheim's sociology of law is unsatisfactory and has been critically discussed by both anthropologists and sociologists (Pospisil, 1971; Taylor et al., 1973). First, it is not entirely clear that primitive societies have 'law', and secondly, insofar as they do have law, primitive law was far less repressive than Durkheim wanted to argue. The repressive nature of law is more obviously related to the rise of private property and conflicting

classes than it is to the dominance of the *conscience collective*. My argument is, however, that much of Durkheim's basic argument can be retained as an ideal typical characterization of social forms and that his thesis can be elaborated and refined to provide an important reflection on the nature of law, religion and medicine. My thesis is that the contemporary division between disease and illness is a feature of the professional and cultural division between law, religion and medicine. In particular, the relationship between social illness and natural disease has to be seen in the context of the secularization of society. In order to present this argument, it is important to consider the differences between three ideal typical societies which, for the sake of convenience, can be called pre-modern, transitional and modern. The nub of the argument is that medicine has replaced religion as the social guardian of morality. This replacement involves a 'medicalization' of the body and society (Zola, 1972).

In pre-modern societies, classificatory distinctions between disease, deviance and sin are either non-existent or underdeveloped. The aetiology of physical disease and social deviance was sought in the moral history and condition of the individual. Health and morality were fundamentally united in practice and in theory. We can thus conceive of these societies as having an outer membrane of protective moral assumptions, a membrane which housed the central sacred core of society. This membrane was periodically attacked by plagues of anti-social facts which had the function of reinforcing the *conscience collective*; these hostile facts were undifferentiated disease-sin-deviance phenomena which constituted a sacrilege. This moral membrane was demarcated by a cluster of rituals of exclusion and inclusion, which maintain the internal purity of the system against external dangers. Punishment of offences against the *conscience collective* was largely repressive and brutal, being exacted on the body of the criminal in a public setting. The scaffold is the symbol of a society grounded in a coherent moral system (Foucault, 1979). Just as there was no clear classificatory discrimination between disease and sin, so there was little professional specialization between lawyers, clergy and doctors. Religious roles embraced a diversity of activities, including welfare, healing and law-finding. Within this type of society, the state did not have extensive social functions and it was not developed as a specialized political instrument. Power was personalized and embodied in the person of the king who had extensive power in theory, but lacked the bureaucratic apparatus to enforce personal authority. In terms of disease categories, epilepsy, venereal disease and leprosy perfectly illustrate the undifferentiated nature of the threats to society, since these conditions were simultaneously religious, moral, medical and legal phenomena.

In a transitional society, there is greater professional specialization both within and between religion, medicine and law. Medical specialists, in particular, attempted to enforce a monopoly over their trade and to exclude unqualified and unlicensed practitioners. In England, an enactment of 1511 attempted to prevent the practice of medicine by persons who

were not approved by the appropriate authorities. The difficulties of enforcement are amusingly illustrated by the life of Dr Simon Forman, an Elizabethan doctor–astrologer who had an unlicensed practice among the London elite, much to the chagrin of the Barber–Surgeons and College of Physicians (Rowse, 1974). Although the physicians were organized as a college from 1518, they did not become the Royal College until 1851 and the surgeons did not break away from the United Barber–Surgeons’ Company until 1745. Associated with this social division of labour in the ‘learned professions’ (Carr-Saunders and Wilson, 1933), there was also a mental division of labour in teaching and practice. Sins, crimes and diseases begin to be separated out in the classificatory map of human problems, and specialized institutions of control and surveillance – hospitals, asylums and prisons – were developed to deal with specific social problems. In the nineteenth century, hospitals ceased being simply dumping grounds for the poor and were developed as specialized institutions for specific diseases. At the theoretical level, the spiritual and the natural world were increasingly separated under the dominance of scientific naturalism which treated nature as a mechanism, embraced evolutionism and argued that mental phenomena had material causes. The discovery of the tuberculosis bacilli by Pasteur and Koch resulted eventually in the dominance of germ-theory as the principal explanation of disease. Given the existence of micro-organisms as the cause of disease, medicine could be presented as a value-free and exact science; the debate about disease could be extracted from theological, social and moral frameworks. With the development of Koch’s postulates, every disease had its own specific germ and there was no real need for theological or moral assumptions about diseases in human populations. These changes in knowledge and professional monopolies presuppose changes in the role of the state. A professional control over patients and the ability to exclude competition are only possible with the support of the state and with legal enforcement. Professional specialization and monopolization require the expansion of the state, because practices of social closure which exclude competitors require the coercive support of the state (Parkin, 1979). The professionalization of medicine depends upon coercive acceptance of official definitions of health and disease. These definitions identify the objectivity and reality of disease entities, the facticity of which exists independently of human subjectivity or political judgement (Johnson, 1977).

In modern societies, the public role of religious institutions and professionals is greatly attenuated (Wilson, 1966) and the *conscience collective* becomes effete and indistinct. The moral hinterland of society is worn away by waves of industrialization, urbanization and modernization of consciousness. The remaining moral debris of previous generations is appropriated and dominated by medicine and law. What will count as sin is greatly curtailed in favour of concepts of disease and crime. In turn, what will count as crime or deviance is slowly incorporated by medicine as forms of deviance

(alcoholism, malingering, homosexuality and political dissent) are embraced and subsumed under disease. As a result,

Medicine and the law are the two principal professionalized disciplines of every complex society that have provided an institutionally determinate rule for managing a portion of our prudential interests: the law – in terms of restricting harm or the threat of harm to those interests ... medicine – in terms of ensuring the functional integration of the body (or mind or person), as by care and cure, sufficient for the exercise of our prudential interests. (Margolis, 1976: 252)

The state thus regulates the body through the agency of a variety of ideological apparatuses, especially through family law and preventive medicine. The modern medical regimen implies a certain asceticism in morals as the main defence against sexually transmitted diseases, heart disease, stress and cancer. In this sense, religious norms of the good life have been transferred to medicine; the result is that medicine, as an allegedly neutral science of disease, encroaches upon both law and religion, in providing criteria of normality. While the sacral *conscience collective* withers away, medicine provides, as it were, a second-order moral framework – a framework which is, however, masked by the language of disease.

The argument so far has been largely presented in terms of a contrast between three ideal typical characterizations of society, which attempt to provide a sketch of professional specialization and the differentiation of disease, sin and crime. Obviously this typological approach does not attempt to deal in any detail with the complex historical transformation of moral facts from pre-modern to modern society. The sketch simply provides the background to the claim that our conception of disease as a scientific, amoral category is the product of cultural differentiation and professional power. There are without doubt a variety of objections which could be raised against such a background sketch. One objection would be that the relationship between religion and medicine is far more complex than I have suggested. Rather than attempt to defend the argument as a whole, it is interesting to focus briefly on the historical relationship between religion and medicine. The ideal typical outline of pre-modern society suggested that the profane world of disease–sin–crime was undifferentiated, precisely because health and salvation were equated. An objection to such a view would argue that, historically, medicine in the Western tradition has characteristically adhered to a secular conception of disease. In its ancient attempt to establish itself as a profession with a scientific basis, medicine was from Greek times based on natural as opposed to supernatural explanations of health and disease. Thus, Hippocrates rejected supernaturalism in the aetiology of epilepsy in his 'On the sacred disease' (Temkin, 1971). The problem for Greek doctors was to distinguish themselves as clearly as possible from quacks and they did so by claiming a scientific basis to the practice in which illness was seen to have natural causes. Galenic medicine thus came to conceptualize phenomena into three categories (Burns, 1976). The naturals were the functional and structural features of the body, especially the four humours;

the non-naturals were basically the environment such as air, food and drink; and the preternaturals were anti-nature, namely diseases. Health was the proper ordering of the naturals and an appropriate regimen of non-naturals. The role of the doctor was to aid nature in the defeat of preternaturals by manipulating the non-naturals. Supernaturalist causality had a very limited role to play in Greek medical theory and practice. Because the gods had no place in professional Greek medical theory, the implication of Galenism was that the individual had a moral responsibility for the health of his body by following, under the advice of his physician, an appropriate regimen (Temkin, 1973).

This separation of medicine and religion was not invariably categorical and unambiguous, especially in Christian, mediaeval Europe. There was considerable conflict between the religious and the medical view of disease; this conflict had a number of dimensions (Turner, 1981). From the point of view of Christian values, the care and the cure of the sick were acts of charity; the medical fee conflicted with this basic assumption and so professional doctors were seen to be parasitic on the poor and the sick. Furthermore, Christian theodicy could not regard disease as a morally neutral category, since disease was a sign of the health of the soul. This Christian approach to disease faltered on the problems of free will. If God is good, then He cannot be the author of disease, which is written in the moral responsibility of the human being. If God is all powerful, then He must be the author of disease which carries within it a moral lesson. One partial solution to the paradox of medicine and religion was to argue that, although human beings are morally responsible for the diseases which invade them, they are also ultimately responsible to God for the stewardship of their bodies. It was thus in the control of the non-naturals that religious and medical perspectives found an alliance. Stewardship of the body expressed a serious responsibility for the body which the soul inhabited during its earthly existence. The medical regimen and a system of religious stewardship were thus dovetailed as modes of life which promised both longevity and purity. The naturals could be explained scientifically without recourse to supernaturalism or morality, but the realm of the non-naturals was a sphere in which morals, religion and medicine were undifferentiated. The moral regimen and the medical regimen of the body were identical.

Secularization

This study of the body has presupposed a process of secularization which has transferred the body from an arena of sacred forces to the mundane reality of diet, cosmetics, exercise and preventive medicine. For example, diet was once an aspect of a religious repression of passions and the aim of asceticism was to liberate the soul from the cloying distractions of desire. In a society where consumption has become a virtue, diet is a method of promoting the capacity for secular enjoyments. Diet was simply one aspect of a more

general rationalization of the body; through the application of the natural sciences to the body, the human body became reified and disciplined through systems of gymnastics (Broekhoff, 1972). The division between disease and sin can also be treated as a manifestation of secular intellectualism which extracted the body from its sacral moorings. The body is no longer the focus of a sacred drama involving sacramental ritualism; it has become the object of secular professionalism under the ultimate surveillance of the state. The transition from a sacred canopy to secular surveillance is, however, a great deal more complex than this thesis of rationalization would suggest. Secularization is, in fact, a complex, uneven and contradictory process of cultural change.

In the sociology of religion, there are two distinctive views of secularization which are completely antithetical (Turner, 1983). The first view treats secularization as simply the decline in social significance of organized religion (Wilson, 1982). The church ceases to play a major role in the organization of public life and Christian belief becomes irrelevant in the dominant educational institutions. As a result, religious institutions atrophy and no longer enjoy collective hegemony over the mass of the population. Religion slowly but persistently disappears from the public domain and becomes, in so far as it survives at all, a matter of personal interest. The grip of religion over the body is thus abolished with the spread of secular practices and beliefs. The body is no longer necessarily subject to the transformations of baptismal water, Eucharistic feasts or sacramental rites. The body comes now within the gaze of scientific disciplines and institutions which apparently make no assumptions about the supernatural character of the implications of our this-worldly materiality.

The alternative argument denies that organized Christianity was a dominant cultural institution in the Middle Ages because the peasantry fell outside its orthodox mantle. The population was in general indifferent to, or ignorant of, Christian teaching and practice, adhering to pre-Christian traditions, superstition and pagan practice. The church may have had some control over the urban, literate population, but there was a vast hinterland of opposition to Christian institutions. The popular culture of pre-modern societies was either secular (Burke, 1978) or heretical (Ladurie, 1974). Since there was no 'golden age' of Christianity, there could be no 'decline' of organized, official religion. In this view, the body was not incorporated by Christianity; instead, it was the object of numerous heretical and pagan practices and beliefs. The body was part of the underworld opposition to an urban Christian tradition which attempted to subordinate and to deny the body by orthodox asceticism. However, the sexuality of the ordinary people was largely uncontrolled by, and resistant to, official attitudes and institutions (Quaife, 1979). The teaching of the church on sexual morality had little effectivity because the cultural apparatus for transmitting and enforcing official norms was relatively weak and underdeveloped (Abercrombie et al., 1980). The human body thus existed within a dense supernatural environment, but this was not

essentially Christian. At various points on the way to modern capitalism, the church was able to impose greater control over the population. The Reformation and Counter-Reformation were periods when, through missionary activity, improvements in the quality of the clergy and the growth of literacy, at least some of the pre-Christian pagan culture was swept aside. The Catholic confessional and Protestant conversionism provided the institutional means for a surveillance of everyday sexuality (Hepworth and Turner, 1982). From this perspective, religion does not decline with the growth of capitalism, but rather extends its control over the laity with the growth of systems of mass communication. Secularization is a relatively recent phenomenon and it involves, not so much a steep descent, but an undulating plateau.

As an alternative to both arguments, I want to consider a different view of secularization in which religious functions are simply transferred to secular institutions. Religious beliefs and practices provide the starting point and the model for activities which reappear in secular society under a new garb. Secularization thus involves mutation and reallocation rather than decline and attrition. To some extent, this view of secularization is implicit in Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1930). The secular institutions and values of industrial capitalism – calculation, efficiency, hard work, bureaucratic management, rationalization and vocation – had their origins in the Protestant Reformation. Calvinistic individualism and asceticism were thus transferred through mutation into the secular world of capitalist business. Just as Protestantism transferred the monastery into the family, so secularization pushed religious asceticism onto the factory floor. Protestant rationalism was thus reconstructed and redeployed in capitalist culture as a consequence of a secularization process. A similar argument is implicit in Foucault's commentaries on discipline and sexuality. The discipline of the monastery provided the formative model for the regulation of the body in the school, the army and the factory. Panopticism refined and elaborated the monastic regulations by making them more efficient, effective and rational. Religious disciplines did not decline; they were simply reassembled in a wider and more pervasive social system (Foucault, 1977a). Similarly, the Catholic confessional provided a primitive model of surveillance in which the father-confessor intervened in the family between the husband and the wife. The confessional did not deny or silence sexuality, but rendered it expressible and visible. The religious confessional was thus the seed which flowered eventually in a confessing society: 'The confession has spread its effects far and wide. It plays a part in justice, medicine, education, family relationships, and love relations, in the most ordinary affairs of everyday life, and in the most solemn rituals' (Foucault, 1981: 59). The assumptions of the transitional confessional – the culture of guilt, the criteria of the true confession, the innocence of talk, and the interior conscience – are through a process of secularization redistributed in a network of modern institutions. The confession did not decline or disappear; it was redeployed in psychoanalysis, police practice,

court procedure, modern literature and medicine. In particular, the moral organization of the individual by religious practices is now reallocated to medicine, especially in the intimate relationship between the general practitioner and the family.

Medical Morality

In eighteenth-century medicine, there was a clear movement at the level of theoretical medicine towards a science of the body through the development of what we might call 'hydraulic mathematics'. The body, for writers like Cheyne, was simply a system of pumps. At the level of medical practice, there was little real change in the medical approach; the equilibrium of the body had to be maintained by appropriate inputs and evacuations. The individual could exercise control over this process through the proper management of the life-process. This management of the individual body had a close relationship to the government of the social body; both required discipline, order and morality. In the final analysis, health depended upon morality, since improper life-styles were the root of personal illness and individual immorality was the product of social disorder. Sickness in the individual was intimately linked with disorder and mismanagement of the social body. Briefly, the wages of sin were disease and death. In this respect, the alliance between doctors and mothers in the control of family morality under the auspices of public health in the nineteenth century represented a continuity with traditional medicine (Donzelot, 1979). Medical prescriptions for health implicitly or explicitly carried with them proscriptions on behaviour which was simultaneously abnormal and immoral. The biologically normal was grounded in notions of socially normal. In the nineteenth century, much of this convergence of medicine and morality was organized around the problem of sexual deviation, especially in women and children. As we have seen, such medical categories as agoraphobia, masturbatory insanity and hysteria were woven into the fabric of Victorian moral notions.

Contemporary medicine is technically sophisticated and claims a scientific basis in the notion that disease is a natural not a cultural phenomenon. Alongside this medical technology, there are also important continuities in the medical evaluation of the contribution of a 'healthy life' to physical well-being. One illustration is the issue of sexually transmitted disease. Gonorrhoea is often described as an 'epidemic' of modern societies, being associated with the liberalization of sexual mores, the increase in homosexuality, the decline in the use of condoms, the increase in asymptomatic carriers, and the resistance of the gonococcus to antibiotic treatment. The spread of venereal diseases like gonorrhoea represents an interesting medico-moral problem. In the absence of effective antibiotics gonorrhoea can be controlled by greater medical intervention (such as greater surveillance of carriers and treatment of partners of infected

patients), educational programmes recommending more widespread use of male prophylactic devices, or by campaigns against family breakdown, divorce and sexual promiscuity.

The obvious feature of sexually transmitted diseases is that, in most cases, they are associated with illicit or promiscuous sexuality. One implication of medical intervention is thus to make illicit sexuality free from the negative consequences of illness; medical intervention would remove the moral 'lesson' of disease. This paradoxical situation of medicine was evident in the repressive orientation of the National Council for Combating Venereal Disease in the early decades of the twentieth century. The Council in Britain warned against the dangers of illicit sexuality, but avoided offering advice on the use of condoms, because this might actually provide an incentive to immoral behaviour (Armstrong, 1983). In more recent times, the paradoxical position of medicine has become evident with respect to herpes, AIDS and cervical cancer. The first two are closely associated with homosexuality, but there is evidence that AIDS can be contracted by a 'naive' subject. Public response to AIDS has been compared to mediaeval attitudes towards leprosy because AIDS victims have been systematically isolated and excluded by a terrified public. Professional pronouncements have occasionally been equally hysterical; in 1983 the front-page cover of the *Journal of the Australian Medical Association* carried the banner that AIDS was 'the black plague of the eighties'. Although medical research institutes will be funded to discover an antibiotic treatment of modern venereal diseases, one implication of these 'epidemics' is that monogamy, sexual fidelity or celibacy are the primary defences against infection. The same implication is relevant in the case of cervical cancer which is associated with viral infections resulting from promiscuous contacts with males not employing condoms.

Although modern societies possess an extensive body of knowledge relating to the natural causation of disease, it would appear that some diseases are not interpreted in morally neutral terms. Venereal disease is popularly conceptualized as an invasion of the body by alien germs, but the mechanism which, so to speak, opens the sluice-gates permitting nature to invade culture is the deviance of human populations from morality. Since there is concern that the efficacy of antibiotics is in decline, the sluice-gates can be closed by protecting the moral core of society. The sluice-gates are to be controlled by rituals of inclusion and exclusion, because the diseased are not so much 'victims' as 'agents' of a biological disaster.

The illustration of AIDS is, of course, somewhat dramatic and possibly unusual, but it can be taken as indicative of a general alliance between medical practice, morality and sport. Medical standards of appropriate behaviour are now very widespread in modern urban societies in which demographic changes have emphasized the health-issues of geriatric populations. The state has a very clear interest in preventive medicine for promoting health in populations which are rapidly ageing. Personal responsibility for health through exercise, diet and the avoidance of drugs, reduces

the tax drain of curative medical intervention. There is consequently an interesting alliance between the state, the medical profession and the healthy citizen. The monogamous jogger is the responsible citizen, whereas the moral deviant becomes, through self-induced illness a burden on the state. The thrust of this argument is that, while we live in a secular society, the traditional *conscience collective* has been to some extent transformed by redistribution within the medical system. These transformations are associated with the decline of organized religion as the principal carrier of the dominant moral ideology, with the professional specializations of law and medicine, and with the role of the state as the guarantor of professional monopolies. The *conscience collective* has diminished and declined, but aspects of its moral content have been transferred into popular concepts of disease as a retribution for an unhealthy life and into the moral world-view of the medical profession.

Doctors, Women and Sexuality

The argument has been that modern medicine in practice takes a distinctive moral outlook on what is normal behaviour and that such an outlook is not merely accidental but an inevitable feature of medicine. 'Disease' as a category cannot be extricated from a cultural nexus and as a result all judgements about 'normal' functioning carry a moral pay-load. The moral implications of medicine, especially in the area of sexually transmitted diseases, have a more significant impact on women than they do on men. In this respect, the general practitioner has very decisively appropriated the role of the family confessor. Differences in the treatment and attitude of doctors towards men and women are now documented (Clarke, 1983). In general terms, medicine has been instrumental in the sexist description of women as neurotic and emotional. The myth of female hypochondria supported the idea of women as sick persons and qualified women as patients (Ehrenreich and English, 1978). I take an example from the anonymous and undated *Every Woman's Doctor Book* from the 1930s. The doctor makes a number of paternalistic assumptions about the nature of the normal household and normal sexuality. Sexual intercourse will occur 'once or twice weekly', but not during the woman's period because that would be 'distasteful to people of any delicacy of mind'. The normal marriage will eventually produce children:

I would advise all young married folk who are actually not in want or ill-health to shoulder the responsibility of a babe early; it may call for some self-denial, a few visits less to places of amusement, a few cigarettes less a week, but the babe will bring such joy and comfort in his tiny hands, that no sacrifice can be weighed against the wonderful gift of his coming.

Interestingly, the first 'babe' is male and the wife is expected to bear the sole burden of his parenting. The conception of children is natural since 'the most pathetic figure in the world is the childless wife'.

It could be argued that this advice belongs to a world which is now moribund and that the medical view of social and individual 'normality' has been radically transformed. There is evidence, however, that doctors continue to regard women in an overtly sexist fashion and this is particularly the case in the area of gynaecology. A general survey of gynaecology texts in the United States published between 1943 and 1973 revealed attitudes of doctors which were consistently condescending and paternalistic (Scully and Bart, 1981). House-bound women are regarded as prone to depressive moods, but these have no real content; women who are liberated from the home through employment or liberated from child-bearing by contraception are regarded as shallow and underdeveloped emotionally:

The very recent widening of the sphere of feminine activities, with the assumption of the male function of protection and maintenance, has led to a further weakening of the reproductive urge, resulting in the modern 'smart' type – sexless, frigid, self-sufficient. (Scully and Bart, 1981: 83)

The assumption behind such an orientation to female patients is that domesticity and mothering are the normal attributes of female biography and that deviations from this normal trajectory result in emotional disturbance – insomnia, depression and migraine (Sacks, 1981). Since the menstrual cycle is often seen as problematic for the woman's emotional stability, the principal solutions are either marriage and pregnancy, or hysterectomy.

Medical advice to women is thus typically based upon taken-for-granted assumptions about normal life-styles for women and these assumptions are ultimately grounded in notions relating to the normality of the nuclear family and the domestic role of women. In this respect medical morality can be regarded as reactive, regressive and patristic, because there is a radical disjunction between the statistical and prescriptive sense of normality. The position of women has changed in four important respects over the last 100 years and these changes have rendered the medical model of the 'normal' female increasingly obsolete. Women now represent a significant section of the industrial work-force, albeit in the unskilled and casual sector of the market. They have inadequate but important control over reproduction through the availability of contraceptive devices. Women, as a result of legislation relating to marriage, property and divorce, enjoy juridical equality with men in principle. Finally, with the decline of the nuclear family and the growth of single-parent households, women are increasingly likely to assume control of the domestic space.

Medical ideology thus assumes a patristic character in making assumptions about women which are sociologically invalid. It is not simply that medical myths qualify and interpellate or call forth women as willing patients, but rather that medical assumptions attempt to drive women back into locations which they have to some extent already vacated. The argument is not to be regarded as a conspiracy theory and it is not the case that 'medicalism' is simply forced upon reluctant mothers. A variety of factors reinforce

the paternalistic power of doctors over familial relationships. Because social science plays no significant part in the medical curriculum, general practitioners are poorly equipped to understand the social dynamics of illness (Anderson, 1952; Badgley and Bloom, 1973; Glassner and Freedman, 1979; Pflanz, 1975; R. Strauss, 1957). Women do not occupy commanding positions within the medical profession and a feminist perspective on illness is diluted by professional training: discrimination against women in medical training is well documented and historically well established (Walsh, 1977). The relationship between doctor and patient tends, therefore, to reproduce and reflect the hierarchical relationship between men and women within the household (Gamarnikow, 1978). The general practitioner is thus trained into a conservative and regressive ideology of social relationships, while also inhabiting a social role which has a privileged access to the household and to women in periods of personal crisis. The general practitioner is, as a result, perfectly equipped to occupy roles of surveillance over the household which husbands can no longer control and monopolize.

Culture and Disease

Pre-modern societies patrolled their boundaries with dramatic rituals of inclusion and exclusion. As Durkheim observed, the greater the threat from exterior disorders – the crime–sin–disease complex – the greater the sense of group membership and the more prominent the feeling of sacred forces. The threat of extinction from disease and death was vivid and omnipresent, being symbolized in the macabre dance of death and conceptualized in death as the rape of the living. The interior purity of society could be preserved through religious ritualism, especially the sacrament of penance which acted as a religious pump to expurgate sins. Before the rise of an individualistic culture, sins were external and objective, and their origin lay in bodily appetite which undermined reason. The moral apprehension of the individual was implanted in the human species by God and not cultivated by training and moral education (Potts, 1980).

Although I have attempted to argue that where we locate ‘disease’ is a product of a classificatory scheme which presupposes a nature/culture dichotomy, the concepts of ‘culture’ and ‘civilization’ are relatively recent (Elias, 1978). For the *philosophes* of the French Enlightenment, men can be cultivated into civility by appropriate education; society can be transformed via the school. The concepts of *policer* and *civilizer* go together and imply a new social order based on rational ideas. The disorder of society is no longer rooted in the body or objective sin, but in ideas which oppose enlightened cultivation. Desire is to be regulated by training, not ritual and repressive law. People had to be forced to be enlightened, and hence the power of the school to cultivate the child had to have the force of the state to achieve its objectives. The process of compulsory cultivation also required the secularization of society, since it was the church which had

traditionally corrupted reason with the mythology of faith. This new power of surveillance over the child required confinement within the protective walls of the family and the school. The disorders of society were now more obviously disorders of the mind rather than the body. As Foucault (1973) has clearly noted, the reforms of the hospital system were also a major legacy of the Enlightenment tradition and the French Revolution. If the citizen had a duty to be rational, he also had an obligation to be well. The sick had a duty to attend the clinic, where knowledge of their disorders could be utilized in the education of the healthy. Medicine was no longer restricted simply to the cure of maladies, but became part of a wider movement in the education of the citizen in the requirements of healthy existence. The political and educational aims of the Enlightenment were to be realized in the medical consultation.

Disease lost its theological aura. It lost its theological significance as a lesson to the sinner and became a natural entity, merely a process in the biological environment, but its moral and social status was somewhat enhanced. Disease can be controlled by social hygiene and by individual education in appropriate life-styles. We can choose to be sick through irrational habits (lack of exercise, abuse, addiction, promiscuity) and these irrational habits are increasingly regarded as deviant. Activities which threaten the health of the individual are also regarded as anti-social and are consequently subject to stigmatization. This stigmatization in everyday relationships has to be seen in a context where the state progressively intervenes in the regulation of behaviour affecting health, for example the control of cigarette advertisements. We can argue, therefore, that, although the theoretical object of medicine is differentiated and secularized, medicine is essentially social medicine, because it is a practice which regulates social activities under the auspices of the state.

It is for this reason that much of the philosophical discussion of the difference between disease and illness is hot-house philosophy; it fails to grasp the historical and social nature of the categories of medicine. 'Disease' has an uncertain status because it lies on the boundaries of 'nature' and 'culture', both of which are social constructs. If 'disease' is an index of the nature/culture relationship, it is also sensitive to gender relations. Diseases are, at least in part, socially distributed along the contours of the social structure; for example, the standardized mortality ratios for diseases of the respiratory system, circulatory system and digestive system are highly correlated with class position. The practice of medicine reflects both the class and gender structure of society. What is 'natural' for women is in everyday life closely monitored by male doctors and this is especially true in issues relating to abortion and pregnancy. For example, the availability of abortion in practice will depend heavily upon a doctor's evaluation of the moral status of the woman (Aitken-Swan, 1977; Macintyre, 1977). It is thus impossible to discuss the nature of 'disease' even in theoretical medicine without locating the concept within a hierarchy of moral evaluations, which in turn have to be understood with reference to

power in social groups. 'Disease' is not a unitary concept and not simply a factual statement about natural processes; it is a classification reflecting both material and ideal interests. The importance of such classificatory schemes is that they lead ultimately to questions about the ontological status of the body.

Ontology of Difference

To be sure, eating, drinking, and procreation are genuine human functions. In abstraction, however, and separated from the remaining sphere of human activities and turned into final and sole ends, they are animal functions.

K. Marx, *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts, 1844*

Introduction

The general argument of this study has been that the social sciences have often neglected the most obvious 'fact' about human beings, namely that they have bodies and they are embodied. When they have taken this factual substratum into account, the results have often been trivial. Sociobiology in particular is a blind alley which suppresses an equally obvious 'fact' about human beings, namely that their biological presence is socially constructed and constituted by communal practices. Although the body has been suppressed as a primary focus in classical social philosophy, there are a number of debates which relate directly to the problem of human embodiment. Two obvious examples would be the mind/body issue in philosophy and the nature/nurture controversy in the sociology of intelligence. More fundamentally, a sociology of the body, by raising the ambiguity of the division between nature and culture, leads to the question: what generically is man? That is, the sociology of the body must ultimately address itself to the nature of social ontology. In sociology, the debate about the nature of being has typically taken a relativistic turn. Since all human attributes appear to be culturally specific, it is difficult to locate any human characteristics which appear to be spatially universal and historically continuous. Sociology appears to bring out the difference between human groups and societies rather than features which unite them. For example, one implication of anthropological research has been that those aspects of sexuality which appear 'natural' are in fact the products of specific cultural arrangements (Mead, 1949). If there are no universal features of human nature, then it is difficult to speak of any universal human values. A relativistic view of human attributes is thus conjoined with a relativistic perspective on values. Human beings are just different and, since their 'needs' are relative and socially constructed, we cannot make cross-cultural judgements about whether existing social arrangements can satisfy 'real' needs. Human needs are simply the product of different social

arrangements and no judgement can be made as to 'false' or 'real' needs. We cannot postulate that 'needs' exist; we can only observe that human beings talk about having needs. Furthermore, these observations lead to the conclusion that discourses about needs are radically variable, contingent and flexible.

A major alternative to this relativistic view of the body as part of a language by which we organize our experiences socially, derives from Marx. It is fairly obvious why Marxism as a radical critique of society should require a stable social ontology, free from so-called bourgeois relativism and subjectivism. Marx wanted to argue that capitalist society was not simply unjust and unequal, but that capitalism had radically disformed and deformed human nature. Furthermore, Marx wanted to adopt a position in which his view of human alienation in capitalist society was not simply a perspective or a moral opinion. The Marxist critique of society had an objective basis, which could be validated by rational enquiry and by an appeal to substantive evidence. Marx's social critique required a universal bed-rock which would show that other interpretations of human needs (such as utilitarianism) were in fact partial, limited and static. Marx wanted, for example, to criticize writers such as J.S. Mill for taking the nature of man in competitive capitalism as a model of the universal species-being. In order to establish this objective critique of capitalism and this rejection of bourgeois models of *homo economicus*, Marx had to depend on some criteria of universal human needs and thus to depend on an articulate social ontology (Soper, 1981). For Marx, nature is never a fixed, external reality, but is itself a product of human labour which transforms natural reality into 'humanized nature', and this transformative process also shapes the nature of man as a generic being. This view of the dialectical character of 'man' and 'nature' shaped Marx's whole philosophy and hence there was no radical disjuncture between the early Marx of the *Manuscripts* and the late Marx of *Capital* (Avineri, 1970). It follows that Marx attempted to find a way out of cultural relativism via a theory of philosophical anthropology. Without such a theory of universal human potentiality, Marx could not have bridged the fact/value gap in bourgeois political economy (Lukács, 1971). Social ontology in Marxism is thus not merely a matter of decorative addition, but the essential founding of an objective social critique.

Marx's Ontology

Despite the centrality of the problem of being to Marx's philosophy of history and society, Marx's account of man-in-nature and nature-in-man has been neglected in Marxist exegesis, especially in the aftermath of Althusser's assault on Marxist humanism (Althusser, 1969). The texts which bear directly on Marx's ontology are somewhat limited in extent (Heller, 1976; Markus, 1978; Mészáros, 1970; Lukács, 1980). This tradition in Marxist exegesis is largely East European, specifically Hungarian, and

depends heavily on the influence of Lukács who saw, better than most, the problem of subjectivism in social thought (Lukács, 1974). Various aspects of this Marxist focus on social ontology have found their way into mainstream sociology via the synthetic commentaries of Berger and Luckmann (1966), but the general significance of Marx's ontology for, to give two examples, the sociology of gender and medical sociology, has not been fully appreciated. In Marxism itself, the structuralist interest in the 'scientific' Marx of *Capital* minimized the impact of Marx's ontology which emerged through a debate with Feuerbach and Hegel in the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844* (1970).

Although the implications of Marx's perspective on social ontology are profound, the basic ingredients of his analysis of human nature are relatively direct and coherent. The ingredients of this ontology are incorporated in Marx's account of how social beings transform and appropriate nature through the collective labour process. Man in the generic sense transforms nature, which is both the object and condition of his existence, through labour which is a conscious, practical social activity, and through this transformation of nature man also continuously and consciously transforms himself. It is important to emphasize two essential features from this preliminary statement. First, human universal characteristics are not fixed and static; what human beings share is not a fixed datum of biology but a universal capacity for transformative labour. Secondly, the human capacity to overcome and surmount 'nature' presupposes social relations which enhance human agency and consciousness. These relations are historically variable, depending on the mode of production which is dominant in any given society. It follows that the man–society–nature relationship is essentially and critically historical. One consequence of this transformative capacity is that what Marx called the natural boundary is pushed backwards by the social advance of human potentialities. The limits of nature are reduced by the very advance of social capacities as nature becomes the 'inorganic body' of man (Marx, 1967: 293). These early reflections on man's being-in-society have to solve fairly substantial issues in classical social theory: the relationship between man and animals, man and nature, and the ontological leap between nature and society. Marx's answer to these issues is worked around a dialectical analysis of the relationship between the 'naturalization of man' and the 'humanization of nature'. For Marx, the fluidity of the nature/culture dichotomy is carved out by the historical and social character of labour.

Labour in the broad sense of conscious, collective, practical action is the centrepiece of Marx's ontology in that man is a being who has to transform his natural environment through hunting, cultivating crops, domesticating animals and producing the means of production in order to survive. Marx thus describes man as a universal natural being in that man has the capacity and potential to transform any object of the natural world into the subject of his needs. It is in this sense that Marx refers to the naturalization of man in terms of the extension of his 'inorganic body'. At the same time,

man imposes a cultural stamp on nature and drives back the natural frontier of external conditions, becoming progressively less dependent on this natural environment. It is this expanding control over nature which both extends human universality and entails the humanization of nature. Productive, intentional activity is the distinctive feature of human intercourse with nature by which man appropriates his environment and at the same time historically forms himself as an active, subjective agent. We cannot, of course, fully understand Marx's ontology without understanding his political economy. In a society based upon the private ownership of the means of production, man no longer labours collectively to satisfy wants through the creation of use-values. In a class society, the means of production are alienated from the working population which is thus forced to sell its labour-power in order to survive. Under these social conditions, the worker is alienated from the product of his labour, alienated from his work, alienated from his species life and fellow men, and finally from nature itself, that is, from his inorganic body. Society and nature appear now as external, reified and alien forces controlling the life of the individual rather than as products of human labour itself. Human labour now assumes a negative destructive quality:

External labour, labour in which man is externalised, is labour of self-sacrifice, of penance. Finally, the external nature of work for the worker appears in the fact that it is not his own but another person's, that in work he does not belong to himself but to someone else. (Marx, 1967: 292)

Nature as the site in which human potentiality is realized becomes an alien force as a result of social change under conditions of private ownership and appropriation. Marx's political programme is thus also closely linked with his ontology, since it is only as a result of revolutionary change that man, as a universal being, can repossess his inorganic body. The conceptual proximity of Marx's ontology and political action is clearly borne out in *The German Ideology* where Marx observes that without a revolutionary overthrow of capitalism by communism this universal potentiality of human labour cannot be fully realized and secured (Marx and Engels, 1974: 56).

To summarize Marx's argument, the nature of human beings and their being with respect to nature are shaped and constituted by the essential character of men as practical agents who labour collectively to transform their conditions and their own character. The transformation of nature and the development of the human species occur under definite social and historical circumstances. The basic features of this position were expressed by Marx with his usual directness and brevity:

Men can be distinguished from animals by consciousness, by religion or anything else you like. They themselves begin to distinguish themselves from animals as soon as they begin to *produce* their means of subsistence, a step which is conditioned by their physical organisation. By producing their means of subsistence men are indirectly producing their actual material life. (Marx and Engels, 1974: 42)

Nature is not a thing-in-itself, but an extension of man – the inorganic body of human agents – and nature becomes a thing-for-man. Nature exists as an external, objective reality, but it is also transformed by labour and socially appropriated, becoming an internal reality of human development.

The Body in Nature and Nature in the Body

The fact of human embodiment was a crucial feature of Marx's view of the essence of human nature and the character of human labour. The existence of man was, for Marx, inescapably sensuous. Much of Marx's criticisms of Hegelian idealism was based on the argument that idealism understated or ignored the necessarily sensuous character of human activity. According to the first thesis on Feuerbach, both idealism and materialism had suppressed the conscious, sensuous and active nature of human *praxis*. Idealism grasped the subjective consciousness of human existence but neglected the way in which existence is rooted in sensuous production; materialism grasped man's location in nature, but converted man into a mere machine responding to external pressures (Rotenstreich, 1965). As we have seen, the concepts of nature as a world of physical objects independent of man and of man as a thing-like phenomenon (a machine, an hydraulic pump, or as a cog within a clock) both emerged at a specific point in history, namely with the growth of commodity production within a fully monetarized economy (Sohn-Rethel, 1978). Marx, by contrast, regarded both man and nature as the sensuous products of historical and social processes. Although Marx himself, especially in the manuscripts of 1844 and in *The German Ideology*, constantly emphasized this practical, sensuous character of human activity, the fact of human embodiment has not been adequately discussed in recent commentaries on Marx's ontology. Embodiment is a necessary condition of man's sensuous appropriation of nature; embodiment is a precondition for practice. Marxists have not really attempted to conceptualize this rather obvious fact that human sensuous agents require embodiment in order to express their agency. Marxists can, therefore, be criticized alongside sociologists because they 'tend to ignore the body and to "desomatize" social relationships' (Freund, 1982: 19). This is an important criticism, but it is possible to develop Marx's ontology in a fruitful and constructive fashion to incorporate the notion of human embodiment. The complexity of the body as both a natural phenomenon and a social product can be exposed by attempting to extend Marx's notion of alienation into a discussion of disease. The problem of disease in the human body in turn brings out the subjective and objective experiences of embodiment.

To repeat a paradox which has formed much of the thematic unity of this study in the sociology of the body, human beings both have and are bodies. In so far as I have a body, I share a number of characteristics in common with other primates which can be regarded as biological systems

and in this sense my body is a natural environment over which I exercise control, but which also exercises restraints over me. Like other phenomena in the environment, I can touch, feel, smell and see my body. However, I require my body in order to carry out this touching, feeling, smelling and seeing. In exercising control through embodiment, I have immediate and first-order possession over my body in a way which I do not experience with respect to other objects. I possess my body, but there is a sense also in which it possesses me, since the demise of my body is also (at least for all practical purposes) my demise. This embodiment, however, is fundamentally social, since my ontology is necessarily social. Thus, references to the possession of my body do not imply any methodological individualism. To employ a distinction which is now common in the analysis of class positions in Marxism, human beings typically have possession of their bodies, but they do not necessarily have ownership. Although Marx always used the word 'man' in a generic sense, it is also well known that his analysis of the 'human essence' very rarely offered an analysis of the location of women in society and history. One fundamental feature of human society has been that, although women have a phenomenological possession of their bodies, they have rarely exercised full ownership. In this sense, the sexual division of labour has always expressed a fundamental alienation of the body. When Marx defined human ontology in terms of sensuous agency, his definition has to presuppose that human beings enjoy both possession and ownership of their bodies. For Marx, this prerequisite for *praxis* was primarily negated by the emergence of capitalist society in which people are forced to sell their labour given the particular character of the social relations of production. However, the negation of the ownership of our bodies is not specific to capitalism.

Under slavery and patriarchy, ownership of bodies is precluded by the political and legal system of control, so that agents experience their bodies as objects which are ruled externally. There are, of course, various institutional arrangements for the commodification of bodies, and prostitution is notoriously the most ancient of such arrangements. In this respect, prostitution can be regarded as the conversion of a natural asset as a use-value into an exchange-value; under some circumstances, casual homosexuality might also be regarded as a commodification of sexuality, devoid of subjective commitment and affective attachment. This loss of sensuous ownership of the body could, therefore, be regarded as one form of corporeal alienation, since at least one dimension of Marx's use of alienation as a concept involves loss of personal control. In a more interesting fashion, it could also be argued that disease involves a loss of bodily ownership and that disease which entails a loss of self is the most proximate and universal form of human estrangement.

A disease can be regarded as an invasion or at least an unwanted alteration of metabolism which has the consequence of disturbing or curbing my everyday social relations and activity. A disease places a limit or restraint on my creative, sensuous practice. To take one example, gout is a fairly

common disease in middle-aged men; it is partly hereditary, but is also associated with poor diet, lack of exercise and alcoholism. Gout is, therefore, probably widespread in the academic community. The immediate cause of gout is an accumulation of uric acid in the blood and the site of the attack is typically the large toe, where the victim feels a sharp and agonizing pain. The agony is usually unexpected and arrives without prior warning. The disease thus has all the features of an uncontrolled invasion of the body as a natural environment. In Greek medicine, gout was called podagra, that is foot-attack, and hence Hippocrates referred to it as the unwalkable disease (Hippocrates, 1886). Podagra is a disease you cannot walk with or upon. Gout is, of course, not simply an invasion of the feet and it is not confined to man, being common in parakeets, turkeys and chickens. Gout thus exists as a metabolic malady in man's domesticated animal environment and also in his internal environment. The tophi which are thus discovered in victims of gout are experienced as an alien intrusion and these tophi, from a phenomenological point of view, indicate the thing-like quality of the body as an environment of the person.

Although disease in this sense is alienation, the important feature of human praxis is that even disease can be appropriated and transformed into culture. Gout can also become part of the ensignia and stigmata of personality, since part of the individuality of a person can be known from their gait. Gout in the foot is thus transferred to the personality, which itself becomes gouty, denoting a special type of person. Although gout is clearly very painful as an alien intervention, it also has a certain honorific status as the complaint of the wealthy and the immobile. James Russell Lowell, who suffered much from the malady, referred to gout as a 'handsome complaint' and associated it with persons who enjoyed 'easy circumstances' (Norton, 1894). William Cullen who was Professor of Medicine at Edinburgh in the second half of the eighteenth century advanced the view that gout was an affliction of the intelligent, and associated it with an abundance of mental and physical abilities (Donovan, 1975). Cullen's treatment involved diet and an abstemious life-style (Talbot, 1964). Gout, like melancholy, was a disease of affluence, leisure and urban civilization. The social and metaphorical associations of podagra as a malady of the leisure class are in this respect interesting. Podagra is a malady of immobility; it is both an effect and a cause of stationariness as the disease of 'unwalkability'. Gout thus creates leisureliness (however painfully enforced) and is the badge of leisure. Although it is an alien attack on the extremity of the skeleton, it is also, at least in eighteenth-century culture, appropriated by people as part of their personality and social status. Gout in this respect becomes part of the total self identity and it becomes perfectly meaningful to then refer to 'the gouty individual'. In social terms, diseases are ranked upon a scale of prestige; gout, TB, melancholy and hypertension can be part of the social marks of intelligence, sensitivity and wit.

The point of this argument about gout is that a disease is a cultural paradox. It appears to be, so to speak, in nature but it is also inevitably

and deeply social. Gout as a malady brought about by uric acid must make a statement about walking or its absence. Walking is a statement about our social and individual character. The horse and the motor car make walking unnecessary for the leisure class who then take up jogging to avoid the unpleasant side-effects of stationariness. The problem of walking was a starting point for many of Georg Groddeck's illustrations of the psychodynamics of disease and illness in *The Book of the It* (1950); Groddeck was the first follower of Freud to ask systematically 'what is the meaning of illness?' Groddeck denied that health and illness are opposites because both are creations of the organism and they have multiple and contradictory meanings. Groddeck offered the illustration of a person walking from the bathroom, falling and breaking the lower thigh. To walk is to be upright, both physically and socially. Children cannot walk at an early age and are not morally and socially responsible for their actions. To be prostrate is to be helpless, but it is also a cry for help and a confession of the need for help. For Groddeck, there is an intentionality about illness, although it is often hidden from the agent himself. The role of psychoanalysis is in part to provide the interpretation of illness to the victim so that the sufferer can understand the positive, eufunctional and protective aspect of disease and illness. Illness also expresses human creativity and this grasp of the artistry of illness is perhaps nowhere more beautifully outlined than in Oliver Sacks's study of *Migraine* (1981).

To understand the point of Sacks's commentary on the meaning of migraine, it is useful to adopt Marx's dichotomy of base and superstructure to the world of human illness. We might argue that disease is a malady of the base, that is, of the organism which all human beings share by virtue of their location as phenomena in a natural world. Human creativity at an individual level occurs in the superstructure, that is, in the social, ideological and moral interpretations they elaborate in response to changes in the organic base. Each disease has an organic grammar, but the speech of the sick patient is highly variable, creative and idiosyncratic. Migraine is something people have, but also something they do. We speak of a 'migraine attack' employing military analogies to suggest an external invasion of the person, but we can also think in terms of migraine behaviour as the activity of a migrainous person. To quote at some length from Sacks:

If the foundations of migraine are based on universal adaptive reactions, its superstructure may be constructed differently by every patient, in accordance with his needs and symbols.

Thus we can now answer, in principle, the dilemma posed earlier, as to whether migraine is innate or acquired. It is both: in its fixed and generic attributes it is innate, and in its variable and specific attributes it is acquired. ...

Walking, at its most elementary, is a spinal reflex, but is elaborated at higher and higher levels until, finally, we can recognize a man by the way he walks, by his walk. Migraine, similarly, gathers identity from stage to stage, for it starts as a reflex, but can become a creation. (Sacks, 1981: 224)

Walking is a capacity of the biological organism, but it is also a human creation and it can be elaborated to include the 'goose-step', the 'march' and 'about-turn' (Mauss, 1979). Walking is rule-following behaviour, but we can know a particular person by his walk or by the absence of a walk. As Groddeck pointed out, my way of walking may be as much a part of my identity as my mode of speech. Indeed 'the walk' is a system of signs so that the stillness of the migrainous person or the limp of the gouty individual is a communication.

The external disease becomes part of culture and personality through appropriation and interpretation. This Groddeckian perspective may appear peculiar, but it is an important corrective to some of the literature on sickness which fails to grasp the contradictory, dialectical nature of suffering. In medical sociology, the symbolic interactionist perspective involves the application of concepts from deviance theory which treats disease and illness as a uniform negation of the self-concept. In this respect, illness can be seen as a process which increasingly restricts social contacts and undermines the coherence of personal identity. Illness creates a sense of dependency on others and on medical technology. For example, patients who are dependent on kidney dialysis have a constant daily reminder of their dependence on machinery (Strauss and Glaser, 1975). The social isolation brought about by chronic illness leads to experiences of being discredited, rejected and devalued. The chronically sick can no longer exercise conscious agency over their circumstances because they are repeatedly reminded of their dependence and they experience themselves as a burden (Charmaz, 1983). The interactionist argument is that illness is a form of deviance and, as such, illness is subject to stigmatization which results in a devaluation of the self. The maladies of the body become the stigmatization of the person. Although this perspective clearly illustrates the alienation of the patient from himself and from his social environment, it is important to bear in mind that not all illness is stigmatized; some forms of illness, like some forms of deviance, have a social prestige and in a peculiar way are positively evaluated. Furthermore, negative social labels are not necessarily incorporated by either the sick or the deviant; stigmatization only occurs where isolated individuals actually internalize negative labels. Associations for the blind, diabetics, paraplegics and the like attempt to resist negative labelling by offering a more positive image of the life-style of the sufferer. These comments on the interactionist viewpoint are obviously trivial. The most important issue is the complex and contradictory phenomenological relationship between the individual and their disease.

We express our agency in terms of our interpretation and adoption of disease and illness in the sense that the migraine attack becomes *my* migraine and the gouty leg becomes *my* special mode of walking. We can also exercise agency, however, in becoming ill or diseased in the trivial sense that if I fail to take my regular walk, eat a protein-rich diet and consume rich wines, then I may well become a gouty person. My choice over pipe smoking may also contribute to future illness and so agency operates both at the

level of interpretation and in the aetiology of disease. Chronic illness does result in a restriction of social contacts, but there is also evidence that loss of rewarding social relations may be causally connected to the onset of disease. The alleged association between cancer and repressed emotions is thus particularly interesting. The notion that cancerous growths are physical signs of repressed feelings can be traced back to both Wilhelm Reich and Georg Groddeck. Reich sought to explain Freud's cancer of the jaw in terms of Freud's unhappy personal life and his repression of emotion. According to Reich, Freud smoked heavily 'because he wanted to say something which never came over his lips' (Reich, 1975: 34). Freud had to bite down his emotions which found their outlet in disease and in this sense Freud 'chose' cancer as an alternative mode of expressivity. For Groddeck, disease is representational, pointing to underlying conflicts and tensions; disease became the symbol of repressed desire (Sontag, 1978). The language we use to describe cancer in terms of unsatisfied and controlled desires emerges out of a consumer culture in which to be complete persons we have to consume, to overspend and to satiate desire. Susan Sontag has suggested, therefore, that modern metaphors of cancer are bits of dangerous ideology, because they hold the patient responsible for disease and thus prevent us from grasping the social aetiology of human misery in capitalist society itself. Her argument is clearly powerful. It would be obscene to argue that workers choose asbestosis as a solution to their repressed emotions; however there is evidence that the onset of cancer is associated with suppressed emotions and that massive stress which is unresolved can act as a trigger for neoplasms (Inglis, 1981).

It is now a commonplace that becoming a patient involves a series of choices, from accepting that one is 'ill' to doing something about it (McKinlay, 1973). While the notion of choice is compatible with illness behaviour, the idea that conscious agency might be involved in the causation of disease is far more problematic. The involvement of will in physical disease takes us back to the problem of the relationship between nature and culture; the crucial issue raised by Sontag's discussion of the metaphors of illness is ultimately the relationship between language and reality. Is disease as a classificatory system itself socially constructed by decision-making processes in scientific medicine? Is the body itself merely a social phenomenon?

Nietzsche versus Marx

For Marx, nature is an objective reality which forms the environment of human beings and the arena in which they satisfy their needs. However, nature becomes less and less significant for human beings who, through collective and productive labour, push back the boundary of natural restrictions. The relationship between people and nature has thus to be seen as essentially social and historical – the relationship being determined by the mode of production by which values are produced. The existence of nature

and the requirement that human needs must be satisfied are fundamental to Marx's ontology and in turn his ontology is basic to his social critique of capitalist society. Without these assumptions, Marx would not be able to draw the distinction between false and real needs. Thus, we have the popular argument in modern Marxism that capitalism ensnares the working class in a web of consumption in which advertising plays upon and creates false needs. Mass consumption is disciplined waste which is ultimately destructive of the individual, social relations and the environment (Baudrillard, 1975). Marx's ontology thus drives us back to the issue of what is universal about 'human nature' and whether 'human nature' is falsified under certain social forms of production. In Marxism, the universal human essence does not reside in biology; what is common to human beings is not certain common biological requirements or physiological characteristics. Human essence is capacity and potentiality; human beings labour upon the natural world to transform it in the satisfaction of their needs, and in transforming nature they realize their potentiality as sensuous, practical, creative agents. This 'nature' is, however, subverted by social conditions in which human beings are alienated from themselves, productive conditions and from other human beings. Concepts like 'man' and 'nature' cannot be understood as fixed abstractions. Thus in his notes on Adolph Wagner's lectures on political economy, Marx argued that:

Man stands in relation with the objects of the external world as the means to satisfy his needs. But men do not begin by standing 'in this theoretical relation with the objects of the external world'. Like all animals they begin by eating, drinking, etc., i.e. they do not stand in any relation, but are engaged in activity, appropriate certain objects of the external world by means of their actions, and in this way satisfy their needs (i.e. they begin with production...) for men who already live in certain social bonds (this assumption follows necessarily from the existence of language), certain external objects serve to satisfy their needs. (Marx, quoted in Schmidt, 1971: 110–11)

Human beings realize their 'human essence' historically and they constantly transform themselves by continuously transforming nature.

Marx thus attempted to avoid relativism by locating his social critique in social ontology. Although the world is always changing as a result of the intervention of humanity in that world and human beings transform themselves as a consequence of their labour on nature, the social ontology of the human species is universalistic. Social structures change constantly, but there is nothing in my being which is essentially different from that of any other. Once Marx's argument is stated in these terms, it is easy to recognize that his ontology could be rendered in entirely different terms with radically different implications. If human beings transform nature through their labour and if human beings are also part of nature, then the ontology of social beings is historically contingent and socially variable. If 'nature' is itself the product of socio-historical practices, then, by labouring on himself, 'man' is a contingent, socially constructed phenomenon. Marx did not want to deny the existence of nature as independent, objective reality, but he

wanted to reject any notion that human beings were determined by objective laws of nature.

The problem of human agency in relation to nature had been addressed by Marx at an early stage of his intellectual development. It played an important part, for example, in his doctoral thesis on 'The difference between the Democritean and Epicurean philosophy of nature' in 1841. Marx praised Epicurus for holding that appearances are real and for asserting the autonomy of human will, but Epicurus's emphasis on human freedom from immutable natural laws also carried the implication that the objectivity of nature was itself dependent on human will. The attraction of Epicureanism for Marx was its atheistic assertion of human freedom from natural laws, that is, the subordination of physics to morality. This rejection of necessity and immutability in favour of human agency may have been connected by both Marx and Engels with the doctrines of Heraclitus, namely that everything is flux and that things are always the union of opposites. Although Heraclitus received only passing mention in the works of Marx, (in Volume 1 of *Capital*, for example), Heraclitus's view of reality as always becoming was certainly compatible with Marx's general emphasis on the historicity of natural and social phenomena. In *Anti-Dühring*, Engels (1959) also referred to Heraclitus's analysis of the contradictory, changing nature of reality as a 'naive but intrinsically correct conception'. Human agency versus a concept of nature as determining and immutable was thus a permanent and deep concern of both Marx and Engels, and they attempted to solve the issue by regarding nature as determining and determined. Nature was a condition and a requirement of human action in circumstances which are historically changing. If phenomena are always changing historically through human agency, how can things be known? If 'Man' is both the subject of, and subject to, 'Nature', then 'Man' is constantly subject to, and the subject of, change. How then could we have knowledge of a being who is always becoming? Marx actually makes the problem more specific by arguing that 'Man' is an abstraction, and that we can only meaningfully talk about real, sensuous men in given empirical circumstances. Since actual men and women are always the products of given social circumstances, and are always changing historically as the result of human intervention, it follows that men and women are always changing, because they constantly change themselves. Since men and women are always becoming, how can we know their nature? Marx is thus faced with a classic dilemma of philosophy which was perfectly expressed by an aphorism of Heraclitus: we can never stand in the same river twice. To express this somewhat differently in more modern parlance, the problem for Marx was to grasp sameness in a world of difference.

As we have seen, Marx's social ontology was an attempt to recognize the centrality of human agency and universality within a philosophical system which showed that all concepts are historical and can only be grasped in a specific socio-historical context. Having outlined Marx's position, I want to show some differences between Marx and Nietzsche, but also to note at least some similarities. One point in examining Nietzsche's philosophy is that

much recent and influential writing on the body, for example that of Michel Foucault, depends heavily on Nietzsche. I also want to show that, while Nietzsche and Marx shared some common presuppositions, the implications of their views of knowledge are obviously different. One useful starting point is to consider Nietzsche's employment of the Heraclitian paradox of being and becoming, a paradox which is central to Nietzsche's epistemology.

Although Nietzsche's epistemology has not been thoroughly debated, it is of considerable interest, given its proximity to much contemporary structuralist theory. One central theme of this epistemology is the limitations of our knowledge and the ungrounded pretensions of positivism as a system of thought. First he notes that since the world is flux, it is difficult to accept that we can know 'being' at all. In a world of becoming, we can only know that part of being which we have constructed:

A world in a state of becoming could not in a strict sense be 'comprehended' or 'known'; only in so far as the 'comprehending' and 'knowing' intellect discovers a crude ready-made world put together out of nothing but appearances, but appearances which, to the extent that they are of the kind that have preserved life, have become firm – only to this extent is there anything like 'knowledge', i.e. a measuring of earlier and later errors by one another. (Nietzsche, 1968: sec. 520)

We know that which we have imposed on becoming and that which we have constructed out of the chaotic flux of experiences. It follows, secondly, that language is a crucial feature of Nietzsche's epistemology of becoming. Since we are forced to think in words, language is the matrix by which we systematize and fix becoming. In section 20 of *Beyond Good and Evil* (1973), Nietzsche noted that it is hardly surprising that there should be strong family resemblances between Indian, Greek and German philosophy. These family resemblances are the product of a language affinity; we are forced to think in similar ways because of an underlying common grammar. Because our grammar involves the subject – predicate relationship as a principal feature, our systematization of reality is inevitably egocentric – I think, I feel, I do. However, these causal notions and egocentric features are products of language (the world of being). The third crucial feature of Nietzsche's epistemology is the emphasis on the usefulness of knowledge in social survival. Language and knowledge grow out of the social need for communication:

Consciousness does not really belong to man's individual existence but rather to his social or herd nature. ... We simply lack any organ for knowledge, for 'truth': we 'know' (or believe or imagine) just as much as may be *useful* in the interests of the human herd, the species. (Nietzsche, 1974: sec. 354)

The nature and functions of knowledge are thus located in the evolutionary development and needs of the species, especially in the necessary features of social communication. Language is a requirement of human survival and is rooted ultimately in the physiological basis of human existence. It is relatively easy to grasp how Nietzsche's epistemological theories have

provided one aspect of the philosophical background of modern French structuralism.

The immediate background of structuralist thought was provided by the analysis of language by writers like Ferdinand de Saussure, Roman Jakobson and Louis Hjelmslev (Coward and Ellis, 1977). The elements of this theory of language can be briefly stated. First there is the distinction between speech (*parole*) and language (*langue*) in which the latter is defined as a system of signs whose relationships are determined by linguistic rules. Language is thus a system of signs which has a determinate structure. Secondly, there is the distinction between the acoustic component (the signifier) and the conceptual element (the signified) of the sign. There is no necessary relationship or fit between the signifier 'tree' and the concept of tree. The signified is not a thing but the component of a thing. The relationship between signifiers and signifieds is arbitrary; what makes thought coherent is the system of rules which governs the location and function of individual signs within a system of language. In Foucault's terms, the notion that there is a necessary connection between an 'order of things' and an 'order of words' is a metaphysical assumption of Western epistemology (1970). The knowledge we possess about reality is a knowledge of concepts since 'reality' is itself a concept which has a meaning as a consequence of its opposition to 'unreality'. Thirdly, structuralism argued that language as a system of signs can be studied as an autonomous, self-generating system which is not dependent on the intentions of its speakers. Structuralism would thus be a synchronic analysis of signs and distinguished from conventional diachronic analyses of Marxism. The history of a system of language was irrelevant for an understanding of the logic of knowledge production. In general, therefore, structuralism was primarily concerned with questions of form rather than substance. The meaning of signifiers – 'cat', 'dog', 'fish' – is determined, not by their relationship to reality, but by a system of formal rules, which is governed by rules of correspondence and difference.

Although the immediate background to this view of language was provided by the work of Saussure, the structuralist assumptions of writers like Foucault are closely related to Nietzsche's epistemology. In particular, what we know is not reality but simply knowledge and the knowledge we have is the product of language which attempts to impose a system on the flux of becoming. What we know is not things-in-themselves, but signifiers of the world-of-becoming. The knowledge which is generated about the world is always an act of will by which human groups attempt to impose a meaning on the world so that knowledge is always the will to truth.

Although there is much in common, therefore, between Nietzsche and Foucault, there is at least one major gap between their perspectives. Because Nietzsche thought that all human existence involved evaluation of its moral significance, there would always be the possibility of a re-evaluation of values. Nietzsche was not a nihilist; indeed he was a specific critic of life-denying philosophy and an advocate of life-affirming beliefs.

Because knowledge is relative and a matter of perspective, there can be no authority imposed from above. Neither God nor the state has a privileged monopoly of knowledge. Although the argument that we can never know being appears to be highly pessimistic, it also has the implication that our knowledge of becoming could in principle be reconstructed. By contrast, Foucault offers no such escape because he rules out the possibility of discovering a transcendental subject to discourse which could give life meaning. His analysis of the psychiatric theory of madness is not designed to offer a better practice; his account of the birth of the clinic does not promise an alternative medicine.

Nietzsche's relativism or perspectivalism brought him to hope for a better moral world, because what we know is useful for our survival. Nietzsche's view of knowledge as practical thus provides a link with Marx, who in *The German Ideology* defined language as 'practical consciousness': 'Language, like consciousness, only arises from the need, the necessity of intercourse with other men. ... Consciousness is, therefore, from the very beginning a social product, and remains so as long as men exist at all' (Marx and Engels, 1974: 51). In a similar fashion, Nietzsche saw language as the embodiment of consciousness growing out of the need for social communication in the struggle for the continuity of the human species. It is therefore social being that determines consciousness; in contemporary structuralism, it is discourse which determines being. The subject can only know, feel and experience what is permitted by the rules of discourse. This epistemological argument is thus close to Foucault's position that classification as an expression of will or power determines the possibilities of experience.

The Body and Difference

From a structuralist perspective, there is a sense in which the body is socially constructed by discourse and our knowledge of it is only made possible by classificatory procedures – 'In this sense the reality of the body is only established by the observing eye that reads it' (Armstrong, 1983: 2). The body is not part of given reality, but an effect of our systemization of becoming. There are two problems with this interpretation of the body. First, it is reductionist in the sense that human conscious action is reduced to the effects of discourse. For example, the sexuality of our bodies is determined by the rules of a discourse which permits individuals to have one sex but not two (Foucault, 1980b). Although the structuralist tradition has been highly critical of reductionism – such as economism – it involves itself in what might be called discursive reductionism. Human agency is either minimized or ignored. For example, structuralism permits no theoretical space for human resistance to discourse since we are determined by what we are permitted to know. Secondly, despite all the references to pleasure and desire, a structuralist analysis of the body as the effect of discourses ignores the phenomenology of embodiment. The immediacy of the personal

sensuous experience of embodiment which is involved in the notion of my body receives scant attention. My authority, possession and occupation of a personalized body through sensuous experience are minimized in favour of an emphasis on the regulatory controls which are exercised from outside by experts who are equipped with coercive knowledge of its needs and functions.

An adequate sociology of the body will have to have a number of necessary features. First, it must embrace some notion of agency which works against any simplistic reductionism. Although the body is an environmental limit over which human beings do not have total control, it is also the case that, through embodiment, they exercise some form of corporeal government. They practice in, on and through their bodies. It is partly because of this claim about agency that the conventional distinction between sickness and disease has been rejected. There is an element of agency in the 'selection' of diseases which are methods of coping with dependency and crisis. Diseases are not simply invasions of an environment by an alien entity, and there is a sense in which persons appropriate illnesses as part of their individuality. We refer to 'my gout' or 'my migraine' and it would be odd for somebody to talk about 'its gout' and 'its migraine'. This argument is not to deny that morbidity is highly determined by class, ethnicity and gender, but it is to reject an entirely over-socialized conception of embodied persons.

A theory of the body must, secondly, address itself directly to the dichotomy between nature and culture, since the relationship between these is social, historical and contradictory. Bodies are certainly part of nature, but explanations of human behaviour in terms of biology are highly inappropriate. Human practice involves, as Marx noted, the humanization of nature in which nature is appropriated and forced to serve human needs. Our bodies become alienated things only under specific social circumstances. Biology and physiology are themselves classificatory systems which organize and systematize human experience, and they are therefore features of culture not nature. 'Disease' has to be understood as a classification of biological process and, although it would be reasonable for somebody to object that we can die from disease even if it is simply a classification, 'death' is also a variable cultural category, being determined by medical decisions-making, medical classification and technological interventions. What will count as a 'living body' or a 'dead body' depends on culture not nature.

Thirdly, an adequate sociology of the body must be social and not individualistic. Such an observation is perhaps too obvious to be worth stating, but much of the phenomenology of embodiment is highly individualistic and fails to recognize fully that personal experience of embodiment is highly mediated by social training, language and social context. My authority over my body may be a necessary feature of human agency, but the nature and extent of that authority depends heavily on my social circumstances – my body may be somebody's legal property.

The sociology of the body thus leads us eventually into the question of social ontology and I have attempted to outline two contrasting positions. First, there is the tradition of Feuerbach and Marx which approaches the body via a theory of human sensuous practice on nature in which embodiment is social and historical. The realization of human potentiality is only possible under social conditions where human beings are relatively free from external control and alienation. A genuine Marxism is thus not simply about social freedom, but must include some account of the liberation of embodied persons from physical misery. Marx's social ontology leads to a critique of those features of control and constraint over human potentiality which result from social domination. For example, 'women's complaints' are entirely socially produced and it is thus not utopian to consider a society in which they simply would not exist.

The second tradition is associated with the epistemology of Nietzsche and finds its contemporary expression in the work of Foucault. In this structuralist perspective, the body is an effect of complex processes of knowledge which arise from the will to truth. The body arises as the consequence of modern rationalism and it is situated in the context of political struggles which seek to regulate human beings within an administered society. The body is that which is signified by biological, physiological, medical and demographic discourses; it is thus a concept which is the effect of knowledge/power. At one level, such a perspective could have a radical implication, since what has been constructed by knowledge/power could be deconstructed by resistance, but Foucault does not permit any genuine notion of progress. We can illustrate this negative side of Foucault by considering his discussion of sexuality, especially from *Herculine Barbin* (Foucault, 1980b).

Foucault wants to argue, correctly, that the difference between 'man' and 'woman' is the effect of discourses and is not a natural and obvious fact of biology. The difference is brought about by the impossibility of having two sexes within one body. Modern medical discourse precludes the 'error' of the hermaphrodite by insisting that all bodies are either male or female:

Biological theories of sexuality, juridical conceptions of the individual, forms of administrative control in modern nations, led little by little to rejecting the idea of a mixture of the two sexes in a single body, and consequently to limiting the free choice of indeterminate individuals. (Foucault, 1980b: viii)

However, it could be argued that gay liberation, the feminist movement, the liberalization of laws relating to sex offences and the availability of genetic engineering have blurred the difference between male and female sexuality. There is now a greater awareness that biological sex, sexual personality, sex training, gender identity and sex roles may vary independently. It could also be argued that rigid male/female differences are no longer relevant to late capitalism where technological and social changes have, for example, made 'heavy work' in previously male occupations

increasingly insignificant. Citizenship rights in late capitalism are formally universalistic and progressively indifferent to the particularities of biological sex, and in so far as this is the case, the ontology of sex difference becomes redundant.

Although Foucault wants to argue that the imposition of difference by discourse represents an extension of power over bodies by an elaboration of knowledge, his pessimism prevents him from recognizing that the possible disappearance of sex difference is an extension of individual rights and potentialities. There is in fact only one line of argument which would be compatible with Foucault's general position, namely that the disappearance of difference represents an expansion of administrative control over persons by repressing their individuality and their sexual uniqueness. Since both 'sameness' and 'difference' are compatible with bureaucratic and localized practices of power over bodies, there is no way out of the iron cage. Although Foucault often appears as a major critic of Cartesian rationalism and although his genealogy appears as a critical weapon, it is difficult to see how there is any real space for agency and resistance. For Foucault, the movement for sexual liberation is based on the false premise that power is always repressive, but he offers no real alternatives since both power and opposition involve discourses. Gender is merely a construction of sociomedical discourses, but so is everything else. Nietzsche's programme for a route out of our dilemma through the principle of the life-affirming instinct is thus largely missing from the work of Foucault. Embodiment is more than conceptual; it is also potentiality and the realization of that potency requires a social critique which recognizes that some societies are more free than others.

Body Paradoxes

Sociological theory can be said to be organized around a number of perennial contrasts – agency and structure, the individual and society, nature and culture, mind and body. Solutions to these contrasts – voluntarism and determinism – are simultaneously premature and lop-sided, because the contradictions are theoretically creative and productive. We can exercise agency, but we do so in the context of massive structural restraints. We are individuals, but our individuality is socially produced. Human beings as organic systems are part of nature, but their natural environment is also the product of historical practices. 'Nature' is also a product of culture. We are conscious beings, but that consciousness can only be realized through embodiment. The importance of the sociology of the body is that it lies at the axis of these theoretical tensions and it is thus a necessary component of any genuine sociology. The difficulty of providing a coherent account of what we mean by 'the body' is an effect of these theoretic problems.

In order to locate these problems within a theoretically fruitful framework, it has been argued that every mode of production has a mode

of desire. Societies exist in so far as they reproduce their means of existence and reproduce their human members. The relations of production in every society presuppose relations of desire; sexual production is never unregulated. The sexual means of reproduction are only biological in the most trivial sense: sexuality is distributed through the society by social relations of possession and ownership, and these relations determine who is to be constituted as appropriately sexed persons and determine what sexual unions are legitimate and desirable. To use the modern jargon, sexuality is inscribed on persons, not by the inner discourse of their physiology, but by the exterior discourse of sexual ideology. Every mode of desire thus has its appropriate interpellative ideologies which constitute out of the raw material of human flesh, persons with appropriate sexuality, sexual identity, genders and personalities. These interpellative discourses not only constitute persons with sexualized bodies but insert such agents into the social locations of reproduction (brothels, families, kinship groups and tribes). The mode of production and the mode of desire are focused on the dimensions of individual bodies and populations, and together they generate the four-fold problem of order – reproduction, restraint, representation and regulation – which I have claimed is universal to social formations. Since the control of bodies is essentially the control of female bodies, the sociology of the body has to be simultaneously an analysis of patriarchy and gerontocracy. Discourses of sexual difference, the organization of power through patriarchal relations and the domination of generations by gerontocracy within the household, represent essential institutions for the distribution of bodies and the conservation of property. Societies based on private property are necessarily class societies and the precise operation of these forms of control and regulation will vary between classes. Following an earlier argument (Abercrombie et al., 1980), it may well be the case that the organization of such societies depends more on the coherence of the dominant class than the incorporation of subordinate classes. The sexual deviance of the peasantry may have been of concern to the priesthood, but the socio-economic system did not depend on peasant morality. Since different modes of desire correspond to different modes of production, I have argued that some diseases are symbolic of the form of dependency and domination which are constituted by different forms of society. Hysteria, anorexia, onanism and agoraphobia are ‘diseases’ of sexual dependency, and the language of these complaints is essentially political.

Although every society has a government of the body, there is always resistance and protest. To identify a regimen of the body is not to assume its effectivity and, from the point of view of rulership, it is not surprising that disorders of the social body should be conceptualized in terms of diseases of the individual, especially female, body. Michel Foucault is correct in suggesting that the control of the body is the site of all controls, but the problem with structuralism is that it represents what might be called ‘discourse determinism’. By denying subjectivity and embodiment,

'discourse determinism' fails to provide an adequate phenomenology of the body and abandons the idea of the body as sensuous potentiality. I have attempted to illustrate these ideas by emphasizing the importance of human agency and consciousness even in the aetiology of disease. This agency is indicated by the language of ownership through which we indicate our embodiment in the world – my body and not its body, my disease and not its disease, my pain and not its pain. This reproduction of structures by the mode of desire has to operate through my embodiment and the necessity of the reproduction of the system is brought about by the pleasures of copulation. Although various social institutions – the mediaeval church and the communist party – have attempted to separate reproduction and pleasure, the attempt is doomed to failure. This paradoxical fact is a necessary point of resistance.

One peculiar feature of the mode of production in late capitalist society is, however, that it does not require an ascetic mode of desire; indeed, pleasures are produced by the process of commodification and elaborated by the circuit of consumption. The regimen of bodies is no longer based on a principle of ascetic restraint, but on hedonistic calculation and the amplification of desire. Asceticism has been transformed into practices which promote the body in the interests of commercial sensualism. The new anti-Protestant ethic defines premature ageing, obesity and unfitnes as sins of the flesh, but this is not an argument against Weber, for whom, although capitalism might enhance material wealth and produce pleasure, it could not provide purpose. The problem for capitalism is that the business cycle constantly expands expectations of pleasure which it can never satisfy, either continuously or universally. Unlike feudalism, capitalism is not forced to deny satisfactions in the interest of primitive accumulation; it generates permanent expectations of personal gratification which cannot be satisfied within the periodic crises of the circuits of capital.

The pleasures of the body are never wholly incorporated by consumerism; they may become features of individualistic protest and opposition. In late capitalism, there appears to be a radical disjunction between production and desire which generates widespread dissatisfaction and disillusion. The economic crisis of late capitalism has thus given a new twist to the Malthusian paradox: while human pleasures, being variable, grow by a geometric ratio, the capacity for consumption grows by an arithmetic ratio. The gap between expectation and consumption represents a level of relative deprivation which is the focus of social disequilibrium. It is for this reason that the government of society requires a government of the body. All government involves regulation and regulation is the imposition of uniformities of standard. The bureaucratic regulation of populations takes place, as both Weber and Foucault realized, through the individuation of bodies and in contemporary societies the moral regulation of bodies is brought about under the auspices of health. The problem is that health, like pleasure, is personal and particular, precisely because embodiment is always

unique. Bodies may be governed, but embodiment is the phenomenological basis of individuality. The last word, therefore, belongs to Nietzsche:

For there is no health as such, and all attempts to define a thing that way have been wretched failures. Even the determination of what is healthy for your *body* depends on your goal, your horizon, your energies, your impulses, your errors, and above all on the ideals and phantasms of your soul. Thus there are innumerable healths of the body; and the more we allow the unique and incomparable to raise its head again, and the more we abjure the dogma of the 'equality of men', the more must the concept of a *normal* health, along with a normal diet, and the normal course of an illness, be abandoned by the medical men. (Nietzsche, 1974: sec. 120)

Bodies in Motion

Towards an Aesthetic of Dance

The Experience of Aura

One of the most influential articles in cultural theory in the twentieth century was Walter Benjamin's 'The work of art in the age of its technological reproducibility' (2002). His claim was that in its traditional setting, where it was often associated with cult and ritual, art had an aura. Given Benjamin's social and cultural context, we have to assume that this aura had distinctively sacred properties. Benjamin was a close friend of Gershom Scholem the famous scholar of Jewish mysticism and a student of the Kabbalah. As a result Benjamin's whole aesthetic theory was shaped by Jewish mystical tropes, leading some commentators to interpret Benjamin's work as 'an aesthetic of redemption' (Wolin, 1994).

With the development of modern technology, art becomes reproducible, is removed from its cultic setting, and begins to shed its aura. The uniqueness and authenticity of a work of art is a function of its embeddedness in the social context of a stable traditional culture. The history of art can be seen as an endless contradiction between this cultic or sacred value and its exhibition or market value. Benjamin was particularly interested in the impact of film and photography on the authenticity and aura of art, which made art available to the masses. In the secular and democratic environment of modern society, art does not effortlessly function in a ritual or cultic context, and with modern technology it can be endlessly reproduced. Andy Warhol's silk-screen images of sports stars are the classic illustrations of this self-conscious act of reproducibility. The charismatic status of the artist and art is converted slowly but inevitably into celebrity, where branding replaces aura. Nike as a brand guarantees the reliability of the product rather than the authenticity of a unique object. In this sense it can be said to illustrate the standardization of the world that is described in George Ritzer's *The Globalization of Nothing* (2004).

Benjamin's essay first appeared in Pierre Klossowski's French translation in the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* in May 1936. Benjamin, writing within a critical Marxist paradigm, saw the essay as a contribution to a materialist theory of culture and its reception by the masses. While Benjamin had high hopes for this essay, it was rejected by Theodor Adorno writing on behalf of the Institute for Social Research, and dismissed by Bernhard Reich in

Moscow for the *Internationale Literatur* on the grounds that Benjamin had not sustained a thesis about the erosion of aura. Although Benjamin saw the essay as a contribution to materialism, the real intellectual influence on the concept of aura had come from the Stefan George circle, and it was Karl Wolfskehl who had spoken of 'the breath of life' that surrounds all material forms and which exudes life (Brodersen, 1996). While Benjamin wanted to develop an optimistic political assessment of the reception of art by the masses, the underlying dimension of his aesthetics probably owed more to romanticism, vitalism and the Stefan George circle than to a mechanistic materialism. Benjamin's work became influential despite rather than because of its Marxist vocabulary. Benjamin's aesthetics are tragic rather than revolutionary and the dominant influence on his work was ultimately from Jewish mysticism rather than mechanistic materialism (Turner, 1994).

Benjamin was primarily concerned with both classical literature and with new art forms such as photography. However, Benjamin's aesthetic theories have an interesting relevance to dance in the sense that dance more than most art forms is quintessentially a performance involving all the senses. While much cultural theory has been similarly concerned with text and with vision, any appreciation of dance must pay attention to its performative characteristics, that is, precisely to its non-reproducibility. I want to argue that dance is peculiarly resistant to, but not immune from, mechanical reproduction, and hence its auratic qualities appear to survive, albeit with reduced potency, into secular modernity. While this chapter is concerned with the issue of the performing body, the issues raised here have a much wider bearing on the question of modern aesthetics, and specifically with the relationship between performance, embodiment and representation.

In terms of Martin Heidegger's philosophy of Being, dance is fundamental to our being-in-the-world; there are no cultures without it and it is shared with other species as a rhythmic performance conveying basic emotions about sex and violence. Dance is a 'natural language' by which human beings convey meaning through organized performances, typically accompanied by music and with costumes. While dance occurs in a myriad of forms and with multiple functions, dance has invariably three significant components. It typically involves both music and movement. It is often regarded as a total form of art because it involves movement, music and representation. It also invariably involves the human body, more specifically the performing body. From an anthropological perspective, dance involves purposeful, intentionally rhythmical, patterned sequences of non-verbal body movements and gestures regarded as having aesthetic value (Sparshott, 1995). In traditional societies dance occurs in specific ritualized and controlled contexts, for example as a war dance. In Tiwi culture in North Australia, dance embodies cosmological histories of the tribe, where dance was given to the tribe by Purukipali, the mythical hero who taught funeral dances to mark the death of his son Tjinani. Dance performances

often occur in stylized or ritualized settings, especially in the court. There is an important relationship therefore between the training of the body, norms of civility and the political power of the aristocratic elites and the court. For example, traditional Javanese dance required precise formalized movements and performances were evaluated in terms of their exact adherence to rules that had to be mastered with care and diligence. As late as 1916 or 1924 a treatise was composed for Prantgwadana V11 on 'rules for the art of dancing at the Mangkunagarn court', namely the so-called Tayungan Dance. For example rule number 13 specifies the posture necessary for raising one leg (*engkrang*). This position involves a set of carefully described movements: 'While the right palm is facing upward, the left leg moves forward, then the right palm is rotated inward in front of the right hip. While the head is turned to the left, the left leg is lifted and the left sampur is flicked backward' (Brakel-Papenhuyzen, 1995: 219). These rules guarantee that the postures will be repeated according to their ritualistic significance, but the Tayungan dance remains a unique performance, in which the skill, dexterity and training of the performer produce an authentic aesthetic experience, but not one in which aura is diminished by its rule-bound reproducibility. Although dance did not play a significant part in Norbert Elias's historical sociology of civilization, dance was important in training the body to make it a civilized part of courtly behaviour (Elias, 1978). Deportment was an essential feature of the civilized bodies of courtiers, and ballet was essentially a product of court life. While dance traditions vary enormously, even the most abstract and philosophical performances such as the Zen-inspired choreography of modern Korea and Japan contain elements of reverence, grace and tranquillity (Fraleigh, 1999).

These observations on the court, dance and rules of civility raise more complex issues in the philosophy of art and aesthetic experience. In particular, to study ballet as performance rather than as representation, sociologists need to pay attention to the performing body. Richard Shusterman in *Performing Live* (2000), drawing on the work of Pierre Bourdieu and developing a pragmatist aesthetic, has argued that an aesthetic understanding of performance such as hip hop cannot neglect the embodied features of artistic activity. The need for an understanding of embodiment and the lived experience of the body is crucial in understanding performing arts, but also for the study of the dancing body. While choreography is in one sense the text of the dance, performance takes place outside, or in addition to, the strict directions of the choreographic score. Dance has an immediacy, which cannot be captured by discourse analysis or by representational study. It is important to re-capture the intellectual contribution of the phenomenology of human embodiment in order to avoid this reduction of bodies to cultural texts. Dance is a theoretically interesting topic because it demonstrates the analytical limitations of cultural interpretations of the body as simply text and at the same time dance opens up an important research field in which we can study the connections between the 'lived body' in relation to state formation, national culture and globalization.

Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, field and capital are very relevant to the sociology of dance (Turner and Wainwright, 2003a). While Bourdieu has clearly been the target of much critical appreciation in recent years (Fowler, 1997; Jenkins, 1992; Lane, 2000), the most interesting critical response has come from Shusterman in *Pragmatist Aesthetics* (1992) and *Surface and Depth* (2002). Shusterman makes an important contribution to aesthetic theory by examining the relationship between the pragmatist legacy of John Dewey and Bourdieu's cultural sociology. In his emphasis on the body in relation to aesthetics, Shusterman makes the point that Bourdieu's cultural analysis is in fact exclusively concerned either with the audible (musical taste) or the visual (conventional works of art). Performance is not addressed by Bourdieu, despite the centrality of the notion of practice to his sociology as a whole and his notion about 'bodily knowledge' (Bourdieu, 2000). Shusterman argues that Bourdieu's sociology of the aesthetic is implicitly parallel to Adorno's critique of popular culture. Visual culture – such as a Baroque painting – or literary culture – such as a Shakespearean sonnet – has more cultural capital than a dance which is seen to be ephemeral and lacking in serious intellectual content. For example, Shusterman has been interested in rap music as a critique of society, and he does not regard rap as merely an expression of inauthentic popular culture. Having described Bourdieu's treatment of the everyday habitus as not only compatible with but superior to the social philosophy of language and rule following in the work of Austin and Wittgenstein, Shusterman claims that Bourdieu failed to provide an adequate sociology of experience, particularly aesthetic experience. He claims that Bourdieu's reluctance to treat experience (of movement) seriously is associated with the fact that appreciation of phenomena such as rap or tango falls outside the cultural privilege accorded to intellectual self-consciousness and reflection. Reliance on such intellectual introspection will not help us penetrate to 'the deeper, unconscious, socially structured strata of the self that help shape individual consciousness' (Shusterman, 2002: 224). Despite Bourdieu's own protests to the contrary, Shusterman (2002: 221) claims that Bourdieu failed to deal with lived experience, especially the passing experience of a dance gesture – 'No sympathetic attention is given to the phenomenological dimension of lived experience, its power of meaningful, qualitative immediacy, and its potential for the transformation of attitudes and habits'. Shusterman takes contemporary rap as a powerful instance of these conceptual problems, but dance in general provides as it were a litmus test of the scope of traditional aesthetic theory, in which the Kantian legacy of disinterested, rational judgement is still omnipresent.

Defining Dance

In its traditional settings, dance was a conduit of aura or grace as the root of charisma. We can argue that the aura of dance is channelled along three

dimensions – the religious, the sexual and the political. Because the human body is, as it were, the most readily available ‘instrument’ by which to convey meaning and emotions, the body played a critical role as the expression of society as a whole. It has an immediate capacity to express sacred values, sexuality and power. Dance also has a powerful association with healing. Performance had both psychoanalytical and physical healing functions in traditional societies. Song and dance were used in North African societies, for example among the Berbers, to release young men from the traumatic effect of spirit possession or from the evil eye. The rhythmic movement of the body has a cathartic effect over both performer and audience. Although we have lost these beneficial effects of dance in modern society, there are still healing cults in the contemporary world that draw on these ancient associations between dance, possession and healing.

Traditional societies harnessed the body to express the sacred authority of the group or society, and hence there is a close relationship between the body, the sovereignty of a king, and the notion of sacredness. This theme has been pursued with great intellectual skill by Giorgio Agamben (1998) in his inquiry into the origins of *homo sacer*, the sacred man. Agamben shows that, following M. Foucault’s analysis of biopolitics in *The History of Sexuality* (1977b), there is always a necessary relationship between the sovereign power of the state, power over the body and the control of life. I would express this somewhat differently to say that there is a necessary relationship between the sovereignty of the state (king) and control over the sovereignty of the individual body. Since the body expresses both sacred and sexual power, this control involves sovereignty over sexual and religious expressivity. The power of the body is expressed performatively in dance, and it is in dance that the sexuality and potency of the body is ritually presented as a public spectacle. Formal, stylized dance often occurred within the court, where the carefully trained and manicured body expressed, not its own power, but the power and authority of the sovereign. The dancing body was an expression of the order of society as orchestrated in the body of the king. Oppositional dances were noteworthy for their coarseness and vulgarity. Bruegel the Elder’s paintings of peasant dancers at a wedding feast show the strong but uncouth and untrained bodies of ordinary peasants that are fuelled with alcoholic lust. There is therefore always a complex division between the regulated sexuality of classical ballet – the dance *par excellence* of the court and the elite – and the erotic or grotesque dances of the ordinary people. In modern societies, this sexuality of dance has become a commercial product as witnessed in the emotional consumption of the exotic dancer.

The aura of the body is an effect of its embeddedness in tradition and ritual. In this sense, dance perfectly illustrates Benjamin’s theory of the sacredness of art in its traditional forms. My argument is, however, that dance as an art form is resistant to mechanical reproducibility. As a performance, it cannot be easily and exactly recreated over and over again. Choreography has been developed as a method, a scientific method, of

reproduction, but it is not a perfect science of movement. There has been a long debate in dance studies about whether a dance can be perfectly reproduced from a score and whether such reproduction is artistically desirable. A performer is not simply a vehicle through whom the artist speaks, but a genuine artist who must make her own interpretation of the music and the dance score. There is a gap between the text or score and the object or performance, and it is in that gap that the work of art takes place, constituting a performance that can never be repeated. As the choreographer Merce Cunningham (1985) pointed out, music and dance share time in common, but dance occurs in time and space, and no satisfactory dance notation exists to capture fully a dance performance. Dancers, unlike musicians, cannot take their scores home to learn, and the majority of dancers are taught their parts by a choreographer, a rehearsal coach, and a 'translator' or 'reconstructor' using a Labanian system of notation. Rudolf Laban (1879–1958) developed a movement theory in which he constructed a qualitative assessment of the body, effort and space. Laban also developed a system for notating dances that is known as Labanotation. As Helen Thomas (2003:131) has observed, Labanotation will never capture the entire quality of a dance performance and more importantly 'fixing the dance in the score seems to run counter to the evanescent character of the dance in performance', that is, it runs counter to the aura of the body in performance. While film and photography have brought dance, especially classical ballet and modern dance, to a wider audience, the experience of a live performance cannot be captured by such mechanical means. In any case, the whole development of post-modern dance, including so-called contact improvisation, has gone against the emphasis on formal notation and strict adherence to a choreographed script. New dance or post-modern dance experiments with dance roles, settings, music and improvisation to increase the gap between text and performance.

A focus on dance can help us also to consider the current status of the sociology of the body, mainly because the promise and limitations of social studies of the body are replicated in dance studies. My principal criticisms of the existing sociology of the body are firstly that it has become too theoretical, and hence it is often divorced from empirical, especially ethnographic, research. While theories relating, for example, to the social construction of the body proliferate, there are few important, genuinely creative, ethnographies of embodiment. Secondly, both the sociology of the body and dance studies, in so far as they have been influenced by post-modern perspective, by concentrating on the body as a cultural text, have often neglected, somewhat paradoxically, the issue of human performance. Dance brings into sharp focus the important issue that the aesthetics of the body cannot be understood without attention to performance, and post-modern readings of the textuality of the body have obscured not illuminated this basic point. Let us put Shusterman's argument in a slightly different framework (Turner and Wainwright, 2003b). Sociologists, including Bourdieu, have neglected the issue of the body-in-movement.

Specifically there is really no development of the sociology of dance – although there is a respectable field of anthropological research (Blacking, 1977). This absence comes out in Shusterman's observation that our taste for popular music, for example, is often displayed by movement – tapping feet, swaying hips, clicking fingers or shaking of heads. By contrast, appreciation of classical music is often shown by the absence of any movement. The phenomenal body becomes inevitably engaged in the aesthetic appreciation of performance.

The appreciation of dance as performance is itself an embodied aesthetic of taste that presupposes interest not disinterest. Artistic forms or institutions that communicate palpable aesthetic experiences to an audience through performance are not effectively or comprehensively comprehended through a constructionist epistemology. Dance is the classical illustration of the argument that performance cannot be understood merely as a choreographic text. As we have already noted, it is precisely the gap between choreographic score and the object or performance that constitutes the authenticity of the dance. It is important therefore for sociologists to pay attention to the question of performativity in order to grasp the role of embodiment in the phenomenology of the body in motion. Just as literary theory wants to talk about the textuality of a work, so we need to pay attention to the performativity of artistic practices, that is, the ways in which movement, attack and gesture are assembled. The same arguments would apply to sport or sex.

From the perspective of writers like Bourdieu and Shusterman, we need to be constantly attentive to the practices of everyday life and what I want to call the phenomenological circumstances of performance, technique and action, that is, to the materiality of the dance performance itself. Performing as a successful classical ballet dancer cannot be merely a function of social construction; it needs to be accomplished or brought off. It needs to be done as a performance. There is of course a democratic ethos that lies behind social constructionism encouraging us to believe that, if only the social definition of the situation were to be challenged and changed, then I too could become a Nureyev, but such forms of philosophical idealism typically come up against the laws of gravity. As sociologists, again employing a language that could be derived from Heidegger, we should attend to what I refer to as the 'stuffness' of life or its quiddity. As a word quiddity has useful properties in stimulating the sociological imagination. The term can refer to analytical philosophers engaging in (generally useless) debates about whether things exist. A quibble is a captious argument. But it also refers to the nature of a thing – a quid is that which a thing is. To understand dance as a performance we should not neglect the thing-ness (quid) of the body in movement or what Heidegger might call the 'throwness' of the dance in action. An appropriate Heideggerian question might be – what is this thing called dance? To understand the context within which the living body accomplishes a successful performance, we need to understand the history of modern dance and its transformation by globalization.

Dance and Modernism

As a traditional or ritual art form dance has remained relatively resistant to mechanical reproducibility, but dance has also played an important part in the emergence of nation states and the process of modernization. In this sense the body has been harnessed to the project of modern sovereignty. Because the body is a powerful medium for expressing social values, it was important in the nationalist framework of modernization in the twentieth century. We might say that the aura of the body was embraced and then submerged by national movements that seek to embody national values. As an expressive and mimetic performance, dance has articulated local, typically religious, cultures through bodily movements, but it has also developed as a secular articulation of romantic nationalism, a conduit of erotic relationships, and a vehicle of global consumer culture. In contemporary society, dance has become a commodified form of expression that is exchanged as an aspect of the complex flow of cultural goods and genres around the globe. Tango is probably the most obvious illustration of these cultural exchanges and transitions being part of a global political economy of sexual passion (Savigliano, 1995).

Dance appears to have a fundamental, or least enduring relationship to national culture, if not to nationalism. Firstly ballet in the nineteenth century and well into the second half of the twentieth century was an important component of diverse projects of romantic or cultural nationalism. For example, Frederick Ashton, the arch-classicist, created 'English' choreography and a canonical repertory that dominated the Royal Ballet for decades, producing a national style of lyrical, romantic, fluid dance. In its high culture forms, dance has been constitutive of a romantic vision of nationalism. By contrast, the curriculum and financial organization of modern dance are now deeply globalized (Wulff, 1998). Trainers and performers are part of a global flow that connects the major cultural centres and makes the reproduction of national dance cultures virtually impossible. It tends to produce inevitable hybrid forms. For instance, the cultural evolution of European dance has entailed a dialectic process of national and global identities. These tensions between national dance forms and global commercial pressures are well illustrated in *Riverdance* which simultaneously expresses Irish national culture and strong commercial interests that force the show into a global arena.

While ballet was essentially an elite art form, modern dance has been subject to a powerful debate involving a democratization process that has been profoundly critical of the conservative, elitist assumptions of the classical canon. While there has been a process of global standardization (with Japanese theatres promoting traditional forms of Western classical ballet), there have also been diverse processes of democratization and diversification, through private and public support for modern dance, choreography for the disabled, folk dance and alternative arts. This internal process of criticism has been closely associated with post-modern dance,

which has rejected the modernist assumptions of dance as athletic and masculine. These contradictory processes of globalization, democratization and fragmentation are a perfect illustration of what sociologists have inelegantly called 'glocalization', combining and contrasting the local and the global. Thus, dance in modern society has both expressed conservative processes around the formation of a national choreographed idiom and a radical tradition of social reflection through oppositional styles. There have also been important contradictory tensions between popular dance, especially in its folk idiom, and modern dance. This relationship between popular and modern dance is fundamental to how and whether a national dance style can emerge.

The impact of Russian ballet from its debut in 1909 raises interesting historical questions about whether the globalization of ballet can be traced back essentially to the Russian revolutions or whether it is a late twentieth-century development. In terms of the political dialectic between national and global styles, Germany failed, apart from the centralized strategy of National Socialism before the Second World War and the socialist governments of East Germany, to produce a recognizable 'German ballet', because the federal political structure has constrained the emergence of a national dance identity. Spain has also been characterized by strong regional or sub-national traditions, apart from a period of centralized nationalism under General Franco. With the collapse of Spanish fascism and Spanish entry into the European Union, dance has enjoyed a remarkable democratic period of cultural effervescence that has in turn emphasized regional differences. In Italy the states or regions that existed before unification in 1861 had their own opera houses and ballet companies, and their artistic individuality survived well into the modern period. Attempts by Mussolini's fascist regime to produce a more centralized system, with the creation of the Opera Ballet School (1928) in Rome and the Royal Dance School (1940), were not wholly successful. Italy has never enjoyed a national ballet institution. In France during the post-war political restoration, Paris Opera and its ballet were defined as aspects of bourgeois culture. While the meteoric development of ballet in France in the 1980s is a reflection of French political policy within the European Union, ballet has long been fundamental to French culture. Serge Lifar, a Diaghilev product, trained French stars to replace Russian dancers and imposed a neo-classical aesthetic that expressed French good taste. National dance genre has always been fractured by both regional and global politics. A national ballet culture was typically a state project, because the size of classical ballet required considerable resources and organization, and therefore national dance traditions have been difficult to maintain.

The classical ballet of the dominant classes has been challenged by alternative expressions of nationalism in the form of folk traditions and peasant cultures. The flamenco, although strongly associated with Andalusian and oppositional culture, has often been co-opted as a national dance expression of Spain. In Hungary, the discovery of folk dances was an important

expression of political resistance to Soviet cultural and political influence. But the principal challenge to the elite cultural character of classical ballet has been the democratization of dance in a variety of European cultures. Maurice Bejart abandoned classical French ballet to live in Belgium where he has taken ballet to a wider social audience through the use of popular venues such as sports stadiums and town halls. In Germany, the radical ideas of Rudolf Laban who declared that 'Every man is a dancer' had a lasting impact on the introduction of egalitarian values into dance, especially through the *Bewegungschore* (movement choirs). In the Netherlands, the progressive policy of cultural citizenship in which every one has the right to develop his or her potential to the full, has produced a levelling process in dance culture. In the 1980s the *danswerkplaatessen* offered subsidised opportunities for training and development. In Sweden, the policy of equal cultural rights was expressed in state support for dance, and efforts were made to make dance available to marginalized social groups, including the disabled.

The body has been the site of these national, global and democratic contests. It is the living site where the politics of identity is inscribed. Debate about the body has, as a result, been prominent in the dance revolution in Flanders where the journal *Etcetera* has explored the issue of the 'authentic body' as a strategy to deconstruct the disciplined or social body. The struggle for political expression in Spain has been conceptualized in terms of the liberated body and the democratization of culture has been experienced in terms of the liberation of the body. In Britain, a new politics of the body has seen ballet exploring the limits of what is possible for the body. Dance companies like DV8, V-Tol and Random have developed energetic, high risk and extreme forms of physical expressiveness. By pushing the body to its limits, choreography also comes to explore the limits of humanity. In Germany the Austrian Johann Kresnik invented provocative choreographic statements of the political crises of Europe in which the body has become merely a commodity. Corporeal identities have been important conduits for a variety of contradictory social and political processes. Whereas the body was the expression of national sentiment in both fascist and socialist state experiments through state investment in dance, modern dance has become simultaneously a focus of global cultural trends and local experiments in democratization.

Ballet and modern dance have been sites of political contestation over the status of the male body and its relationship to national culture. Modernization and the celebration of male strength and sexuality appear to go together. Ballet was introduced into China by Yu Deling, the daughter of China's ambassador to Japan. Ronglin learnt ballet in Japan and Paris, taking classes with Isadora Duncan and returning to China in 1903. Ronglin performed ballet for the Empress Dowager Cixi, the Guangxu Emperor and the court. Ballet was promoted by the late Qing elite and ruling classes, but the adoption and adaptation of ballet to Chinese culture was remarkably enhanced during the Maoist cultural revolution. Ballet flourished in China in

the 1960s during which time the Chinese ballet classic 'Red Girl's Regiment' emerged. First performed in 1964 in Beijing, it tells the story of a slave girl who escapes from her landlord and master, joins a revolutionary group (the Red Girl's Regiment) and eventually kills her feudal lord. The ballet adopts a Western genre of dance but refashioned it to express class struggle and the triumph of women in the new society. During the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), under the influence of Mao's wife, Jiang Qing, a former actress, 'Red Girl's Regiment' was converted into a revolutionary model play. The Communist Revolution had the unintended effect of making ballet part of the revolutionary repertoire of the Party (Lin, 2003).

Dance, and particularly ballet, is organized in terms of a definite gender code. There is normally a marked gender difference between the physical presentation of the male body and the female body. In ballet, women dance on pointe, and men on high demi-pointe. Male dancers lift female dancers. Moreover, acquiring the bodily form and physical capacity for ballet requires extensive training and investment of time. Ballet and later modern dance have encapsulated elite visions of the national character of performance. In America, the strong body of modern dance was symbolic of American youthfulness. In China the adaptation of the Western body to Chinese revolutionary values symbolized the liberation of the revolutionary woman from her confinement in feudalism. The dancing body in short is a text that has a national script. Nevertheless, in this introduction, I have emphasized the idea that an adequate aesthetic theory of performance must look at movement and embodiment if we are to appreciate the lived body. More importantly, the aura of dance can never be fully subordinated to modern techniques of reproduction – film on the one hand and computerized choreography on the other. Walter Benjamin's concept of aesthetics therefore finds its most compelling evaluation in the presence of the aura of a moving body.

Modern dance in the United States most profoundly challenged European domination of performance art, reconstituting dance as a democratic project. Modern dance was explicitly seen as the product of a vibrant society, and by contrast Russian dancers were seen to be slow and lethargic. Choreographer and dancer Martha Graham (1894–1991) explored individualism, expressivity, feminism and the American frontier. Before the Second World War, Ted Shawn provided artistic opportunities for celebrating the male body, youthfulness and the vitality of American culture.

Modern dance has been a global site in which social conflicts over gender, race and class have been staged. Isadora Duncan (1877–1927) embraced Nietzsche's radical philosophy and promoted the idea of dance as a discipline of the mind. Her controversial views on women and dance were important in promoting and celebrating sexual experimentation (Daly, 1995). Nijinsky became a global icon of queer culture, as a dancer whose persona defied sexual classification (Kopelson, 1997). Nureyev, the greatest male dancer of the 1960s and 1970s, was the epitome of the global playboy. Ballet was also a venue for conflicts over racial bodies in high culture, where black

dancers were eroticized (Foulkes, 2002). Because the body is central to dance performance, the dancing body has been a political vehicle for wars of culture.

Dance in popular culture has been a medium for the transformation of public attitudes towards sexual expression. In the United States in the 1920s, the taxi dance hall and the public dance hall provided venues for strangers in large cities to meet and enjoy fleeting erotic relationships. These dance halls also promoted individualized solo dancing, and the Charleston, shimmy and black bottom enjoyed world-wide popularity (Thomas, 2003). Latin America styles have also been influential in the emergence of a global dance culture. The tango, samba and rumba were incorporated into global popular culture and imported into Europe and Japan as exotic and erotic dances. Their raw sexuality was eventually civilized in the West and then exported back into Argentina and Brazil as if they were still original, authentic performances.

Dance is closely associated with youth movements, the baby boomers and the expressive revolution of the post-war period that emphasized emotions, sexual fulfilment and experience over cognition and rational understanding (Parsons, 1999). The twist in the early 1960s brought about the final demise of the dance hall, and paved the way for club culture. Whereas older generations continued to jive and twist, younger generations embraced more individuated forms of dance, and independent young women no longer stood in circles waiting for an invitation to dance. The rave, which emerged out of the acid house events of the late 1980s, is a house party and can be regarded as an urban do-it-yourself disco event. Rave culture involved dressing down or anti-fashion, the use of drugs such as Ecstasy, and intensive dancing. There was an historical transformation from disco to house, from acid house to warehouse or field. 'House music' was a hybrid style of musical culture, combining African-American traditions of jazz and soul music with European styles such as electronic pop. There was a somewhat separate development of gay male circuits in the 1970s, which, with the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the 1980s, also became fund raising events. Gay dance has consequently been significant in the construction of global sex. Dance has therefore been an important vehicle of twentieth-century cultural globalization.

Conclusion: The Stuff of Dance

There is in modern sociology relatively little work of an empirical and ethnographic character on the human body. Too many publications on the sociology of the body are confined simply to theoretical speculation and elaboration in the absence of a strong research agenda (Turner, 1996: 32). In a similar vein Wacquant claims correctly that recent 'sociology of the body has paid surprisingly little focused attention to the diverse ways in which specific social worlds invest, shape, and deploy human bodies' (1995: 65).

Distinct social worlds, such as those of ballet and boxing, produce and reproduce distinctive corporeal cultures in which the performer becomes his or her body. Wacquant notes when you: 'Walk into a boxing gym and you cannot but be struck by the sight and sounds of bodies everywhere and enraptured by the strange, ballet-like spectacle they offer' (1995: 66). This resonance between the 'male world' of boxing and the 'female world' of ballet is captured in Taper's particularly evocative 'thick description' of his visit to watch George Balanchine rehearsing the New York City Ballet. Taper writes:

The rehearsal studio of a ballet company is something of a cross between a convent and a prize-fight gym. Before the dancers go into action, they paw a resin box in a corner, like fighters, and when they make their way about the room between classes or rehearsal sessions, they are apt – even the most petite of ballerinas – to walk with a pugilist's flat footed but springy gait, shoulders swaying with a bit of a swagger, arms hanging loosely. There is the acrid sweat smell of the gym, and the same formidable presence of lithe, steel-muscled, incredibly trim and capable bodies ruthlessly forcing themselves to become even trimmer and more capable – a spirituality achieved, paradoxically, by means of single-minded concentration on the body. (Taper, 1984: 3)

We see here how the physicality of both ballet and boxing require the unrelenting development and refinement of physical capital, because a ballet dancer or a boxer has to embody a certain type of corporeal excellence or virtue if they are to deliver an authentic performance.

Both boxing and ballet present specific examples of the more general point that: 'agents create and mould their bodies in accordance with the fields in which they are involved and the demands of those specific fields' (Crossley, 2001: 107). Our research programme investigates the reciprocal relationship between the field of professional ballet and the shaping of the dancer's body – the embodiment of dance. Wacquant himself spent four years conducting ethnographic fieldwork in a Chicago boxing gym. During this time he trained with, and as, a boxer, sparred, and worked as a corner man, and he interviewed 50 boxers. What is striking in Wacquant's study, however, is the way that the objective structures of the social world of boxing are embodied in the boxer's habitus. For example:

The boxer wilfully perseveres into this potentially self-destructive trade because, in a very real sense, he is inhabited by the game that he inhabits ... a veteran middleweight who has rumbled on three continents for over a decade ... [commented] 'you can't [give it up] it's in your blood so much ... you can't give it up'. (Wacquant, 1995: 88)

Boxers literally forge their bodies through intensive physical training and a rigorous diet. Goody Petronelli (the former trainer and manager of 'Marvellous' Marvin Hagler) states, rather more graphically: 'If you don't get that body into shape, you're going to get your head knocked off!' (Anderson, 1991: 39). In both ballet and boxing, acquiring the physical capital needed to be 'a contender' demands total commitment to a regime of hard work.

While Wacquant makes much of Bourdieu's notion of physical capital and field, he says virtually nothing about the boxer's habitus. This is somewhat surprising as Wacquant is widely seen as one of the leading collaborators in, and proselytisers of, Bourdieu's work (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Although Wacquant (1995: 69) notes how thin lanky boxers use reach, speed and technique to become 'boxers'; while shorter, stubby boxers use strength and toughness to become 'fighters' (or 'sluggers' or 'brawlers'); we would go further and argue that physical capital, in the form of body shape, tends to mould boxers into one of these styles or types of boxer. To adapt Bourdieu, we suggest that the boxer's *individual habitus* is moulded by the *institutional habitus* of the boxing gym, or in an alternative formulation, one might say that the boxer's body is both the *medium* and the *outcome* of their innate physical capital. Thus, the body is 'seen as an entity which is in the process of becoming; a project that should be worked at and accomplished as part of an individual's self-identity' (Shilling, 1993: 5). For the professional dancer, however, this is too moderate a stance. Becoming a classical ballet dancer requires the body to be the very essence of self-identity. Hence, Rudolf Nureyev boldly declared that: 'I am a dancer' (Solway, 1998). Deborah Bull, one of the leading dancers of the Royal Ballet in the last decade suggests that: 'If the body can talk, then the language of classical ballet should be the most articulate which exists' (1999: 275). Moreover, fluency in this particular language of the body is only gained through the adoption of a punishing body schedule. The irony of dance, in this case with special reference to classical ballet, is that its aura can only be preserved as an effect of routine effort and discipline in order that the effortless production of movement escapes the constraints of mechanical reproduction. To be a ballet dancer or a boxer requires one to become a particular type of person and a particular type of person involves a particular type of body. It is through this embodiment that the virtue or excellence of the dancer is manifest.

The Body and Boredom

The New Longevity

Introduction: The Body and Metaphysics

Twentieth-century interest in the body in philosophy, cultural studies and sociology cannot be addressed without recognition of the impact of Martin Heidegger's *Being and Time* of 1926. Heidegger (1962) insisted that we cannot understand human existence outside of its temporality. Heidegger's reflection on being as time was in part inspired by his reading of Aristotle for whom being – in fact all forms of existence in the natural world – was motion (Brogan, 2005). Aristotle was concerned to understand how all forms of life are produced or created, namely how life comes into being. This coming into being is shaped by *techne* and hence one cannot understand the form of life of a human community without understanding its particular form of technology. The meaning of technology here is not simply a matter of machinery and equipment, but the world-view that shapes our practical engagement with our environment or nature generally. This idea of the shaping of life by technology formed the basis of Heidegger's criticisms of modern society as a misappropriation of technical skills in his *The Question Concerning Technology* (Heidegger, 1977). This criticism of a technological civilization was not unlike Max Weber's criticism of the process of rationalization as a disenchantment of reality. Now one extremely important aspect of rationalization is in fact the rationalization of time, whereby time is divided into infinitely small segments that are understood within a linear framework. Life is seen as the steady progression of the individual through measured time in which time as a resource is a scarce commodity. In capitalism, as we all know, time is money. Against this world picture, Heidegger (2005), as a consequence of his visit to Greece in 1962, contemplated the idea of life as a sojourn in which we can fully enjoy the experience of personal unfolding outside the rational confines of measured time. This idea of life as a sojourn was further developed by his student Hans-Georg Gadamer in his discussion of tarrying (Ross, 2006).

For Heidegger the essential feature of our sojourn on earth is the fact of our ultimate death. We are in his words beings-unto-death and it is this aspect of existence that defines our true character. Although Heidegger pays little direct attention to the process of ageing, we might argue that it is ageing which defines the temporality or motion of being

as a continuous process through life and a process, of course, that is deeply shaped by technology. Given Heidegger's insistence on death as a defining feature of being, his philosophy has often been characterized as an 'existential phenomenology', but this existentialism also sought to reject subjectivism and humanism. When Heidegger talks about Being, he employs a variety of terms to suggest an objective existence rather than the subjective or existential being of individuals. His terms for Being include *seiend* (being), *Seiendes* (entity or that which is), *Sein* (Being) or *Dasein* (Being-there) and through these terms he sought to distance himself from the subjectivity of modern individualism. However, Heidegger also employs examples to discuss his philosophical ideas in which unreflective existence in everyday life appears to play an important role in attempting to explain the nature of being. For being is always being-in-the-world and this requires paying attention to the situation of being and entities in the everyday world (Mulhall, 1996). Furthermore, our being in this world always entails being with others in the everyday world and here again Heidegger's intention is to show how his conception of Being is not an individualistic notion.

Heidegger's approach to the question of Being remains ambiguously related to the question of the body. Heidegger wanted to reject any subjective treatment of existence and his philosophical treatment became associated with anti-humanism, at least in opposition to Sartre's existentialism. In criticizing metaphysics, Heidegger wanted to avoid any notion of essentialism in accounts of Being. Thus on the one hand he constantly appeals to notions of the handiness of things that are present-to-hand, and on the other appears to stress the fact that *Dasein* is not simply body-in-the-world. To some extent it appears that he regarded the topic of the body as a separate topic. In an aside Heidegger observed that "This "bodily nature" hides a whole problematic of its own, though we shall not treat it here" (1962: 143). Nevertheless, the whole notion of the temporality and spatiality of Being indicates that Heideggerian philosophy has to address the body. One solution is to examine authors who recognized the need for an understanding of Being from the perspective of phenomenology. It is difficult after all to imagine the temporality of being without the temporality of bodies. Is not this idea of embodiment the real basis of the idea of being as motion? Perhaps the philosophical understanding of the body in response to Heidegger has been most fully expressed by Jean-Luc Nancy. In his study of the body, Nancy is critical of the legacy of both Martin Heidegger's existential phenomenology and Edmund Husserl's transcendental phenomenology.

In various publications – *Corpus* (1992), *Noli me tangere* (2003) and *Le sens du monde* (1993) – Nancy criticized the failure of modern social philosophy to engage with the materiality or fleshly quality of our presence in the world. His philosophy as a whole can be said to question the boundary or limit between the world of signification and the material world of being (James, 2006). To some extent this involved a criticism of the legacy

of Heidegger in which the main focus was on the coming of Being into appearance rather than with the tangible quality of our being that is with the facts of 'worldhood'. Much of Nancy's early work was inspired by the very materiality of Catholic theology itself, namely with doctrines of incarnation and resurrection, and his writing focused on key notions of the Eucharist as expressed in, for example, the injunction – take, eat, this is my body. More specifically it can be said that Nancy was particularly concerned with the idea of touch, for example when the disciples to dispel their doubts want to touch the body of the Risen Christ. Both Nancy and Merleau-Ponty can be said to have explored the limitations of Heidegger in their work on the senses in the ways in which the body is an incarnation of the senses. For Nancy, Christianity is a religion that seeks to make the intangible (the divine presence) into tangible matter and hence the act of touching becomes a central pattern of the revelation of matter.

From the perspective of medical sociology, we might argue that this tangible quality of the world can be taken-for-granted because the functioning body is supremely at home in the world. However, the naturalness of embodiment quickly becomes a problem with illness and disability. When the body loses some of its mobility and dexterity, then the world presents itself as a problem. What is striking is that much of the philosophy and sociology of the body has been explored by people whose own bodies have become problematic through illness. One could mention Arthur Frank's *At the Will of the Body* (1991) or Irving Zola's *Missing Pieces* (1982). More precisely, Nancy's commentary on the materiality of the body is framed within his own experience of a heart transplant and subsequent cancer. These traumatic experiences typically bring social theorists to ponder the quiddity of the human body and its place in the world. When the machine breaks down, even the bravest Cartesian will show concern.

Despite the growth of the sociology of the body, sociologists have been reluctant to address what I want to call the stuffness of existence. The legacy of constructionist epistemology and postmodernism has been to convert the body into a facet of culture. The first problem is that most constructionist accounts of the body neglect or deny our experiences of embodiment. This absence becomes especially important when we want to engage as sociologists in the analysis of pain, suffering and impairment. It has the consequence of denying the very humanity of the agent. As the human body disappears behind the social and cultural constructions that produce it, the vulnerability of the human agent is obscured. The question of the stuffness of everyday life and the limitations on research in the signification of the body is nowhere better illustrated than through a study of ageing and death. In order to comprehend the vulnerability of the human body we must not allow social construction wholly to obscure the phenomenological body. This argument entails our recognition of the materiality of life. We must as sociologists who are concerned to capture the facticity of mundane existence attend to this 'stuffness' of life and the world into which the body is thrown. Clearly technological interventions

constantly change the relationship between the material body and the world of everyday life and these technological interventions can range from the invention of the walking stick to space ships, but many of these changes are also less obvious. Medical technologies are currently promising to transform the whole relationship between body and world, for example by offering us the promise of 'life extension'

Technology and Living Forever

The possibility of 'living forever' has recently received a lot of attention, partly as a consequence of a realization of the implications of stem-cell research and related advances in medical science. While the prospects of enhancing life has been a concern of ancient philosophy, both east and west (Appleyard, 2007), modern science has clearly brought about a whole new consciousness about age and ageing (Vincent, 2006). However, in order to discuss these issues, we need to clarify the terminology that surrounds the discussion of life expectancy and longevity. In his 'A history of ideas about the prolongation of life', Gerald Gruman (1966: 6) coined the term 'prolongevity' to mean 'the significant extension of life by human action'. In unpacking this definition, he argues that 'length of life' or 'longevity' has two meanings. The first is simply the number of years the average person may expect to live, and hence if the average age of death in the advanced countries is in the late 70s, we can refer to this as 'life expectancy'. The second meaning is 'life span' which refers to the longevity of the most long-lived human being. In modern times, the life span can reach over a hundred years, but life span has not in fact changed significantly. By contrast, life expectancy has risen dramatically with improvements in health care, diet and standards of living.

What then constitutes a 'significant' extension of life? Gruman divides scientific and philosophical opinion into two schools, namely those who believe that a major increase in life span is simply not possible, and those who believe it could be extended either greatly or indefinitely. The list of optimists includes the Marquis de Condorcet (1743–1794) who wrote his famous *Sketch for a Historical Picture of the Progress of the Human Mind* which was published posthumously in 1795, William Godwin in 1793 in his *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* (1946) and C.A. Stephens in *Natural Salvation* (1903). These were early optimistic proponents of prolongevity. Gruman usefully points out that these radical advocates of prolongevity were fundamentally influenced by a more general belief in (scientific) progress, and as a result they were more likely to perceive the shortness of the human life span as socially determined. They were committed to secular progress and were consequently hostile to traditional or religious views of the inherent and unalterable limitations on life. The moderate supporters of 'prolongevity' were typically hygienists such as Luigi Cornaro (1475–1566), whose 'common-sense' dietetics in his treatise

on sobriety recommended life-style changes as the basis of an enhanced life span.

The moderate debate is therefore essentially around the idea of prolonging the life span by medical intervention to bring about dramatic and significant increases. Furthermore, the medical goal of prolongevity must be also to reduce the disabilities, suffering and mental disorder that so often accompanies ageing. Modern prolongevity is quite definitely secular; the means to achieve prolongevity will come from secular bio-medical sciences rather than supernatural means. The discourse of prolongevity is necessarily secular, according to Gruman, because Christian confidence in an after-life has been shaken by the decline of religion as a general framework of belief and practice. Thus 'the modern era has been characterized by a marked decline of faith in supernatural salvation from death, i.e. immortality and resurrection by divine fiat' (Gruman, 1966: 5). This interpretation of the dilemma of modern theology is essentially correct but in my view the theology of prolongevity will not go away so easily, because the promise of everlasting life in this world raises huge questions about the nature of humanity – questions that in many respects demand a theological answer.

The more utopian aspects of the life-extension project have been advanced by Aubrey de Grey at Cambridge University who has treated the problem of ageing as an 'engineering' problem, that is, a problem with the functioning of the body that can be fixed. In short, there is nothing inevitable about the ageing process, and those who oppose the idea of longevity are pessimistic 'deathists'. For example, if ageing and eventual death are merely the effects of the accumulating of debris in human cells, this deposit could be treated as simply a problem of human engineering. De Grey argues specifically that if and when we can engineer the longevity of a mouse, then the step towards human immortality will be very rapid. He argues that there are essentially seven causes of ageing: cell depletion; cell excess; mutations in the chromosomes; mitochondrial mutations; accumulation of non-dividing cells or junk; debris outside cells; and cross-linkage producing stiffening of the tissues. De Grey argues that these causes can be treated without too much technical difficulty by breaking down junk and stimulating the immune system. De Grey's strategy is not simply to keep people alive but to rejuvenate them. Their longevity will not be dogged by disability, immobility or memory loss, and therefore his position is probably best described as 'immortalism'.

In summary, the critics arguing against De Grey claim that ageing and death are not only inevitable but necessary if we are to avoid overcrowding and pollution. These are deathists. Those medical practitioners and philosophers who argue that the application of current medical knowledge and techniques will produce a slow but steady increase in life expectancy in the near future are proponents of longevity. However, they also argue that it is unlikely that human life can be extended much beyond 125 years. The distinctiveness of De Grey's ideas of rejuvenation is that we can have

longevity and eternal youth. De Grey, while heavily criticized by many medical scientists, is aware, for example, of the psychological problems that will attend immortality, namely the problem of boredom. His solution again has an engineering flavour to it. It will be necessary to enlarge the human brain for us to find creative solutions to living forever.

Body and Soul

In traditional societies, death, especially the ubiquitous but unpredictable presence of death in everyday life, was an essential feature of mundane expectations and religious practice. With rampant infectious disease, infantile mortality rates were high and life expectancy at birth was low. In much of northern Europe, the completed fertility of women born at the start of the nineteenth century was five children. The consequence was that women spent most of their lives coping with pregnancy, lactation and rearing their children. In Spain, for example, around one-fifth of children born in 1900 died in their first year. With relatively short life expectancy, few children would have grown up to see their grandparents. In demographic terms, the efficiency of reproduction was very low. In the context of high infant mortality rates there is an anthropological argument that emotional attachment to children was not highly developed, because parents had to learn the art of 'death without weeping' (Scheper-Hughes, 1992). Death, especially rampant and malevolent death, was an inescapable feature of the public domain and this traditional world of dying is often contrasted with the more private, predictable and individualized form of death in modern society (Ariès, 1974).

In such traditional societies, the presence of death was a routine feature of everyday life and the promise of an after-life had greater salience and immediacy. Death as an escape from the turbulence of this world was a significant feature of the mediaeval imaginary. This ever-present threat of death and the promise of life eternal were periodically underscored by plagues, famine and warfare; these were more or less constant features of mediaeval society. The Black Death created a new type of consciousness of death as an active agent, malevolently destroying human society. The centrality of tragic death to art and theology remained important ingredients of human culture. Reactions to the Plague were obviously mixed, but they included a smouldering resentment from the peasantry which may have contributed to political unrest and anti-clericalism in Europe in the late fourteenth century. Aware of the danger that society might collapse, the elite poured money into the Church as a key institution in the maintenance of mediaeval society (Ziegler, 1969). In more recent times, the prevalence of tuberculosis and the theme of early, tragic death sustained a consciousness of death in the literary imagination of the elite. Throughout the nineteenth century, the scourge of 'the white death' (tuberculosis) focused the minds of the cultural elite in Europe and beyond (Dormandy, 1999).

Given these difficult demographic and social conditions, millenarian and messianic movements were a common feature of traditional societies, promising a new kingdom to compensate for the suffering of this world. In less dramatic terms, the Christian Church offered the promise of salvation and eternal life – under a range of soteriological doctrines and conditions. We know from the history of Western theology that justification can be narrow – the Calvinistic doctrine of a small company of the saved – or broad in the Armenian doctrine of the salvation of all believers. However, the Christian doctrine of heaven and hell recognized a strong connection between moral behaviour in this life and the promise of salvation. The Ten Commandments were an essential feature of Christian ethical teaching in preparing men and women for death and their eventual resurrection. In this discussion, I am, out of convenience, referring primarily to Christianity, but a similar theology of death and justification is shared more or less by Islam and Judaism. By contrast the ancestor worship of many ‘Eastern Religions’, such as Shinto, did not assume a corporeal resurrection on the Day of Judgement and was more concerned to promote filial piety towards ghostly forebears. The concern of the living was to avoid ‘hungry ghosts’ and haunted households. The need to placate ‘hungry ghosts’ continues to be an integral part of popular Chinese religion, but it is not compatible with Christian notions of ‘the life of the world to come’ (DeBernardi, 2006). However, the ‘world religions’ in general developed an ethical discipline for mankind based on personal piety, the reward for which was the promise of some form of salvation and freedom from suffering. The Nicene Creed of the First Council of Nicaea in 325 and the First Council of Constantinople in 381 affirmed belief in ‘the life of the world to come’ which was regarded as a central article of faith. Although the Nicene Creed has been rejected by many fundamentalist Protestant groups because it is not to be found in the Bible, it is evident that the doctrine of the Resurrection and the promise of eternal life are building blocks of orthodox Christian belief.

The doctrine of heaven served therefore as an official part of the Church’s teaching on salvation, but it also played an important role in underpinning the Christian view of a moral life. Life in this world was primarily a preparation for the next; it was assumed that this mortal life was typically short and unhappy. Heaven was a reward for this-worldly asceticism and piety, but hell was also a punishment for the worldly and the wealthy. The Sermon on the Mount promised rewards for the lowly and down-trodden of this world and the New Testament criticism of the arrogance of riches was summarized in the graphic image of the camel that cannot pass through the eye of a needle. There is therefore another way in which one can read the promise of heaven which was brought out in Friedrich Nietzsche’s theory of resentment in *On the Genealogy of Morals* (Nietzsche, 1967; Schacht, 1983). Because the sermons of Jesus declared that the poor are blessed, heaven can function as an aspect of psychological resentment. In a society characterized by grinding poverty and injustice, the resentment of the lowly was expressed through a millenarian doctrine in which the rich

will be confined to everlasting punishment. It is the rich who have exploited the poor who will suffer, while the poor but righteous person will enter into heaven. Hell functions not only to reward bad behaviour, but as part of a psychologically satisfying resentment of the dominant classes. A modern version of this argument might be detected in the robust pragmatism of William James in *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1922: 162–3) where he condemns the ‘sick soul’ for its ‘manufacture of fears and preoccupation with every unwholesome kind of misery’. There is, he declared, ‘something almost obscene about these children of wrath and cravers of a second birth’.

The Elixir of Life

The promise of eternal life was a central feature of the Nicene Creed and in societies with high mortality rates and short life expectancy belief in an after-world played a significant role in religious belief and practice. Christianity was itself originally a millenarian religious movement in which the expectation of a Second Coming and resurrection was a dominant religious theme of the early Church. The human body was a recurrent issue in mediaeval theological works including speculations about the physical survival of the Virgin Mary after death and about how devils possessed the human body. In Christian eschatology, there was a consensus that body and soul could not be separated without damage to human happiness and survival beyond life. Caroline Bynum in *Fragmentation and Redemption* notes that Aquinas for example argued that a ‘full person does not exist until body (matter) is restored to its form at the end of time’ (1991: 228). Of course the doctrine of physical resurrection raised acute conceptual difficulties for Christian theologians. Would, for example, the finger nails of an individual all be restored with resurrection? Could a person eaten by a dragon enjoy resurrection? The issue of the resurrected body was not of course merely an issue for theologians. It formed the basis of popular religious belief and practice with respect to the relics of saints and their miraculous healing of the laity. In all of these respects, Christianity has a decisively corporeal cosmology of the world.

There is an alternative, of course, to life after death, namely the secular quest for longevity in this world. The fascination with an elixir of life motivated much of pre-modern science. Belief in the existence of natural substances or elixirs produced from them that could prolong life was a significant aspect of Chinese medicine at least from the time of the Warring States. Because these substances included mercury, lead and arsenic, many alchemists suffered from early deaths rather than enjoying prolongevity (Needham, 1970). The preparation of these substances was costly, and therefore the alchemists were typically members of the imperial court, providing services to the elite. The occupation of alchemist was thus precarious since they were often accused of poisoning the emperor and

hence were executed by the new incumbent. Needham raises the issue of where longevity could be enjoyed. Confucianism did not have a clear idea of an individual soul and was in any case more interested in promoting social success and mobility in this world. It was reluctant to engage in any debate about personal survival. In orthodox, atheistic Buddhism, the notion of the persistence of the soul in an after-world was wholly contrary to its teaching. Taoism recognized a range of forms of existence, but after death they simply dispersed. The aim, therefore, of the medical elixir was to sustain existing life on this earth and to make it more enjoyable. The quest for an elixir involved a distinctively secular agenda to promote this-worldly prolongevity.

In the Christian West, the search for an elixir of life was equally prevalent, at least among the elite. My account here depends heavily on the brilliant analysis of *The Pope's Body* by Agostino Paravicini-Bagliani (2000) – originally published in 1994 as *Il corpo del Papa*. He shows how speculation about longevity was an important dimension of mediaeval theology, especially in so far as the spirituality of the Pope was related to questions about the nature of longevity. These questions arose because mediaeval Popes had remarkably short lives and this fact was often taken as an indication of their profound spirituality. Nevertheless Popes were apparently as keen as the next man to extend life.

The vision of paradise in which the incorruptible body was everlasting was an important dimension of utopian thought. The imaginary world of Prester John – a world filled with abundance and wealth – was an object of considerable fascination in the time of the rise of papal power, that is between the Concordat of Worms in 1122 and the Peace of Venice in 1177. For example, Lothar of Segni (later Innocent III) wrote a commentary on old age in his *De miseria conditionis humanae* in which he developed a mythical history in which at the beginning of time men lived for over 900 years, but with the Fall from Paradise and the onset of human decline God, addressing Noah, created a new limit for men of 120 years (Gen. 6: 3). After which time human life became shorter until the Psalms declared that the years of our life are merely threescore and ten. Human life was now characterized by its 'toil and trouble'. The Flood was a dividing point in human existence in which human decline is measured by the brevity of life. Lothar argued, however, that this brevity was important in squashing human delusions of the *prolongatio vitae* and on this point he agreed fully with the Salerno medical school that the prolongation of life was not possible.

Thinking about age and ageing in this period was associated with the *De retardatione accidentum senectutis* – on delaying the misfortunes of old age – a work that was addressed either to the Pope or the Emperor. This work has occasionally, but mistakenly, been attributed to Roger Bacon (1214–1294), a Franciscan and leading Aristotelian. The attribution is related to the fact that Aristotle's *On Generation and Decay* itself played an important role in Western medical doctrines about ageing, including the Salerno school, an important centre for translating Greek and Arabic texts. Salerno thus contributed to the domination of Western medicine by

Latin philosophy. The result was the production of such texts as the *Regimen sanitatis salernitanum* which in verse form offered useful tips for healthy living, such as diet, exercise and temperance (Porter, 1997). While the Salerno school had rejected the idea of prolonging life, the *De retardatione* kept alive in mediaeval society the possibility of extending life through the discovery of appropriate ingredients.

Ageing was seen to be an effect of the decline of two of the humours that make up the human body (heat and moisture) in relation to two other humours (coldness and dryness). The secret of longevity was to discover those ingredients that could retain heat and moisture in the body while delaying the negative impact of cold and dry elements. The knowledge required to delay such developments was occult,

because he who possesses the secret of all their properties sooner or later transgresses the divined law; it follows that only the 'wise in speculation' (*sapiens in speculatione*) and the 'expert in the ways of things' (*expertus in operatione*) can derive 'noble and sublime' profit from such substances. (Paravicini-Bagliani, 2000: 203)

The treatise was largely concerned with providing a list of such substances, of which the principal elements were gold and amber.

Paravicini-Bagliani (2000: 205) points out some important differences between Roger Bacon's writings on the *prolongatio vitae* and the *De retardatione*, resulting in what he calls his 'extraordinarily audacious and coherent "theology of the body"'. For Bacon, humans can extend their span of life by drawing upon the empirical knowledge made possible by astronomy, alchemy and optics. In short, longevity does not have to depend on a supernatural resurrection, but can take place naturally in the here and now. The promise of prolongevity was seen to be secular and natural, not supernatural. The experimental sciences which Bacon defended and promoted can repair the defects of human nature that resulted from mankind's expulsion from Paradise with the Fall. Empirical knowledge would assist humans to manage their humoural decay, thereby arresting the apparently inexorable decay and corruption of the mortal body. In this respect Bacon's thought was revolutionary. It proposed that through science – in this case alchemy – men could gain control over their own natures and did not need to succumb to mortality, but these thoughts were indeed so radical that the proper understanding of the secrets of life should be reserved to those who have a duty 'to rule themselves and others'. These secrets should be entrusted to the few to rule over the many, and in particular these secrets should be at the service of the body of the sovereign and the Pope.

This prolongevist alchemy therefore played an important role in the evolution of Western attitudes. It involved a radical view because it assumed that man could achieve power over nature and Bacon's defence of experimental and empirical science against scholarly speculation was seen by his contemporaries as a revolutionary doctrine. In his *Opus majus*

Bacon asserted that an 'extension of life' was possible with the aid of an 'experimental art' that could overcome the defects of existing medical knowledge.

Bacon's precocious empiricism and commitment to science against the fruitless speculation of idle clerics provoked great controversy, and Bacon was imprisoned in 1278 in Ancona partly for his dissemination of Arabic alchemy. His work raised in an acute form the conflict between religious and secular views of the body. There is an important, albeit complex, relationship between the healthy body and the immortal soul. There is, apart from any thing else, an etymological connection between the idea of saving the soul and the health or *salus* of the body. The verb to salve means to heal a wound by an unguent or in a more extended sense to heal a person of either disease or sin. The theological notion of the verb to save has a similar meaning – to deliver a soul from sin. The verb is related the idea of making something safe and we might be permitted therefore to draw a connection between 'to comfort' (that is to fortify), to make safe, and to salve. These interrelated notions therefore usefully bring out the connections between healing the body and healing the soul.

There is also a connection in Christology in the sense that Jesus is a prophet who exorcises devils, heals the sick and saves their souls. The idea of Jesus as a healer plays an important part in affirming the authenticity of the message of Jesus and hence the New Testament account of his ministry is attentive to his healing powers (Davies, 1995). It is perhaps unsurprising that Christians drew the conclusion that the healthy body was a sign of the healthy soul and that deformity and disability were signs of human sinfulness. The etymology of the idea of malady is useful in pointing to both the presence of disease and the possibility of evil. Christ came to heal sinners and somewhat ironically there is in the New Testament the suggestion that Jesus may also have suffered from some debilitating condition when he is admonished – 'heal thyself!' From these basic assumptions, the view developed of a basic connection between the moral life and the healthy life, and in turn that people who conduct themselves properly (in terms of living a 'clean life') may expect both to live longer and to enter into heaven having avoided such obvious sins as gluttony and lust.

There is however a basic theological problem here. If heaven is the desired goal of the Christian soul, why not commit suicide in the anticipation of accelerating entry into paradise? This was in fact an option for Christians in the early Roman Church until it was declared to be a heresy. There is however a second version of this problem. It was notoriously the case that popes had very short lives and there was a recognized tradition that Popes were only in office for relatively short periods. The solution to this puzzle was to claim that the spirituality of the Pope was so intense that his body could not house such charismatic power and that the spiritual inclination of the papal soul was to flee to its maker.

Sociology of Ageing

What is the implication of this philosophical and historical discussion? There is in traditional religious systems an important connection between health, longevity, morality and sanctity. In the Christian doctrine of justification, the saints have mastered their bodies and their souls. Christian theology does not in fact create a gulf between moral behaviour, healthy living and life after death. In this respect, it did not recognize any hiatus between 'the good life' of the body in this world and resurrection in the next. There was with respect to justification a clear relationship between how we behave towards our bodies in this life and the expectation of life everlasting. This connection could be either based on moral self reflection – I shall get my just rewards for my conduct in this mortal life – or on resentment – the rich and powerful will be punished hereafter.

We can express this somewhat complex picture in terms of a simple demography. In the majority of traditional societies, a long life was the exception. There was, therefore, a dramatic relationship between a short life in the secular here and now and its being surrounded by either oblivion or eternity. Of course strict Calvinism said nobody can know whether they are a member of the Elect, and no 'good works' can guarantee immortal bliss. According to Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, this bleak and brutal picture of Calvinism was modified to suggest that riches were indeed a sign of election. We could re-read the Weberian narrative to suggest that a healthy life (based on asceticism and restraint) resulted in secular longevity and the hope of paradise. It is within this framework that I want to consider the implications of ageing and the possible arrest of ageing by campaigns for prolongevity.

Medical interest in ageing goes back at least to writers such as Luigi Cornaro (1464–1566) who, in his *Discourses on the Temperate Life* of 1558, argued that his own longevity was a consequence of temperance, exercise and a good diet. The body's finite supply of vital spirits could be husbanded by temperate practices of diet and exercise. It is unclear what causes ageing, but the idea that ageing is inevitable has been the basic presupposition of gerontology. If ageing is an inevitable process of cellular degeneration, then the question 'do we have a right to live forever?' does not arise, apart from as fanciful philosophical speculation. It is obviously the case that life expectancy increased dramatically in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but in the second half of the twentieth century it had reached a plateau. If we take men in the United Kingdom, the expectation of life at birth in 1901 was only 45.5 years, but by 1991 this was 73.2 years. However, subsequent demographic data indicate only a modest increase from 75.4 in 2001 to a projected 77.6 by 2020.

In conventional gerontology, living forever might, in practical terms, mean living a full life and achieving the average expectation of longevity. More recently, however, there has been considerable speculation as to whether medical science could reverse this natural ageing process. Between the 1960s

and 1980s the view put forward by biologists was that normal cells had what was known as 'replicative senescence', that is, normal tissues can only divide a finite number of times before entering a stage of quiescence. Cells were observed *in vitro* in a process of natural senescence, but eventually experiments *in vivo* established a distinction between normal and pathological cells in terms of cellular division. Paradoxically, pathological cells appeared to have no such necessary limitation on replication, and therefore a process of 'immortalization' was the distinctive feature of a pathological cell line. By extrapolation biologists concluded that finite cell division meant that the ageing of whole organisms was inevitable. These laboratory findings were consistent with the view that human life had an intrinsic and predetermined limit, and that it was only through pathological developments that some cells might out-survive the otherwise inescapable senescence of cellular life. Human ageing was both normal and necessary.

This conventional framework of ageing was eventually overturned by the discovery that human embryonic cells were capable of continuous division in culture, thereby showing no sign of any inevitable replicative crisis or limitation. Certain non-pathological cells (or stem cells) were capable of indefinite division, and hence were 'immortalized'. The cultivation of these cells as an experimental form of life has challenged existing assumptions about the distinctions between the normal and the pathological, and between life and death. Stem cell research begins to redefine the arena within which the body has reserves of renewable tissue, suggesting that the limits of biological growth are not immutable or inflexible. The body has a surplus of stem cells capable of survival beyond the death of the organism. With these developments in micro-bio-gerontology, the capacity of regenerative medicine to expand the limits of life becomes a plausible prospect of modern medicine, creating new economic opportunities in the application of life sciences. In these circumstances, the theological notion of an after-life would probably disappear, since most survivors would literally experience eternal life or at least indefinite life on earth. However, if we assume that, while genomic sciences could reduce mortality, it would, at least in the short term, increase morbidity, as chronic illness and geriatric diseases increased. Living forever would mean in practice living forever in discomfort, that is, in a morbid condition. There would therefore be increasing psychological problems including depression, ennui and despair as surviving populations discovered new levels of boredom through the endless repetition of the same, resulting periodically in bouts of collective boredom, hysteria, ennui and suicide. However, the followers of de Grey argue that this pattern of decay is not inevitable and that longevity could also be combined with rejuvenation. Long life would not condemn us to a cabbage-like existence.

The prospect of indefinite life would thus raise an acute Malthusian crisis of resources and make Cornaro's optimistic vision of a healthful long life, a living nightmare. These transformations in fact imply an interesting

change from early to late modernity. In the early stages of capitalism, the social role of medical science was to improve health care thereby making the working class healthy and more efficient. The application of medical science was to produce an efficient, robust and reliable labour force, but late capitalism does not necessarily need a large unskilled labour force at full employment, because technology has made labour more efficient. In the new biotechnological environment, disease is no longer a negative force in the economy, but, on the contrary, an aspect of the factors of production.

The new medical technologies imply that human beings could in principle live forever and thus the new biological revolution goes to the core of Nietzsche's views on morality and the arrival of the 'overman'. Can modern biology replace traditional morality by allowing us to live forever, regardless of our behaviour in this world? If medicine can offer a certain cure for such conditions as venereal disease, lung cancer and obesity, would I change my behaviour towards my sexual partners, and would I abandon my preference for cigars and chocolate cakes in favour of asceticism? If the new biological sciences make possible the idea of living forever, then we can have a life beyond ethics. The Christian idea of an after-life and the Buddhist quest for release from the 'states of woe' in the cycle of rebirth would become problematic obscure beliefs. It is difficult to see how the ethical determinism of Buddhist doctrine, for example, could survive the genetic determinism of modern medical sciences. Could medical science in Buddhist terms release human beings from endless suffering? Technology thereby offers to cut the relationship between ethics and the bodily regulation of life. If we can live forever through medical technologies, do we need ethics?

Conclusion: Boredom and the Theology of Prolongevity

The utopian aspect of scientific technology of the Victorian period declined in the twentieth century as the prospects of nuclear disaster and environmental pollution became dominant aspects of public awareness and debate. René Dubos who coined the expression the 'mirage of health' has argued that 'technological innovations commonly have disastrous secondary effects, many of which are probably unpredictable' (1974: 147). This public unease with scientific advance has been reflected in opposition to genetically modified food and in growing awareness of the hitherto unforeseen consequences of global warming. This lack of confidence and trust in science possibly explains the academic success of the concept of risk society as a general explanation of our current dilemmas (Beck, 1992). In this discussion of medicine, longevity and the body, I have tried to suggest that current stem cell research has potentially far reaching consequences for society and the status of the human.

However, one pessimistic conclusion would be that, while the life span could be extended indefinitely, it would expose human beings to significant

mental instability and infirmity. The boredom that would be associated with the endless repetition of life might be intolerable and, as people become bored with life as well as bored by life, it is unlikely that psychiatric medicine could discover anti-depressive drugs that could inoculate us against perpetual ennui. The other issues are moral, namely the sheer injustice of the current prospects of prolongevity where both the average African life span and life expectancy have declined significantly by comparison with northern hemisphere standards. The prospect of an indefinite extension of life fundamentally disrupts the basic idea that life is a gift over which we must exercise some stewardship and hence life involves a series of generational contracts. Because I have inherited a set of resources from my ancestors – including life itself – after a period of time in this world I should hand on these gifts to my own offspring. Such a notion of life and generational exchange is a basic element of the idea of justice.

The prospects of living forever are at present remote, and the moral arguments against such a goal are considerable. However, in anticipation of a society in which prolongevity has become a reality, it is here that Heidegger's analysis of boredom in his *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* (1995) might prove to be relevant. Prolonged life with no purpose will result in a profound boredom when we are trying to kill time, or passing the time by trivial diversions. Heidegger believed, however, that at the end of this process there was the possibility that one could find an emptiness that would release one from the immediate pressure of boredom. Can we assume that a new senescent ethics would be developed in response to these dystopian changes? Let us turn to Michael Raposa's *Boredom and the Religious Imagination* (1999) to consider different levels of boredom: being bored by something, or being bored by ourselves. In these circumstances, we are forced to 'spend time' or 'kill time'. It is here that one can see the overwhelming threat of prolongation – how much time can one kill? Following Heidegger's treatment of metaphysics, Raposa identifies a deeper level of boredom where the world becomes boring as one in which 'nothing matters'. In this deep boredom of the world, one can enter a spiritual state of indifference. This spiritual boredom can lead to a transcendence and overcoming, when we are liberated from the particular character of the here and now. We are no longer caught up in trivial tedium, but in a more profound boredom that exposes the real nature of existence. Heidegger's notion of a revelatory boredom means that we can recognize ourselves as beings-towards-death. This notion of a spiritual boredom still requires therefore an end to life which prolongevity seeks to deny. Therefore the problem of finding a meaningful death remains an issue for human beings.

Epilogue

Vulnerability and Values

This intellectual quest to renew sociological theory around the topic of the human body has involved three broad assumptions: the vulnerability of embodiment, the precariousness of institutions, and the interconnectedness of social life. This renewal of sociology requires us to grasp the political significance of embodiment in order to understand the transformations of modern society. The sociology of the body has to be more than simply a study of the body in its interactional context. There is a dialectical relationship between these three components of embodiment, vulnerability, precariousness and reciprocity, that becomes obvious as soon as one thinks about the processes of modernization. It is within this dialectical balance between vulnerability, precariousness and interconnectedness that modern medical technologies are, for example, powerful and far-reaching. If our embodiment is the ultimate source of our common sociability, then changes to our embodiment must have implications for both vulnerability and interconnectedness. Society is being profoundly influenced by the recent micro-biological revolution. In some respects this is merely an intensification of the application of Mendelian laws to human reproduction and health. Medical scientists realized that the reproductive advantages of Mendelian type heredity are that it creates greater evolutionary opportunities that are beneficial. For example, cell mutations can give positive side effects such as disease resistance. Mendelian theories of heredity have proved to be hugely controversial in modern society because they underpin the pressure from parents in affluent societies for so-called 'designer babies' leading its critics to fear the creation of a Master Race. Application of the findings of the Human Genome Project will give scientists increasing control over reproductive outcomes. In the popular press the new eugenics is deployed to explain social circumstances such as crime, divorce and homosexuality in terms of genetic legacies. These developments are a serious challenge to the notion of 'the social' that is ultimately the foundation and justification for sociology as such.

The new micro-biology is also driven by a powerful commercial logic, and has largely unrecognized, or indeed hidden, military and policing uses and has implications that are problematic for human rights and political democracy. Contemporary medicine has promoted a new 'mirage of health' (Dubos, 1960), but cloning, reproductive technology, and organ transplants

both express and enhance social inequalities, especially between societies, and they have the potential to transform our human identity in ways that are negative and destructive. The point of this chapter is to offer a further reflection on the erasure of 'man' at 'the edge of the sea' in Michel Foucault's *The Order of Things* (Foucault, 1970: 387), and to raise once more the ambiguity of the questions: what are the proper goals (ends) of a political community, and do our current problems anticipate the termination (end) of humanity?

Let us reconsider religious mythology. *Religio* is that which binds and disciplines a community whose humanity is historically a function of a shared set of experiences of birth, maturation and death. It is difficult to see how this *communitas* could survive the medical rationalization of our world or how anything could replace, or stand in for, this social binding by *religio*. This loss is one sense in which we can speak with Foucault of 'the end of man'. The twentieth-century philosopher who perhaps saw this crisis of being most clearly was Martin Heidegger (1977) who believed that modern technology, as an exploitative framework of natural resources, would interpose itself between being and the world.

Embodiment, Vulnerability and Frailty

Human beings are ontologically frail and their natural environment, uncertain. In order to protect themselves from the vagaries and afflictions of mere life, they must build social institutions (especially political, familial and religious institutions) that come to constitute the arrangements that we call 'society'. This argument clearly has some connections with Alasdair MacIntyre's *Dependent Rational Animals* (1999), in which he criticizes Western philosophy for its neglect of two central facts about human beings – their vulnerability and their afflictions. He goes on to argue that vulnerability explains our dependence on others for protection and sustenance.

Vulnerability is derived intellectually from the legacy of Aristotle's view of biology and the forms of life that is our animality. We need the companionship of society, which in the sharing of bread, provides us with trust and the means of mutual support. We need the creative force of ritual and the emotional effervescence of common festivals to renew social life and to build effective institutions, and we crave the comforts of social institutions as a means of fortifying our existence. These words – companion, fortify, comfort, trust – are metaphorical reflections on the idea of building up a community by mutual actions. Sociology is the study of such conditions of solidarity and of the processes that break them down; in short it is the study of the dialectic of solidarity and scarcity (Turner and Rojek, 2001).

These institutions are, however, themselves precarious and cannot guarantee the provision of an adequate and reliable social environment. Rituals typically go wrong; it is difficult to build institutions that can both sustain

existing traditions and adapt to changing circumstances. There is an ongoing process, obviously, in which traditional institutions are challenged and repaired. The afflictions and uncertainties of our social being generate inter-societal patterns of dependency and connectedness that in their more psychological manifestations result in sympathy and empathy, without which society would not be possible. This picture of society is neo-Hobbesian in that its premise is that life is nasty, brutish and short, but, instead of the individualistic notion of a social contract and property rights, human rights are juridical expressions of basic patterns of solidarity whose foundations are in the common experience of frailty and precariousness, on the one hand, and social interconnectedness, on the other.

The concept of vulnerability is derived from the Latin for 'wound'. Although *vulnus* refers to real wounds in the human body, it is in many respects itself a metaphor for frailty. Wounds are open and they open us to life; the wound is a metaphor of the human condition. It is instructive that 'vulnerability' should have such an obviously corporeal origin. In the seventeenth century, vulnerability had both a passive and an active significance, namely to be wounded and to wound. In mediaeval religious practice, veneration of the Passion was associated with meditation on the Seven Wounds of Christ. These wounds were evidence of the humanity and suffering of Christ and these human attributes came to emphasize his sharing of human attributes through a common vulnerability (Woolf, 1968: 221). These themes of Christ's suffering evolved eventually into the cult of the Sacred Heart. To vulnerate is thus to wound, but in its modern usage it has come to signify the human capacity to be open to wounds. Vulnerability has become, in one sense, more abstract: it refers to the human capacity to be exposed to psychological or moral damage. It refers increasingly to our ability to suffer (morally and spiritually) rather than to a physical capacity for pain from our exposure or openness to the world. This openness to wounding is part of what Peter Berger (1980) has called our 'world openness', namely that we do not live in a biologically determined or species-specific environment. To be vulnerable as a human being is to possess a structure of sentiments, feelings and emotions by which we can steer a passage through the social world.

Our vulnerability is also part of our capacity to draw sensual pleasures from our openness to experiences. Therefore, Karl Marx, along with Aristotle, offers a promising starting point for a study of our wounding, in that it points to the sensual, practical and active components of the structure of social action. In one sense we need to be vulnerable in order to be open to threats and dangers so that we may take evasive action. MacIntyre's position, which has a one-dimensional emphasis on disability and affliction, is ultimately limited because it presents a somewhat passive view of vulnerability. It is important to avoid a melancholic social science (Lepenies, 1992), but it is equally important to recognize that the world that human beings fashion collectively to form social worlds is inherently and alarmingly precarious.

In order to provide some conceptual depth to this model of frailty and precariousness, it is necessary to develop the sociology of the body, and in particular a notion of embodiment as a framework for a theory of social action. Adopting the notion of the social as process, it is important not to reify 'the body', but to treat embodiment as a process, namely the social processes of embodying. First, embodiment is the effect or consequence of ongoing practices of 'corporalization'. In this respect, embodiment is a life process that requires the learning of body techniques – walking, sitting, dancing, eating, and so forth. Embodiment is the ensemble of these corporal practices that produces and gives 'a body' its place in everyday life. Embodiment places particular bodies within a social habitus. Secondly, embodiment requires the production of a sensuous and practical presence in the life-world. Embodiment is the lived experience of the sensual or subjective body and in Marx's discussion of practice in the Paris Manuscripts practice involves the sensual, live body and its effects on social relations. It is the active shaping of the lived world by embodied practices. Thirdly, embodiment is a collective project because it takes place in a life-world that is already social. Embodiment is not an isolated project of the individual; it is located within a social world of interconnected social actors. Finally, while it is the process of making and becoming a body, it is also the project of making a self. Embodiment and enselfment are mutually dependent and reinforcing processes. The self involves a corporal project within a specific social nexus where the continuous self depends on successful embodiment, a social habitus and memory. Following both Marx and Bourdieu, embodiment and enselfment always take place in specific spatial contexts, and habitus must be a set of practices in a particular location; it must, we might say, secure emplacement. Thus, the sociological notion of a 'body' involves three related processes: embodiment, enselfment and emplacement.

Because embodiment has in fact many dimensions, one can talk about three aspects: having a body in which the body has the characteristics of a thing, being a body in which we are subjectively engaged with our body as a project, and doing a body in the sense of producing a body through time (Turner, 1996). These distinctions are more felicitously expressed in German where there is a ready-made distinction between the body as an object (*Koerper*) and the body as lived experience (*Leib*). The body is simultaneously an object that I can observe and a mode of being that makes that observation possible. The relationship of an individual to their own body is never an external, objective or neutral relationship, because identity is inextricably bound up with subjective being in the material world. This intimacy between our bodies, our everyday experiences and our psychology was clearly expressed in Maurice Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* (1962). His basic question was about how we experience reality; to experience the world, we have to perceive it and to perceive it we have to possess language. The embodiment of the human being is fundamental to these processes of the apprehension and perception of immediate reality. The psychology of perception had ignored the fact that

the individual's perception of external reality involves bodily experiences of the physical world, and a capacity to manipulate the everyday world through the motor activities of the body. These capacities can be manifest verbally, audibly or visually. Language is necessarily embodied in these material forms of the body's potentiality. As a result, Merleau-Ponty rejected the legacy of Cartesian mind/body dualism to argue that thinking, doing and feeling are practical activities that require our embodied presence.

Ontological frailty includes the notion that human beings of necessity have a propensity to disease and sickness, that they are beings unto death and that ageing bodies set up a tension between the body as lived experience, the objective body and the body image which through the life-cycle involves us in existential discomfort. As a result of these conditions, human beings through the life process are involved in various relationships of dependency. We are, in the language of Nietzsche, the unfinished animal. The notion of the incompleteness of human beings and their frailty was explored in the philosophical anthropology of Arnold Gehlen (1988). A theory of institutions lay at the core of his work. Human beings need to build an institutional framework for life, including systems of lore and law. Human beings are characterized by their 'instinctual deprivation' and therefore they do not have a stable structure within which to operate. Humans are defined by their 'world openness', because they are not equipped instinctively for a specific environment, and as a result they have to build or construct their own environment, a construction that requires the building of social institutions. These institutions are the bridges between humans and their physical environment and it is through these institutions that human life becomes coherent, meaningful and continuous (Berger and Kellner, 1965). In filling the gap created by instinctual deprivation, institutions provide humans with relief from the tensions generated by undirected instinctual drives.

Over time, these institutions are taken for granted and become part of the background of social action. The foreground is occupied by reflexive, practical and conscious activities. However, with modernization, there is a process of de-institutionalization with the result that the background becomes less reliable, more open to negotiation, culturally thinner and increasingly an object of critical reflection. Accordingly the foreground expands, and life is seen to be risky, contingent and reflexive. Traditional institutions of the past recede, and modern life becomes subjective, unstable and uncertain. In fact we live in a world of secondary or quasi-institutions. There are profound psychological consequences associated with these changes. Human beings in archaic societies had character that was a firm and definite psychological structure corresponding to reliable background institutions. In modern societies, the individual as personality is in a 'lonely crowd' (Riesman, 1950) and thus people have personalities that are fluid and flexible, like the institutions in which they live. We can argue in these terms that the modernization of cultures involves a 'foregrounding' of cultural practices and institutions that can no longer be taken for granted. In recent

years, the medical revolution, that has been an effect of the transformation of the biological sciences, has involved a foregrounding of institutions, because it has brought into question what we mean by 'fatherhood' or 'kinship' or 'reproduction'. In fact, this de-institutionalization of social life has nowhere been more significant than in sexual and reproductive relationships.

The notion of social and political precariousness includes the inability of political institutions to protect and serve the interests of individuals, the failure of social institutions to cope with social change, the inability of social institutions to reconcile the conflict between collective and individual interests, and finally the problems of equity between generations that arise inevitably from generational exchanges. Institutions have to be built up over time and therefore they often fail to respond quickly to social change. The process of institutionalization tends to be conservative and cannot address the changing aspirations of new generations. The transformations of charisma by routinization are also a familiar aspect of traditional societies. In the modern economy, organizational failures, take-overs, mergers, corporate corruption, downsizing, organizational stress, inflation, currency instability and restructuring are permanent features of the globalization of the business world. The list of risks in modern society also presents severe difficulties for institutional stability: the exposure of human populations to global disease through such conditions as HIV and AIDS, the instability of the natural environment through industrialization and pollution, and the instability of orderly society through the globalization of crime and narcotics. These illustrations of institutional precariousness are relatively obvious and abundant. Contemporary complexity theory suggests that modern social systems cannot effectively resolve the complexities and contingencies of their environment, and hence precariousness, like risk, is a function of modernization.

Turning to the notion of interconnectedness and interdependence, this neo-Hobbesian world is not simply one of rampant individualism. While the argument from ontological frailty might suggest an individualist or even utilitarian paradigm, the notion of interconnectedness indicates that human beings are always and already social. They are deeply involved socially in an interdependent world through language and socialization. The argument is that regardless of the cultural hybridity and diversity of modern urban life, we are still held together by a common ontology. However, this interconnectedness is threatened by, among other things, technological and medical change. This issue is the real importance of the question: can there be a social world after the body, that is, in post-humanism, where technology has transformed the fundamental character of embodiment?

The point of this formulation of ontology is to provide a foundation for a sociological and normative defence of human rights as protective institutions. First there is the argument that the biological nature of human frailty requires human rights as a protective canopy, and secondly there is the argument that social institutions are necessary but precarious. Given frailty and precariousness, human beings need a legal framework in which

to seek respite from risk and the contingencies of everyday life. Both of these arguments (frailty and precariousness) are an attempt to develop a contemporary version of Hobbes's theory of the state but outside the limitations of any utilitarian notion of social contract. Hobbes argued in *Leviathan* that rational human beings with conflicting interests in a state of nature would be in a condition of perpetual war. In order to protect themselves from mutual, endless slaughter, they create a state, through a social contract, which organizes social space in the collective interests of rational but antagonistic human beings. Furthermore, the institutions, which humans create as protective or defensive mechanisms, have to be sufficiently powerful to regulate social space and as a consequence come unintentionally to present a threat to the human beings that institute the state through a social contract. For example, the state, which holds a monopoly over legalized violence, is both a guarantor of social security but also an instrument, necessarily, of violence.

Human beings are rational, but they are also embodied and they have a capacity for sympathy towards their fellow human beings. The capacity for suffering (another feature of vulnerability) is an important feature of membership of a moral community. The notion that sympathy is the social glue of a society characterized by precariousness can also be seen as a contemporary restatement of the theory of sentiments in classical political economy, especially a restatement of Humean social theory (Rorty, 1989). The point of this sociological theory of rights is to provide a theoretical structure which will connect individual human rights as protective arrangements, the organization of the state as an institution which both guarantees rights but also threatens them, and the notion that sympathy is a major requirement of all social relations along with more traditional categories such as trust.

Human Rights: Frailty, Precariousness and Interconnectedness

I have proposed the sociology of the body as a basis for defending a theory of human rights (Turner, 1993, 2006). Against this human rights discourse, there are clearly powerful arguments in favour of a relativist stand on rights discourse and thus a defence of rights against a relativist consensus will need to be muscular. The notion of universal rights immediately runs into at least two formidable obstacles. First, notions about universalism have been radically attacked by a variety of traditions in social philosophy with the result that there is a broad consensus that universalistic arguments are likely to be sociologically and anthropologically naive. For example, Max Weber's sociology of law was an overt criticism of the idea that natural law could provide an authoritative and convincing basis for rights. The second obstacle is that the body in sociological theory is typically seen to be socially constructed and as such could not act as a general foundation for human rights. For example, Michel Foucault's analysis of the human

body was an attempt to show that the 'body' was a contingent effect of power. In his *Technologies of the Self*, Foucault stated 'All of my analyses are against the idea of universal necessities in human existence. They show the arbitrariness of institutions' (1988: 11). In order to clear the ground for a discussion of human rights as an adjunct of the argument about embodiment, a detour is required to consider cultural relativism and social constructionism.

Arguments about cultural relativism have been manipulated and abused by authoritarian governments to justify various forms of state violence under the banner of cultural authenticity and difference. It is all too easy to justify abuses against children and women on the one hand or devastation of the natural environment on the other, by an appeal to local custom and traditions. Philosophical and sociological arguments against relativism are therefore an important part of the political programme to protect and defend human rights traditions in the public arena. The frailty of the human body and the precariousness of social life provide at least one possibility for starting an account of a foundation for human rights discourse. Because of this frailty and the precarious nature of social reality, human beings require the protective security of general human rights. Not all rights assume this form of protective security but a large element of the human rights tradition is to provide some juridical security for human beings.

Talk about human rights is often difficult in sociological and anthropological theory because of the prior commitment to the notion of cultural relativism. Because cultures differ fundamentally in their values, the notion of universal standards is difficult to defend intellectually. In order to question this conventional view, I start my discussion by considering post-modern versions of anthropological relativism. My aim ultimately is to employ the sociology of the body as a strategy for exploring the moral basis of a universalistic doctrine of human rights, but I fully recognize that universalism is an unpopular approach to social theory; it is often associated with claims about the privileged status of Western thought, or it is associated with patriarchal fantasies of dominance. Universalistic claims about truth or justice have been challenged by various forms of postmodernism and pragmatism, and the general mood of social science and the humanities has been more sympathetic to relativism and to the notion that 'grand narratives' cannot be easily sustained.

It does not follow, however, that postmodernism has not been concerned with ethics. On the contrary, postmodernism which has been influenced by Heidegger has been specifically interested in the ideas of 'care' as an ethic that does not involve grand claims about universalism. Following Heidegger on forgetfulness versus concern for otherness, we can detect a post-modern ethical stance in the idea of care for marginal or powerless groups, and concern for difference and otherness. Similarly, cruelty is, for Richard Rorty, the most serious crime, and cruelty in the form of torture is a denial of humanity, involving a forgetfulness about the human status of victims. These authors seek some grounding for concern, not in the universal

characteristics of human nature, but in the practical requirements for active care and affective sympathy. While such an approach has considerable merit, human frailty provides the basis for a universalistic ethic of concern which goes beyond the apparent complacency of contemporary relativism.

The notion that the frailty of the body provides a foundation for rights is compatible with Heidegger's account of the vulnerability of human beings as beings who are bound to death through the inexorable passage of time. Heidegger's views on the 'thrownness' of being as a state which is permanently precarious provide an account of human frailty which is highly compatible with an emphasis on human frailty as a starting point for an analysis of rights (Heidegger, 1962). The problem with relativism in political theory is, however, that it cannot simultaneously develop an ethic of care and satisfy questions about justice. The recognition of difference does not easily feed into a theory that can give a good account of the conditions of justice. There is, therefore, an ongoing question about justice, namely the universality of the treatment of human beings as human beings.

One of the perennial issues of modern social theory has been to identify a basis, however minimalist, for some universalistic criterion of justice in relation to separate and particular social groups and communities. The core of this issue is to reconcile the aspiration for political equality with the stubborn fact of social differences (in terms of class, ethnicity and gender). Traditional accounts of the principle of equality of opportunity have been appropriately challenged, for example, by post-modern feminism for their blindness to difference. However, if we regard justice as an issue about fairness, then there has to be some foundation of a universalistic character in order for such discussions about justice to take place. Some implicit commitment to universalism, typically as a residual category, is embraced by theorists who want overtly to adopt a resolutely anti-foundationalist or contextualist position. Post-modern relativist epistemologies are often combined with the implicit search for a common vocabulary with which to talk about politics and ethics.

The conviction that embodiment is a fruitful platform for an argument in favour of the universalism of human rights via the notions of frailty and vulnerability is partly grounded in the notion of the ubiquity of human misery. It is self-evidently true that, as Barrington Moore Jr argues in *Reflections on the Causes of Human Misery*:

suffering is not a value in its own right. In this sense any form of suffering becomes a cost, and unnecessary suffering an odious cost. Similarly, a general opposition to human suffering constitutes a stand-point that both transcends and unites different cultures and historical epochs. (1970: 11)

A critic might object that suffering is too variable in its manifestations to provide such a common standpoint. What constitutes suffering in practice might turn out to be culturally specific. Similar arguments have been made against disability as a common standard (Ingstad and Whyte, 1995). One could accept this argument on the grounds that suffering involves essentially

a devaluation of a person as a consequence of accident, affliction or torture, but pain is less variable. Whereas bankruptcy could involve some degree of psychological suffering, a toothache is a toothache. If we claim that disability is a social condition (the loss of social rights) and thus relative, we might argue that impairment is the underlying condition about which there is less political dispute. In short, some conditions or states of affairs are less socially constructed than others.

There is a strong argument then in favour of the existence of a community of sentiment determined by the negative perception of suffering/pain. Suffering and pain are clearly indicators of vulnerability. This notion that there can be a cross-cultural understanding of the bond of suffering was perfectly expressed in *The Merchant of Venice* where the figure of Shylock in Act III scene 1 appears to challenge the conventions of Elizabethan anti-Semitism:

hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer as a Christian is? – if you prick us do we not bleed?

This characteristic of vulnerability provides a standard for the assertion of a human bond across generations and cultures. We need to understand this vulnerability, however, against a background of global risks that in turn draw attention to the precarious nature of human institutions.

The Metaphors of Sociability

Although embodiment is a social project which is routinely accomplished, it also has its own specificity. My embodiment is uniquely accomplished within the everyday world that is routine and predictable. We can express this paradox of particularity and uniformity in terms of the relationship between sociology and ontology in a formulation taken from Heidegger's *The Question of Being* (1958). On the social or horizontal plane, an individual is routinely defined by a set of social roles that specify a position in the world of the economy and society. This horizontal plane is what sociologists call the ensemble of status and roles occupied by an individual. There is also an ontological plane which forms a vertical axis, that is, defined by the finite and unique embodiment of a person. The horizontal social plane is the precarious world of the social system; the vertical plane is the world of embodied frailty. In this sense we might argue that sociological (horizontal) analysis is concerned with understanding the contingent and arbitrary characteristics of social being, while ontological (vertical) analysis attempts to grasp the necessities of our human being. This formulation can be adopted as a further perspective on Foucault's notion of the arbitrariness of institutions. The horizontal plane of social relations are indeed arbitrary; they are also precarious. For example, the institutions of disability and rehabilitation have been radically transformed in the late twentieth century, and the traditional

systems of rehabilitation no longer hold sway. However, on the vertical plane of human existence there are certain necessities which are concerned with ageing, disability and dependency.

In the everyday world we are confronted constantly by the problem of 'disrupted lives' (Becker, 1997) that dislocates the relationships between these vertical and horizontal dimensions: what is the relationship between the body, metaphor and personal identity? The notion of 'disruption' leads us towards a reflexive uncovering of the frailty of our lives and the precarious character of the institutions which underpin them. Both sociology and anthropology have demonstrated that identity is fundamentally embodied, because subjective and objective identity cannot be easily separated from embodiment. It follows that 'self' is not an enduring or stable fact, but changes with ageing, the life-course and the disruptions of illness. Hence, radical disruptions to self can occur as a result of traumatic illness, which often breaks our relationship with significant others, reorganizes our life-world and threatens to destroy the comfortable relationship between self, body and others. In North America, where there is an important emphasis on youthfulness, activism and independence, disruptions to everyday life from accident, chronic illness and ageing represent a profound challenge to the sense of self identity. Sickness is in this sense a form of deviance (Parsons, 1951).

Metaphors of illness and impairment play an important part in helping people to make sense of these unwanted discontinuities. Metaphors help us to understand, but they also have therapeutic qualities and as a result narratives of disruption constitute moral accounts of people's lives. Metaphors are the cultural vehicles which express the values that make life meaningful and coherent. Thus, narratives of healing are part of the process of healing. Given the importance of activism and individualism in American culture, healing narratives are typically structured around themes of disruption and the assumption of personal responsibility.

The stability of everyday life requires the presumption of a continuous and reliable self, and hence we assume that disruptions are exceptional interventions within this normality. For interaction to take place at all, one must be able to make assumptions about the continuity of an embodied self through time and space. There must be a set of effective 'plausibility structures' that give the everyday world a legitimate sense of stability (Berger, 1969). Perhaps the continuity of personal identity is merely an illusion, because disruption to life is a constant human experience. The only definite continuity is the continuity of embodiment, but even that is vulnerable. Hence, the everyday world involves a constant struggle to sustain the illusions of order and continuity, against a backdrop of persistent but unpredictable disorder. Metaphors, which mediate between the self and chaos, provide the building blocks of cultural meaning. The social world has to be constantly constructed against the disruptions that threaten the continuities of the identities of social actors. The de-traditionalization of society through individualization and reflexivity has undermined the vitality

of the metaphoricality of social life. Indeed, we suffer from an eclipse of metaphor.

The technological development of modern society has achieved three negative consequences: it has undermined the comfortableness of our relationship to the natural environment; it has multiplied environmental and social risks, especially associated with globalization; and it has started the process of the transformation of embodiment through the application of medical sciences and the development of bio-technology. In short, technological modernization has raised significant problems for enselfment, emplacement and embodiment. In this conclusion I argue, among other things, that the exhaustion of metaphors in modern society is an index of the erosion of our natural comfortability, and it is also a measure of our secularization.

The body has been crucial to the development of religious metaphors of sociability. These corporeal metaphors were fundamental to the evolution of the theologies and rituals of the world religions. Central to these cosmologies was the notion of the transfer of charisma (or grace) between beings through the conduit of body fluids: blood, water, sweat, milk and sperm. The New Testament account of God's action in history involved the sacrifice of the body of Christ for the sake of human salvation. Once human beings had been turned out of the Garden, early metaphors of property employed the notion of an investment of sweat or labour in the earth. But these corporeal metaphors of the sacred are increasingly irrelevant in a post-modern cultural environment. For example, there is an archaic cosmology common to many religions in which a body is the metaphor of a house and a house is the metaphor of a cosmos. In this homology of house-body-cosmos, 'man cosmicizes himself; in other words, he reproduces on the human scale the system of rhythmic and reciprocal conditioning influences that characterizes and constitutes a world, that, in short, defines any universe' (Eliade, 1959: 173). The intimacy between self, body and cosmos has been shattered by the globalization of electronic information and by the displacement of the self. We have lost the capacity to create effective metaphors to describe the naturalness of our place in the world.

Religious metaphors were obviously set within a specific culture and mode of production. The metaphors of Jewish and Christian cosmology were orchestrated around a theme of pastoral relationships – Agnus Dei, the Great Shepherd, the Flock and the Pastor. These metaphors within pastoral and agrarian societies were able to tap into a set of common experiences and a common language of responsibility, stewardship, care and dependency, namely a common language of vulnerability. The wounds of Christ became a fundamental symbol of human suffering and frailty. The paradox of vulnerability in the double meaning (to wound and to be wounded) was captured, for example, by Bernini's sculpture of the ecstatic vision of St Teresa, where the saint is wounded by a spear of religious possession. Bernini, the master of Baroque effects, perfectly displays the sexual character of this wounding in the supine figure of the saint, who is

consumed and elated. Such figures are dead to the modern imagination, because they have lost their metaphorical force.

The endless cycle of agrarian activity, of sowing and harvesting, produced another set of metaphors of dependence and obligation that expressed social responsibility and dependency. The gathering of the harvest became a basic metaphor of human salvation. With the passage of time, these metaphors became fossilized within theology and as a result there is a fundamental gap between the life-world of an industrial civilization and religious language. With industrialization, there has been no significant evolution of a set of shared metaphors to express the human condition and the communal links that are important for the renewal of sociability. As a result 'the religious sense of urban populations is gravely impoverished. The cosmic liturgy, the mystery of nature's participation in the Christological drama, have become inaccessible to Christians living in a modern city' (Eliade, 1959: 179). I would go further to argue that there is an exhaustion of the fountain of metaphoricality necessary to a shared language of community. Religion in modern society has been privatized and has no necessary connection with public culture; it is an aesthetic choice relating to life-style. As a result, the metaphors of late modernity express the trivialization of culture and the McDonaldization of meaning. The metaphors of the global village attempt to express thin and fragile networks (webs) or individualized journeys through virtual reality (surfing), but they are not collective metaphors of community that connect body, self and society. Attempts to express the world of electronic exchange in the language of the Wild West such as in the subtitle of Howard Rheingold's *The Virtual Community* (1993), 'homesteading on the electronic frontier', are either ironic or phoney.

It is often claimed that the biological and electronic technologies of late modernity promise to make us safe and less vulnerable, but they have in many instances intensified the global risks of modernization. They have also exacerbated the precariousness of our institutional structures, particularly through surveillance and the erosion of privacy. The irony of the argument is that to be human is to be vulnerable. If the promise of modernity were ever to prove successful, it would eliminate our vulnerability, and thus bring about the real rather than the merely metaphorical end of man.

Evil and the Theological Turn

Yet, in the absence of shared vocabulary we need to understand extreme forms of human suffering in the modern world, and to grasp the enormity of modern suffering we are forced to use a theological language by turning to the notion of evil. Extreme forms of violence against civilians – slavery, nuclear war, Holocaust, ethnic cleansing and genocide – have forced human rights research to return to an understanding of evil in human affairs, and hence to explore a theological view of human depravity (Geddes, 2001). The question of evil is often attached to human rights, because these rights

are often asserted in the face of extraordinary or unspeakable examples of human violence, such as genocide, ethnic cleansing, systematic torture and gang rape. We might begin with a preliminary definition of evil acts as involving the mindless or irrational enjoyment of the misery, suffering and destruction of other human beings, and that these gross acts appear to have no utilitarian logic other than the pure enjoyment of the suffering of others. Evil acts involve, as it were, a superfluous violence. The scale of gratuitous violence in modern society has given rise in the social sciences and humanities to the idea of a theological turn that is the quest for a deeper understanding of violence, torture and inhumanity.

Evil can be said to exist because our vulnerable natures expose us to destruction by permitting other agents to play on our weakness, and evil is especially crafted to destroy human beings through a loss of wholeness. Vulnerability has two dimensions. We are vulnerable externally to outside, especially physical, forces and we are vulnerable internally because we are sympathetic and reflective creatures, who have a capacity for self understanding. Violence employs this duality to torture humans through their own reflective sensitivity. This facet of evil doing can be illustrated by the argument that we can inflict pain on animals but can we inflict evil on them? Hence evil is especially connected to our shared capacity for suffering (Scarry, 1985; Wilkinson, 2005). While animals experience pain, they do not suffer as such; they cannot lose their dignity, only their lives. Our vulnerability is such that we need to understand evil and give it a meaning, and in this sense we might say that evil can never be meaningless violence. In theological terms, theodicy was originally any attempt to explain evil within a religious paradigm where God is seen to be good. If God is truly good and compassionate, why is there so much evil in the world? The characteristic Christian answer to this issue has been to say that human beings are moral beings, and hence free to choose either goodness or evil. Contemporary crimes such as the massacres and genocides of Darfur and Rwanda have an enormity that brings into question the very possibility of a coherent theological answer, namely how can such acts of inhumanity and barbarity be understood within existing moral or religious categories? It is not self-evident, for example in the case of Rwanda, that human beings are exercising agency when they find themselves in genocidal situations. Such monstrous acts of barbarity appear to stand outside the boundaries of normality. We can therefore distinguish between ordinary or routine acts of cruelty that are explicable, and evil that is extraordinary and inexplicable in human affairs. We might argue therefore that the very concept of theodicy is itself a consequence of human vulnerability. Our natures determine that we are wounded creatures and hence we search for a theodicy to make sense of otherwise senseless acts of violence. We can plausibly regard the evolution of human rights culture as a contemporary attempt to understand evil, to provide some safeguards, albeit incomplete and inadequate, against future genocides, and through the courts to bring wrongdoers to justice.

The very existence of slavery represents an important challenge to any philosophical or theological argument that because human beings share a common ontology, they share either a common set of ultimate concerns or that at the very least they share a common sympathy for each other's suffering. Slavery has, therefore, within the literature on the history of human rights, been regarded as a major crime against humanity. To treat human beings as chattels is to rob them of their humanity, by robbing them of their freedom to choose. Slavery puts people into the same category of moveable property as cattle. The struggle against the evils of slavery is a particularly important example of the impact of religious consciousness on the construction of human rights. We often reify evil in response to modern atrocity, but this reification of evil is not necessarily helpful in conducting empirical research into slavery (Bales, 1999). Slavery has existed for as long as documented human history. If we want to regard slavery as an example of evil, then we might be forced to recognize that evil is morally and culturally relative. Although in the ancient world some Roman jurists, following Stoical philosophy, regarded slavery as unnatural, slavery was widely practised. In Christianity the Church condemned Christians who enslaved other Christians, but theologians as eminent as Thomas Aquinas believed that slavery was morally justifiable and economically necessary.

Arguments for the abolition of slavery eventually shifted from economic arguments in the eighteenth century to moral arguments in the nineteenth. The anti-slavery campaign prepared the groundwork for the human rights campaigns of the twentieth century. This campaign expanded the definition of evil, and the types of actors who commit acts of evil have also become more varied. Evil is no longer committed simply by nation states. Globalization has had the consequence of disseminating the language and values of human rights definitions of evil.

Religious themes underpin human rights history and practice and the sense of vulnerability itself has a strong theological dimension, and to some extent the Christian message has made vulnerability central to its theology. In particular the suffering Jesus is the essence of vulnerability. Religion has also contributed to what we might call the rituals of inclusion through amnesty, confession and forgiveness. The idea of the global character of human rights may also draw on the religious concept of 'the world', and on the ideas of suffering and redemption. These notions have a significant Christian hue, but one could also deduce aspects of these ideas about the place of human beings in the world from Buddhism and Jainism. However, the aftermath of the trial of Eichmann, the uncovering of the Holocaust, the Rwanda genocide, the Darfur genocide and more generally human responses to twentieth-century ethnic cleansing have produced an overwhelming sense of the presence of evil in modern societies. Human rights has an implicit theology of evil, of the presence of events or processes that defy human understanding and explanation, that appear to lie outside the boundaries of the normal, and which threaten our sense of humanity and normality.

We cannot explain them, and we can only call such monstrous acts evil because we have no other suitable vocabulary.

The history of military violence illustrates the extension of war to the killing and destruction of civilian populations, from the World Wars through to the Armenian genocide, Stalin's mass murders, the Holocaust, Japan's genocidal wars, the Allied bombing of Germany, nuclear war, and the genocides in Cambodia, Yugoslavia and Rwanda (Shaw, 2003). We might say that modern conflicts produce an excess of killing or a superfluity of death. The scale of these killings often appears to bear little relationship to any rational plan of achieving victory in war. Martin Shaw usefully describes these conflicts as a degeneration of war. While his book is an important, if depressing, contribution to the sociology of war, there is a sense that degenerate war still defies rational explanation, precisely because it is an enormity. To some extent we might say that genocide represents the limit of what is comprehensible in a social science; degenerate war charts out an arena within which social science concepts palpably falter and fail. This sense of the inexplicable nature of mass, excessive killing has been commented on by Peter Berger in his *A Rumour of Angels* (1969) who says that modern genocide appears to exist outside the boundaries of enormity for which we have no ultimately credible explanation. In this context both sympathy and revenge may fail as human emotions. Can we extend sympathy to the perpetrators? Sympathetic acceptance is hardly possible, because we cannot recognize them as fellow humans. Revenge is not adequate, and it would have to take place on such a scale that we would also lose our humanity by inflicting it. We are in a way stuck with Derrida's paradox that we have to contemplate forgiving the unforgivable. Because social science falters on this outer perimeter of the imaginable, many writers have argued for 'a theological turn' in social sciences and humans that would, amongst other things, recognize this evil.

Forgiveness or Revenge?

An important dimension of contemporary human rights culture and institutions is the emphasis on forgiveness and restitution. This strand of human rights thinking clearly has strong connections with Christian ethics, in which believers are enjoined to forgive those who would do them harm. These Christian ethics received a powerful critique in the nineteenth century from Friedrich Nietzsche, who, among other things, argued that resentment was a powerful factor in morals. Nietzsche's philosophical criticisms of Christianity claimed that forgiveness was merely a 'slave' mentality, which people, who are otherwise too weak to achieve revenge, might embrace to cope with a hostile and threatening environment. This criticism raises some interesting questions. Is revenge more satisfying, and more emotionally appropriate, than forgiveness? Does resentment express a strong desire for justice as much as for revenge? Jean Amery (1977) and Vladimir

Jankelevitch (1996) have both rejected forgiveness and defended the moral worth of resentment. Both have regarded forgiveness as a form of forgetting and pardon. Moreover, because forgiveness implies an individual act of pardon and forgetting, it has no contribution to the social and political process of dealing with heinous crimes.

This Nietzschean attack on Christian morality has also been explored by Jack M. Barbalet (1998) in his *Emotion, Social Theory and Social Structure* to develop some powerful criticisms of current thinking about human rights, including my own attempt to relate human frailty to rights. Barbalet's attack is clever but fails, in my view, to provide a satisfactory account of the origins and functions of rights. Briefly Barbalet's argument is that sympathy for others is an attitude of the spectator not of the actor, and more importantly that sympathy is weak, as a determinant of action, by comparison with interest. Barbalet quotes David Hume with approval, because Hume argued that, while one might feel pain in witnessing the plight of another, it may never be enough to overcome one's desire to protect one's own interests. While Barbalet does not make the point, we should note, in passing, that this Humean critique is a version of rational choice theory in which actors are driven by their interests and society is held together, not by sympathy or by shared values, but by the satisfaction of their interests, especially in the marketplace. It is for this reason, as Barbalet notes, that the debate about 'sentiment' was an important aspect of classical economics. Precisely because sympathy is a weak emotion, the economic solution to the problem of social order is located in the freedom of social actors to engage in the marketplace. There is a 'hidden hand' working in the market where the force of conflicting interests is somehow finally resolved.

Barbalet goes on to use William James's pragmatic philosophy of interest to suggest that rights may draw less from sympathy than from what James (1912) called 'the hating and fighting impulses' in his 'Is life worth living?' essay in *The Will to Believe* of 1897. Barbalet wants to argue that resentment against transgressions, which produce a desire to get even with those who oppress us, may be more valuable in establishing the origins of rights than sympathy. Vengefulness arises in situations where the subject's regard for themselves is injured. Barbalet wants to show how vengefulness may be a neglected aspect of social movements that want to restore justice. He draws on a number of historical examples to defend his position, including the history of lynching in the United States, in which he argues that the desire for revenge against the inequity of slavery and the racial divide was a significant component of the eventual overthrow of racial subordination and oppression.

Barbalet's counter-argument is very powerful and one which sociologists with a concern to develop a theory of human rights need to take very seriously. In developing a response to Barbalet's criticism, I need to correct, possibly tediously, some of his erroneous assumptions about my position. Barbalet's criticism was directed at my article 'Outline of a theory of human rights' (Turner, 1993), in which I advanced an argument about human

frailty and the precariousness of institutions, arguing that, because we are embodied creatures, we are frail and have specific needs for protection and security. I have subsequently replaced 'frailty' with 'vulnerability', which is a much richer concept.

Barbalet complained that one cannot derive rights from the human body (or nature), citing frailty as a questionable feature of my argument. In reply I would argue that I do not regard the human body as somehow outside the social realm, and, furthermore, the idea of 'embodiment' is a more satisfactory expression of my argument than 'the body'. Our embodiment is shaped by culture – for example how we walk is a social activity – but I do want to argue that our embodiment places certain important limits on walking, and other human activities. More importantly, vulnerability is a much more interesting concept than frailty, because we are, in addition to our physical vulnerability, also psychologically and morally vulnerable. In its early use in the English language, vulnerability could also be a verb (to vulnerate), meaning to inflict wounds on another. Vulnerability does not have to be merely passive. However, my main objection to Barbalet's criticism is that he wants to claim that human or basic rights exist outside the law. Thus 'the notion of human or basic rights holds that individuals, by virtue of their humanity, possess fundamental rights beyond those prescribed in law' (Barbalet, 1998: 128) and he characterizes my argument as saying that 'human rights are founded in the nature of the human body' (Barbalet, 1998: 128).

I do not believe that rights can be simply founded on the body or that they can exist outside the limits prescribed by the law. This problem was the basis of Jeremy Bentham's rejection of human rights as 'nonsense on stilts', in his *Anarchical Fallacies* (Waldron, 1987). Bentham had two complaints against the view of rights that emerged from the French Revolution. The 'rights' that are described in the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen of 1789 were vague and abstract, and referred to nothing that was at all tangible. The word 'right' had been illegitimately transformed from being an adjective ('This is the right way to Cambridge') to being a noun ('The rights of the citizens of Cambridge'). More importantly, he argued that rights are created by laws that are produced and enforced by a state that has the sovereign authority to make such laws and their attendant rights. He wanted to know how rights could exist without a sovereign legal power. Basically, rights are created by the law and only exist within the law. The Declaration of 1789 is a legal statement about people's entitlements, and it claims to have legal force because the signatories to the document were themselves sovereign powers. Whether the Declaration has the same legal force as laws made by parliamentary sovereign bodies is of course disputed by lawyers, and it is for this reason that human rights are sometimes said not to be justiciable. Laws cannot be meaningfully derived from the human body.

My argument is rather that our humanity exists in our vulnerability, and that vulnerability offers a common basis for rights, thereby transcending

cultural relativism. Human rights emerge as a global legal framework in a period when the mechanization of warfare (and more recently the use of nuclear and biological weapons) exposes humanity to the possibility of its own total destruction; the law offers some protection to vulnerable beings, and our vulnerability is one condition for recognizing and accepting our neighbour as a human being who is also in need of such protection. Hence there is the *possibility* of a common solidarity, but this is always fragile, given the precariousness of institutions.

Barbalet, however, seems to me to be correct in arguing that sympathy is a weak emotion, and hence in this argument I propose to follow Richard Rorty's reinterpretation of David Hume in arguing that we cannot depend, as it were, on the natural well-spring of human sympathy – it needs to be cultivated by a moral education, and that the lack of sympathy to the plight of others occurs where there is a breakdown of moral restraint (Rorty, 1989). This is the classical problem of social order that is described so well in Talcott Parsons' notion of the analytical incoherence of the Hobbesian theory of interest and social order in his *The Structure of Social Action* (Parsons, 1937). Theories of interest may be able to explain the actions of individuals (in the face of scarcity) but they cannot explain social order without contradicting their own premises. If actors are motivated only by self-interest, they will rationally use force and fraud to achieve their ends. Therefore how is social order possible? Parsons argued that the socialization of children into a common set of values provided the social solidarity that could contain the divisive impact of interest (Turner and Rojek, 2001). In this discussion I turn to the idea of 'moral education' as an alternative to the more conventional sociological concept of 'socialization' – partly in order to indicate deliberately the relationship between this argument and the more traditional idea of a 'sentimental education'. While moral education and sympathy will never by themselves be effective constraints on selfish interest, such an education is important to develop what MacIntyre advocates in terms of the Aristotelian virtues. Cosmopolitan virtue is necessary if we are to gain some recognition of the Other as a moral agent.

One problem with Barbalet's Nietzschean defence of what we might call 'sweet revenge' is that it is difficult to have a theory of social order that has vengefulness at, or anywhere near, centre stage. How can such a theory avoid the problem of what I will term 'the spiral of violence and revenge'? Nietzsche might have offered some controversial arguments against Christian piety, but his philosophy does not lend itself to the solution of the practical problems of daily existence. Just how far can we take a theory of resentment as a practical guide to action?

There is both an individual and a collective aspect to this problem. At the level of the individual, vengefulness is very difficult to satisfy – we always want more. This problem of the elasticity of revenge is related to Arendt's notion of the banality of evil. Eichmann was not an appropriate figure of revenge – he was too ordinary. Revenge, I would argue, provokes in the individual a desire for excess, for a surplus of revenge. The role of torture

is in this regard designed to satisfy the excessive demand for extra revenge. While I want to kill my oppressor many times over, he can unfortunately only die once. Revenge can never give me the psychological compensation I desire, because revenge is an irrational drive. At the social level, the revenge of one group only produces the retaliation of another. The endless cycle of revenge in Northern Ireland shows just how difficult it is to terminate such a spiral of mutual retaliation, and hence the argument for truth and reconciliation commissions is that they offer a possibility of breaking the cycle of violence precisely because they do not attempt to assuage revenge. The same catastrophe of unlimited revenge has characterized the conflict in Sri Lanka, dragging women and children into combat, because civil conflict has killed off the men. Human rights are not based in emotions but depend wholly on the role of law in society as the only alternative to the spiral of revenge. Vengeance cannot be easily satisfied, and when we metaphorically talk about the thirst for revenge we imply that it cannot be easily satiated. Hence we can grasp the political significance of the biblical exclamation 'Vengeance is mine saith the Lord', which is that revenge has to be taken out of the secular arena.

Barbalet's interpretation of my position is not entirely correct, but what about his view of James? The pragmatic argument of James was an attack on religious idealism and the essay is really an examination of the psychological mechanisms that are necessary to avoid pessimism and sorrow. Pragmatism was a secular philosophy that was hostile to religious theism, mainly because it was suspicious of the idolatry of ideas. James's essay on whether life is worth living attempts to address a person who is depressed and contemplating suicide. James argues a psychological case that powerful emotions as a response to the injustices of life are more likely to encourage one to choose life over death than weak emotions. Like Nietzsche, he believes that the powerful emotions of hating and loving are therapeutic for the ailing soul. It is an argument against passivity and acquiescence. James wants to show that religious meekness may not be a cure for depressed spirits, and that depressed souls should fight back. Life is worth living only if struggle stands a chance of some final accomplishment, and so his argument is not so much a defence of revenge, but a criticism of resignation. Better to hate than to be resigned to our fate. A Christian might reply to James saying that turning the other cheek requires a supreme confidence that life is worthwhile, and this attitude of embracing the other does not involve advocating passive acceptance of injustice.

We need therefore to make a distinction between feelings of vengefulness and actual actions of revenge. The emotion of vengefulness might have soothing psychoanalytical consequences for the troubled mind, but vengeful actions produce, not justice, but a cycle of revenge and counter-revenge. One might agree with Barbalet that sympathy is a weak sentiment, but revenge is too strong and it cannot be satisfied. Barbalet points to the movement to end lynching as a product of revengeful feelings producing a social movement for justice, but another example might be the Mafia where

a feuding society has prevented productive solutions to social problems. However, the point of my account of human rights is to force a connection between classical philosophy and empirical sociology. The idea of a moral education is to strengthen the virtues in order to make public life a proper setting for virtuous action that reinforces public life. Vulnerability is treated as a condition that fosters public action but in developing wisdom through a moral education, this education has to have sufficient moral force to overcome the natural inclination towards a denial of the victim by emphasizing responsibility for actions. As Stan Cohen (2001: 216) argues in his *States of Denial* it is important, in fact, to go beyond sympathy to empathy and identification to see the other as part of a shared moral universe. The study of vulnerability is not a neutral action. By contrast, revenge is not a virtue, it offers no wisdom, and it does not enhance the character of the agent. Revenge may bring some temporary psychological satisfaction, but is it morally uplifting? Against Nietzsche, I cannot see how deep-seated emotions of revenge can serve the nobility of character that comes with forgiving a wrong. By contrast, moral education in vulnerability is designed to foster the virtues of respect and care. Forgiveness allows us to recognize 'the fragility of goodness' (Nussbaum, 1986) in which the contingency or fatefulness of life encourages us to recognize the precarious nature of the moral world to which we all belong. This fragile world needs not strong emotions but strong laws. Perhaps the most important conclusion therefore to this discussion is that rights require not human emotions but effective laws to guarantee the individual's rights and to provide them with legal mechanisms for restitution rather than revenge. No society can exist without the rule of law, and so we need rules not vigilantes. A society with moral standards requires mutual recognition between social groups, if care and respect for different values and cultures are to function in civil society. While the very idea of a common humanity in terms of a shared vulnerability is constantly challenged in the modern world – by warfare, environmental pollution, civil conflict, re-armament and poverty – it is difficult to see how any international system of societies could survive without some real and practical respect for our commonality as vulnerable beings.

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