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Disrupting Boundaries:
Rethinking Organisation and Embodiment

by

Torkild Thanem

2001

WARWICK UNIVERSITY

**Disrupting Boundaries:
Rethinking Organisation and Embodiment**

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Jennifer Miller performing.

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Preface

This thesis is an attempt to disrupt the boundaries of how we tend to think about “organisation” and “embodiment”. Whilst this effort is the result of an ongoing quest to think about the body within and without the boundaries of organisation theory, I have done my best to follow the style and format currently used in this field. I have sought to keep footnotes at a manageable level. I have separated lengthy quotes from the rest of the text by indentation. Shorter sections omitted from quotes are indicated by [...] and longer sections omitted from quotes are indicated by [....]. For the sake of consistency, in some cases I have modified the format of quotation marks used in some of the sources quoted here. The bibliography at the back includes in most cases the original publication dates of works later translated and published in English (e.g. Deleuze, Gilles (1994/1968)). I have tried to avoid gendered language where possible, and I am responsible for translating the quotes borrowed from the Norwegian public health material invoked in chapter 2.

I would like to express my thanks and gratitude to a number of people, who all helped me in the writing of this thesis. Some of them are still at the University of Warwick, others have moved on since I first met them there. Yet others I know from elsewhere. Professor Gibson Burrell, my supervisor at the University of Warwick, gave me help and support, inspiration and guidance, both personally and intellectually prior to and all throughout the four years of this doctoral project. Intellectually, it is to him that I owe the most. Dr Martin Corbett assisted as supervisor and asked important questions, which later helped me clarify and focus my ideas to a more manageable research project. Dr Karen Dale first inspired me to start thinking about the body in

organisation theory. Through her own research she continues to be a major source of intellectual inspiration and guidance.

Steffen Bohm, Martin Brigham, Campbell Jones and Jacob Thommesen, friends and fellow doctoral researchers all contributed in their own way through lengthy conversations about theory, philosophy and the study of organisation. And my friend the sociologist Svein Hammer engaged me in stimulating and lengthy email discussions and coffee chats in Trondheim, Norway – about theory, method and Foucault. My friend the medical historian Dr Jonathan Reinartz read and gave rigorous comments on what I had to say about public health and medicine and directed me to significant texts and events in medical history. Dr Stephen Cummings, who is a crucial source of personal and intellectual support for a number of doctoral researchers at Warwick Business School, gave friendship and a serious quest for clarity and focus. He helped me through many frustrating stages of this project by making me step out of and systematise my own thinking. Professor Keith Ansell Pearson at the Philosophy Department at Warwick helped me get to grips with Deleuze. In addition to his highly instructive books and articles, he gave generously of his time and knowledge, in email correspondence and conversations, and he made very helpful comments on what I have written about Deleuze.

All throughout this doctoral project, my parents and my brother have been a tremendous support, always unconditional in their love and always showing genuine interest in what I was doing. Finally, I could never go on without Louise – her love, support and companionship – and her constant questions and challenges to me, to my own body, and to my body of thought.

Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own work and that it has not been submitted for a degree at another university.

Abstract

This thesis attempts to disrupt the boundaries of how we think about organisation and embodiment. From an investigation into five organisational regimes of Western public health, it argues that the body is a problem for organisation. The body does not come ready organised, but is a nonorganisational, messy and carnal matter of flesh and blood, pains and pleasures, habits and desires. Although modern discourses and institutions seek to organise how we live with our bodies in everyday life, they never do so fully and completely. Bodies are powerful, creative and unpredictable and disrupt the boundaries of organisation.

Asking how organisation theory *deals* with the problem of the body, the thesis seeks to take the discipline further by developing an approach to how it *should* deal with the body, and by identifying what implications this might have for our thinking about organisation. Utilising the conceptualist philosophy of Canguilhem, Foucault and Deleuze, this is done by analysing the concept of “organisation” and the concept of the “body” across organisation theory and related fields.

Five ways of dealing with the body are identified: (i) *not* dealing with it at all, which is mostly the case with mainstream research on formal organisations and more radical research on organisational processes; (ii) reducing the body to an organismic metaphor, which is what much classical and some contemporary mainstream research does; (iii) studying how embodiment enables the successful management of formal organisations; (iv) studying how bodies are organised within and without formal organisations; and (v) studying nonorganisational embodiment, i.e. how bodies disrupt and exist independently of organisation. Whereas the third and fourth themes have been investigated in some organisation theory, little attempt has been made to think about nonorganisational embodiment. Using material in Deleuze, Foucault, feminism and current organisation theory, this thesis appreciates the ways in which bodies disrupt the boundaries of organisation *and* the ways in which bodies live under the conditions imposed by these boundaries. From this perspective, organisation is less powerful, less stable and more fragile than we often think, and bodies are more powerful, more dynamic and more creative.

This conceptualist interest in organisation, nonorganisation and the body gives rise to a theory and philosophy of organisation that might provide the underpinnings of a radical approach to everyday problems of organisation and embodiment, such as aesthetic labour and impression management; virtual organisations; culture, subcultures and resistance at work and in public space; health and safety; and gender, race and sexuality.

Chapter 1

Introduction

The Body: A Problem for Organisation Theory?

Let me begin to whet your appetite for the task ahead by speaking of human excretion. Throughout the history of human societies, organisations of production have dealt with issues related to the body, to bodily organs and to bodily remnants and waste products. In his history of smell, the French nineteenth century historian Alain Corbin (1994) tells us that in 1844 the political economist Clément Joseph Garnier dreamt of constructing an *ammoniapolis*, a large industrial complex for the treatment of urine. We know little in detail about Garnier's *ammoniapolis*, but it is possible to imagine that the plan was for a vast network of sewage canals which would transport urine and faeces from the private houses and hotels, the schools, businesses and hospitals of French urban centres, out to *ammoniapolises* located outside the cities. Thus, the *ammoniapolis* would not only remove the stench and filth of human excreta from urban space and clean up the places where people lived and worked. It would also put that same matter to effective use in the industrial production of ammonia. Although Garnier's dream was never realised, there were several facilities of a smaller scale in France at the time which were involved in the processing of human and animal waste and excreta into ammonia. For example, there was a factory producing ammonia near the refuse dump at Bondy near Paris. And there was a thriving industry of cesspool-clearing companies, which supplied ammonia factories with excreta collected from the cesspools of private dwellings and hotels. Nitrogen is crucial to the production of ammonia, and experts were worried that the flushing of cesspools with water and the replacing of cesspools with main drainage systems would undermine

the nitrogen content of excrement. The importance of nitrogen was common knowledge amongst cesspool-clearing companies, which valued the excreta of the poor above the diluted excreta of the rich and for this reason lobbied French politicians and public officials against the installation of main drainage systems. Material collected from the premises of the masses was not mixed with water and had a nitrogen content of 9 kilograms per cubic meter. In comparison, the cesspool of the Grand Hôtel in Paris had a nitrogen content of 270 grams per cubic meter (Corbin 1994: 265n39).

The commercial value of waste, excreta and rotting matter also affected the French knackery and slaughterhouse business in the early nineteenth century. In 1812 the chemists Payen, Barbier and the Pluvinet brothers were given permission to produce manure from a process that liquefied the fats and compressed the flesh of carcasses. In 1816 Foucques wanted to use the flesh, bones and intestines from the slaughter of horses in the production of alkaline liquid and different coloured soaps. Some years later, research by the young Jean-Pierre Barruel meant that ammonia salt could be produced from bone remains, carcasses and purifying water. And after 1825 the Pluvinet factory at Clichy outside Paris, which was a drying works, processed animal blood into products that were exported on a large scale to sugar refineries in the French colonies. On the whole, 'Every part of the corpse, deodorized and carefully sorted, had a rational use' (Corbin 1994: 121). Like the coprophilias and coprophages

in Pasolini's (1975) movie *Saló, or The 120 Days of Sodom*, the argument was that nothing must ever go to waste.¹

Of course, the utilitarian use of waste and excreta precedes and exceeds the above examples from nineteenth century France. Humans have fertilised their fields with human and animal excrements since the emergence of agrarian civilisation five thousand years ago (Lenski et al. 1994). And most farmers across the world continue to do so today, as do most people who want their garden tulips to grow. During the European BSE crisis of the last few years, we have also been informed that British cattle have been fed on the pulverised spines and skeletons from other cattle (cf. e.g. Ridley and Baker 1998). And perhaps more alarmingly, the news media have reported about coprophagic circumstances in the French beef industry during the last decade or so, where cattle manure has been systematically mixed into the cattle fodder (cf. e.g. Bates 1999). Interestingly, little alarm has arisen in light of the diet of the average pig, which consumes leftovers from restaurants and other waste products, and the diet of the fox bred by the fur industry, which eats fodder made by the pulverised remnants of dead family pets such as cats, dogs and guinea pigs.

The chemically useful qualities of urine are also well known to the textile industry. During the industrial revolution in England, cattle urine, which has a high nitrogen content, was used in the dyeing and scouring of wool, cotton and silk. Often child labourers in their bare feet would be stamping in containers filled with urine and

¹ Pasolini's movie is based on the infamous book by the Marquis de Sade, *The One Hundred and Twenty Days of Sodom*.

textile sheets, a process that gives textile the strong colour of Prussian blue (cf. e.g. Stearns 1993). At around the same time, urine and faeces were also the key ingredients in the production of gunpowder and ammunition, though there is no known etymological relationship between ammonia and ammunition.² Since the Nuremberg trials following the Second World War, there have also been discussions and investigations about the Nazis' exploitation of human corpses and body parts for industrial purposes. Although mainstream historians have come to doubt the reliability of the witness accounts giving rise to these discussions, Claude Lanzmann's documentary film *Shoah* (1985), the narrative accounts of Kurt Vonnegut (1968) and Martin Amis (1991), and Ben Hirsch's (2000) biographical account all persist that the flesh and bones of dead human bodies murdered in the Nazi concentration camps first became ammonia, then soaps and candles, glues and explosives.

Throughout Western history both urine and faeces have also been utilised for their therapeutic properties. In his remarkable study entitled *History of Shit*, the psychoanalyst Dominique Laporte (2000: 98) reminds us that the Romans 'routinely claimed that both wounds and disease could be cured *cum stercore humano*' (i.e. "by human dung"). For example, Dioscurides, Apuleius, Catallus, Trabo and Diodorus of Sicily all attributed 'the whiteness of teeth and beards, the sturdy development of once-weak children, and the recovery of sharp vision to urine' (Laporte 2000: 98). They also prescribed the use of urine in the treatment of headaches and so-called feminine disorders, and the use of faeces as a cooling balm for burns and as a stinging

² The word ammunition, which has a French origin, is actually an army corruption of the word *munition*, which means fortification, defence or protection.

cleanser for festering wounds. Further on, whilst drawing on a compilation made by the prominent historian and philosopher of science Gaston Bachelard, Laporte informs us about the use of animal excreta in eighteenth century France. The scent *l'eau de Millefleurs*, for example, was made from distilled cow dung. *Stercus nigrum*, or rat droppings, was used against constipation, and when mixed with honey and onion juices it was seen as a certain cure for baldness. Urine continues to be utilised for therapeutic purposes, I have been informed by an acquaintance of mine working as a biochemistry researcher in one of the Pasteur research laboratories in France. As urine contains hormones as well as nitrogen and other substances, pharmaceutical companies have for the past ten years or so extracted oestrogen from women's urine and given this to women having complications during pregnancy due to oestrogen shortage. Such hormones were previously extracted bio-synthetically from the hypophysis or pituitary gland in the brain of dead female bodies.

Readers might be puzzled by the dwelling on these examples in a thesis on organisation theory. However, as they draw our attention to the body and the waste products of the body, they are central to the main argument developed in this thesis. The body is actually a site and an interface where two major themes in organisational theorising meet: *the organisation of production* (pursued in mainstream work) and *the production of organisation* (pursued in peripheral areas of the discipline). Whereas the mainstream I am referring to here is typified in contemporary US-style research

published in leading journals such as the *Academy of Management Review* (AMR) and *Administrative Science Quarterly* (ASQ) and exemplified by authors such as Jeffrey Pfeffer (1992), Lex Donaldson (1985, 1996) and Henry Mintzberg (1983, 1994), the periphery that I am referring to sometimes appears in European journals such as *Organization Studies* and *Organization* and may be exemplified by authors such as Gibson Burrell (1988), Robert Cooper (1989) and Robert Chia (1995). The organisation of production is basically about the internal workings of formal organisations and relates to how formal organisations go about their business in terms of activities such as planning, decision making, operations, production, human resource management, sales and marketing. Here, typically organisation is a bounded entity governed by an overall goal or more or less common purpose. In contrast, the production of organisation, which was first coined as a concept by Cooper and Burrell (1988) in the introductory article of their four-piece series on modernism, postmodernism and organisational analysis in *Organization Studies*, assumes a broader perspective of organisation. Here, Cooper and Burrell argue that

We need to see organization as a *process* that occurs within the wider “body” of society and which is concerned with the construction of objects of theoretical knowledge centred on the “social body”: health, disease, emotion, alienation, labour, etc. In other words, to understand organizations it is necessary to analyze them from the outside, as it were, and not from what is already organized. It becomes a question of analyzing, let us say, the production of organization rather than the organization of production (Cooper and Burrell 1989: 106).

From this, which still may be regarded as both path-breaking and peripheral work in organisation theory, arises a research programme concerned with two things in particular. First, it is concerned with the ways in which formal organisations are made possible in the first place, by activities of boundary-drawing, ordering and categorisation, such as the use of a particular language, computing system, accounting standard or statistical procedure, and the submission to timetables, dress codes and job descriptions. As such, organisation is not simply 'a social tool and an extension of human rationality' expressed in 'planned thought and calculative action'. Following Nietzsche, it is more a 'defensive reaction to forces intrinsic to the social body which constantly threaten the stability of organized life' (Cooper and Burrell 1989: 91). Consequently, it appears that the production of organisation incites an element of uncertainty that undermines the power and stability of organisation. The key aspect of the production of organisation, however, is that it is concerned with the ways in which organisation continues to order social life outside the boundaries of formal organisations. Our lives are not simply organised in the workplace. They continue to be so through discourses and institutions that make us think and act in certain ways both at home and in public space. Surveillance technology in city centres and on the motorway, advertising campaigns on television and in glossy magazines, and rules and regulations for appropriate behaviour influence how we live our everyday lives in a contemporary modern society. As such, the production of organisation may be as goal-directed or purposive as the organisation of production. But even if it seeks to institute boundaries on the conduct of social life and to some extent makes possible the boundaries of formal organisations, it is not restricted to the boundaries of formal organisational entities.

In sum, then, this thesis associates organisation with boundaries and purpose. These themes are perhaps most clearly articulated in mainstream organisation theory, where formal organisational entities are distinguished from the rest of the world through their capacity to maintain their boundaries against the environment, and the assumption that organisations are driven by a common purpose (cf. e.g. Barnard 1938). Moreover, since Weber's (1947) writings on bureaucracy, organisations have been associated with a hierarchical division of labour made possible by the institution and maintenance of boundaries between the various people, roles and responsibilities within the organisation. However, it can also be argued that a somewhat different division of labour is produced by processes of organisation that institute and maintain boundaries that separate different groups of people in society, by which some groups are stigmatised whilst others are valorised and by which some groups gain power to dominate others. This latter aspect of organisation, which alludes to the notion of "labours of division" (cf. e.g. Hetherington and Munro 1998; Dale 2001), will be dealt with in parts of the thesis. On the whole, however, I shall not be concerned with the division of labour and labours of division in an explicit sense.

As we see from the examples above, the body and its waste products is used commercially in the organisation of production, by companies and other organisational entities that seek to organise their production processes as rationally as possible. The body is therefore located inside the organisation of production – and in many instances at the very centre of organisations of production, which benefit from utilising human and animal excreta as raw material. But in order to be exploited commercially, and by being exploited in industrial production processes, the body and its waste products are also at the centre of the production of organisation. If we

assume like Mary Douglas (1966) that dirt, disorder and disorganisation is simply “matter out of place”, urine and faeces cease to be dirty and disgusting when removed from the areas of urban dwelling and relocated within the ammoniapolis outside the city where they are transformed into artificial fertilisers, textile dyes and explosives. And dead bodies cease to be dirty and disgusting when supplied to the glue factory. In other words, *the production of organisation turns disorder into order*. Bodies and bodily waste products, which initially are matters of disorder, disorganisation or nonorganisation, become matters of order and organisation when subjected to the production of organisation.

I am not suggesting here that the terms *disorder*, *disorganisation* and *nonorganisation* are synonymous. *Disorder* is often used normatively in everyday language as another word for mayhem, havoc or ragnarokk. As I shall discuss later, there is also a notable difference between disorganisation, which by some organisation theorists is treated as a bizarre or inferior version of organisation (e.g. Tsoukas 1998a), and what I call nonorganisation. *Disorganisation*, which is mounted on the natural science understanding of “chaos as nonlinear order” (cf. e.g. Stewart 1989; Cohen and Stewart 1994), preserves some sense of teleology or goal-direction and may be reduced to a matter of organisation. *Nonorganisation*, on the other hand, is irreducible to organisation. Nonorganisation is most certainly not about different members of an organisational entity working towards conflicting goals. Nonorganisation is about not having or working towards any set goals at all and refers to the creative forces of excess that disrupt, subvert and escape organisation altogether. Despite these differences, disorder, disorganisation and nonorganisation alike do stand in contrast to what we tend to think of as order and organisation. And even if the production of

organisation can never fully turn the disorderly, disorganised and nonorganisational matters of bodies and bodily waste products into clean matters of order and organisation, this is certainly the direction in which it is working. Most notably, this has recently been recognised by two established professors in organisation theory, Robert Cooper (in Chia and Kallinikos 1998) and Robert Chia (1998a). Albeit in brief, and by reference to the same text, they have highlighted the training of bodily functions and the private and public management of bodily waste as crucial to the rational organisation of modern society since Victorian times.

My preoccupation with the body is of the same order as Foucault's. Whilst Foucault speaks in terms of the pervasive microphysics of power and the overarching biopolitics (or bio-power) that write themselves upon and regulate the body into a body-politic, I am concerned in this thesis with the organisation of production and the production of organisation that impose themselves upon and organise the body. In Foucault's words, "power" and the "body". In my own words, but without reducing Foucault's terms to my own, "organisation" and the "body". Like Foucault, I am interested in the body politic, i.e. the ways in which the body is organised to become an organism, an organised body. This is no coincidence. As Karen Dale (2001) shows in her groundbreaking book, which is the first systematic and detailed treatise of the body in organisation theory, it is the body that gives us organisation: 'The idea of "organisation" stems from that of "organ". It derives directly from the structured view of the body [...]' (Dale 2001: 116). Consulting the Oxford English Dictionary, one learns about the etymological links between the body and organisation. In the Renaissance, organisation was an activity performed by the anatomist in the anatomy theatre, at the dissection table, with the scalpel in hand. To organise was to furnish a

body with organs, i.e. to turn a body into an organism. And since the writings of Elton Mayo (1933), the organism has provided one of the most significant metaphors for thinking about formal organisations (e.g. Katz and Kahn 1966; Lawrence and Lorsch 1967; Kast and Rosenzweig 1973; Morgan 1986).

This is only one side of the story. The organisation of the body is by no means obvious. It is only in anatomy textbooks and other medical teaching aids that the organs of the body are to be found in predictable places. Once cut open, a body might reveal a structure deviant from that portrayed in the placards and dummies of the medical school classroom. An internal organ such as a lung or the heart of an individual corpse might not lie exactly where the anatomist would normally expect to find it. Therefore, in spite of the continuous efforts to organise the body, the body cannot be reduced to a matter of organisation.

Bodies are surrounded, penetrated and constituted by powerful forces of nonorganisation that *disrupt the boundaries of organisation*. Deleuze and Guattari (1988) bring out this point – perhaps more clearly than Foucault – in their writing about creative involution, which springs out of their more general emphasis on becoming. Commenting on Deleuze and Guattari’s notions of creative involution and becoming, which here concerns the relations between animal bodies, the philosopher Keith Ansell Pearson (1999) states that ‘Becoming is of a different order than filiation simply because it concerns alliances which cut across phyletic lineages’ and allow for “‘the dance between the most disparate things’” (Ansell Pearson 1999: 162; 68). Like Charles Darwin in *The Origin of Species* (1859), Deleuze and Guattari’s favourite example concerns the symbiotic and sympathetic relationship between the wasp and the orchid. But unlike Darwin, who used this example to illustrate the complexity of

natural selection, Deleuze and Guattari use it ‘in order to show how living matter can evade or transform “selective pressures”’ (Ansell Pearson 1999: 144). According to Deleuze and Guattari, the wasp and the orchid are not distinct beings separated by complete and watertight boundaries. Instead, they engage each other in processes of transversal communication that disrupt, undermine and transgress boundaries between species, phyla and kingdoms. The wasp and the orchid use one another and need one another to reproduce. The wasp, for example, does not simply evolve from a rudimentary to a more mature stage of what it means to be a wasp, but is a wasp becoming-orchid. Similarly, the orchid is not an orchid, but an orchid becoming-wasp. This means that the boundaries between the wasp and the orchid are not stable, complete and always maintained, but leaky, permeable and unstable. I shall say more about this nonorganisational and boundary-disrupting notion of embodiment in chapter 7.

However, before moving on it is worth noticing that both in his own work and in his work with Guattari, Deleuze develops a number of ways to think (at least implicitly) about how nonorganisational embodiment disrupts the boundaries of organisation (e.g. Deleuze 1988a, 1988b, 1992; Deleuze and Guattari 1988). The well-known notion of the “body without organs” is perhaps the clearest example of this (cf. Deleuze and Guattari 1988). The body without organs is not literally a body void of organs; ‘The BwO is opposed not to the organs but to the organization of the organs called the organism’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 158). Rather, ‘it is an inevitable exercise or experimentation’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 149); it is a body that invites us to change our bodily habits and ways of life by experimenting with what a body can do. And as such, it is a body that disrupts and goes beyond the

organisational boundaries of the organism. Although the boundaries instituted and maintained by the organism make possible certain forms of lived embodiment they do by no means capture the entire force, capacity and complexity of the body. Nonorganisation means that no body can ever be fully organised as a stable bounded entity. The body is out of bounds. And it is this exclusion that gives rise to the subject of this thesis: *disrupting boundaries*.

The relationship between organisation, boundaries and the body is an ambiguous one that needs to be examined in some detail. This might be done through the example of Western public health, which I shall investigate, at greater length, in the next chapter. As we shall see, public health is a micro-physics of power and a bio-politics or bio-power that joins the organisation of production and the production of organisation in its attempt to organise our bodies in everyday life. Insofar as public health constitutes an empirical example of the production of organisation, the organisational aspects of public health cannot be reduced to the bounded entities or formal organisations that carry out its policies and strategies – be they research laboratories, public policy units or regulatory agencies. As the sociologists Petersen and Lupton (1996) suggest, public health is much bigger than that and should not be defined in terms of specific services or forms of property, but in terms of its level of analysis. Whilst other strands of medicine are primarily concerned with the individual body, public health is more concerned with bodies in groups in an interactionist sense and how they live in relation to their environment. Hence, it is the population that is the object and target of the detailed knowledge systems and strategies that service public health. This commitment to the population puts public health in an ambiguous relationship to boundaries and organisation. On the one hand, it institutes boundaries, and on the

other hand, it cuts across boundaries. I shall deal with the latter first. In this discussion, boundaries should not be regarded as complete, stable and unbreachable, but recognised as leaky, unstable and permeable, as always in the making and never fully completed. And as I shall discuss in chapter 5, Robert Cooper (1990) draws attention to at least the unstable and incomplete nature of boundaries whilst underlining their ambiguity. Boundaries do not only belong to the system, but also to the “outside” environment. They are meeting places.

It cannot be denied that public health operates from a number of formal organisations that themselves are defined by the boundaries that distinguish them from the rest of the world. Biochemical and pharmaceutical research and production laboratories, health policy units and regulatory agencies, and community health clinics and public information offices are all part of a vast network of formal organisations that work for the improvement of the public’s health. But simultaneously, public health needs to cut across these same boundaries, both in order to organise how we live with our bodies in the everyday and in order to reach its espoused objective of a good public health for the entire population. This is the only way it can try and make sure that we take care of our own bodies and relate to other people and their bodies in ways that do not put our own health and the health of other people at risk. Moreover, this is the only way that public health can become what it is. That is, public health can only become public to the extent that its formal organisations are capable of cutting across their own boundaries and work actively with and on the public. As a consequence, public health is defined at least as much by what goes on outside its organisational entities as it is by what happens inside of them. And more importantly, our lives are not just organised to the extent that we work and dwell in organisations. Life is further

organised to the extent that public health manages to organise what we do outside of these same organisations. This is why it is not sufficient to investigate the internal structures and processes that characterise the formal organisations of public health. That is not where public health, or organisation for that matter, begins or ends. Rather, it is crucial to study public health in terms of the strategies, practices and activities that precede and exceed these same formal organisations.

However, public health does not merely cut across boundaries. As noted above, public health is also about the institution and drawing of boundaries, and it is this that makes it an organisational practice in the first place. The public health authorities seek to confine, differentiate and organise the population by instituting and controlling boundaries between bodies and by placing boundaries upon the things that bodies can do. Although insisting on different health problems being related across boundaries (for example between the private and the public, between one country and another, between the body and its environment), public health continues to institute boundaries that differentiate and classify the population into different groups and categories. The result is a mode of organisation that on a general plane seeks to separate the unhealthy from the healthy, the dirty from the clean and high-risk groups from low-risk groups. Public health as a whole is however underpinned by a fundamental discontinuity. Different public health regimes have adopted different techniques, instituted different kinds of boundaries and implemented the production of organisation differently. I shall maintain this sense of discontinuity in my investigation of public health in the next chapter.

Another sense of discontinuity also emerges in the context of public health and boundaries, organisation and embodiment. Although public health seeks to organise

how we live with our bodies in the everyday, it can never do so fully and completely. We eat stuff that is deemed unhealthy, we smoke and drink more than we are told is good for us, and we enjoy intimate relationships that allegedly put our sexual health at risk. Also, we do not clean ourselves enough, or we clean ourselves too much, sometimes developing skin allergies as a result. Consequently, the organisational boundaries of public health are discontinued and disrupted by the nonorganisational forces of embodiment itself. Whilst the body is a site on which the organisation of production and the production of organisation meet and interact, it poses a problem for the workings of organisation. And as such, it poses a problem for the discipline of organisation theory. This gives rise to three questions, which provide the starting point of this thesis. *First, how does organisation theory deal with the problem of the body? Second, how should organisation theory deal with the problem of the body? And third, what implications does this have for how we, as organisation theorists, should think about organisation?*

Given the abundance of bodily metaphors in organisation theory (for example the notions of the corporate headquarter, corporate foot soldiers, corporate anorexia, the heart of the organisation, the slimming down of operations, headhunting, and indeed the organism metaphor itself), I must insist that this is not another attempt to make us think about organisations as if they were organisms. Instead, it is an attempt to put the body at the centre of organisational theorising. *First, by critically analysing how various processes seek to organise the body. And second, by drawing attention to the ways in which bodies precede and exceed, disrupt, undermine and escape organisation.*

The body that I want to introduce into organisation theory is therefore the concrete and very physical body of flesh and blood, bones and tissue, pains and pleasures, and habits and desires. This is the body that makes life possible and through which life is lived. This is the gendered, sexual body and ethnic body; the queer and straight body; the ill and healthy body; the young, ageing and dying body; the ugly and beautiful body; the clean and dirty body; the anorexic and obese body; the hungry, starving and saturated body; the suffering and violent body; the moving and arrested body; the painful and joyous body; the emotional and thinking body; the consuming, working and creative body. This is the human, non-human and transhuman body, the same and different body, the normal, deviant and abject body. This is the organised and nonorganisational body. This is the body that for decades has been an absent body, a body excluded from the social sciences by the Cartesian mind/body dualism because it poses a problem for the rational mind and because it can be all the things above and many more (cf. Leder 1990; Shilling 1993; Dale 2001). Surely, this body cannot be reduced to the status of a metaphorical body as an insubstantiated, rhetorical trope.

Feminism, from the work of Simone de Beauvoir (1997), was the first strand of thought to introduce the body into the social sciences. Although feminism does not necessarily imply a concern with all the aspects of embodiment mentioned above, many of them are dealt with in feminist work and all of them can be dealt with from a feminist perspective. Bodily difference is a central theme in feminism (e.g. Firestone 1972; Wittig 1981, 1987; Kristeva 1982; Irigaray 1985; Jaggar and Bordo 1989; Butler 1990, 1993; Bordo 1993; Grosz 1994; Grosz and Probyn 1995). This means that feminism deals with and may enable organisation theorists to deal with the ways in which bodily difference is constructed by organisational processes within and

without the boundaries of formal organisations. Moreover, it can help organisation theorists recognise and deal with the ways in which bodily difference disrupts, undermines and escapes such organisational processes and constructions.

In his recent piece in the anthology *Body and Organization*, Martin Parker (2000) warns about the potential problems of making the body our centre of attention. Parker is particularly worried that the increasing interest amongst social scientists in the body will lead to what he calls “deceptive materialism” (Parker 2000: 72); that once we know what the body is we can understand how it is constructed and organised. This materialism is deceptive because it supposedly gives us a point at which analysis can begin and end. For me, however, bringing the body into organisation theory is not a question of analytical closure, but openness. Unlike biomedicine, which seeks a finite understanding of what the body is, the approach that I am proposing here does not pursue the production of a complete knowledge about the body. The complexity and dynamism of embodiment means that we can never fully know what a body is and what a body can and cannot do. We can only begin to experiment with what a body can do. This is why the body becomes so important for organisation theory. If we cannot know what a body can do, we must also recognise that the body cannot be fully and completely organised.

So far, I have spoken largely in terms of “the body”. But as Karen Dale (2001) insists, this is a highly problematic concept. “The body” might easily give the impression that one is talking about one homogeneous and uniform body, a body that is rather similar to the biomedical organism, an already organised body that can only look a certain way and can only do certain things. Also, the notion of “*the* body” or even “*a* body” runs the risk of reification; the body becomes a stable thing or object, a bounded

entity impervious to change. Dealing with this problem, Dale chooses to speak in terms of “embodiment” rather than “the body”. “Embodiment” signifies more obviously the processual and dynamic aspects of what it means to be a body, aspects that should become clearer when I in chapter 7 deal with the nonorganisational workings of bodies and embodiment. Simply getting rid of the notion of “the body” or “a body” has however proven extremely difficult, especially when dealing with the more empirical context of public health and when examining the works of others dealing with body-issues. And doing so is by no means a guarantee for avoiding reification. The reader will therefore find that I speak in terms of both “the body” and “bodies”, “a body” and “embodiment” throughout this thesis, and the meaning of each term should become clear given the specific context in which it is used.

As already indicated, this thesis is about how organisation theory deals with and should deal with the problem of the body. But before actually investigating this, I shall in chapter 2 elaborate on various ways in which the body is a problem for organisation, thus becoming a site where the organisation of production and the production of organisation meet. This is done through the example of public health. Public health brings together formal organisations of production and the production of organisation in an attempt to organise bodies in everyday life, at the level of populations. Although the major concern of this chapter is with the New Public Health of contemporary modern societies, particularly in the West, I do also deal at length with four other public health regimes: the Great Confinement, the Victorian Sanitary Movement, Pasteurian Public Health and Eugenic Public Health. These regimes of what one might call the “Old Public Health” all provide a necessary background and contrast to the New Public Health, as they help us recognise the

different organisational principles employed to tackle different bodies and different problems of health and embodiment in different historical contexts. And the discontinuities between all these regimes raise questions about the durability and power, not only of individual public health regimes or public health as a whole, but of organisation in general. And consequently, it draws attention to the methodological question of how one can study the ways in which organisation theory deals with, and should deal with, the problem of the body.

In chapter 3, I turn my attention to this methodological question. My answer is to propose a *conceptualist methodology* and a method of *concept analysis* developed from the works of Georges Canguilhem (1989, 1994), Michel Foucault (1970, 1972, 1979) and Gilles Deleuze (1988c), three French twentieth century thinkers who are all part of the same but not homogeneous intellectual tradition. In general, the method, or perhaps *methods* of “concept analysis” that are legitimised by my “conceptualist methodology” first make possible the critical analysis of the concept of organisation and the concept of embodiment in different strands of organisation theory. And it makes possible the critical analysis of how these strands do or do not deal with the problem of the body. Further on, it makes possible the critical analysis of a concept of embodiment that may enable organisation theory to create a concept of organisation that recognises the fragility as well as the power of organisation. Insofar as this conceptualist methodology pursues not only the critical analysis of previous conceptualisations, but also the creation of new concepts of organisation, and insofar as philosophy is a matter of concept creation, it also provides a starting point for how

we as organisation theorists might develop a philosophy of organisation.³ The various ways in which Canguilhem, Foucault and Deleuze contribute to this conceptualist methodology will be clarified in this chapter.

In the remaining chapters this methodology is put to work. In chapter 4, I analyse the concept of “organisation” in mainstream organisation theory by (i) examining the intellectual roots giving rise to this concept, (ii) identifying the main characteristics of this concept, and (iii) assessing the ways in which this concept of organisation deals with the problem of the body. Although it may be problematic to treat this as one single conceptualisation of organisation, the shared preoccupation amongst different authors makes it possible to at least speak in terms of one (if not one single) concept. I trace this concept of organisation in the following literature: First, in the work of L. J. Henderson (1935), Elton Mayo (1933) and Talcott Parsons (1951, 1956a, 1956b), who were all conjoined in the Harvard Pareto Circle, and who all preceded the founding of organisation theory as a distinct academic discipline. Second, in the work of the three classical organisation theorists Philip Selznick (1949), Peter Blau (e.g. 1955) and W. Richard Scott (e.g. 1981). Third, in the work of the Australian organisation theorist and positivist Lex Donaldson (1985) from the 1980s. And fourth, in more recent textbook and encyclopaedia entries by Andrzej Huczynski and David Buchanan

³ I realise that invoking the term “we” might be problematic in this context, as it may be seen to suggest that the discipline of organisation theory is underpinned by some sense of unitary consensus or common identity. However, this is not my intention, and – as my further discussion indicates – I seek to recognise the discontinuous and some times antagonistic relationships between different strands of organisation theory. For example, a philosophy of organisation – as opposed to a more descriptive and empirically oriented organisation theory – is not necessarily everyone’s “cup of tea”. Nevertheless, events such as “The Philosophy of Organization” workgroup, which since the year 2000 has been a standing workgroup at EGOS, indicate an increasing interest in developing organisation theory along the lines of a philosophy of organisation, and it is this expanding, albeit heterogeneous, population of organisation theorists that constitutes the “we” in this context.

(1991), Paul Thompson and David McHugh (1990), and Arndt Sorge (1996). I do so because these figures have had a demonstrable impact on the formation of organisation theory in terms of institutions, book sales and intellectual influence. Their work also brings out the central themes of mainstream organisation theory in a “representative” way.

In chapter 5, I analyse what concept of organisation is pursued in a more peripheral area of organisation theory that is more preoccupied with organisational processes than formal organisational entities. Beginning with a brief examination of the influence of Weber in this strand of thought and a brief discussion of the processual concept of organisation developed by Karl Weick (1969, 1979), I devote most of this chapter to the thinking of Robert Cooper (1976, 1990), Haridimos Tsoukas (1998a) and Robert Chia (1995, 1998a). Here, I inquire into the main characteristics of the concept of organisation emerging out of their work and I continue to ask how this concept of organisation deals with the problem of the body.

In chapter 6, I turn my attention to different implicit or explicit concepts of embodiment developed in the quite recent and highly peripheral strand of thought in organisation theory that claims to actually focus its research efforts on the body. Again, I am concerned to find out how these thinkers deal with the problem of the body. First, however, I investigate some of the feminist and sociological research that has inspired and influenced work in this area. The first section deals with feminist research outside organisation theory (Judith Butler 1990, 1993; Susan Bordo 1993; Sandra Lee Bartky 1988; Luce Irigaray 1985) and with feminist research inside organisation theory (Arlie Hochschild 1983, the journal *Gender, Work and Organization*, and Karen Dale 2001). In the second section I analyse the concept of

embodiment in the sociology of the body as represented in the works of Bryan Turner (1992, 1996), Nick Crossley (1995), and Simon Williams and Gillian Bendelow (1998). And in the third section I examine attempts made by organisation theorists to deal with the problem of the body, including Burrell (1984), Cooper and Burrell (1988) and the anthology *Body and Organization*. At the end of this chapter I return to Karen Dale's (2001) project. Three main ways of dealing with the body are identified across the writers examined in this chapter: the organisation of the body, the embodiment of organisation, and nonorganisational embodiment.

In the penultimate chapter 7, I continue to investigate nonorganisational embodiment by analysing some of the concepts of embodiment developed by Gilles Deleuze. From his starting point in a philosophy of becoming in which the concept of the virtual is very central, I turn to examine three of his conceptualisations in depth: the Spinozist body; creative involution and becoming-other; and the body without organs. I end the chapter by discussing how Deleuze, on a more general level, thinks about nonorganic and organic forms of embodiment.

In the concluding chapter 8, I attempt to bring together the main arguments made throughout the thesis and sketch out the main elements of what I choose to call a *monstrous organisation theory*; that is, an organisation theory pursued in a space of boundaries and an organisation theory capable of *disrupting boundaries*. Here, Deleuze's thinking about nonorganisational embodiment is used to raise an important challenge to the discipline: *How should organisation theory deal with the problem of the body, and what implications does this notion of embodiment have upon how we, as*

*organisation theorists, should think about organisation?*⁴ The conclusion is therefore *not* simply a summary of previous chapters. In addition, the conceptualist method emerging out of Deleuze and Guattari's (1994) notion of philosophy as concept creation is employed in the creation and invention of a new monstrous concept of organisation. Insofar as one accepts the DeleuzoGuattarian notion of philosophy, the creation and invention of new concepts of organisation constitutes the first step in developing a philosophy of organisation. Of course, the monstrous concept developed here is not completely different from what has been said before. But it seeks to explicate the implications that the problem of the body has upon organisation by recognising the excess power of bodies that disrupts and makes organisation and its boundaries less stable and less powerful than we often realise. As such, this concept of organisation constitutes a platform from which the philosophy of organisation may be developed.

⁴ This "we" is somewhat broader than the "we" invoked on p. 27. It not only refers to organisation theorists concerned with the philosophy of organisation (or issues of embodiment for that matter), but includes the discipline at large. Even if many organisation theorists may not be convinced by the proposed connection between embodiment and organisation, it is the discipline as a whole that I want to address.

Chapter 2

Public Health and the Organisation of Bodies in Everyday Life

2.1 Introduction

As I argued in my introductory chapter, the body is a site and an interface whereupon two major themes in organisational theorising meet: the *organisation of production* and the *production of organisation*. The body, which is a carnal, messy and enigmatic matter very much alive and teeming, is targeted by the organisation of production through formal organisations and by the production of organisation through processes seeking to order social life within and without the boundaries of formal organisations. As both themes imply (though rarely explicate) a quest for organising the body through the institution and maintenance of boundaries, the body poses a problem for organisation. Western public health is an example of how formal organisations of production as well as the more general processes of the production of organisation meet to organise bodies in everyday life. Since the body poses a problem for organisation, it also poses a problem for public health. But as I indicated in the previous chapter, it is not only as a target that the body poses a problem for the organisational projects of public health. The body is a problem because bodies are capable of disrupting the organisational boundaries of public health; we do not always do what we are advised or told to do by the public health authorities; for example, we often eat and drink stuff that might increase the risk of developing coronary heart disease.

Before I in the remaining chapters turn to the more general question of how organisation theory deals with and should deal with the problem of the body, I shall in

this chapter elaborate on how public health – as an *organisational regime* – deals with the problem of the body. In other words, how does public health seek to organise bodies in everyday life? The notion of an “organisational regime” should in this context be understood in terms of Foucault’s (1979, 1980) notion of power-knowledge regimes, i.e. as the rules, regulations and regularities that are instituted for the production of order and organisation (cf. also Foucault 1972). As an organisational regime, public health should therefore be understood in terms of the rules, regulations and regularities that are instituted for the production of order and organisation on the body.

The principal task and overall objective of public health in the West is to prevent the spread and occurrence of disease, illness and injuries and to promote and improve the health and wellbeing of the population.⁵ Western public health seeks to do so through a vast network of formal organisations in the State apparatus such as biochemical and pharmaceutical research and production laboratories, public policy units and regulatory agencies, public information offices and community health clinics. In addition, there are numerous companies that profit from increasing health consciousness across the population. This includes gyms and fitness centres, manufacturers of so-called healthy foods (for example of bran, rye and yoghurts and of light versions of butter, cheese and sauces), pharmaceutical companies and chemists, and manufacturers, distributors and retailers of sports gear and sports

⁵ Health and wellbeing are highly problematic concepts in that different people may have different views of what good health and wellbeing is about. Western public health authorities today do however tend to generalise these notions and define them in terms of a person’s ability to participate in work and to work at leisure activities.

equipment. Ideally, an investigation of public health should therefore deal with such organisations in some detail. After all, it is these organisations of production that institute the production of organisation that is meant to organise how entire populations live with their individual bodies. But since the real power of public health is that it organises bodies beyond its own formal organisations, it is the production of organisation through public health that attracts my major attention here. Foucault's (1979) concept of bio-power, which refers to the mass of techniques driven to organise bodies and populations, brings out the key characteristics of the production of organisation. Hence, it may help us view the production of organisation instituted by a public health concerned to improve the health and wellbeing of the population in a more general context:

During the classical period, there was a rapid development of various disciplines – universities, secondary schools, barracks, workshops; there was also the emergence, in the field of political practices and economic observation, of the problems of birthrate, longevity, public health, housing, and migration. Hence there was an explosion of numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugation of bodies and the control of populations, marking the beginning of an era of “bio-power” (Foucault 1979: 140).

Although public health is preoccupied on the whole with the organisation of bodies and populations, it is important to recognise that the history and practice of public health is one of discontinuity. Different public health regimes have applied different strategies in different countries at different points in time and thereby instituted different principles of organisation. Significant discontinuities in these organisational schemata may include the shift from miasmatic theory to germ theory towards the end

of the nineteenth century as well as the shift towards an increasingly lifestyle-oriented public health during the last decades of the twentieth century. Additionally, one cannot ignore the many discontinuities that underpin the conduct of public health within one type of society at a certain point in time, as public health authorities try to tackle a wide range of different health problems. Public health policies in contemporary Western societies, for example, are spread out across an extensive patchwork of various organisational practices, stretching from mass vaccination programmes to nation-wide health education campaigns.

Given the discontinuous nature of public health, it is crucial to recognise that the practices investigated in this chapter are not seen to actualise a principle of organisation that is universal to or equally embedded in all the different areas of public health. Instead the assumption is made that public health operates by a heterogeneous set of different organisational principles that must be carefully examined in light of the particular practices that bring them forward. In this chapter, I shall trace therefore the production of organisation through a limited sample of public health regimes. This is an attempt to identify the specific organisational practices that are at work in each one of these regimes and to examine the distinctive ways in which these variations on bio-power organise bodies and populations. In order to do so, I will deal with some of the different practices that have come to shape public health throughout its history. This is obviously quite different from writing a conventional history-project, as that would call for an all-inclusive and fully chronological account of the history of public health. Indeed, the conventional historian might find my study incomplete, inadequate and irrelevant, in that my tracing of discontinuities in the organisation of bodies gives rise to a highly selective study of public health. The

sanitary arrangements of the Ancients, for example, which often is seen to mark the beginning of the history of public health (e.g. Rosen 1993), is left out. What this enables me to do, however, is to identify five different regimes of public health, all of which exemplify how the production of organisation writes itself onto the ways in which we live with our bodies in the everyday. The five regimes examined are the following: the Great Confinement, the Victorian Sanitary Movement, Pasteurian Public Health, Eugenic Public Health, and the New Public Health – in that order. These regimes are chosen because they are the most obvious, the most written about, and the most inclusive from a Western perspective.

2.2 The Great Confinement

During the seventeenth century, public health (if we can employ this term to practices of that period) was part of the medico-political and organisational regime that Foucault (1967) calls the Great Confinement and Goffman (1961) refers to as the rise of total institutions.⁶ Prior to the Great Confinement, medicine had been the private province of wealthy patrons, who could afford to be looked after by private male doctors. The general population, on the other hand, resorted to folk medicine and witchcraft executed by barbers and wise women, and it was only with the Great Confinement that medicine became public, i.e. concerned with large numbers of people at the level of the population.

⁶ Although Foucault is primarily interested in the effects that the Great Confinement had upon the treatment of madness in the Classical Age, he acknowledges that the insane constituted only one strata of a much larger target group implicated in this system of governance.

Under the Great Confinement, which Foucault (1967: 46) characterises as a “‘police’ matter’, the impoverished, unemployed and disease-ridden working classes were conceived as major threats to the social order and to the health and wellbeing of the upper classes. They were therefore lumped together in large numbers in penitentiary institutions such as workhouses, poorhouses, madhouses and asylums. Indicating the scale of the Great Confinement, Foucault writes that:

more than one out of every hundred inhabitants of the city of Paris found themselves confined there, within several months (1967: 38).

Further on, Foucault argues that the Great Confinement served an economic function in that ‘Throughout Europe [...] It constituted one of the answers the seventeenth century gave to an economic crisis that affected the entire Western world: reduction in wages, unemployment, scarcity of coin’ (1967: 49). In times of recession, the Great Confinement prevented the poor, unemployed and thieving working classes from stealing, plundering and uprising. In times of recovery, it provided the same people with work, ‘thus making them contribute to the prosperity of all’ (1967: 51). Moreover, work was (and I would argue that it still is) thought to have a leading effect on morale as it diverted the person away from self-indulgence and crime.

But even though this relationship between economy and morality goes some way in explaining the rise of the Great Confinement, it is also necessary to look at the ways in which the public health of the Great Confinement operated as an organisational regime. Like dirt, the poor were treated as matter out of place, and the authorities put great efforts into forcing this part of the population into a bounded and limited space within which they could mind their own business whilst being separated from the rest

of society. Since the main objective was to stop certain people from getting out and about and into the streets and quarters frequented by healthy, wealthy and decent citizens, this regime was in principle little else than a formalised version of the ghetto, only with narrower and more formally imposed boundaries. Although work, which transforms and utilises bodies as labour power was an important aspect of everyday life in the asylum, the training and disciplining of the body and the treatment of somatic and mental illness was still not exercised and regulated through any coherent system.

The importance during the Great Confinement of maintaining a bounded sense of space may exemplify Robert Cooper's understanding of organisation as "simple location". Cooper takes this term from Whitehead (1925: 72) and employs it to make sense of Foucault's (1973, 1977b) understanding of the gaze as 'a major strategy of modern organizing' (Cooper in an interview with Chia and Kallinikos 1998: 137). More specifically, Cooper's reference to simple location is concerned with the ways in which the world is formed by regimes of knowledge and made to exist as identifiable things with a definite and finite place in space and time. The long-term confinement of the poor within the bounded space of the penitentiary institution materialises this organisational principle in that it implies the localisation of a particular portion of society within a limited space.

Simple location clearly provided a solution for the Great Confinement. However, the way in which simple location operated under this regime was also part of the problem. As the penitentiary institution made little effort to discipline the ongoing inside its own boundaries and actually treat disease, illness and mental disorders, and as urban populations continued to grow rapidly throughout the nineteenth century, confinement

of the diseased proved increasingly difficult. Moreover, as epidemics such as cholera continued to kill thousands of people, it was recognised that this regime did little to contain, let alone cure disease itself. In fact, mortality was much higher inside the penitentiary institutions than outside, and few people who entered a poorhouse or asylum were likely to come out alive. As a result, provoked urban masses rioted in the streets of European cities demanding the system to be abolished. Though far from giving a complete explanation, these factors may together help us understand why towards the middle of the nineteenth century the Great Confinement gave way to the Victorian Sanitary Movement. As we shall see, the organisational principle of simple location may be more closely associated with the Victorian Sanitary Movement than with the Great Confinement. This does not mean that the continuity of simple location as an organisational principle should be exaggerated. The way in which simple location operates under the Victorian Sanitary Movement is rather different from the way in which it operates under the Great Confinement.

2.3 The Victorian Sanitary Movement

The Victorian Sanitary Movement is an interesting case, not just because of its role in creating a formal system of public health institutions and procedures, but also because it has already been recognised as an organisational regime by other organisation theorists. Robert Cooper and Robert Chia, two of the most prominent advocates of processual thinking in organisation theory, highlight the Victorian Sanitary Movement as an example of the production of organisation, or “generic organisation” as Cooper also calls it. Chia (1998a) does so in his editorial introduction to his *Festschrift* to Cooper, whilst Cooper invokes this example in an interview by Chia and Kallinikos (1998), which appears at the end of the same *Festschrift*. Both Cooper and Chia draw

upon and make some thoughtful remarks about a text written by the nineteenth century historian Richard Schoenwald (1973). In this text, which appears as a book chapter in an anthology on urban culture in Victorian England, Schoenwald (1973: 669) argues that the Victorians ‘found dirt horrifying’ and that numerous technological, legislative and administrative devices were instituted in order to ‘reduce some of the filth in growing cities.’ Schoenwald’s main interest, however, lies with the psychological dimensions of the Victorian Sanitary Movement, and he draws attention to the colonisation of the very private by the public by dealing specifically with the various techniques applied to train and discipline the urban citizen and create social order on a mass scale in the industrial centres of nineteenth century England. The Victorian Sanitary Movement and the training of excretory functions figure prominently in Schoenwald’s account:

The control of excretory behaviour furnished the most accessible approach on a mass basis to inculcating habits of orderliness. The sanitary reformers wanted to break man’s self-indulgent unboundedness by making him learn certain ways of behaving which he would repeat every day of his existence. They determined to remove with impersonal finality the products of his body. If man could be forced to yield to interference in such a sensitive domain [i.e. excretory behaviour], he could be made to acquiesce in any kind of control: he could be made to learn many ways of binding his energy, he could be pressed into modernity (Schoenwald 1973: 675; my addition).

This point is picked up by both Chia (1998a: 2-4; 9) and Cooper (in Chia and Kallinikos 1998: 137-138). Early on in his text, Chia (1998a: 2) quotes two statements from Schoenwald (1973). The first deals with the emphasis on teaching people to

fundamentally change personal habits that are unacceptable to the norms of rationalised urban life:

Learning that some smells are good, and that others are bad, re-enacts the great scene in man's developmental history when he began to walk erect. He could not maintain erect posture and still yield to the array of tempting aromas at ground level which drew his less highly developed [animal] forebears. [...] Stand up straight and act like a human being! You have to learn how to live with other people, with lots of them in big cities, and you have to learn that they can't find your smells as beguiling as you do, or everyone will be down on all fours and riot and rampage will run in the streets! Turn your nose away from the smell of lower parts, turn your eyes and your mind to higher things! (Schoenwald quoted in Chia 1998a: 2; Chia's omission).⁷

Chia then invokes a second quote from Schoenwald, which highlights the notion that 'things have their rightful and wrongful places' (1998a: 2). This also alludes to the notion of organisation as simple location referred to in my discussion of the Great Confinement, even if in a different way. Whereas the Great Confinement instituted an organisation of simple location seeking to locate particular people in particular places, the Victorian Sanitary Movement sought to identify and locate particular things and objects in particular places:

⁷ Chia does not indicate that he omits the word "animal" from Schoenwald's original. I have therefore added it back in.

Industrialized society rests on order; order means everything in its place; dirt is whatever is not where it should be; the meanings of dirt held most deeply because learned earliest relate to bodily operations; then a society bent on order should put the body into order by putting order into the body; society gains order by “training” (Schoenwald quoted in Chia 1998a: 2).

Reading Schoenwald’s own text, one understands that this statement is in direct alignment with the perspective brought forward by the anthropologist Mary Douglas (1966) a few years earlier, which is inspired by Freud’s idea that ‘Dirt is matter in the wrong place’ (Freud quoted in Schoenwald 1973: 673). In her seminal work *Purity and Danger*, which is more broadly concerned with ritual practices of purification and cleanliness across pre-modern and modern societies, Douglas demonstrates how dirt is invested with danger and taboo. Defining dirt as disorder, and disorder as “matter out of place”, her main argument is that examining what is regarded as dirty or unclean in any culture is the key to understand what kind of order that culture seeks to establish. Schoenwald elaborates how the instalment of order relates to boundaries:

By crossing boundaries that should not be crossed, dirt has violated the prescriptions of the surrounding culture. Men are always trying to organize each other, by setting bounds, and by treating trespasses on these bounds as pollutions. To maintain itself a society must proclaim that things have their right places, whether within the biological organism or the social (Schoenwald 1973: 673).

Unlike Schoenwald, Chia makes no reference to Douglas (and neither does Cooper for that matter). Instead, he comments upon the second statement that he borrows from

Schoenwald ('Industrialized society rests on order [...]') by relating the training of excretory functions to the potty training undergone by most children when learning to grow up in modern society. As potty training implies 'disciplined retention and scheduled letting go', Chia argues that this is the most evident example of how order is put into the body (1998a: 2). And, yet again invoking Schoenwald, he adds that this bodily order, which was underscored and reinforced by the water closet and the sewer, was 'necessary to keep an industrialized society producing and consuming' (Schoenwald quoted in Chia 1998a: 3).

These are interesting thoughts, but despite the construction of large-scale sewage systems and the appearance of the first water closets in the Victorian era, I would be cautious to overrate the role of these technologies in the rise of potty training. The establishment of a causal link, which is what Chia (using Schoenwald) seems to be suggesting between the sewer and the water closet on the one hand and the rise of potty training on the other, could easily lead to the kind of technological determinism that Schoenwald wants to avoid in his psychologically focused study. Although the sewer and potty training were both central elements in the sanitation of Victorian society, it was only much later that private houses were connected to municipal sewage lines, and that water closets became widespread enough to have a significant impact upon the regulation of excreta in Western countries. Prior to the water closet, in Victorian times and several years beyond, people handled their excreta by means of the chamber pot and the privy, and most children growing up in the West still begin potty training on the chamber pot before proceeding to the water closet. By the time the water closet did find its place into almost every household in the West, potty training was already internalised into the everyday life of most citizens.

Moreover, the Victorian sewage systems cannot be causally linked to the rise of potty training in the same era, as the excretory regulation undertaken by means of the sewer takes place on a different level from that undertaken by means of potty training. Whereas potty training enables us to exhaust excreta from our bodies in a controlled and scheduled manner, the sewer facilitates the transportation of excreta not away from our bodies as such, but away from the dwellings in which we live with our bodies. As Freudian psychoanalysis has demonstrated, these two examples of excretory regulation may be connected in the sense that they are driven by the same desire for order and cleanliness. But to suggest that one is the cause of the other is at best problematic. Chia does not discuss this problematique at all, and hurries to conclude that the Victorian Sanitary Movement ‘provided one of the most efficient means for ordering social habits in space-time and for instilling attitudes of orderliness on a mass basis’ (1998a: 3).

That may be so, but the Victorian Sanitary Movement is not the only area addressed by Chia in this text, and in the next paragraph he turns his attention to the role played by statistics in the organisation of the population in Victorian times:

Administrators struggled to manage a large amorphous mass whose sheer magnitude could only be understood in terms of statistical representation. Statistics, the “science of the state”, became, therefore, the dominant means for “understanding” and thus managing the inchoate masses (1998a: 3).

As with his brief discussion of sanitation, Chia provides an interesting and important account of statistics that stresses its managerial and organisational functions. But statistics is also not the prime focus of Chia’s analysis. Despite noting (but only

noting) the emergence of new conceptual terms such as population densities, death rate and birth rate, he does not relate statistics and its affiliated approach of Benthamite methodisation back to the workings of the Victorian Sanitary Movement. Instead, he proceeds to discuss the attempt of John Wilkins and Thomas Sprat, co-founders of the Royal Society in England, in removing slipperiness from everyday language. Consequently, Chia's references to statistics and to the Victorian Sanitary Movement, albeit interesting in themselves, remain too shallow and too unarticulated for the purpose of this chapter, whose main focus is the organisational aspects of public health. Although Chia provides an interesting starting point to the public health of the Victorian era, it does not provide the level of detail necessary to grasp how Victorian public health seeks to organise bodies. Before leaving this particular regime, I shall therefore move away from Chia's text and look more closely at the role of sanitation and statistics in the crusade for a good public health in Victorian Britain.

The rise of the Victorian Sanitary Movement towards the middle of the nineteenth century gave rise to an increasingly institutionalised public health effort against poverty and epidemics in Britain. What had started off as a voluntary front largely consisting of philanthropist Quakers and Dissenters, under the leadership of utilitarians Edwin Chadwick and Thomas Southam Smith, turned into a professional civil service whose operations were guided by the assumption that disease caused pauperism. Poverty was seen as an economic problem with a medical cause, both on a national level and on the level of individuals and families. Since the diseased could not supply their bodies to the labour market, they could not play a productive part in the national economy of wealth creation and were thus unable to take a salary or wage to support themselves and their own families. Hence, sickness bred poverty and

obstructed the movement of the labour market. Further on, sanitation and hygiene amongst the poor were seen to be of such appalling standards that their dwellings became fertile habitats for the growth and spread of disease. But rather than targeting poverty directly, the pioneers of the Victorian Sanitary Movement sought to improve public health and remove barriers to wealth by investing in sanitation and hygiene. Even though it was impossible to abolish poverty as such, it was possible to eliminate poverty due to preventable disease.

The sanitary and hygienic projects of the Victorian era were rooted in the miasmatic theory of disease, which for many centuries had explained the occurrence and spread of fevers and infectious disease. According to this aetiology, 'disease was caused by gases given off by putrefying, decomposing organic matter, rotting flesh and vegetables' (Porter 1997: 411). Hence, the Victorian Sanitary Movement adopted a very broad approach where improvements in public health had to come from a cleaning up of the entire physical environment in which people lived and worked. This period saw the construction of drainage systems, sewage removal canals and waste disposal systems. It also saw the removal of cesspools, the improvement of water and gas supplies and the provision of burial grounds. And it saw the sanitary regulation of factories, workshops, schools and houses unfit for human habitation, as well as the monitoring of "offensive" trades such as slaughtering, tanning and dyeing. To implement and supervise these projects and to inspect and survey sanitary and hygienic conditions, an expanding number of local medical officers administered them under local health boards and assisted by a growing body of legislation in the form of Public Health Acts. Since the entire environment was the object and target of this public health regime, it adopted a macroscopic approach by which the

environment was organised through the separation of filth, rubbish and excreta from the spaces in which people lived and worked.

Although these organisational practices were typical of the Victorian Sanitary Movement, they were not the only kind, and it would be wrong to reduce this regime to a macroscopic matter of infrastructure. As well as showing a broad concern with hygiene and sanitation, the Victorian Sanitary Movement also showed, as Chia's (1998a) and Schoenwald's (1973) accounts imply, a more microscopic interest in organising bodies. Public health officials were convinced that the health and hygiene of the population was influenced by the health and hygiene of individual bodies, and this belief triggered the rise of initiatives insisting that people took greater care in cleaning themselves, their clothes, their homes and their family members. Consequently, with the introduction of disciplinary techniques, the Victorian Sanitary Movement sought to colonise private and intimate hygiene because of the individual's impact in interaction upon other individuals.

In the final years of the Victorian Sanitary Movement, the emergence of epidemiology made statistics an increasingly important tool in the fight against disease and epidemics. Epidemiology, which is the study of the incidence, distribution and possible control of disease, was able to provide Victorian public health officials with prevalence figures indicating the distribution of disease across the population. Thus, epidemiology could construct relationships between disease and particular elements in the physical environment, confirm the connection between disease and pauperism, and justify the huge investments into large-scale sanitation and hygiene programmes. In so doing, epidemiology also provided public health authorities with a means to survey and inspect the health situation at the level of society, divide and classify the

population according to morbidity rates, demographic and socio-economic variables, and organise disease into recognisable entities of epidemics and pandemics. Hence, the rise of epidemiology throughout the last decades of the nineteenth century added another type of organisational practice – a discursive system of surveillance and classification – to the already complex and extensive scene of Victorian public health. The Victorian Sanitary Movement was however far from capable of utilising the full potential of epidemiology. Epidemiological measures such as morbidity rates enable the organisation of bodies and populations according to risk groups, which in turn may enable a more narrow and intensified public health effort. But the lasting commitment to miasmatic aetiology meant that Victorian officials continued to see threats and hazards to public health almost everywhere in the environment and therefore to organise accordingly.

If we are to follow Bruno Latour's (1988) argument from *The Pasteurization of France*, the same can be said about the hygienist movement and its implementation of public health policies in mid-nineteenth century France. According to Latour, a more focused public health only appeared with the shift from miasmatic aetiology to the germ theory of disease. Prior to this, the French hygienist movement pursued an approach that was both too broad and too thin to be effective. As public health officials in France as well as in Britain and other European countries sought to improve hygienic conditions all across society, they did not necessarily direct their efforts where they were most acutely needed. As they tried to do everything, they ended up with a regime that in fact was capable of doing very little of what it intended. Although these aspects do not fully explain the paradigmatic shift undergone by public health about a century ago, they certainly made it more difficult to maintain the miasmatic theory of

disease and the broadly yet thinly distributed measures that followed from it. And by the first years of the twentieth century, there had been a move to a germ theory of disease that informed public health officials to pursue a different set of organisational initiatives. Drawing on yet departing from Latour's (1988) account, I shall examine this regime in more detail in the next section.

2.4 Pasteurian Public Health

In the first part of *The Pasteurization of France*, Latour (1988) analyses the shift from a hygienist movement informed by miasmatic theory to a hygienist movement informed by Pasteurian germ theory. Unlike miasmatic theory, whose macroscopic perspective led public health authorities to tackle disease and epidemics by means of civil engineering and large-scale infrastructure projects, the microscopic bacteriology of germ theory informed a public health regime that turned its focus on the small and hitherto invisible things in the world. More specifically, it held the general idea that disease is caused by 'tiny invasive beings' (Porter 1997: 428), which also had informed earlier theories of contagion concerned with how disease entities pass from infected persons to others. But unlike earlier theories, bacteriological germ theory was able to identify microbes as the actual source of disease. And since only particular microbes could produce particular pathological conditions, prevention became possible through the development of vaccines once these microbes were known. Louis Pasteur demonstrated this in a number of cases, developing successful vaccines against chicken cholera, anthrax and rabies. These results formed the basis of Pasteur's germ theory, which not only was the first general theory of bacteriology, but also was instrumental in changing the conduct of public health.

As noted above, Latour argues that public health and hygiene prior to Pasteur had tried to tackle a range of issues too wide to be seriously effective in dealing with any one issue. Pasteur's discoveries in bacteriology made possible a streamlining and simplification of public health that in turn made the fight against disease and epidemics more intensive and more effective. Having previously targeted the totality, hygienists now subscribing to Pasteurian germ theory were able to focus on microbes alone. Latour helps us understand how this had significant implications for the conduct of public health:

Either the microbe gets through and *all precautions are useless*, or hygienists can stop it getting through and *all other precautions are superfluous*. The hygiene that took over the doctrine of microbes became stronger and simpler, more structured. It could be both more flexible – quarantine could be relaxed – and more inflexible – total disinfection to 120 degrees. In a sense hygiene lost ground, since it was no longer directed at the totality, but in another sense it gained ground at last by striking more surely at an enemy that had become visible (Latour 1988: 48).

Further on, Latour argues that the Pasteurian strike against the microbes set in motion no less than a social transformation. However, it was the microbes themselves, he emphasises, that made this possible in the first place. It was because the microbes in Pasteur's laboratories behaved in a certain way that Pasteur and his colleagues were able to obtain the scientific results they did, successfully develop the vaccines they did, and become as popular with the hygienist movement as they did. In other words, the microbes were not just the objects of Pasteurian bacteriology, germ theory and

public health and hygiene, but subjects or actants operating alongside human actors in a social network.

It should be no surprise that this point is at the centre of Latour's investigation. Not only does it enable Latour to analyse that which precedes and makes possible a particular science or technology. Doing so is commonplace amongst most historians and social scientists devoted to the study of science and technology. His emphasis on the social role played by microbes in making possible the rise of Pasteurian science is however all but commonplace. This must therefore be seen as part of Latour's general attempt to redefine the "social" and the way that social scientists should study science and technology. This is an admirable project, which not only illuminates the processes giving rise to a Pasteurian science and public health, but also helps us understand the consequences of this regime. If Pasteur had not discovered the role of microbes in the occurrence and spread of disease and in the development of vaccines, the microbes would not have been selected as the main target of public health. And consequently, public health would not have undergone the changes that it did and had the effects that it had in terms of regenerating the human and reorganising and transforming human behaviour and societies. Vaccination is perhaps the most obvious example of how Pasteurism reorganised and regenerated the human. As a vaccine is injected into someone's body, it does not simply – if successful – give him or her enhanced resistance to a certain disease-carrying microbe. Firstly, inoculation is a penetration of the bodily boundary constituted by the skin. Secondly, inoculation alters the biochemical constitution of the body and reorganises the way the body functions and responds to external attacks from disease-carrying microbes. And thirdly, by assisting

the body's immune system, it solidifies the boundaries that separate and defend the body from its surroundings.

As Pasteurism and the distribution of vaccines enabled public health authorities to shift their focus away from pauperism and dirt, hygienists like Walcott in the US, who saw hygiene as a means of social control, were worried that it would 'terminate the ultimate responsibility of the individual to preserve conscientious cleanliness' (Rosenkrantz quoted in Latour 1988: 257). This seems premature, however, as vaccination was far from capable of solving all the problems of public health. Since the discovery of the microbe could only narrow down and relax public health and hygiene to the extent that bacteriology could eliminate microbes or successfully vaccinate people against them, Pasteurian public health had to continue to rely upon and carry forward methods previously employed by the pre-Pasteurian hygienists. Of course, acts of social control that did little or nothing for the targeting and fight of microbes lost ground, and this does for example explain why the length of quarantine in some cases was reduced. Those cases that were accompanied by more extensive quarantine, on the other hand, suggest a more restrictive regime, and the entry of Pasteurism into the doctor-patient relationship made the doctor central to the execution of social control. As individual liberty was redefined so that 'no one had the right to contaminate others', the doctor should take responsibility for everyone's liberty by making sure that the contagious patient was notified, 'isolated, disinfected, in short put out of harm's way, like a criminal.' Hence, the doctor played an important role as a policeman and inspector in an organisational system of notification and quarantine where '*Disease was no longer a private misfortune but an offense to public order*' (Latour 1988: 123). And with the Pasteurian assumption that anyone and

everyone in the population could be contaminated by contagious diseases, this was an offence that at least in principle could be committed by the rich and powerful just as much as by the poor.

In conclusion, Pasteurian public health operated on a level of analysis that was both more focused and more total than that of the pre-Pasteurian regime. Firstly, it was more focused because it did not regard as health hazards just anything giving off a foul or upsetting smell. Although drains had a pestilential smell, 'they presented no danger' unless microbes passed with the smell (Latour 1988: 48). And secondly, it was more total because it looked beyond the health-and-wealth relationship that informed Chadwick's sanitary projects in Victorian Britain and Villermé's hygienist policies in France and marked out the poor and social outcasts as risk groups of disease and epidemics. Not just the poor, but the entire population was seen to be at risk from the microbes. Finally, Pasteurian public health was characterised by three main practices of organisation: (i) vaccination, which cuts across the bodily boundary of the skin, reorganises the functioning of the bodily interior and strengthens the boundaries between the body and its surroundings; (ii) policing, which identifies the occurrence and spread of microbes in the population and notifies patients and authorities so that the right measures can be taken; and (iii) quarantine, which isolates carriers of infectious disease for a certain amount of time within the boundaries of the hospital and the sanatorium. Interestingly, the notion of policing and quarantine resemble some aspects of previous public health regimes: policing, that of surveillance during the Victorian Sanitary Movement, and quarantine, that of the asylum during the Great Confinement. There is therefore some continuity between Pasteurian Public Health and previous public health regimes as well as some newness

making Pasteurian Public Health different from whatever went on in public health before.

The Pasteurian preoccupation with microbes did however not take full charge of public health and was therefore unable to save minority groups from being specifically targeted as risk groups under the new Eugenic Public Health. And although the rise of eugenics in the early decades of the twentieth century did not erase the microbes from the minds of public health officials, it did shift their agenda so that certain individuals and certain minority groups again became the selected target of public health policy. Before moving to the lifestyle-focused public health regime of contemporary Western societies, I shall therefore trace the organisation of bodies in Eugenic Public Health.

2.5 Eugenic Public Health

Eugenics, which is the science of controlling breeding to produce a healthier and more intelligent race, emerged as a significant force at the public health scene early in the twentieth century and soon became popular amongst medical scientists, politicians, the bourgeoisie, and the labour movement (cf. Weindling 1989; Johannisson 1994). As these groups were not single-handedly interested in public health and hygiene, their interest in eugenics also had to do with the need for an effective labour force, increasing fears of foreign infiltration, economic strain, and class antagonism. A public health based on eugenics was therefore seen as a way of restoring 'order and social harmony in a society undergoing great social upheaval' (Johannisson 1994: 174).

Eugenics springs out of the quest to cultivate a population with beautiful genes and strong bodies, a quest that was made obvious in art-works, political propaganda and popular movies and broadcasts in the inter-war era. For example in Nazi Germany, young Aryan men were sent to special camps where they were required to fertilise as many women as possible. As the men underwent a fiercer selection process than the women in these camps, it seems that the Nazi eugenicists were more concerned with men's genes than women's genes. However, eugenics is also about the eradication of bad genes and weak bodies. Whereas Pasteurian Public Health regarded microbes as foreign elements that had to be eliminated from the environment and inhibited from penetrating the boundaries of the body, eugenics was concerned that foreigners were kept out of the boundaries of the nation state. Foreigners were seen to threaten the quality of national health and strength by spreading disease, undermining racial purity and reproducing excess numbers of children of inadequate stock. Eugenics made similar generalisations about people with mental and physical disabilities, who were regarded as foreign elements inside national borders. They should therefore under no circumstances be allowed to reproduce. Internationally, the US was at the cutting edge of eugenics. Between 1907 and 1940,

18,552 mentally ill persons were sterilized in US State hospitals. Some States, beginning with Connecticut in 1896, passed legislation that restricted marriage between nervous and mentally ill individuals. Federal legislation was also passed in the 1920s which limited immigration from eastern and southern Europe (Dowbiggin 1992: 379).

Whilst restrictive immigration legislation was specifically passed to 'protect the public from disease or practices contradictory to the dictates of modern medicine'

(Carson 1996: 506), all these incidents were part of the Americans' strive to restrict 'breeding of the unfit' (Mosussi 1993: 465). Being the most active state, six Californian institutions accounted for eighty percent of all sterilisation in the US between 1918 and 1920. And when the Germans started their systematic persecution of Jews, gypsies and 'individuals [...] thought to be hereditarily unfit (homosexuals, the mentally ill and "antisocials")' (Harwood 1992: 467), they turned to California for inspiration and advice on their sterilisation campaign (Mosussi 1993). According to Lerner (1997), the Nazis did not vulgarise or politicise eugenics with the Final Solution. Rather, they realised the beliefs held by many of the leading scientists at the time. A similar view is put forward by Weindling (1989), who argues that German eugenics did not have its roots in the nationalist and racist movement, but instead was a reflection of German public health, social policy and biomedical science at the time.

Even though eugenics was taken to its extreme during the Holocaust, it was by no means brought to an end when Germany capitulated in the Second World War. Long after the consequences of the Final Solution became known, eugenics was applied on a large scale in most Western countries, even if driven by different motives and different means. In the Netherlands, for instance, eugenics was more a matter of class than race, and its methods were specifically directed at the poorer members of the population (Heteren 1991). In Scandinavia, eugenics in the form of the involuntary separation of families, enforced confinement and coercive sterilisation, was employed to control different minority groups, but affected those at the lower end of the social ladder most seriously. Both in Sweden and Norway state officials and politicians were concerned that people who made inadequate parents should not have children or at least not be responsible for the upbringing of children. As a result, numerous families

were separated against their will, and children were confined in orphan homes. In 1934, Sweden introduced their first sterilisation law, which was tightened in 1941. When the law was revoked in 1975, sixty thousand people had been sterilised, of which ninety percent were women (Johannisson 1994: 177; sic.). Decisions had been made by the National Board of Health in each case, and were based on eugenic, medical and social indications. Amongst those sterilised were mentally retarded people, psychiatric patients, Romany people, orphans, “teddy boys” and their girlfriends, and young single mothers. As well as aiding the engineering of the perfect Nordic body and a harmonious social order, sterilisation was an effective contraceptive that helped controlling the birth rate in poor families. If only of a smaller scale, similar projects were done in most Western countries during this period. The Norwegian health authorities, for example, sterilised large numbers of Romany people, psychiatric patients and “mentally retarded” people, *inter alia* (cf. Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development 2000-2001).

The mass sterilisation projects in the West did however lose ground in the late 1960s as contraceptives became available to the entire population and the birth rate decreased amongst those deemed inadequate for parenthood. By that time, the eugenic projects of Western public health had managed to organise people and populations according to three main organisational practices. Restrictive immigration legislation, concentration camps and penitentiary institutions had organised societies by constructing boundaries that controlled movement and separated national populations from so-called foreign elements, whether these people were on the outside or inside of national borders. Coercive adoption of children organised families by separating parents from their children and raising children in orphanages and with foster parents.

And coercive sterilisation organised individuals deemed social outcasts by intervening into their bodies and conducting genital surgery that restricted what these people could and could not do. Although specific in their own right, the first two kinds of practices remind us of the Great Confinement two-to-three hundred years earlier. And overall, these three organisational practices exercised massive control upon societies, ranging from who could enter and move freely within a country's national borders, to who could become and continue to be parents. Hence, the eugenic regime controlled the kind of roles that people could play in society, the kind of social relationships they could pursue, and the kind of experiences they could have. Despite some of the same rhetoric and policies are still present in the public and popular discourse on immigration (non-Westerners are often stigmatised as being more diseased, more likely to commit crime and more likely to reproduce), most Western countries have, after decades of Eugenic Public Health, acknowledged that eugenic methods are at odds with the ethico-political values of liberal democracy. And they have realised that there are more important challenges for the betterment of public health and wellbeing than the purification of hereditary stock. Particularly significant is the recognition that the entire population should be the target of public health, and that lifestyle-related disease has emerged as an increasingly prevalent health problem in the West. During the last three or four decades of the twentieth century this has given rise to what is known as the New Public Health, and it is therefore to this lifestyle-oriented regime that I now turn my attention.

2.6 The New Public Health: Lifestyle, Lifestyle-Related Illness and Health Promotion

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, public health has always been distinguished from other strands of medicine by looking beyond the biological aspects of individual

bodies and into the social dimensions of health. But whereas the Old Public Health sought to prevent the spread of disease by means of sanitary inspection, vaccination, and coercive measures like quarantine, confinement and sterilisation, the New Public Health has turned more of its focus towards health problems associated with the modern lifestyle and the conduct and appearance of the individual body. This does not mean that the methods of the Old Public Health have been totally discarded by the New Public Health. But since contagious diseases like tuberculosis and polio are conceived as less serious threats to the public health of Western countries, lifestyle-related diseases like cancer and cardiovascular disease have been singled out as the biggest health problems facing this part of the world. In order to deal with these health problems, the New Public Health has become increasingly reliant upon health promotion and health education campaigns that seek to influence habits of eating, drinking, smoking, exercise and sex. In short, the messages communicated in these campaigns tell us to eat less, drink less alcohol, quit smoking, start exercising and take care when choosing partners and having sex. Below I shall refer to some of these campaigns to illustrate the workings of this regime, which is involved in such a wide variety of issues that, as Dorothy Porter (1999) suggests in her history of public health, it is concerned with everything and everybody, and, may I add, with everything that everybody does.

The shift towards a public health of lifestyle-related disease is one by which, in principle, the entire population is treated as a risk group. In the UK, this interest in the population as a whole may be dated back to 1943 and the appointment of John Ryle as the first chair in social medicine at Oxford University. According to Ryle, the physician and medical sociologist David Armstrong (1983) informs us, his new

version of social medicine had to be distinguished from previous attempts. Whereas the old social medicine had merely addressed the problem of so-called deviant groups in society, the new social medicine was concerned with pathological deviance in the population as a whole (Armstrong 1983). Thus portrayed, Ryle's perspective was in line with Canguilhem's (1989) point that towards the middle of the twentieth century medical research realised that it was *normal to be pathological* and that illness struck even those who seemed to be the most healthy members of society.⁸ This was both the popular and professional perception of polio victims in the 1940s and 1950s, as the disease typically struck children, adolescents and young adults with active lifestyles and of any social class. And this was and still is the popular and professional perception of cancer, as it has been difficult to identify systematic variations in the prevalence of cancer across different socio-economic strata in the population. Consequently, public health authorities have insisted on a generalised notion of surveillance where everybody has to be observed and targeted. In the words of Armstrong (1983: 37), 'The new social diseases of the twentieth century [...] had been reconstructed to focus medical attention on "normal" people who were nevertheless "at risk".' And since everybody is at risk, health education campaigns emphasise that everybody should take responsibility for their own health, no matter how normal they are. This position is closely related to research findings in epidemiology, and the lifestyle-oriented regime of health promotion and health

⁸ Canguilhem, who studied at the École Normale Superior in Paris in the 1920s, develops this point from another "*normalien*", Emile Durkheim (1947, 1951) and his concept of *anomie*. It is also worth noting that Canguilhem became professor at the Sorbonne four decades after Durkheim was installed as professor there and two and a half decades after Durkheim's death.

education campaigns continues to be heavily connected to and reliant upon epidemiological research.

As epidemiology is preoccupied with the emergence, prevalence and possible control of disease, current epidemiological research conducts health promotion surveys or so-called lifestyle surveys designed to reveal the distribution of particular habits and health problems in the population. Apart from asking respondents to provide personal and demographic information such as date of birth, gender, race and marital status, these surveys are concerned with a number of factors: participation in work, education, exercise and leisure activities; social and sexual relationships; the intake of fats, sugars and fibres; the consumption of drugs, alcohol and tobacco; blood pressure and cholesterol level; and family history of chronic and terminal illness. From the data collected, researchers link lifestyle with illness. This is done by calculating risk factors and designing risk profiles that in turn are associated with increased chances of illness, and it is done by identifying risk groups in the population that are seen to be at a higher risk than other people in developing particular pathological conditions. The expert knowledge of epidemiological research is applied in the development of guidelines about lifestyle changes that people should undertake to prevent and ease health problems, and it is further communicated to the lay public through information channels such as self-help manuals and health education campaigns. Together, epidemiology and health education constitute a discursive practice and a domain of power-knowledge relations that on an everyday basis seeks to organise the formation of subjectivity, and, in turn, embodiment. The expert knowledge of epidemiological research is presented as objective truths in health education campaigns (Petersen and Lupton 1996: 59) that provide information and suggest 'alternatives to individuals,

families or groups to prevent disease and promote health' (Gastaldo 1997: 113). And in order to enhance the status, credibility, legitimacy and effectiveness of health education campaigns, it is rarely concealed that the imperatives they try to further are founded on scientific epidemiological research. The appeal to scientific legitimacy may be illustrated with the following quote from a Norwegian campaign seeking to promote physical exercise amongst the population:

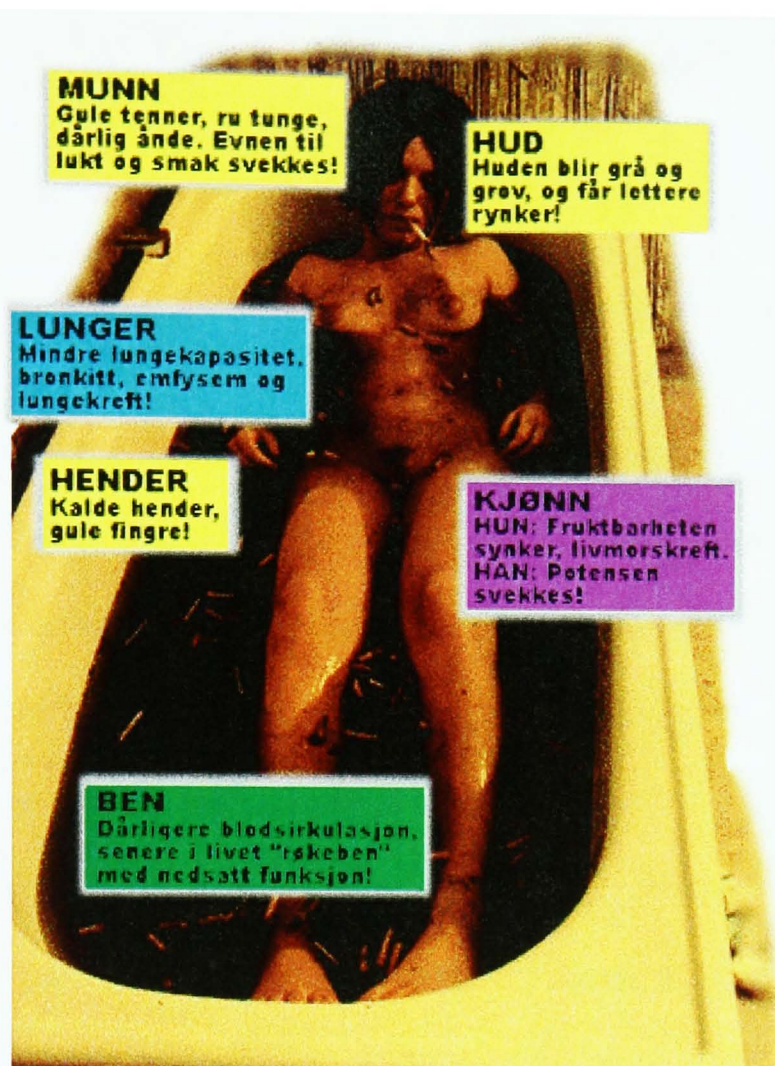
Both Norwegian and international studies show that an active life can inhibit a range of diseases and improve the quality of life. The risk of dying from cardiovascular diseases is for instance twice as high amongst physically inactive as amongst physically active people, even when risk factors such as a high blood pressure, a high level of cholesterol and smoking are taken into account. In addition to prevent a range of physical ailments, there is documentation that physical exercise also has a positive effect on mental health. [...] Recent research has shown that a bit of light exercise half an hour every day yields the best improvement to health (National Council on Nutrition and Physical Exercise 2000; my translation).

Further on, in the quest to organise everyday lifestyles, health education constructs a morality of personal responsibility by which everybody is seen to have the choice to be healthy or unhealthy citizens. In other words, health education constructs two identities that people can choose from by stating what people are expected to do and by identifying and enunciating the potential outcomes of certain habits and behaviours (Gastaldo 1997). On a more general plane, the emphasis on personal responsibility means that public health is not simply about the organisation of the body. Instead, it

highlights the sense in which the individual is invested with a particular kind of identity or subjectivity, which in turn becomes the vehicle for organising the body.

The significance of moral choice is for example evident in anti-smoking campaigns, which identify smoking and smoking-related health problems as one of the most serious threats to good health. The current anti-smoking campaign 'Giving-up-Smoking', which is organised by the UK National Health Service (NHS), argues that 'Smoking is the biggest single cause of ill health and premature death in the UK.' Further on, the campaign states that 'nearly one in five of all deaths are smoking-related', and that 'on average, smokers lose more than one day of life each week' (National Health Service 2000). Similarly, Norwegian health promoters associate smoking with heart disease, cancer and respiratory illness, and state that in Norway every year 7,500 deaths are caused by smoking, that internationally the equivalent figure is three million people, and that in Norway between 350 and 550 deaths are caused by passive smoking (Statens tobakksskaderåd 1999a). That these are moral choices is evident in at least two senses. First, in that they are seen to offset the pains and joys of the lives that people are able to live. And second, in that they are seen to affect one's ability to contribute to society and the level of one's costs to society.

A campaign targeting Norwegian teenagers is more specific about the consequences of smoking, and information is presented in association with a picture of a young naked girl with a cigarette in her mouth and a sad expression on her face (see fig. 2.1).



(Figure 2.1: Norwegian Anti-Smoking Campaign Targeting Teenagers)

The girl lies in a bathtub filled with cigarettes floating around in filthy water. On the picture, different tags relate the different consequences of smoking with the health and appearance of bodily organs:

- Mouth: yellow teeth, rough tongue, bad breath. Impaired ability to smell and taste!
- Skin: your skin gets grey and rough and develops wrinkles more easily!
- Lungs: impaired lung capacity, bronchitis, emphysema and lung cancer!
- Hands: Cold hands, yellow fingers.
- Sex. She: impaired fertility, cervical cancer. He: Impaired potency!

- Legs: impaired blood circulation, later in life smoker's legs with reduced functioning!

(Figure 2.1: Statens tobakksskaderåd, undated; my translation)

Making the wrong choice is therefore portrayed as having very serious consequences. Either you follow the guidelines for healthy living communicated in health education campaigns and increase your chances for a long and healthy life. Or you fail to adopt the professional advice of the public health authorities and undermine your chances of preserving your physical capacity and avoiding disease. Inability to make the right choice, i.e. inability to be healthy, to regulate your own lifestyle and to modify your risky behaviour is seen as a moral failure on two levels. Firstly, because the self fails to take care of itself (Greco 1993: 361). And secondly, because unhealthy living breaks with what Greco calls our 'duty to stay well', a duty which is served by our 'individual appropriation of rational choice' (1993: 357) and paid to the larger collective in which we live. The health status of an individual is therefore not simply a private matter. As Herzlich and Pierret (1987: 161) argue several decades after the Victorian Sanitary Movement and the Eugenic Public Health, good health is still seen as 'collective capital, owned by the lineage, the race or the nation.'

Convincing people to take personal responsibility for their own health is not just a matter of stressing the moral obligation that every citizen has to the population as a whole. Health education campaigns also appeal to the idea that people have a rational and egoistic self-interest in taking such responsibility. This is for example evident in the Norwegian youth campaign referred to above. Furthermore, other anti-smoking campaigns emphasise that giving up smoking slows down the ageing process and

saves you a lot of money that ‘You can spend [...] just on yourself’ (Statens tobakksskaderåd 1999b; my translation). Arguments like these have proven all the more powerful in the narcissistic culture of contemporary Western societies where the body has become a project of the self to be worked upon and subjected to self-care, self-examination and self-improvement. Living a healthy life is about realising the body as a project of the self, and is associated with self-satisfaction, self-fulfilment, and seen as the key to live an active and enjoyable life, participating in society and responding dynamically to changes in the outside world. Although the advice given in such campaigns is driven by an attempt to promote healthy living, people can by following the same advice pursue the narcissistic ideals of beauty, physical appearance and an attractive body shape, ideals that may sometimes contradict with what is seen to be healthy.

Even if contradicting one another, both the emphasis on personal responsibility and the emphasis on self-interest emerge from a bourgeois value-system that presumes the existence of the individual, and could only be made possible with the construction of the individual as a distinct and autonomous entity capable of social, moral, rational and egoistic agency. As Foucault (e.g. 1970, 1979) demonstrated during his tireless efforts to rewrite the intellectual history of the moderns, the rise of the individual can be attributed to changes in European society, politics and science occurring at the end of the eighteenth century. It was during this epoch that the individual was separated from the rest of the world to become an agent in its own right.

Some of the first and still most groundbreaking attempts to conceptualise the individual can be found in Kant’s critical philosophy. With a more contemporary and rather simplistic wording, it can be argued that Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*

(1996/1787) and *Critique of Judgement* (1987/1790) asserts the individual as a rational subject capable of goal-directed behaviour and free to pursue actions in search of self-fulfilment and self-actualisation. Whereas the *Critique of Pure Reason* brings out an understanding of the rational and goal-directed subjected, the *Critique of Judgement* brings out an understanding of the human body as an organism, i.e. an organised body functioning teleologically and acting rationally due to the laws of nature and the organising powers of the rational mind. And with the deontological ethic presented in *Critique of Practical Reason* (1993/1788), it can be argued that Kant erects the individual as a moral being with the capacity and the duty to take personal responsibility for his or her own actions. Since then, Kant's thinking about the individual has been actualised in the liberal discourse of modern democracy, in which freedom is always coupled with duty and responsibility.

The New Public Health illustrates how contemporary Western nation states, on a macro-level, carry this discourse forward in the government of individual citizens, who on a micro-level, internalise and act according to this same discourse. More specifically, health education campaigns first provide information about how individuals across the entire population can prevent disease and promote health. Individuals then supposedly behave as rational actors and moral agents who utilise this information to make the right decisions about how to live – both in terms of self-interest and in terms of their moral duties and obligations to the community.

These aspects of the New Public Health highlight how two levels of analysis – the macro-level of the population and the micro-level of the individual – are brought together in the prevention of health problems and the promotion of health and wellbeing. Of course, the macro and the micro are not absolutely distinct, and it is

difficult to see where one ends and the other begins when their boundaries are so much disrupted. But on the one hand, the New Public Health is concerned with the health condition of the population as a whole, whilst on the other, it makes it the task of private individuals to take care of their own health and their own bodies. The New Public Health therefore produces a certain sense of selfhood, which in turn organises individual bodies as well as populations. Hence, it is a privatised regime that cannot be simply defined as that which is not private health. Indeed, the notion of the public in public health is far from straightforward, and before proceeding it should be acknowledged that equalling the public with the population is deeply problematic, both within a historical and a contemporary context.

For example the *rei publicae* of Cicero's political philosophy, which referred to the upper class community of free men (no women) in the city states of Ancient Rome, implies a narrow and elitist understanding of the public, in sharp contrast to the notion outlined earlier. Opposite to Cicero's *rei publicae*, and different from the idea that the public in public health includes the entire population, is also the way in which nineteenth century public health was primarily concerned with the impoverished working classes. Within a contemporary context, the notion of the public in public health is complicated further as the New Public Health is not only concerned with populations at the macro-level and individuals at the micro-level. Although the New Public Health constructs the population as a whole into one big risk group, this reflects only one version of how epidemiology defines the public. Current epidemiological research also identifies specific risk groups at the meso-level, i.e. groups of individuals within the population. These groups are both seen to be at a particularly high risk from certain pathological conditions, and they are further

stigmatised by being seen to pose greater risks to the health of the population as a whole than are other people. This is for example reflected in UK sexual health campaigns, which on the whole still maintain that gays, prostitutes and injective drug users are at higher risks than the rest of the population from contracting HIV and AIDS. Despite the reminder that ‘the rate of HIV infection amongst heterosexual men and women is rising’, we are also informed that ‘In the UK, most new infections are amongst gay and bisexual men’ (Health Education Authority, undated).

Moreover, these same campaigns give specific advice to some of these risk groups as to how they can avoid infection. Gay men are for example informed about how to conduct safe sex.

Many ways of having safe sex carry no risk of HIV – like kissing, masturbation and body rubbing. [...] Gay men have shown how you can make safer sex great sex too. Safer sex has an added bonus. It helps protect you from other infections, such as gonorrhoea and hepatitis B (hep B). These infections can increase the risk of contracting HIV if you have unsafe sex (Health Education Authority 1996: 3).

Although it is normal to be pathological, the construction of risk groups means that some people are more pathological (or should I say more normal) than others, and more often than not treated accordingly by the public health authorities. This does not contradict the notion of a privatised public health and a public health concerned with everybody in the entire population. It only calls for a more complex account of the New Public Health, where some people in the population are expected and compelled

to make more severe modifications to their everyday habits and lifestyles than are other people.

Nevertheless, as the New Public Health makes the individual its centre of attention by emphasising personal responsibility, appealing to self-interest, and defining health in terms of self-enjoyment, self-fulfilment and bodily attractiveness, coercive measures become peripheral to the attainment of its objectives. Instead, people are disciplined by constructs of knowledge that first make them conceive of health in these terms and second give them the impression that they voluntarily choose health-promoting ways of life because they want to and not because they are forced or manipulated to do so. Consequently, one is being convinced that the changes in lifestyle proposed by health education campaigns are acts of personal self-interest and not acts of ascetic self-denial (Petersen and Lupton 1996). But by providing selective information to foster healthy lifestyles, health education campaigns do interfere with individual choice. And even though such campaigns may help people make informed decisions, the information given is derived from and pre-formed by expert knowledge that align with public health policy. Having in this section used contemporary examples to illustrate how the New Public Health works to improve health and wellbeing across the population, I shall in the subsequent and penultimate section of this chapter discuss the organisational regime of the New Public Health in light of Foucault's concept of governmentality.

2.7 The New Public Health and Governmentality

The shift from coercive methods to more subtle techniques of self-discipline has given way to a public health whereby the production of organisation is extended beyond that of previous regimes. The New Public Health is not content with cleaning up the space

we inhabit, disinfecting our water, pasteurising our milk, vaccinating us against disease-carrying bacteria and isolating us when suffering from a contagious disease. Instead, it seeks to organise our everyday lives and daily activities by imposing boundaries upon our lifestyles and upon what bodies can and should do. Since the late 1980s this trend has provoked a number of sociologists to analyse the New Public Health in terms of Foucault's concept of governmentality (e.g. Nettleton 1997, Osborne 1997, Petersen 1997, Turner 1997). Although Turner (1997) in particular identifies a tension between Foucault's concept of governmentality and Ulrich Beck's (1992) notion of a risk society, he still advocates the former as a way of appreciating the ways in which contemporary society, including the public health authorities, seeks to deal with and eliminate risk. But before I return briefly to some of these authors in the discussion below, I need to say something about the general aspects of governmentality in Foucault's thinking.

Arguing that 'We live in the era of governmentality', Foucault (1991: 103) introduced this neologism in a series of lectures given at the Collège de France in the late 1970s, some of which have later been published in edited collections of his works (e.g. in Burchell, Gordon and Miller 1991 and in Foucault 1997a). Although Foucault throughout this lecture series often used the word governmentality interchangeably with the terms "governmental rationality", the "rationality of government" and the "art of government", this should not be taken as an indication of just a narrow concern with government in the political domain (Gordon 1991). In the English-speaking world, "governmentality" carries two additional meanings: the *mentality of the governor* and the *government of mentality* (cf. Rose 1989). However, more central to Foucault's concept of governmentality was the even broader concern with the

relationship between power, knowledge and subjectivity, and it is this understanding of governmentality which is my primary interest here. Interestingly, this general understanding is indicated in the title of Foucault's last two years' lectures at the Collège de France: 'The government of one's self and of others' (Gordon 1991: 2). This meaning is also evident in one of Foucault's other lectures on the subject matter, where he comments on what he sees as the explosion of government in the sixteenth century and the rise of a body of literature concerned with giving "advice to the prince" on how to govern:

Government as a general problem seems to me to explode in the sixteenth century, posed by discussions of quite diverse questions. One has, for example, the question of the government of oneself, that ritualization of the problem of personal conduct which is characteristic of the sixteenth century Stoic revival. There is the problem too of the government of souls and lives, the entire theme of Catholic and Protestant pastoral doctrine. There is the government of children and the great problematic of pedagogy which emerges and develops during the sixteenth century. And, perhaps only as the last of these questions to be taken up, there is the government of the state by the prince (Foucault 1991: 87).

This concern with government, Foucault says, lasted to the end of the eighteenth century. But even though Foucault here rests with a specific historical period, this is not to say that the phenomenon of governmentality itself is limited to this historical period – even if that was when it was first discovered. As stated above, he insists that 'We live in the era of governmentality' today, and this effectively means that governmentality has become the dominant mentality grounding all modern forms of political thought and action (Miller and Rose 1990). This view is also in contrast to

the idea that governmentality is limited to the state apparatus. Although governmentality initially emerged as a triangular relationship between sovereignty, discipline and government to regulate and control populations through an apparatus of security requiring a whole series of knowledge regimes, this does not make governmentality an effect of the administrative state. Instead, it makes the administrative state an effect of governmentality.

In another of his Collège de France lectures on governmentality, Foucault relates the term to ‘the “care” and the “techniques” of the self’. Here, he defines governmentality as ‘the government of the self by oneself in its articulation with relations with others’, and finds examples of governmentality in pedagogy, behavioural counseling, spiritual direction and models of living (Foucault 1997b: 88). Consequently, Foucault bridges the gap between regimes of discipline and the production of the self, thus providing an integrated understanding of power-knowledge relations and the emergence of the modern self through disciplinary technologies. Foucault elaborates on this understanding in a lecture originally given at the University of Vermont in 1982, arguing that governmentality is the point of contact between technologies of domination such as discourse and the state on the one hand, and technologies of the self on the other hand (Foucault 1997c).

Techniques for improvement and participation are therefore double-edged. First, they extend the clinical gaze and constructively manage the population, and in doing so, they produce an enterprising, self-caring and self-regulating subject whose personal life and personal relations are increasingly managerialised. Consequently, Foucauldian governmentality, which locates power in a diverse and diffuse array of sites, associates power with the day-to-day practices, expert systems and knowledge

regimes of professionals. As a matter of governmentality, power is expressed in self-help manuals and public information campaigns and adopted by ordinary people in a quest for self-achievement, good health and wellbeing.

Sociologists studying public health from a Foucauldian perspective have specifically invoked the concept of governmentality to deal with the increased focus on lifestyle and lifestyle-related diseases, the increased use of health education based on epidemiological research, and the increased emphasis on self-interest and personal responsibility in the management of health risks. Both Nettleton (1997) and Petersen (1997), for instance, examine governmentality in relation to the New Public Health by drawing attention to the ways in which health promotion as a disciplinary technology relies upon producing a self which is always seen to be at risk and therefore seen to be responsible for managing risk.

On the whole, the concept of governmentality enables us to recognise, on the one hand, how people govern themselves voluntarily as particular kinds of persons, and on the other hand, how public health experts act as judges of normality that assist in processes of self-governance and self-discipline by giving advice and by promoting social institutions that facilitate so-called healthy choices. This means that in the New Public Health, power is ambiguous in that it is less about repression, violence, direct coercion and blatant control than it is about the creation of an expert knowledge regime which, through its knowledge about the normal human subject, serves to channel and constrain thinking and action.

But as governmentality acknowledges the complex, subtle, incomplete and partial nature of power relations and constructs power as a matter of micro-negotiations,

studies that examine public health in terms of governmentality can also recognise that the extent to which public health is able to organise bodies and populations is limited. Although the New Public Health influences how the body is to be disciplined and manufactured as a project of the self, people also resist public health imperatives by taking charge of how their own bodies are to be regulated and manufactured as projects of the self. In other words, people institute their own regimes of self-discipline by subverting the regimes pursued by the public health authorities. Barebacking is one example of such resistance. Despite, or rather because of, militant anti-AIDS campaigns promoting safe sex, a minor but growing number of gay men in the US (and to a lesser extent elsewhere) frequently and deliberately engage in unprotected sex with random partners. Seemingly, their motivation is not merely a wish to resist what the State and public morality tells them to do.⁹ Risking HIV infection, they are also driven by a desire to live dangerously and engage in limit experiences that might have lethal consequences for themselves and for others.¹⁰ Other examples of how the organisational attempts of public health are disrupted may include smoking, drug use and sunbathing. For many teenage girls, smoking provides a means to regulate body-weight, and can be seen as a way to cope with the increasing pressures of achieving a slim and attractive figure at an age when their bodies undergo significant change. For a large number of adolescents and young adults, doing drugs is a central aspect of participating in the club scene, as it enables people to lose weight

⁹ Although “motivation” as a term may carry a lot of assumptions, and even though attempts to identify any particular motives are speculative, interviews with people committed to this scene suggest that a more complex set of motives informs this practice (cf. QX 2000).

¹⁰ If we accept James Miller’s (1994) biography of Foucault, Foucault in the late 1970s and early 1980s engaged in similar limit experiences of risk-taking, at the interface between sex and violence, drugs and disease, pain and pleasure.

and party all night, unrestricted of mental inhibitions and bodily needs of sleep, rest and food. And for numerous sunbathers, young and old, who skip sun protection and expose their bodies to excessive hours of sun on the beach, in their garden or on the sun bed, the risk of skin cancer seems a small worry compared to the unbearable thought of lightness – looking pale and bleak.

These are all examples of how public health is resisted, subverted and ignored. In addition, we should be aware that the organisational attempts and imperatives of public health are disrupted and undermined because people have sincere difficulties in living up to them. Even if highly motivated to institute and maintain the boundaries that are meant to enhance our own health, we are not necessarily able to do so. First, social situations beyond our own control and choosing may subject our bodies to accidents, injuries and violence that put our health at risk. Second, bacteria and viruses may germinate, contaminate and infect our bodies in spite of any personal measures taken to prevent disease. And finally, it is difficult enough to change a few established habits if not to mention an entire lifestyle. In other words, we are (i) incapable of maintaining the boundaries that separate our intimate sphere from the larger social sphere and the people, animals and other objects that populate it; we are (ii) incapable of maintaining the boundaries that separate our individual organism from its internal and external environment; and we are (iii) incapable of imposing boundaries upon our everyday habits and lifestyles. In conclusion, it must be

recognised that the New Public Health, even if powerful in itself, is up against some very powerful forces. These forces undermine what it tries to do to bodies and what it tries to make bodies do to themselves. And consequently, it seems that they make it impossible for public health to fully organise bodies according to its own objectives and imperatives, principles, techniques and boundaries.

2.8 Conclusion

Having studied some of the ways in which public health throughout Western history has sought to prevent disease and promote good health, five different regimes of public health organisation have been identified as significant for my argument: the Great Confinement, the Victorian Sanitary Movement, Pasteurian Public Health, Eugenic Public Health, and the New Public Health. Despite similarities and overlaps between these regimes, it is important that we acknowledge the discontinuities that make one regime different from the next. Based on my investigations in this chapter, I would suggest the following taxonomy as a means, albeit simplistic, to make sense of the processes that characterised the organisation of embodiment at the level of the population under each of these public health regimes. This taxonomy is further illustrated in table 2.1, where each public health regime is associated with a particular or a number of various problems, organisational institutions, organisational discourses, and organisational principles or solutions. Like most tables, this one is overly simplistic and does not for example include all the organisational discourses and institutions discussed in this chapter. Moreover, the organisational institutions and discourses included do not necessarily belong to the same level of institution or discourse. But even though the neo-liberalism of the New Public Health and the germ theory of the Pasteurian Public Health, let's say, are of different discursive orders, I

hope that the table helps tease out the key elements of each public health regime and eases comparison between different public health regimes.

Public Health Regime	Problem	Organisational Institution	Organisational Discourse	Organisational Principle or Solution
The Great Confinement	Poverty	Asylum	Health-wealth relationship	Separation, Isolation, Exclusion (Simple Location I)
The Victorian Sanitary Movement	Dirt	Sewage system, urban works, health inspectorate	Miasmatic theory, epidemiology, urban planning, architecture, engineering	Hygiene (Simple Location II) Surveillance, Training Colonisation
Pasteurian Public Health	Micro-organisms	Laboratory	Germ theory	Immunisation, Vaccination
Eugenic Public Health	Foreign, weak and impure bodies	Immigration control, death camp, asylum, orphanage	Eugenics	Selection, Separation, Isolation, Exclusion, Extermination, Sterilisation
The New Public Health	Lifestyle	Health education	Neo-liberalism	Governmentality

(Table 2.1: Differences and Similarities across Five Public Health Regimes)

From this, we can see that the Great Confinement sought to organise the population by separating, isolating and excluding the poor and diseased from the rest of society. The Victorian Sanitary Movement sought to organise the population by cleaning up the environments in which people lived and worked as well as training people to clean their own bodies. Pasteurian Public Health sought to organise the population by exterminating disease-spreading micro-organisms from the bodies of people and animals, from the food and water consumed by people and animals, and from the spaces inhabited by people and animals. Eugenic Public Health sought to organise the population by selecting good genes and strong bodies and excluding and exterminating bad genes and weak bodies. And finally, the New Public Health still seeks to organise the population by influencing and invoking boundaries on people's lifestyles.

Across these five regimes, it is also possible to identify two diverging lines of development. On the one hand, as public health has expanded into new fields of interest in an attempt to organise and impose boundaries upon new areas of everyday life, it has become both more intensive and more extensive. But on the other hand, a number of examples suggest that public health sometimes relaxes the daily pressure on bodies and populations, whilst at other times even fails to organise everyday life and embodiment to the extent that it wants. Foucault's concept of governmentality does to a certain extent encapsulate this ambivalence, at least with regards to the New Public Health. First, it implies that the disciplinary technologies of power-knowledge regimes are internalised by people in how they go about governing their own bodies and their own daily lives. And second, it acknowledges that none of these disciplinary technologies can be fully internalised into all-pervasive regimes of self-discipline. This openness means that self-discipline is sometimes taken over by individuals themselves who create their own subjectivities, ways of life and sub-cultures in contradiction and resistance to, independently from and in order to subvert the disciplinary technologies of exterior power-knowledge regimes. Foucault's recognition is by all means an important one, and it helps us become aware that the organisational boundaries instituted by public health are open to disruption, subversion and termination. And in that respect, it helps us recognise that the body is a problem for organisation. Not just in the sense that it is a problem to be solved, but also in the sense that it is a consistent problem that we may never be able to solve with the help of organisation. Since the body, then, is a problem for organisation, we as organisation theorists – whose research object supposedly is organisation – ought to think about how we are to deal with this problem. And as I explained in my introductory chapter, this is the task of this thesis. That is, to study how organisation

theory deals with the problem of the body and to make some further propositions as to how organisation theory should deal with the problem of the body, all along bearing in mind that the body is capable of disrupting the boundaries of organisation. Foucault's work, which has been much neglected by mainstream organisation theorists but used extensively by more peripheral scholars to study the production of organisation (e.g. Burrell 1984, 1988; Cooper and Burrell 1988; Townley 1993; Grey 1994), might help us illuminate the production of organisation on the body. So before I in chapters 4 to 8 turn to examine how organisation theory does and should deal with the problem of the body, I shall in the next chapter outline the methodology and method that enables me to pursue this task.

Chapter 3

A Conceptualist Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I shall outline and critically analyse the methodological principles and metatheoretical assumptions that will guide this investigation of how organisation theory does and should deal with the problem of the body. This endeavour is threefold. First, I will discuss what I mean by methodology and what I regard to be the task of methodology, both in general and with particular reference to a conceptualist methodology applied to the study of organisation and embodiment. The objective of this discussion is to position this thesis metatheoretically in relation to the larger terrain of social science research. Second, in what is the major part of this chapter, I will analyse the key ideas that inform my conceptualist methodology and the method of concept analysis that goes into it. These ideas are adopted from three French twentieth century thinkers: Georges Canguilhem, Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze, who are arguably all part of the same intellectual tradition. Finally, and with reference to the remaining chapters of the thesis, I will briefly outline how I attempt to utilise this conceptualist methodology in my investigation of how organisation theory does and should deal with the problem of the body.

3.2 A Method of Concept Analysis and a Conceptualist Methodology

Put briefly, method is the tools and techniques that are used in order to investigate a particular research issue or problem. In the social sciences, where one typically makes a distinction between quantitative and qualitative methods, this may include anything from regression analysis, via various types of questionnaires, interviews and

observation techniques, to documentary analysis and discourse analysis, which are techniques for the study and interpretation of text. *Concept analysis*, which is the method utilised in this thesis, falls into the latter category of qualitative research, where texts drawn from particular streams of thought are studied with the particular goal of revealing *meaning*. Unlike traditional hermeneutics (e.g. the young Dilthey; cf. Dilthey 1976; Burrell and Morgan 1979: 236; Schwandt 1994: 121), this is not an attempt to verify objective meanings. Interpretative openness is essential to this project. Moreover, this notion of concept analysis is very different from the method of concept analysis in the discipline of logic. In logic, a concept is usually a short enunciation or sentence that is to be broken up into its attributes in order to be deemed consistent or inconsistent, true or false, analytic or synthetic, a priori, a posteriori, or tautological (cf. Mates 1965; Fjelland 1995). In this thesis, I am not interested in making “logical” inferences. Rather, the method of concept analysis developed here is employed to trace and critically analyse what presumably is the most central concept within organisation theory, the concept of “organisation”. And it is employed in order to find out what different conceptualisations of organisation within organisation theory say about the problem of the body.

But method is not synonymous with methodology. First, one particular methodology can include a number of different methods, each of which enables one to do different things. And second, methodology, which is the theory of method, takes place on a different and more abstract level than method. In this thesis, I propose a distinction between a method of concept analysis on the one hand and a conceptualist methodology on the other. A *conceptualist methodology* may include different analytical methods, each of which enables one to analyse a concept in different ways.

Moreover, conceptualist methodology involves the critical evaluation and assessment of what form the analysis of concepts takes and what it can and cannot achieve. From a starting point in conceptualist methodology, one can therefore ask what a particular concept reveals about the discursive field within which that concept is developed. And one can ask how the critical analysis and recreation of a particular concept may enable further developments in the same (yet constantly changing and inevitably different) discursive field. In this thesis I am interested in tracing the formation of the concept of organisation in organisation theory and finding out what it can say about organisation theory, which undeniably is the main discursive field within which the concept of organisation is formulated and expressed. The main question here concerns how organisation theory and different conceptualisations within organisation theory deal with the problem of the body. Further on, I am interested in how the concept of organisation can be changed within organisation theory, and I am keen to map out some of the implications that such change may have upon the ways in which organisation theory operates, how it thinks, and what it does. More specifically, I am interested in what might happen to organisation theory and the concept of organisation once it starts dealing with the problem of the body. I will return to the methodological aspects of this whilst examining the conceptualism of Canguilhem, Foucault and Deleuze. But first, I shall briefly outline my position on three other metatheoretical dimensions: epistemology, ontology and human nature, starting with the former two.¹¹

¹¹ I thought long and hard on including ten pages on how I arrived on my epistemological and ontological position. But since I feel it is more important to move the thesis on rather than get side-tracked, I decided to simply present my standpoint on these metatheoretical dimensions. At some point, I also thought about working from the perspective of Actor-Network Theory (ANT), and some people might argue that ANT, as represented in the work of Michel Callon (e.g. 1986) and Bruno Latour (e.g.

3.3 A Realist Epistemology and A Relativist-Materialist Ontology

Drawing upon the ideas of Stephen Brown, Joan Pujol and Beryl Curt (1998). I propose a realist epistemology and a relativist-materialist ontology. A *realist epistemology* implies that a discursive formulation, such as a map, concept or theory, is real in the sense that it influences how we look at the world. By means of exclusion, and even if only within a regional or limited realm of discourse, a discursive formulation simplifies, orders and stabilises that which otherwise would be disorderly and unintelligible. This is particularly interesting with regards to the body, since a realist epistemology would argue that the constructed views about the body have important consequences for how we live with our bodies.

This realist epistemology shares an important position with pluralist and relativist epistemology. As it abstains from making absolutist truth-claims about the research object studied, it acknowledges the possible existence of several different and often contradictory discourses on what might nominally be regarded as one and the same research object. This does not mean that it encourages, as does naive pluralism, the combination of incommensurable principles within one and the same intellectual programme. Instead, this underlines the futility of the positivist tenet that the world can be fully represented by one universal knowledge system.

1987, 1988, 1999), is part of the same French twentieth century intellectual tradition as Canguilhem, Foucault and Deleuze. But because of certain problems with much ANT (for example the danger of reifying reality by speaking of actor-networks as entities without showing sufficient concern for how actor-networks come into being), and because it comes short of the philosophical rigour characteristic of Canguilhem, Foucault and Deleuze, I believe that its weaknesses outweigh its strengths.

The *relativist-materialist ontology* pursued in this thesis stands in stark contrast to the universalist ontology that often is accepted and augmented by critical realism (e.g. Bhaskar 1978). A relativist-materialist ontology recognises material reality as the relative and relational play between heterogeneous and multifarious, dynamic and unpredictable forces. In other words, reality is a matter of many different material realities of which it is impossible to gain complete and absolute knowledge and fully represent in any system of knowledge. However, the impossibility of perfect representation is no reason for avoiding ontological questions. It is the indeterminate and open-ended nature of reality that makes ontology such an endless inquiry and the ontological turn such an important challenge, certainly if one's objective is to re-evaluate the implications that the reality of embodiment has upon organisation. This project is too important to be left to the natural scientist's quest for representational certainty. It can only be pursued if one opens oneself up to the tools delivered by the open-ended enterprise of philosophical speculation. Though itself a representation of reality, the relativist-materialist ontology adopted here does at least seek to critically understand what reality is and what is in it. I shall return to the enterprise of philosophical speculation later in this chapter, whilst discussing the method of concept creation developed by Deleuze (with Guattari 1994). But before rounding off my metatheoretical discussion, I shall deal with the topic of human nature.

3.4 Human Nature, the Conditions of Humans and the Transhuman Condition

Ontology is closely related to human nature, which is the metatheoretical dimension concerned with the relationship between human beings and their environment. Burrell and Morgan (1979) distinguish between two basic approaches to human nature: voluntarism and determinism. Whereas *voluntarism* emphasises the rational ability of

the human being to act according to her free will and change the environment in which she lives (regardless of what environment that is), *determinism* highlights the environmental structures and forces that influence and constrain the human being so as to only act in certain predictable ways. According to this dichotomy, one is given the impression that determinism is about the environmental conditions under which humans live (i.e. the *conditions of humans*). Simultaneously, one is given the impression that voluntarism is about the human alone or the *human condition* (i.e. what the human is and what s/he is capable of), which is little different from ontology understood as the reality of the human.

The distinction between the conditions of humans and the human condition is traditionally what marks the dividing line between the social sciences and philosophy. But since determinism and voluntarism are perspectives pursued by social scientists and philosophers alike, it would be highly problematic to simply associate determinism with the conditions of humans and voluntarism with the human condition. Not only would this conception split investigations of human nature into two separate types of inquiry, none of which would investigate human nature as a whole (one would be concerned with the human environment whilst the other would be concerned with the human). This conception is also problematic because voluntarism itself implies a view of the human being, which does not say all there is to say about the human condition. Indeed, it may be argued that the rational actor portrayed in voluntarism is herself subjected to particular conditions under which s/he lives, rationality, the possession of a rational mind and the pursuit of rational behaviour being the most obvious. And since voluntarism is inseparable from rational behaviour, it does not imply a more unpredictable world than determinism does.

The determinate character of both determinism and voluntarism gives rise to a bias towards the conditions of humans. Consequently, the determinism/voluntarism dichotomy provides a highly limited understanding of human nature. This point has particular relevance for this thesis, as the notion of the rational actor of free will is quite similar to that of the organised body of the organism. After Kant's (1996/1787) critical philosophy, which turned the human into the centre of the Universe, both the rational actor and the organism have been typically conceived as self-regulating, autonomous and teleological beings. Whereas the rational actor is seen to pursue certain means for the fulfilment of certain ends, the organism is seen to operate through certain physiological functions for the fulfilment of certain forms of embodiment. In other words, they are both seen to function according to a set of general laws that reflect a rational organisation induced by a rational mind, by a divine power or by Nature itself. Further on, the organism is typically regarded as the human condition, in that it is seen as the natural and thus the only possible form that embodiment can take. However, insofar as the organism is only one possible form of embodiment, a form that is primarily imposed upon embodiment by biomedical (and to some extent biophilosophical) discourse, the organism is also produced by a certain set of environmental conditions. Therefore, the reduction of embodiment to the organised body of the organism is not the human condition, but rather a condition (and an organised one) under which human beings may live.

In this thesis, which among other things is concerned with alternative ways of thinking about the body, a central task is to think beyond the organisation of bodies and beyond the organised body of the organism. It is important to think beyond organisation because it is organisation that closes down the range of alternatives open

to lived embodiment. The ways in which Deleuze thinks embodiment beyond the organism is the topic of chapter 7. Insofar as the organisation of the body and the organised body of the organism is about the conditions of humans, this thesis therefore seeks to go beyond the usual territory of the social sciences and enter what traditionally has been the sanctuary of metaphysicians, the human condition. This is not the human condition as conceived through the rational actor or the organism. And since I seek to think about the body beyond organised bodies such as the organism, simply speaking in terms of the human condition is somehow inadequate. Thinking about the body in ways that transgress the boundaries of the organism involves thinking about the human condition in ways that transgress the boundaries of the human condition. The transgressive nature of the human condition therefore makes it more appropriate, as does Deleuze (1994), to speak in terms of the *transhuman* condition. And since this sense of the transhuman condition draws our attention to the ways in which bodies transgress the boundaries of organised embodiment, this is an underlying theme of chapter 7.

But as I hope to make clear in that chapter, the transhuman condition is not simply about the ability of an individual human to exceed the boundaries of its own current existence. Although changing one's habits and ways of life is a central aspect of the transhuman condition, this also places the human in a radically different and indeterminate relationship to its environment. Consequently, the voluntarism/determinism dichotomy, which confines human nature to a matter of determinacy, cannot be maintained in this thesis, but must be replaced by the notion of the transhuman condition, which recognises the *indeterminacy of human nature*.

Having now outlined the metatheoretical positions that inform this thesis, I shall in the next part develop in further detail the method of *concept analysis* utilised in this thesis and, from the perspective of conceptualist methodology, evaluate what can be achieved with this method. As noted above, this section involves a serious engagement with Canguilhem, Foucault and Deleuze, in that order. But before dealing separately with each one of them, I shall say something about why I have chosen to develop my conceptualist methodology and my method of concept analysis through the ideas of these three thinkers. And I shall say something about what it is that brings these thinkers together, both intellectually and biographically. This is not an attempt to reduce their individual projects to one homogeneous tradition in French twentieth century thought. Their individual distinctions will become more apparent when I deal with each one of them. This is also not an attempt at biographical reductionism, which would reduce the works and ideas of a certain intellectual to his or her personal history. I do however see some biographical connections between Canguilhem, Foucault and Deleuze, and I do believe that drawing attention to some of them can help us appreciate the continuity in their thinking and writing. Hence, in the discussion of Canguilhem, Foucault and Deleuze, I am trying to do two things simultaneously. One is to show that they are connected biographically and intellectually, and the other is to show that each of their projects are different and enable me to do different things – in a sense, the three of them give rise to three different methods of concept analysis. The following sections will therefore develop in some tension between these two tasks.

3.5 Canguilhem, Foucault and Deleuze

On a most general level, Canguilhem, Foucault and Deleuze are all representatives of a philosophy of concepts that stands in stark contrast to the philosophy of consciousness and experience pursued by other twentieth century philosophers in France, and most notably so by Jean-Paul Sartre's (1957) existentialism and Maurice Merleau-Ponty's (1962) phenomenology. In his introduction to the English edition of Canguilhem's (1989) *The Normal and the Pathological*, Foucault invoked this dichotomy as a retrospective tool to make sense of and locate himself and Canguilhem within the larger terrain of the history of French philosophy and French history of science. As the Foucault biographer David Macey (1993) shows, the same dichotomy is even utilised by the contemporary sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, who is specifically concerned to draw an opposing line against vulgar existentialism. Although problematic, the distinction between the philosophy of concepts and the philosophy of consciousness and experience can be traced well back into the nineteenth century. Drawing on Foucault's introduction to *The Normal and the Pathological*, the Foucault commentator Gary Gutting (1989) identifies similar oppositions between the philosopher Maine de Biran and the pioneering sociologist Auguste Comte, the philosopher Jules Lachelier and the mathematician and philosopher Louis Couturat, and the philosopher Henri Bergson and the mathematician and philosopher of science Henri Poincaré. Whereas Maine de Biran, Lachelier and Bergson are associated with the philosophy of consciousness and experience, Comte, Couturat and Poincaré are associated with the philosophy of concepts. Further on, though recognising the twentieth century thinker Alexandre Koyré and the philosopher and mathematician Jean Cavailles as later representatives of the philosophy of concepts, Foucault identifies the philosopher and historian of science Gaston Bachelard, with Georges

Canguilhem, as the key figure of the philosophy of concepts in twentieth century France. Teaching Canguilhem at the prestigious École Normale Superior (ENS) in Paris, it was Bachelard who initiated the emphasis in the history of science on epistemic breaks, discontinuities or ruptures (*coupures*) in the explanation of scientific change, and this became a central theme in the works of Canguilhem and Foucault.¹² Although Deleuze's philosophy, which includes a serious commitment to what he calls superior empiricism is strongly influenced by Bergson, this does not exclude him from the wider tradition of the philosophy of concepts, and it may even be emphasised that the association of Bergson with the philosophy of consciousness and experience is an uneasy one.¹³ And even though Deleuze (with Guattari) (1994) develops a different philosophy of concepts from Canguilhem and Foucault, it will become more apparent in the section on Deleuze below that some concern with rupture is also noticeable in his histories of philosophy.

The distinction between the philosophy of concepts and the philosophy of consciousness and experience may be further problematised by drawing attention to Foucault's and Deleuze's common interest in the relationship between theory and practice. The same year as Foucault in his foreword to Deleuze and Guattari's (1984) *Anti-Oedipus* announced the twentieth century as Deleuzian, twenty-two years before

¹² Interestingly, Louis Althusser, who was Canguilhem's colleague and Foucault's teacher at the ENS, did also emphasise the role of *coupures* in explaining scientific change. Jacques Derrida, who like Althusser was a *pied noir* brought up in Algeria, was taught by both Althusser and by the four years older Foucault at the ENS. Concerned with identifying internal differences and contradictions in discourse so as to offer controversial rereadings of conventional texts, Derrida's (1976, 1978, 1982) deconstructivism may also be seen to develop from a preoccupation with *coupures*.

¹³ Admittedly, Bachelard (2000) attacked Bergson's theory of duration for neglecting the importance of *coupures*. This does however not make Foucault's (1989) attempt to locate Bergson within the philosophy of consciousness and experience any less problematic.

Deleuze made his speech at Foucault's funeral, and some years before they stopped meeting in person due to some misunderstanding about each other's conception of power, Deleuze and Foucault did a joint interview on intellectuals and power (Foucault 1977a). In this discussion, which brings out the mutual respect and admiration that they had for each other, Deleuze argues that we are about to experience 'a new relationship between theory and practice.' Previously practice has been regarded either as a mere consequence or application of theory, or as the inspiration of theory, as that which is 'indispensable for the creation of future theoretical forms.' But 'In any event', Deleuze states, 'their relationship was understood in terms of a process of totalization' (Deleuze quoted in Foucault 1977a: 205). Deleuze's alternative, in which he implicates Foucault, argues for a more 'partial and fragmentary' relationship between theory and practice where 'theory is always local and related to a limited field, and [...] applied in another sphere, more or less distant from it.' Hence, theory and practice do not resemble one another, but need one another. It is practice that provides theory with a set of relays enabling theory to move from one point to another, and 'theory is a relay from one practice to another. No theory can develop without eventually encountering a wall, and practice is necessary for piercing this wall' (Deleuze quoted in Foucault 1977a: 206). The kernel of this is that not only is theory a practice in itself, but theory and practice inform and shape each other enabling both to make decisive radical movements and develop further.

Referring to collective resistance and grass root movements, Foucault agrees that ‘theory does not express, translate, or serve to apply practice: it is practice’ (Foucault 1977a: 208). The theoretician or intellectual cannot ‘place himself somewhat “ahead and to the side” in order to express the truth of the collectivity; rather, it is to struggle against the forms of power that transform him into its object and instrument in the sphere of “knowledge,” “truth,” “consciousness,” and “discourse”’ (Foucault 1977a: 207-208). In other words, the theoretician’s activity is not about representation or truth-telling at all, but is always part of the struggle for power.

Accompanying the broadly defined philosophy of concepts that joins Canguilhem, Foucault and Deleuze, is also a serious pursuit of the philosophy of life, otherwise known as biophilosophy. As Deleuze showed the strongest commitment to philosophy, metaphysics and ontology, it is in his thinking that one most clearly can find a philosophy of life. But even though Canguilhem’s and Foucault’s writings are often seen as epistemological projects preoccupied with the history of science and the formation and operation of discourse (e.g. Delaporte 1998), this is not their sole concern. Even if less explicitly than in Deleuze’s writings, both Canguilhem’s and Foucault’s work express ontological agendas. Canguilhem and Foucault are not exclusively concerned with the epistemic regularities of the life sciences, but also demonstrate a serious interest in the reality of life itself.

The above discussion of the philosophy of concepts and the philosophy of life might give the impression of Deleuze as an outsider in the company of Canguilhem and Foucault. The relationship between the three is however less straightforward, and it must be recognised that Canguilhem, who was born in 1904, belonged to a different generation from Foucault and Deleuze, who were born in 1926 and 1925 respectively.

It must also be recognised that even if Foucault and Deleuze are uneasily categorised within one particular field of knowledge, the diverse character of Canguilhem's career, which involved a long-term engagement with philosophy, medicine and the history of science and medicine, was unparalleled by Foucault and Deleuze. Since Canguilhem is much less of a name in organisation theory than Foucault and Deleuze, it is necessary to elaborate on these aspects, which make Canguilhem stand out.

Canguilhem entered the ENS in 1924 to read philosophy and enrolled in the same class as Sartre and the sociologist Raymond Aron, one year before Merleau-Ponty and Althusser. After graduating, Canguilhem taught philosophy at various academic institutions in France, but resigned from his post as philosophy instructor at Clermont-Ferrand with the Vichy regime coming to power in France and started studies in medicine. He had not studied philosophy to teach fascist doctrine (Macey 1993). The move to medicine was however not motivated by an interest in practising medicine. By studying medicine, Canguilhem got an opportunity to acquire first-hand knowledge about a field of knowledge whose historicity and philosophical underpinnings interested him. The first systematic expression of this interest was Canguilhem's second doctoral thesis, written at the end of his medical studies in the early 1940s and published under the now famous title *The Normal and the Pathological*.

The close relationship between Canguilhem and Foucault first started to take shape whilst Canguilhem was a philosophy instructor at the University of Strasbourg in the early 1950s. At the same time, he was affiliated with the ENS and happened to be at the entry panel when Foucault applied to the school. A couple of years later he was also a member of the examination jury when Foucault had to re-sit his examination at

the end of his degree. Foucault did splendidly and Canguilhem wrote Foucault a recommendation letter that secured him a research post following his graduation (Macey 1993). Moreover, Canguilhem, who by that time had replaced Bachelard as chair of philosophy at the Sorbonne, was appointed by the University to review (not examine) Foucault's doctoral thesis and clear it for publication. Most English-speaking readers would know this thesis under the title *Madness and Civilization*. This was the real start of what later became a close friendship between two academics who perhaps had more in common than we often realise. Although Foucault was never directly taught by Canguilhem, the former read the works of this master with great interest at an early stage of his university studies.

Although Canguilhem did teach Deleuze when the latter was studying philosophy at the Sorbonne during the Second World War, the relationship between Canguilhem and Deleuze is less obvious. Canguilhem was not the teacher that Deleuze was most impressed with. Deleuze held Ferdinand Alquié and Jean Hyppolite in greater esteem than he did Canguilhem, even though he found them both to be stuck in the history of philosophy (cf. Olkowski 1998). Canguilhem's influence should nevertheless not be underestimated, most notably because Canguilhem's project entails so much more than it is traditionally seen to do. The philosopher and Deleuze commentator Keith Ansell Pearson (1999) sees a strong similarity between Deleuze's biophilosophy and Canguilhem's vitalism, and is certain that Deleuze found an important source of inspiration in the work of his former philosophy teacher. The way that Canguilhem reconceptualised traditional categories of the normal and the pathological, health and illness, life and death, has found resonance in much of Deleuze's own writings. More specifically, Ansell Pearson mentions Deleuze's notion of the crack developed in *The*

Logic of Sense (1990), where Deleuze attempts to rework Nietzsche's notion of great health (the health that has incorporated sickness). And he draws attention to Deleuze and Guattari's (1988) understanding of evolution in *A Thousand Plateaus* where symbiotic complexes such as monstrous couplings and unnatural participations are regarded as 'the source of real innovation in evolution' (Ansell Pearson 1999: 8). Although Canguilhem is primarily regarded as an epistemologist, his vitalism has therefore given significant impetus to Deleuze's ontological project. But beyond Canguilhem's influence on Deleuze, and just as importantly, it is possible to identify Canguilhem's rethinking of the normal and the pathological as an ontological endeavour in its own right. In addition to evaluate the methodological ramifications of Canguilhem's conceptualism and how Canguilhem seeks to study epistemic formations and change, I shall return to the ontological dimensions of Canguilhem's conceptualism later in the following section.

3.6 Canguilhem's Conceptualism

In his introduction to *The Normal and the Pathological*, Foucault (1989) argues that Canguilhem initiates a remarkable shift in the history of science. Whereas previous work had been preoccupied with so-called noble and pure sciences with a high degree of formalisation and mathematisation, such as mathematics, physics and chemistry, Canguilhem directs his attention at a group of sciences that were and still are less fit for formalisation and mathematisation and more dependent on external and ideological factors. To be precise, Canguilhem deals with the so-called 'middle regions where knowledge is much less deductive' and far more influenced by 'the marvels of the imagination' (Foucault 1989: 13).

But apart from re-evaluating what Foucault identified as an – until then – ‘relatively neglected domain’, Canguilhem triggers or at least reinforces a set of other significant changes in the history of science. First, as in the work of his precursor Bachelard (e.g. 1984), ruptures, breaks or *coupures* is a fundamental theme running through Canguilhem’s project. Rejecting the idea that the history of science can restore or discover continuities, unities and totalities in discursive fields, Canguilhem focuses on sudden changes, inconsistencies, discontinuities and paradoxes.

Second, Canguilhem makes an epistemological turn, which according to Foucault (1989: 17) goes “hand in hand” with his “*coupurism*”. It is by looking through an epistemological lens that the historian of science is capable of identifying the regional discontinuities running through her object of study. It is by becoming an *epistemologue* that the historian of science can discover the shifts in normativity that get rid of certain norms within a particular domain and invent new norms governing scientific practice.

Third, by studying the sciences of life, Foucault (1989) argues that Canguilhem shows equal interest in their Other, i.e. vitalism. It is in order to understand the concepts of life, health and the living being or organism that Canguilhem has directed his attention to death and disease, morbidity and monstrosity, anomaly and error.

And finally, Canguilhem’s approach to the history of science is a privileging of the concept. After all, it is the concept that makes science what it is (Canguilhem 1994). More specifically, it is the cutting out and formation of a concept that allows the study of the processes proper to a certain scientific object. As Foucault (1989: 19) reminds us, the concept must however not be so narrow that it does not allow for “elementary

analysis". With respect to the life sciences, this means that a biological concept must be sufficiently open to be accessible to the elementary analysis of physics and chemistry (in organisation theory, perhaps a similar relationship should be assumed between our own concepts and the disciplines of sociology, psychology, political science, etc.). According to Delaporte (1994), this means that Canguilhem takes a macroscopic view of the history of science. Grouping biology, physiology and medicine together, he does not write the history of isolated disciplines but the history of concepts, theories and biological objects. In conclusion, it is the formation of a concept and the constitution of an object that are the key events for Canguilhem in the history of science. Since it is the study of concepts that is the primary concern in this thesis, it is this aspect of Canguilhem's project that is the main focus of the remainder of this section.

Canguilhem's history of science is particularly concerned with the formation of biomedical concepts, such as the reflex and the cell. More specifically, this historical study of scientific concepts involves analysing the development and content, elaboration and underlying principles of concepts in the life sciences rather than developing alternative conceptualisations. This preoccupation reveals an epistemological rather than an ontological focus in Canguilhem's work, and he makes it absolutely clear that he is a student of the history and historicity of science rather than of science itself. Rather than setting out to change a scientific concept and the scientific field of knowledge within which it operates, his project is a study of the changes and ruptures undergone by science (cf. Canguilhem 1989).

Related to scientific change is the central notion of truth and error. Although Canguilhem does not discuss or necessarily believe in the truthfulness of science as

such, his studies deal with scientific concepts that are or have been taken to be true by the scientific community by which that particular concept has been invented. For Canguilhem, the success or failure of a scientific concept therefore depends on its capacity to tell truth or commit error, i.e. it depends on the extent to which the scientific community having invented the concept continue to accept it as true or not. This understanding of truth and error places Canguilhem's history of science in an interesting relationship with the internalism/externalism divide, which, as LaCapra (1983) argues, has proven so troublesome to the Anglo-American tradition of the history of science. First, Canguilhem lacks the genuine commitment to the discovery of truth and the correction of error pursued by internalist historians of science. And second, the external environment of scientific concepts, such as the academic community, the biography of scientists, political events, technology and techniques, economic conditions, national culture, etc., are only regarded significant insofar as they play a role in the scientific formation of concepts.

If one scrutinises Canguilhem's project more closely, the epistemological bias identified above does however become less apparent and his interest in concepts becomes more ambiguous. In the first edition of *The Normal and the Pathological* completed in 1943, Canguilhem is quite explicit about the limitations of his inquiry and the epistemological nature of his project. Unlike Bergson (1965), who in *Duration and Simultaneity* sought to renovate Einstein's theory of relativity in physics by adding to it a metaphysical treatise of relativity, Canguilhem does not attempt to renovate medicine by adding to it a metaphysical understanding of the human body. Whilst renovation is a task for physicians themselves, Canguilhem views his own

contribution at the level of methodology where he seeks to renovate or renew certain methodological concepts in the history and philosophy of science and medicine.

Contrary to Canguilhem himself, however, I would argue that this distinction between methodology and metaphysics is an uneasy one, and even if Canguilhem does not renovate the biomedical metaphysic, he is engaged with metaphysical problems. More specifically, he does so by using philosophy as a means to reopen rather than to close down problems. Referring to Léon Brunschvicg, Canguilhem argues that ‘philosophy [...] is the science of solved problems’ (1989: 35). This does not mean that it is the task of philosophy to solve problems or develop solutions to problems. Rather, philosophy problematises already existing solutions by reopening them for further questioning and inquiry. Even though Canguilhem’s project is undoubtedly biased towards the epistemological or methodological analysis of biomedical concepts, its attempt to reopen problems philosophically means that it is not restricted to epistemology and methodology. And despite Canguilhem’s great respect for biomedical science and its solutions, he does in effect take some steps towards renovating the understanding of life and embodiment, health and disease beyond the biomedical metaphysic. This ontological undertaking is less than obvious in the first edition of *The Normal and the Pathological*. But it becomes a crucial and slightly more apparent theme when Canguilhem, in what is effectively the third edition of the book written twenty years later, adds a section on what he calls *vitalism*.

The notions of the norm and the normal, the normative and normativity are at the centre of Canguilhem’s vitalism. Although Canguilhem problematised the understanding of normality already in the 1943 edition by making the pathological an immanent aspect of the normal and arguing that contemporary biomedicine had made

it normal to be pathological, his vitalism is a more explicit attempt to destabilise the traditional understanding of normality. Inspired by Bachelard, Canguilhem argues that ‘The normal is not a static or peaceful, but a dynamic and polemical concept’ (1989: 239). This is in contrast to traditional views in biomedicine, which tend to study normality in terms of the Gauss curve and associate the normal with what is quantitatively common. More specifically, Canguilhem turns the normal into a matter of normativity, by which he means ‘the biological capacity to challenge the usual norms in case of critical situations’ (Canguilhem 1989: 284). This means that different people need to institute different norms according to their own condition:

Each of us fixes his norms by choosing his models of exercise. The norm of a long-distance runner is not that of a sprinter. Each of us changes his norms according to his age and former norms. The norm of the former sprinter is not that of a champion. It is normal, that is, in conformity with the biological law of aging, that the progressive reduction of the margins of security involves lowering the thresholds of resistance to aggressions from the environment. The norms of an old man would have been considered deficiencies in the same man just reaching adulthood. This recognition of the individual and chronological relativity of norms is not skepticism before multiplicity but tolerance of variety (Canguilhem 1989: 284).

Whether intentional or not, in his introduction to *A Vital Rationalist*, which is a selection of Canguilhem’s writings, Paul Rabinow (1994) enables us to extend the implications of this reconceptualisation of normality. As the normal becomes a matter of normativity and health becomes a matter of instituting new norms of living, Rabinow (1994: 18) argues that Canguilhem’s vitalism offers not the ‘invincible

philosophy of biologists’, but ‘has an essential role [to play] as an “indicator” in the history of biology.’ This means that vitalism may act as a ‘theoretical indicator’ that draws attention to problems to be solved, and act ‘as a critical indicator of reductions to be avoided.’ Vitalism, which Rabinow regards as an expression of Canguilhem’s *pathos* is therefore no substitute for biomedicine, and it does also not remove Canguilhem from the rigorous study of biomedical concepts, which Rabinow regards as an expression of Canguilhem’s *ethos*. It does however mean that concepts of life are put in touch with life itself and that Canguilhem not only pursues a philosophy of concepts that studies how life science has elaborated concepts of life (*ethos*), but also a philosophy of life by which these concepts become an integral part of life itself (*pathos*).

It is also possible to identify an ontological orientation in another aspect of Canguilhem’s conceptualist project. The concept is not only Canguilhem’s target because it is that which makes science what it is. The concept also defines the human condition; the concept is that which makes humans what they are. In other words, it is our development and use of concepts that makes us different from other living beings and enables us to structure our environment. Of course, one may disagree with Canguilhem about the extent to which human beings are different from other living beings, and one may disagree with him about the extent to which human beings are capable of structuring their environment. Moreover, the anthropocentric sentiments of this approach stand in some contrast to my previous discussion of the transhuman condition. But rather than dismissing Canguilhem’s thought as mere anthropocentrism, it is possible to view his connection between the human and the concept in close affinity with the transhuman condition and the realist epistemology

argued earlier. As Foucault (1989) argues, the development and use of concepts does not kill life and it does not separate human beings from life. Instead, concepts enable life in general, they enable life to be lived in certain ways and certain lifestyles to be pursued, and they enable the construction of certain worlds – lives, lifestyles and worlds that would not be possible without concepts and conceptual knowledge. As we shall see, even if in a slightly different way, this role of the concept also figures prominently in Deleuze’s philosophy of concepts. First, however, I shall turn to Foucault. But instead of attempting an all-encompassing study of Foucault’s project here, I shall be highly selective and focus on how his project may aid my development of a conceptualist methodology. And in order to do so, I shall adopt a reading of Foucault which may be unusual in the social sciences. That is, I shall largely read Foucault through Deleuze’s (1988c) sympathetic and very creative reading developed in the book with the same name. Let me nevertheless start by exposing an element in Foucault’s thought that locates him in close affinity to Canguilhem.

3.7 Foucault: Knowledge, Power and Self

Although Foucault is less explicitly concerned with concepts than Canguilhem, the influence of Canguilhem’s move beyond the internalism/externalism dichotomy is obvious in Foucault’s (1970) *The Order of Things*. Like Canguilhem, Foucault was uneasy with any attempt to develop frameworks of causality to systematically explain the various external causes that contributed to the production of knowledge and to ‘a specific change in science’ (1970: xiii). Foucault found questions regarding what made a particular discovery possible, what made a new concept emerge, and the origin of a particular theory ‘highly embarrassing’ (1970: xiii). This was not merely

because Foucault (1970: xiii) found ‘no definite methodological principles on which to base such an analysis’. In fact, he argued that no such framework existed. And most embarrassing were such questions when posed in relation to the empirical or positive sciences. Even though ‘the role of instruments, techniques, institutions, events, ideologies, and interests is very much in evidence’, ‘one does not know how an articulation so complex and so diverse in composition actually operates.’ This led Foucault to the following conclusion:

it would not be prudent for the moment to force a solution I felt incapable, I admit, of offering: the traditional explanations – spirit of time, technological or social changes, influences of various kinds – struck me for the most part as being more magical than effective (Foucault 1970: xiii).

It is from this starting point that Foucault in *The Order of Things* employs an approach to the history of science that focuses on the discontinuities of epistemic or discursive formations, i.e. the changes undergone by a scientific field or an area of thought over time. Like Canguilhem, Foucault does not study scientific disciplines in isolation, but does instead investigate how a group of different disciplines deal with the apparently same concept, theory and object. Furthermore, Foucault denounces the possibility of discursive unity and argues that it is the contradictions within one discursive formation – i.e. the existence of incommensurable or irreconcilable concepts – that drives such changes and discontinuities. Although this leads Foucault (1972) in the *Archaeology of Knowledge* to denounce the investigation of scientific concepts as limited and dissatisfactory because the study of all aspects of the discursive formations within which these concepts have been developed is crucial, Canguilhem’s influence on Foucault is apparent.

It is worth noting that Foucault has also utilised this approach earlier, both in *Madness and Civilization* (1967) and in *The Birth of the Clinic* (1973). Whereas *Madness and Civilization* is preoccupied with epistemic breaks in the study of madness and *The Birth of the Clinic* focuses on epistemic breaks in medicine, *The Order of Things* is preoccupied with epistemic breaks in three different areas; the study of life, language and political economy. Foucault does not, however, discuss this approach in detail in any of these works, but does instead provide an outline of its main principles in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972). It is for instance here that Foucault privileges the level of discourse – as opposed to the levels of concepts, objects, enunciations or themes – and elaborates on the significance of contradictions in discourse. More specifically, he argues that it is the existence of incompatible propositions, irreconcilable meanings and ‘concepts that cannot be systematized together’ that leads to changes and transformations, ruptures and discontinuities in discourse’ (1972: 149). Foucault’s use of the term archaeology has led certain Foucault commentators (e.g. Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982) to refer to all these works as Foucault’s archaeological studies.

Trying to make sense of Foucault’s later works, the same commentators have typically located *Discipline and Punish* (1977b) within what they call Foucault’s genealogical period. Whereas Foucault’s archaeology is seen to concern itself with epistemic or discursive discontinuities, his genealogy is seen to deal with breaks or ruptures in institutional practice. In highly simplistic terms, and just for the time being, *Discipline and Punish* may be seen as a study of the changing ways in which society, in an attempt to achieve order and stability, deals with deviance. Even though this study takes its material largely from the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth

centuries, it is not a conventional history. More specifically, it is not a history of the past seeking to understand the past through the eyes of the present for the purpose of making us contemporary moderns learn from and avoid the mistakes of the past. Instead, it is a history of the present that genuinely seeks to understand the present through the past. And it is not merely concerned with discontinuity in the sense that it seeks to trace ruptures in institutional practices of the past. Genealogy is not concerned with primordial origins and continuous lines of development, but with finding traces of the present in the past so as to undermine the uniqueness, purity and innocence of the present. By tracing the disciplinary practices of contemporary modern society to the Benthamite panopticon of the eighteenth century, Foucault places us contemporary moderns in juxtaposition to and not in opposition to those who lived before us.

Although I have no problem with labels such as archaeology and genealogy *per se*, it is the tendency amongst certain Foucault commentators to impose a sharp distinction between Foucault's early archaeological period and his later genealogical period that I find unhelpful. Further on, as Foucault's latest works in particular – and most notably the three volumes of *The History of Sexuality* – are concerned with both discursive and institutional breaks in a way that complicates the relationship between power, knowledge and the formation of the self or the subject, the inadequacy of the archaeology/genealogy dichotomy becomes more obvious.

Avoiding such dichotomies, Deleuze (1988c) reads Foucault's project as a whole and appreciates the close connections between his so-called archaeology and genealogy. Doing so, Deleuze's approach is very much in line with how Foucault himself, in the introduction to *The Use of Pleasure* (the second volume of *The History of Sexuality*),

made sense of his own project. Not only does this approach more readily recognise the true potential of Foucault's project. As we shall see, Deleuze's *Foucault* also provides an interesting starting point for utilising Foucault's project as a way to study how the body is a problem for organisation and how organisation theory deals with this problem.

Although the first part of Deleuze's *Foucault* (i) focuses on *The Archaeology of Knowledge* and *Discipline and Punish*, (ii) appreciates the thematic differences reflected in these books, and (iii) recognises that the latter indicates a rupture in Foucault's project, Deleuze also develops a reading that connects the themes of these books. The emphasis on discursive breaks in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* and on institutional breaks in *Discipline and Punish* are brought together in the second part of Deleuze's *Foucault* where Deleuze identifies three main themes in Foucault's *oeuvre*: knowledge, power and self or subjectivation. Deleuze's point is that despite variations in emphasis, Foucault preoccupies himself with all three themes throughout his entire project. 'These three dimensions – knowledge, power and self – are irreducible, yet constantly imply one another' (Deleuze 1988c: 114).¹⁴

Even though all three themes could be seen to reflect an epistemological orientation in Foucault's project in that they concern the problem of societal order and the ways in which such order is produced, Deleuze finds that Foucault treats them as if 'They are

¹⁴ Deleuze introduces the concepts of the diagram and the fold to make sense of this complexity, and to show how regimes of knowledge, power and self come into being, how they change and how they cease to exist. This offers a very interesting reading of Foucault's project. But as Foucault says nothing about the fold and very little about the diagram in his own works, it would not be possible to do justice to these concepts without displacing Foucault and turning this section into a section on Deleuze rather than Foucault.

three “ontologies” (1988: 114). However, the “ontology” referred to here is not the same sense of ontology as I discussed in the first section of this chapter. This is not because Foucault insists that these ontologies are not universal but historical. As my earlier discussion indicates, I not only support but also seek to develop a non-universalistic – i.e. relativistic – ontology. The problem is that Foucault’s ontologies do not sufficiently focus on what exists outside knowledge, power and subjectivation, but instead on the ways of being that are produced by processes of knowledge, power and subjectivation. I would argue that a more genuine, even if underdeveloped ontological turn, is only realised in the fourth theme identified by Deleuze in the appendix entitled ‘The Death of Man and Superman’. Here, specifically hinting to Foucault’s ending in *The Order of Things*, Deleuze indicates that Foucault opens up for a future understanding of the human condition which is not human but transhuman and exists outside knowledge, power and self. In the following discussion I attempt to bring together all four themes – knowledge, power, self and the death of man and superman. In the final section of this chapter I shall also indicate how these themes are reflected in my own investigation of how organisation theory deals with the problem of the body.

The novel way in which Foucault brings together power and knowledge in what is known as power-knowledge relations is appreciated by most Foucault commentators, not least because he does so explicitly in the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*

(1979). Here, Foucault clarifies his understanding of power from *Discipline and Punish*. This view is controversial and groundbreaking in that it not only rejects bourgeois understandings of power but also abandons significant aspects of the traditional Marxist understanding of power. In bourgeois understandings, power is typically reduced to a matter of apolitical negotiations or reified in terms of objects and tangible resources. The possession of resources is therefore associated with the possession of total power (cf. e.g. Dahl 1957). In Marxist theory, which to some extent reproduces a reified understanding of power where power is bound up with the ownership of the means of production in society, power is seen in terms of the repression hypothesis – as repressive – and as that which inhibits things from happening.¹⁵

The modern State plays a central role in both bourgeois and Marxist perspectives. In the former, it is the sovereign status of the State that protects the population and its territory from attacks by external and internal enemies so as to ensure social order and harmony. In the latter, the State is the expression of the values of the dominant classes in society. In capitalist society, the State is therefore a capitalist State expressing the values of the bourgeoisie. Real social change, whereby the domination and exploitation of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie is brought to an end, is therefore only

¹⁵ Reading Philip Goodchild's (1996) introductory commentary on Deleuze and Guattari, one is led to believe that it was Foucault's (1979, 1980) attack on the repression hypothesis that caused the relationship between Deleuze and Foucault to go cold. During the years up until Foucault's death, Deleuze and Foucault did not meet in person but only communicated through letters and by reading each other's work. Although Foucault's critique was not explicitly directed at Deleuze and Guattari, but on the Reichians who preached "the revolution of desire" and analysed power in terms of desire and repression, it is likely that Deleuze and Guattari's (1984) *Anti-Oedipus* was a main target of this critique, as they spoke in exactly such terms. Interestingly, by the time of *A Thousand Plateaus*, the follow-up to *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari had dropped the concept of desiring-machines and largely adopted Foucault's non-repressive understanding of power as micro-physics.

possible if the proletariat is able to overthrow the bourgeois capitalist State in the largescale uprising of the proletarian Revolution.

In contrast to these two perspectives, Foucault argues that power is not total but relative. Power is not a thing, but is instead to be understood in terms of micro-physical forces or micro-powers that are not simply localisable to the State or to capital, but operate through and in relation to knowledge and resistance. This is not to ignore the power of the State. But rather than viewing the State as the cause of power, the State is seen as an effect of various micro-powers, such as regional discursive formations, local institutional practices and small-scale activities of resistance. Consequently, power is positive or productive in that it makes things happen. I will elaborate on the relative, micro-physical and productive nature of power in the discussion below, dealing first with the productive nature of power-knowledge relations.

Foucault extends Francis Bacon's seventeenth century doctrine that knowledge is power by turning it on its head and saying that power is knowledge. Doing so, Foucault not only recognises that one may be able to execute power by expressing knowledge. He also argues that it is by executing power that one can produce knowledge and decide what is knowledge and what is not. Although Foucault has been preoccupied with the production of knowledge ever since writing *Madness and Civilization*, it is not until *The History of Sexuality* that he goes some way in offering a systematic and explicit discussion that maps out the intricate relationship between power and knowledge and underlines the political nature of knowledge. As indicated above, this first enables Foucault to highlight the ways in which power produces knowledge or the ways in which discursive formations are produced within networks

of power. The truth claims of a scientific discipline such as medicine are for instance not produced within a political vacuum, but reflect the values and interests of certain people, communities and institutions. Further on, by drawing attention to the political nature of knowledge, Foucault is also able to highlight the ways in which power produces knowledge about phenomena that would not otherwise have existed as such. Sex and sexuality, which obviously is the topic of *The History of Sexuality* is a splendid example in this respect. Rather than repressing sexual activity, the discourse on sex that starts to emerge in the nineteenth century, and constitutes the focus of Foucault's inquiry, gives rise to sexual activities that are not known of in previous centuries. The sexual practices of the masturbating child, the perverse adult and the Malthusian couple therefore only appear in the nineteenth century.

Second, the notion of power-knowledge relations highlights the ways in which the practising of knowledge can have powerful influences upon people and societies, and this brings us to the third theme identified by Deleuze (1988c). It is in these relations between power and knowledge that people are subjectivated into certain types of being, selfhood and identity. In other words, power-knowledge relations produce subjectivities and shape the ways in which people live in the world. More specifically, as a particular discourse or knowledge regime may inform and be informed by a particular institutional practice, the coming together of that knowledge regime and that institutional practice may shape and influence the people (and the thinking and acting of those people) who are targeted by that same knowledge regime and that same institutional practice. For example, as the joint forces of pedagogical discourse and the school shape or subjectivate the child into a pupil, they invest that child with a certain identity, behaviour and way of being. A pupil is supposed to sit quietly at her

desk, read and write, answer questions politely when asked by the teacher, etc. Similarly, as the interaction between medical discourse and the hospital subjectivates and transforms the person into a patient, a set of behavioural rules, almost a code of conduct, is imposed upon the patient. A patient is supposed to stay in her hospital bed, be examined by a doctor, take her medical prescriptions, etc. The body – whether disciplined or not – therefore figures at the centre of these power-knowledge relations. Perhaps this becomes less of a puzzle when acknowledging that the body was a central aspect of both Foucault's intellectual project and his private life. As the Foucault biographer James Miller (1995) suggests, Foucault's intellectual interest in the body cannot be seen as separate from his own homosexuality and personal engagement in the gay masochist scene in San Francisco.

Yet another example in this context is public health, which was the focus of my discussion in chapter 2. Operating through a complex network of different discourses (e.g. biomedicine and demography) and institutional practices (e.g. vaccination schemes and health promotion campaigns), public health seeks to organise people, bodies and how we think and what we do in everyday life. As a power-knowledge relation attempting the subjectivity of the healthy body or the healthy citizen, public health therefore exemplifies how a concept of organisation and the organisational discourse surrounding that concept operates through institutional practices so as to exercise material effects upon how we live in the everyday. This is the key element that I take from Foucault when trying to make sense of how organisation deals with the problem of the body. And consequently, this is central to how organisation theory may be seen to deal with the problem of the body.

But in addition to highlight the material effects of organisational discourse and the everyday implications of power-knowledge relations, Foucault also enables me to recognise the limited effectiveness with which power-knowledge relations can institute particular subjectivities, ways of being and forms of embodiment. Towards the end of my inquiry into public health I acknowledged some of the ways in which bodies escape, upset and undermine the organisational regime of public health. This brings us to the third sense in which power and power-knowledge relations are productive, which is to say that power-knowledge relations produce resistance. In an oft-quoted statement, Foucault says that ‘Where there is power, there is resistance’ (1979: 95). This means first that power provokes resistance. The more extreme the means and methods of the oppressor, the more extreme the response of the oppressed. But this also means that resistance itself is an expression of power. In contrast to Marxist theory, which tends to view power and resistance as dialectical oppositions at the macro-level of society, Foucault shows that resistance not only responds to power by doing the opposite of whatever power has already done. Resistance is not merely about the large-scale Revolution directed to overthrow the State. Instead, resistance is productive and powerful in that it may escape any dialectical opposition, act independently of the normalising subjectivities attempted by the combined micro-physical efforts of knowledge regimes and institutional practices, and produce different lifestyles, different types of selfhood and different ways of being that subvert and transgress the workings of power-knowledge relations altogether.

Short time after writing the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault starts talking about “governmentality” and “technologies of the self” (cf. Foucault 1997b, based on a Collège de France lecture from 1978, and Foucault 1997c, based on a

paper given in 1982). Through these two concepts, which I dealt with in chapter 2, Foucault not only appreciates the ways in which subjectivation is produced within micro-physical power-knowledge relations. He also recognises the ways in which forms and processes of subjectivation are challenged from without by forces in the outside world and subverted from within by the subject's own inventions. Both concepts are double-edged in that they also emphasise the ways in which people may discipline, govern or take care of themselves by pursuing alternative lifestyles through which one is taken beyond the ethical space of normalising discourses and institutions and their narrow codes of conduct. Thus, the concept of self-discipline first developed in *Discipline and Punish* takes on a different meaning altogether. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault (1977b) merely regards self-discipline as the means by which exterior goals of discipline are internalised by the docile subject. Through the ambiguous concepts of governmentality and technologies of the self, self-discipline becomes a matter of inventing one's own ethic and codes of conduct. This radical and Nietzschean understanding of self-discipline as self-mastery is reflected in the last two volumes of *The History of Sexuality*, *The Use of Pleasure* and *The Care of the Self*. In *The Use of Pleasure*, Foucault (1986a) discusses how in Ancient Greece ethics was not about an externally imposed code of conduct being internalised by the individual, but about a sense of self-mastery emerging from within. In *The Care of the Self*, having first analysed the role of externally imposed codes of conduct in Ancient Greece, Ancient Rome and early Christianity, Foucault ends by emphasising 'the development of an art of existence dominated by self-preoccupation' (1986b: 238). In Foucault's own words, this ethic

emphasizes the importance of developing all the practices and all the exercises by which one can maintain self-control and eventually arrive at a pure

enjoyment of oneself. [...] It is the development of an art of existence that revolves around the question of the self, of its dependence and independence, of its universal form and of the connection it can and should establish with others, of the procedures by which it exerts its control over itself, and of the way in which it can establish a complete supremacy over itself (Foucault 1986b: 238-239).

This understanding of ethics, which draws attention to how one can live independently of power-knowledge relations and their externally imposed codes of conduct may also be seen in relation to the fourth theme identified by Deleuze (1988c), the death of man and superman. In a commentary on Foucault, Canguilhem (1997) does also emphasise how Foucault in *The History of Sexuality* is not simply concerned with ethics, but continues to pursue an interest in the human condition, understood as the ‘conditions in which human beings “problematize” what they are, what they do, and the world in which they live’ (Foucault quoted in Canguilhem 1997). Although Foucault’s (1986b) notion of an art of existence is underdeveloped and may run the risk of turning the human into a voluntaristic and narcissistic subject seen to be in total control over her own destiny, a reading that locates this ethic in relation to the death of man and superman may provide a less anthropocentric perspective. What Deleuze does in his discussion of the death of man and superman is to indicate a future where the forces of the human exist in relation to a multitude of new forces. As these forces are both indeterminate and non-human, this future will bring about the disappearance of the human as such. But since this ontological theme remains underdeveloped in Foucault, I shall discuss how such a radical ontology figures in Deleuze’s philosophy of concepts.

Before turning to Deleuze's philosophy of concept creation, from which his radical ontology and philosophy of life emerge, it is worth noticing that his project is also underpinned by a sense of discontinuity. Rather than studying the history of philosophy and the ideas of a particular philosopher in order of importance or in chronological order, Deleuze starts in the middle, at the margins or with particular turning points in an author or in the history of philosophy as a whole. This does for example explain why Deleuze is interested in some of the more peripheral figures in the history of philosophy, such as Nietzsche and Bergson, Duns Scotus and Lucretius, Spinoza and Leibniz (cf. Deleuze 1983, 1988a, 1988b, 1990, 1993, 1994), who all in one way or the other 'challenged the rationalist tradition in this history' (Deleuze 1995: 6). The result is not a coherent and holistic presentation of the history of philosophy and of particular philosophers, which would be in agreement with the conventions of the history of philosophy. Instead, Deleuze departs from those ideas and concepts that interest him most personally, thus making unexpected movements and connections in thought that break up and reshuffle rather than smoothly order the history of philosophy and the *oeuvres* of particular authors. In a letter to his critic Michel Cressole (published in *Negotiations* 1995), Deleuze characterises his own way of doing history of philosophy as buggery.

I suppose the main way I coped with it at the time was to see the history of philosophy as a sort of buggery or (it comes to the same thing) immaculate conception. I saw myself as taking an author from behind and giving him a child that would be his own offspring, because the author had to actually say all I had him saying. But the child was bound to be monstrous too, because it resulted from all sorts of shifting, slipping, dislocations and hidden emissions that I really enjoyed (Deleuze 1995: 6).

Although the buggery metaphor is aimed to problematise the history of philosophy, it is also problematic in itself. As a brief comment made in a letter rather than a fully-fledged metaphor developed in one of Deleuze's books, it remains underdeveloped and unreflective, particularly of its own male-centrist bias. However, it is worth paying attention to because it problematises the heterosexist terms in which we tend to think about the male body. From Deleuze's buggery metaphor it is also possible to see that even Deleuze's histories of philosophy are exercises in *concept creation*. They are not simply critical encounters with previously invented concepts. The method of concept creation is at the centre of *What Is Philosophy?* (1994), which is Deleuze's last joint work with the psychologist Felix Guattari, and it is to their formulation of a philosophy of "concept creation" that I now turn.¹⁶

3.8 Deleuze and the Philosophy of Concept Creation

Already on the second page of *What Is Philosophy?* Deleuze and Guattari (1994: 2) argue that philosophy is 'the art of forming, inventing, and fabricating concepts.' This is a very interesting idea, and it is developed with an immaculate sense of detail. By no means, therefore, does this statement mark the end of their discussion. Following this idea, Deleuze and Guattari outline a complex set of related premises that govern the process of concept creation. First, the concept needs conceptual personae. Deleuze and Guattari trace the notion of conceptual personae to the Ancient Greek

¹⁶ *What Is Philosophy?* is indisputably a joint effort between Deleuze and Guattari. I do however feel that posing this question and outlining the premises of a philosophy of concept creation is likely to have been more of a concern to the philosopher Deleuze than to the psychologist Guattari. As argued above, concept creation was also at the centre of Deleuze's histories of philosophy. Moreover, Deleuze (1994) did already in *Difference and Repetition* (first published in France in 1968) deal systematically with philosophy as concept creation.

understanding of the philosopher as friend (i.e. the friend of wisdom), and it becomes clear that it is the philosopher, as the friend of the concept, who is the conceptual persona who invents the concept. In contrast to the sage in other civilisations, the Greek philosopher does not possess wisdom, but continuously seeks wisdom by constantly creating and inventing, recreating and reinventing concepts. The role of the philosopher as conceptual persona is however a complex one. Not only does this make the philosopher the friend of wisdom and concepts. Given the intensity with which the philosopher seeks wisdom, s/he is also the lover and claimant of concepts who operates in constant rivalry with other lovers and claimants.

This characterisation of the philosopher as conceptual persona underlines the dynamic and uncertain nature of what it means to do philosophy. Since the philosopher is constantly inventing concepts and constantly challenging previously invented concepts in rivalry against other philosophers, no one philosopher is ever capable of achieving total control over a concept. Final definitions are unattainable. The autopoietic nature of the concept itself reinforces this indeterminacy. Concepts are self-positing; they posit themselves. Concept creation and self-positing are not mutual exclusives, however, and Deleuze and Guattari assert that 'The concept posits itself to the same extent that it is created' (1994: 11). Consequently, and even though it is the philosopher who has the potential to create the concept, s/he can only potentially have the concept, its power and its competence.

Establishing philosophy as the business of concept creation, Deleuze and Guattari also elaborate on their understanding of philosophy by saying what philosophy is not. Contrary to what is often believed, philosophy is not contemplation, reflection or communication. Contemplation is simply 'things themselves seen in relation of their

specific concepts.’ And reflection has nothing to do with philosophy because no one has ever needed philosophy to reflect on anything. Finally, philosophy is not about communication because communication is about consensus rather than concepts. ‘The idea of a Western democratic conversation has never produced a single concept’, Deleuze and Guattari insist. Although philosophy creates concepts for contemplation, reflection and communication to take place, it is not itself engaged in any of these activities, which are merely ‘machines for constituting Universals in every discipline’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 6). Deleuze and Guattari are highly opposed to the notion of Universals, and argue that philosophy has already left the Universals of contemplation and reflection and with it the dream of dominating other disciplines. Also, philosophy no longer sees an opportunity in ‘falling back on Universals of communication that would provide rules for an imaginary mastery of the markets and the media’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 7). Their critique of Universals is an important one in that it makes concept creation depart from elitist convictions that would posit philosophy as the mother of all knowledge. In Deleuze and Guattari’s own words:

The exclusive right of concept creation secures a function for philosophy but it does not give it any preeminence or privilege since there are other ways of thinking and creating, other ways of ideation that, like scientific thought, do not have to pass through concepts (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 8).

If thinking does not need to pass through concepts, then, why do new concepts have to be created? Deleuze and Guattari’s answer is the following: Philosophy must create concepts anew exactly in order to prevent itself from becoming like its rivals, which all are disciplines of Universals. After all, philosophy is not just like any other form of

thinking, and Deleuze and Guattari emphasise that ‘the first principle of philosophy is that Universals explain nothing but must themselves be explained’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 7). In their view, this is exactly the problem with sociology and the human sciences, epistemology, linguistics, psychoanalysis and logic, if not to mention the more recent rivals to philosophy, computer science, marketing, design and advertising and ‘all the disciplines of communication.’ Although these disciplines have colonised the word concept itself whilst claiming to be its friends (i.e. conceptual personae), their understanding of the concept and of creativity and concept creation is a fundamentally non-philosophical one by which the concept is commodified and reduced to a matter of information and enterprise; a product to be sold like a packet of noodles or like a simulation of a packet of noodles (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 10).¹⁷

Deleuze and Guattari do however realise that philosophy itself is partly to blame for the colonisation and commodification of the concept by the disciplines of communication:

¹⁷ Since Deleuze and Guattari highlight the role of marketing in understanding the commodification of the concept, their own passage should be of particular interest to academics in the management field. Here, they depict marketing and the other rival disciplines as having ‘seized hold of the word *concept* itself and said: “This is our concern, we are the creative ones, we are the *ideas men!* We are the friends of the concept, we put it in our computers”’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 10). Further on, they argue that ‘Marketing has preserved the idea of a certain relationship between the concept and the event. But here the concept has become the set of product displays (historical, scientific, artistic, sexual, pragmatic), and the event has become the exhibition that sets up various displays and the “exchange of ideas” it is supposed to promote. The only events are exhibitions, and the only concepts are products that can be sold. Philosophy has not remained unaffected by the general movement that replaced Critique with sales promotion. The simulacrum, the simulation of a packet of noodles has become the true concept; and the one who packages the product, commodity, or work of art has become the philosopher, conceptual persona, or artist’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 10).

Philosophers have not been sufficiently concerned with the nature of the concept as philosophical reality. They have preferred to think of it as a given knowledge or representation that can be explained by the faculties able to form it (abstraction or generalization) or employ it (judgment) (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 11).

Although Hegel and the other post-Kantians are recognised by Deleuze and Guattari as having avoided turning the concept into an abstract or general idea, they nevertheless argue that it is Hegel in particular who fails the indeterminacy of philosophy by reconstructing, by other means, philosophy as the mother of all knowledge. Treating conceptual personae as “ghostly puppets”, Hegel and the post-Kantians pursue an *encyclopaedia* of the concept by which concepts are treated as Universals of knowledge. It is from the heights of this universal encyclopaedia that the concept has fallen into the disaster described above, where the concept is nothing more than a product to be bought and sold in the marketplace. Deleuze and Guattari’s alternative, which they briefly refer to as a *pedagogy* of the concept, is more modest in that it challenges the arrogance of Hegelian universalism as well as the commodified concept in the disciplines of communication. Unfortunately, the notion of a *pedagogy* of the concept remains underdeveloped, and it therefore makes little sense to replace the notion of a *philosophy* of the concept with this notion. If anything, Deleuze and Guattari’s reference to a pedagogy of the concept appeals to a humble learning approach where no philosopher can impose final definitions and meanings.

Anyway, it is from this starting point that Deleuze and Guattari in the subsequent chapter ask what a concept is, and quickly declare that ‘There are no simple concepts.

Every concept has components and is defined by them' (1994: 15). In other words, the concept is a multiplicity. To Deleuze and Guattari, this means two things. First, that the concept is a whole, and second, that the concept is a fragmentary whole. Being a whole, the concept is able to totalise its components. But being a fragmentary whole, this ability is limited. Moreover, since it is only through its fragmented nature that the concept can 'escape the mental chaos constantly threatening it, stalking it, trying to reabsorb it' (1994: 16), the concept's ability to do so is also limited. Deleuze and Guattari's understanding of the concept in terms of wholeness and fragmentation should therefore not be interpreted as a leap towards order and closure, but as a recognition of the openness of the concept.

The openness of the concept is reinforced by its relational nature. The concept is not absolute and on its own, but always in relation to another. In other words, the concept becomes what it is in relation to the Other, and more specifically, the concept becomes what it is through its connections with other concepts and with particular problems, which are pre-conceptual:

All concepts are connected to problems without which they would have no meaning (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 16).

Consequently, the discovery of a new problem would change the role, nature and meaning of a concept completely. But in addition to reinforce the indeterminate nature of the concept, this means that Deleuze and Guattari avoid turning the concept into an abstract entity confined to the domain of ideas. Since concepts are connected to pre-conceptual problems, concepts speak of the world. And insofar as concepts are dynamic, they speak of possible worlds. This is the power of the concept: Not just to

express that which exists here and now, but to express that which might possibly exist in the future. It is through this assertion that Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy of concept creation extends into an ontological project. It is by creating concepts that Deleuze (sometimes with Guattari) rethinks life and embodiment. I shall examine parts of this philosophy of life in chapter 7, as I investigate Deleuze's effort to rethink the reality of embodiment. And in the final chapter of this thesis I shall argue that it is by inventing different conceptualisations of organisation that organisation theorists might be able to rethink organisation. For the moment, however, what needs to be recognised is that new concepts of life and embodiment may not only change the ways in which we think about life and embodiment. New concepts may also change the ways in which we live life and embodiment. Similarly, new concepts of organisation may change the ways in which we organise our activities on a daily basis.

Creating new concepts of life, embodiment and organisation is therefore not just a matter of pure theorising. If we are to take Deleuze and Guattari's argument seriously, any concept needs to be conceptualised in relation to pre-conceptual and post-conceptual problems and experiences – of life, embodiment and organisation. A *philosophy of organisation* therefore needs to be developed in relation to a *non-philosophy of organisation*. Of course, during the last decades there has been an unprecedented expansion in empirical and non-philosophical research about formal organisations. But since this mainstream body of work is largely inattentive to the philosophical aspects of organisation and sometimes even hostile to philosophically minded studies of organisation, this is not the non-philosophical Other that I have in mind. For a philosophy of organisation to prosper, it needs to relate to a non-

philosophical Other that respects it, welcomes it, and complements it. Just as much as the philosophy of organisation recognises the need for empirical non-philosophical research, the non-philosophy of organisation must recognise the need for theoretical and philosophical research on organisation.

But at the same time, a philosophy of organisation must be developed in relation to a different Other: i.e. in relation to a philosophy of *nonorganisation*. This is not an explicit part of Deleuze and Guattari's (1994) notion of philosophy as concept creation. Deleuze does however think about issues of "nonorganisation" in detail elsewhere (cf. Deleuze 1988a, 1994), and I shall discuss the notion of nonorganisation further in chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8. With regards to Deleuze, it may be argued that nonorganisation, through his concept of the virtual that I examine in chapter 7 is at the centre of and marks the very starting point of his philosophy of becoming. As a matter of nonorganisation, the undivided Whole of the virtual puts organisation into a larger context that destabilises specific organisational phenomena as well as organisation in general. The consequences of this may be remarkable. First, nonorganisation undermines our attempts to organise bodies and bodily activities. And second, it destabilises and opens up what it means to be a body. And finally, as we shall see in chapter 8, this may have important consequences for how organisation theory should deal with the problem of the body. In the next section of this chapter, however, I shall give an overview of how the method and methodology outlined above will be put to work in the different chapters of this thesis.

3.9 Conceptualist Methodology and the Problem of the Body in Organisation Theory

Having examined the projects of Canguilhem, Foucault and Deleuze from the interest of developing a conceptualist methodology, I have been able to identify some shared intellectual platform or problematique that joins the projects of these three thinkers. Not only are they all considerable figures in French twentieth century thought; and not only did they know each other personally. From their overlapping intellectual endeavours, it is possible to identify a common school of thought, constituted by a shared pursuit of a philosophy of concepts and a philosophy of life. Given their efforts to develop a philosophy of life, it is also possible to identify a shared, albeit different, interest in the body. I would argue, however, that it is largely because of the different ways in which they seek to develop a philosophy of concepts that they engage differently with life and embodiment. This also explains why I in the remainder of this thesis employ Canguilhem, Foucault and Deleuze individually, to examine different albeit related problematiques. But before actually doing so, I shall provide a brief outline indicating where Canguilhem, Foucault and Deleuze are individually put to work in this thesis, and how each one of them enables me to investigate how organisation theory deals with the problem of the body.

First, Canguilhem's "conceptualism" is employed in chapters 4 and 5 to study the concept of organisation in organisation theory and how it deals with the body. Although I am concerned with one academic discipline rather than a group of different disciplines, I would argue that the interdisciplinary nature of organisation theory and my conceptualist focus shows a very similar concern to that of Canguilhem. This first enables me to analyse in chapter 4 how the concept has developed from classical organisation theory up until contemporary mainstream

organisation theory. Although it makes little sense (at least in relation to the research project pursued here) to speak of a paradigmatic shift in the history of organisation theory, this focus also enables me to draw attention to a paradoxical situation, which has had considerable impact on the development of the field. Whereas the body through the concept of the organism was of great interest to some of the pioneers of organisational research (especially Elton Mayo), studies focusing on the functioning of the organism in the working environment were excluded from the discipline sometime in the late 1940s and the organism was reduced to a metaphor of organisation.¹⁸ Consequently, the body has been an absent presence in organisation theory. It is my argument in this thesis that this absent presence has had significant implications for how organisation theorists tend to think about organisation.

Although the classical and contemporary mainstream concepts of organisation are very similar (and in principle one and the same concept) in that the majority of organisation theorists continue to think organisation as organisational entities void of embodiment, Canguilhem's emphasis on ruptures also enables me in chapter 5 to identify another contradiction in organisation theory. Since the 1980s, a new strand of thought, which effectively rethinks the concept of organisation in terms of organisational processes, has emerged within the discipline. This trend has by no

¹⁸ Abraham Maslow, who is mostly famous in organisation theory for his notion of the hierarchy of needs, provides a highly embodied understanding of motivation, which actually focuses on the basal needs of the body in explaining human motivation. This is however largely ignored by the majority of organisational researchers, who typically attribute a privileged status to the more mental kinds of motivation located at the top of his hierarchy. Another aspect of Maslow's academic career, which is mostly ignored in organisation theory, is his research in female sexuality, where he interviewed working class and middle class women about their sexual fantasies (cf. Cullen 1997).

means had a chance yet to dominate later thinking in organisation theory. But it highlights the disunited nature of the field. Canguilhem's notion of ruptures or *coupures* may be too strong a word to be used in the context of organisation theory, even if what is rupturous depends on your particular field of vision. But since Canguilhem's notion of ruptures or *coupures* is the starting point by which an emphasis on contradictions and discontinuities is enabled, it most certainly deserves to be acknowledged.

In order to understand the processual concept of organisation, Canguilhem's conceptualism needs to be supplemented with Foucault's concern with *power-knowledge relations and the formation of the self*. Foucault's contribution here is not so much a technical matter of how to study a research object, but a more general one of where to direct one's focus when studying a particular research object such as organisation or the body. What Foucault enables me to do, then, is study what organisational discourses and institutions try to do to the body. Although Canguilhem and Foucault share a conceptualist bias and a preoccupation with *coupures*, the latter did more explicitly study the political underpinnings and consequences of concepts and other discursive elements. In this chapter, Foucault's notion of power-knowledge relations therefore enables me to emphasise how the processual concept of organisation draws attention to the ways in which concepts and discourses organise people in everyday life. Although Foucault's notion of power-knowledge relations may most directly be seen to enable inquiry into how the concept of organisation and organisation theory may organise people in everyday life, this is not the focus of this thesis. Any such inquiry would have to be pursued elsewhere, and it is to some extent already developed by Karen Dale (2001) in her book *Anatomising Embodiment and*

Organisation Theory. Most importantly, the use of Canguilhem and Foucault in this chapter enables me to see how the problem of the body, though figuring only marginally in only some of this literature, remains largely absent in processual conceptualisations of organisation. Whereas Foucault in particular draws attention to the ways in which the body is disciplined and bodies are constructed and categorised, this stream of thought pays very little attention to issues of embodiment, thus making little difference to mainstream thinking about organisation in this respect.

In chapter 6, Canguilhem's conceptualism enables me to analyse how the body is conceptualised in feminist research, the sociology of the body and organisation theory. More specifically, this chapter identifies a fundamental discontinuity in the conceptualisation of the body across (but not necessarily between) these three areas of thought. This discontinuity is identified in terms of three main themes that with benefit can be thought in relation to Foucault's notion of power-knowledge relations. Through these themes, it is also possible to relate the concept of embodiment to issues of organisation. The first theme emphasises the ways in which the body is organised through discourses and institutions. The second theme emphasises the ways in which embodiment enables action and organisation in terms of discourses and institutions. And the third theme emphasises the ways in which bodies transgress the power-knowledge relations of organisational discourses and institutions altogether. As we shall see, a majority of the literature is concerned with the first theme. Some writers are concerned with the second theme, and very few writers are concerned with the third theme, to which I shall return in chapter 7.

In chapter 7, I analyse some of the different ways in which Deleuze has conceptualised embodiment beyond organisation. Although it is possible to identify in

Deleuze's thinking a persistent concern with the ways in which bodies transgress and exist independently of organisation, Canguilhem's and Foucault's emphasis on *coupures* also enables me to appreciate certain ruptures in Deleuze's thinking about the body. Not only does Deleuze draw upon different philosophers and different phenomena whilst thinking about the body. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, with Guattari, he also makes a temporary shift by which a primary interest in the human is supplemented (if not replaced) with a stronger interest in non-humans.

But Deleuze's own *philosophy of concepts* also enables me to emphasise the ontological nature of his interest in the body. More clearly than Canguilhem and Foucault, Deleuze is not merely concerned with how other areas of thought conceptualise the body. Consistent with his own philosophy of concepts, which more specifically is a philosophy of concept creation, Deleuze seeks to invent new conceptualisations of the body in contrast and competition with previous conceptualisations, many of which seem to collapse into organised embodiment in one way or the other. In the concluding chapter of the thesis, chapter 8, I shall *inter alia*, and without reducing the body to a matter of organisation, put the Deleuzian conception of the body emerging from my discussion in chapter 7 in contact with the concept of organisation. In contrast to the previous chapters, which in one way or the other have dealt with already existing conceptualisations of organisation or embodiment, my objective here is to write in the spirit of Deleuze's, or rather Deleuze and Guattari's (1994) philosophy of concept creation and invent a new (or at least slightly different) concept of organisation – beyond the still disembodied understandings of organisation characteristic of mainstream and processual organisation theory. Insofar as I am capable of recreating the concept of organisation,

this is an exercise in the philosophy of organisation. Thinking about organisation in a way that includes the problem of the body is not an attempt to synthesise organisation and the body or to turn their relationship into one of mutual exclusion. It is also not an exercise in reducing one to the other. Rather, by thinking organisation and embodiment as independent forces that both have the power to affect and to be affected by one another, I hope to emphasise the fragility as well as the power of organisation. The body is a problem that cannot be solved by means of organisation.

3.10 Imposing Boundaries: A Narrow Choice of Literature

Before moving on, it seems pressing to say something about why, in the following chapters, I have decided to analyse a somewhat limited selection of literature. Whereas the thesis is underpinned by a general interest in the disruption of boundaries, it has itself been subjected to quite narrow boundaries. This is perhaps most obvious in my choice of organisation theory literature, which includes above all the classics of the structural-functionalist tradition (e.g. Selznick 1949; Blau 1955; Parsons 1956a, 1956b), but also the more peripheral writers in the processual stream of thought (e.g. Cooper 1990; Chia 1995, 1998a; Tsoukas 1998a) as well as the more recent work of organisational researchers explicitly concerned with the body (e.g. Hassard et al. 2000; Dale 2001). Individual and small group level studies from organisational behaviour (e.g. Taylor 1947) and industrial sociology (e.g. Roy 1952, 1960; Baldamus 1959) that specifically refer to the body in studies of fatigue, job design, and physical working conditions, have been excluded from this engagement with organisation theory. The investigations of lightning conducted in the Hawthorne Studies, which were outlined in detail by both Mayo (1933) and by Roethlisberger and Dickson (1939), only get a brief mentioning. On a more general level, the work of

the phenomenologists and ethnomethodologists in sociology (e.g. Goffman 1959; Garfinkel 1967) and philosophy (e.g. Merleau-Ponty 1968) in which embodiment figures rather prominently have also been excluded, and so have Norbert Elias' (1978) study of the history of manners and Georges Bataille's investigations into eroticism and the scatological (e.g. 1962).

Overall, one might justify the exclusion of these bodies of literature by arguing that their inclusion would force me to violate the spatial boundaries – i.e. the word limit – of the doctoral thesis. Furthermore, one might argue that their exclusion has been necessary in order to come up with a manageable and doable research project. But more importantly, I decided on their exclusion because – in one way or the other – their inclusion would sidetrack my focus away from the research problem of the thesis. This is not to say that the literature mentioned above is irrelevant or uninteresting. But if I were to deal with it in as much depth as a rigorous investigation would require, this would inhibit me from dealing rigorously and in depth with more relevant literature. In other words, including these literatures would force me to exclude other things.

The exclusion of organisational behaviour and industrial sociology must also be seen in relation to my understanding of organisation theory. In spite of the interdisciplinary roots of organisation theory and even though organisational behaviour as well as industrial sociology have close relationships with organisation theory that involve much intellectual cross-fertilisation, there are significant differences with regards to teaching arrangements, institutional organisation, politico-intellectual tradition and research agendas. For example, on the MA programme in Organisation Studies (MAOS) at the University of Warwick (which is the academic institution I know

best), industrial sociology and organisation theory are taught in separate course modules by different members of staff. Similarly, whereas research in industrial sociology tends to be done within sociology departments, by work research institutes administered under government ministries, or by units specialising in industrial relations, organisation theory tends to be done within business schools and management departments. Further on, whereas one may identify amongst the majority of industrial sociologists a primary interest in workers, one may identify amongst the majority of organisation theorists a primary interest in managers and management. And, as the name suggests, the conduct of organisation theory is a more theoretical exercise than the conduct of organisational behaviour and industrial sociology, which both are dominated by empirical and often ethnographic research. Whereas one in organisation theory may find elaborate discussions of the concept of organisation, such work is less evident in organisational behaviour and industrial sociology. This is not to say that any version of organisation theory should be preferred to relevant and interesting work done within industrial sociology and organisational behaviour. As my discussions in the following chapters suggest, this thesis attempts a *critical* engagement with organisation theory. I have chosen to focus on literature from organisation theory because it is this discipline that constitutes my own academic background and it is within this discipline that I see an opportunity to rethink the concept of organisation in ways that may recognise the significance of embodiment.

With respect to phenomenology, ethnomethodology, Elias and Bataille, these bodies of literature have been excluded in part because they fall outside organisation theory, in part because I feel that my own concerns have been addressed more adequately by other thinkers and traditions. Although Elias' sophisticated investigation of the history

of manners draw our attention to the organisation of bodies without formal organisations, he has been excluded from this thesis simply on the grounds that he is not an organisation theorist. Goffman's (1959) phenomenology of symbolic interactionism, as pursued through the notion of impression management, and Garfinkel's (1967) ethnomethodological investigations of phenomena such as transsexualism, privilege the organised nature of social life and embodiment and are excluded on the same basis. Furthermore, I realise that Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology has been significant in problematising the Cartesian mind/body dualism and emphasising the embodied nature of experience and subjectivity, and I can appreciate the radical implications of Bataille's explorations of the erotic and the scatological. However, I feel that Deleuze's and Deleuze and Guattari's biophilosophy is philosophically more sophisticated and more explicitly preoccupied with embodiment than Bataille's writings, and I believe that their work is more powerful in opening up what it means to be a body than the works of both Merleau-Ponty and Bataille.

Chapter 4

Organisation Theory and the Organisation of Production

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter I outlined the guiding principles of a conceptualist methodology for the study of how organisation theory does and should deal with the problem of the body. The time has now arrived to put this methodology to work. In order to do so, I shall direct my attention in this chapter to the concept of “organisation” as it is typically thought within the mainstream of organisation theory. My investigation here is guided by three questions. First, what are the main characteristics of mainstream thinking about organisation? Second, which intellectual sources have informed the mainstream concept of organisation? Third, why does this concept of organisation say so little about the body, and how does the body get lost in mainstream organisation theory? By investigating some of the intellectual sources of organisation theory, I shall try to find out where the disembodied concept of organisation and the disembodiment of organisation theory stem from.

In order to deal with these questions, I shall pursue a historical yet highly selective and discontinuous investigation of the concept of organisation – from the intellectual precursors to organisation theory in the 1920s to the mainstream of contemporary organisation theory. The Harvard Pareto Circle (HPC), which was a powerful and elitist group of intellectuals at Harvard University in the 1920s, 1930s and early 1940s, makes the beginning of my inquiry. Although the HPC preceded the emergence of organisation theory with some years and none of its members were organisation theorists as such, I shall argue that some (indeed many) of the people

associated with it have exercised a leading impact on both classical and contemporary organisation theory. Here I shall focus my attention on three of those people, whom I regard as significant forerunners to organisation theory and its concept of organisation. These are the natural scientist and founding leader of the HPC L. J. Henderson, the organisational researcher and Human Relations pioneer Elton Mayo, and the sociologist Talcott Parsons. Emphasising the influence of these three is not to dismiss the significance of people like Max Weber, Frederick Taylor and Henri Fayol, who (alongside Mayo) are often identified as the forebears of organisation theory. Rather, I have chosen to focus on Henderson, Mayo and Parsons for the following four reasons. First, because they constitute a group of friends and colleagues who were gathered at one of the world's most prestigious academic institutions at the same time. Second, because they share a set of important ideas that were cultivated through their joint participation in the HPC. Third, because their ideas are carried forward by the mainstream and hegemonic concept of organisation that reduces organisation to a matter of organisational entities by drawing a sharp distinction between formal organisations and social organisation. And fourth, because their thinking draws upon certain conceptions of the system and the organism that have serious implications for how one is to think about organisation and the ways in which the body is a problem for organisation.¹⁹ Following the discussion of these important precursors to

¹⁹ The third reason given here is particularly interesting with regards to my decision to privilege the HPC rather than Weber in this brief history of organisation theory. Although Weber did much through his studies of bureaucracy to influence the study of formal organisations (including Parsons' writings on this subject matter), his greater and more sociologically significant emphasis on the rationalisation of modern society in general also highlighted the notion of social organisation. And as Weber's contribution to organisation is an ambivalent one, he has also had a great influence upon more recent organisation theorists keen to develop an alternative and processual concept of organisation. This will be examined in the next chapter.

organisation theory, I shall examine some of the early or classical organisation theorists who have been most directly influenced by the thought of Henderson, Mayo and especially Parsons. These are Philip Selznick, Peter Blau and W. Richard Scott, who, given their keen dedication to central principles of the HPC, may be referred to as “systemic” organisation theorists. Like Parsons, the organisation theory pursued by these three writers is one concerned with formal organisations rather than social organisation. But before examining how Selznick, Blau and Scott think about organisation, I shall include an intermezzo on Robert Merton. Although Merton’s writings were spread across various sociological subfields and not primarily associated with organisation theory, Selznick’s, Blau’s and Scott’s association with Merton is significant here because it provides an important link to the HPC. At Columbia University it was very much Merton who steered the research interests of Selznick, Blau and Scott in the direction of systemic and structural-functionalist sociology.

Having examined the systemic concept of organisation in classical organisation theory, I shall in the final section of this chapter direct my attention to some of the ways in which the concept of organisation is thought within contemporary mainstream organisation theory. The first part of this section deals with the Australian organisation theorist Lex Donaldson. Like the systemic organisation theorists, Donaldson (1985) draws a sharp distinction between formal organisations and social organisation, and insists that organisation theory can only be successful in establishing itself as a distinct discipline if it leaves the latter to other disciplines (e.g. sociology and anthropology) and maintains the former as its sole object of research.

At the moment, however, Donaldson has little reason to worry. As I shall elaborate in the second part of this section, it is this reductive research agenda and its associated concept of organisation as organisational entities – be they business companies, government agencies or voluntary associations – which has dominated the majority of contemporary research in management and organisation theory. This dominant trend is less an outcome of explicit conceptualising and theorising and more the result of a discursive void in mainstream organisational research. Since the Aston Studies of the 1960s and 1970s (cf. Pugh and Hickson 1976, Pugh and Hinings 1976, Pugh and Payne 1977) and since David Silverman's (1970) rethinking of organisation theory, the majority of organisational research has been empirically oriented. Most research appearing in high-profile journals on both sides of the Atlantic (e.g. *AMR*, *ASQ*, *Human Relations*, *Organization Studies* and *Organization*) take the entitative concept of organisation for granted in their investigations of banks, hospitals, car manufacturers, etc. The dominance of this concept of organisation seems only to be explicit in management and organisation theory textbooks, dictionaries, encyclopaedias and handbooks. In order to demonstrate the predominance in contemporary mainstream organisation theory of the entitative concept of organisation, it is therefore to this body of literature that I draw the attention as I bring this chapter to a close.

4.2 The Harvard Pareto Circle

L. J. Henderson, who held professorial chairs in both the Medical School and the Business School at Harvard University, was the founder and undisputed leader of the Harvard Pareto Circle (HPC), of which Mayo and Parsons were members in the 1930s and early 1940s (cf. Russett 1966; Heyl 1968; Keller 1984). As the name partly

suggests, the HPC was a group of Harvard academics from a variety of scholarly areas, joined to discuss and investigate the ideas of the Italian aristocrat and engineer-turned-social scientist, Vilfredo Pareto, a scholar of great merits, sometimes known as the “Karl Marx of the bourgeoisie” (Brinton quoted in Heyl 1968: 317).

The HPC constituted an intellectual and politically conservative elite at Harvard, and included the following prominent names: A. Lawrence Lowell (President of Harvard University 1909-1933), the British philosopher and mathematician Alfred North Whitehead, the economist Joseph Schumpeter, the historian Crane Brinton, and the sociologists Pitirim Sorokin (who became the head of the Sociology Department following its foundation in 1931) and George C. Homans. Other people influenced by Henderson’s “Paretophilia” (Russett’s 1966 term) were Wallace Brett Donham (Dean of Harvard Graduate School of Business 1919-1942), the industrial researchers F. J. Roethlisberger and W. Loyd Wright, the physiologist Walter B. Cannon, and Chester Barnard (President of the Bell Corporation, author of *The Functions of the Executive* and visiting professor at Harvard Graduate School of Business) (cf. Heyl 1968). In other words, the highly elitist Pareto Circle included a significant number of established scholars of impressive intellectual merit. And even though this clique (known amongst its leftist opponents as “the Pareto cult”) ‘never influenced a majority of the faculty’ at Harvard University, one of its founding members Crane Brinton admits that it did have ‘fairly wide repercussions’ (Brinton quoted in Heyl 1968: 317). For example Barnard’s position in American society at the time should not be underestimated. By dominating American telecommunications between the 1930s and the 1960s, his power may be compared to (and might even have superseded) that of Bill Gates and Microsoft today. Moreover, I would argue that the

HPC most likely did influence a majority of the faculty in both the Harvard Sociology Department and the Harvard Graduate School of Business.

The members of the HPC were drawn to Pareto's work for two main reasons. First, they found inspiration in his writings to develop a natural science of society. Perhaps most famous in welfare economics for inventing what was later to be known as Pareto equilibrium and Pareto optimality, Pareto's early training was in mechanical engineering. It was however the important relationship between Pareto's early research in the natural sciences and his later devotion to sociological theory and the study of social systems that preoccupied the members of the HPC (Heyl 1968). For example Pareto's notion of the equilibrational nature of social systems and his study of the circulation of elites in society was based on physics – particularly his mathematical theory of equilibrium in elastic solids – and on his mathematical theory of pure economics (Russett 1966).²⁰ I shall return to the use of Pareto's thinking about systems in general and social systems in particular in my discussion of Henderson below.

Second, the members of the HPC were fascinated by Pareto's aristocratic and conservative politics, which provided this politically conservative membership of the Harvard faculty with a defence against Marxism and the very active Marxists during the 1930s Great Depression (Russett 1966; Heyl 1968),²¹ and which was regarded

²⁰ Pareto's mathematical theory of pure economics had initially been influenced by the work of the economist Leon Walras, whom Pareto later replaced as Professor of Economics at the University of Lausanne.

²¹ George C. Homans (1962: 4) writes the following about Pareto's importance: 'As a Bostonian Republican who had not rejected his comparatively wealthy family, I felt during the thirties that I was

central to the resolution of the problems facing American and Western societies in the 1930s. At that time, the US was severely troubled by the Great Depression, and the Bostonian Republicans of the HPC did not neglect their role in helping the US economy recover from this disaster and, in addition, saving American society from revolution and disorganisation.

The Harvard Graduate School of Business was a key institution in this respect (O'Connor 1999). Backed and operated by central figures in the HPC (including Henderson who set up the Fatigue Laboratory in the Business School), the Business School was Harvard University's arm into big business. Through management consultancy, the Business School would secure industry funding for the University as a whole and make American business successful by teaching and prescribing the methods and advantages of Fordist mass production. In other words, US companies were to become successful and the American economy was to prosper through adopting the Fordist doctrine of "piling 'em high and selling 'em cheap". Consequently, a key aspect of early business research at Harvard was that it prescribed a specific mode of production that since came to dominate the capitalist economy at least for most of the remainder of the twentieth century.²² Already here it

under personal attack, above all from the Marxists. I was ready to believe Pareto because he provided me with a defence.'

²² It is somewhat ironic that in their best seller *The Second Industrial Divide*, Piore and Sabel (1984) (Sabel also serving as the Ford International Associate Professor of Social Science at MIT at the time of publication) pursued the anti-Harvard Business School position that the only way the US could get out of its current economic crisis was by replacing methods of standardised mass production with a system of flexible specialisation.

is possible to identify a sense in which the HPC through its engagement in the Business School at Harvard privileges the study of the organisation of production in formal organisations. But still, it is difficult to trace an explicit concept of organisation amongst the members of the HPC. Instead, some of them are highly inspired by Pareto's understanding of the social system. It is to Henderson's Paretan writings on the social system, which in turn come to influence the classical and mainstream concept of organisation (whereby organisation becomes a matter of formal organisations, organisations of productions or organisational entities) that I now turn my attention.

4.3 L. J. Henderson and the Concept of the System

Henderson (1935) opens his short book *Pareto's General Sociology* by comparing Pareto's (1916) monumental work *Trattoria di Sociologia Generale (Treatise on General Sociology)* to the achievements of Galileo three hundred years earlier. It is therefore no secret that Henderson was a great admirer of Pareto, and this has obvious consequences for Henderson's own conceptualisation of the social system. Although recognising certain limitations with Pareto's project, he does not offer a radically different view. Instead, as we shall see, the conceptualisation arising from Henderson's text provides an introduction to and elaboration of Pareto's conceptualisation.

Somewhat ironically, Henderson (1935) does not start his discussion with Pareto's concept of the social system, but with an outline of Willard Gibbs' generalised description of the physico-chemical system, which he holds amongst the most important contributions to theoretical science in the last fifty years:

A physico-chemical system is an isolated material aggregate. It consists of components, which are individual substances, like water or alcohol. These substances are found, singly or together, in phases. Phases are physically homogeneous solid, liquid, or gaseous parts of the system: for example, ice, or a solution of alcohol in water, or air. The system is further characterized by the concentrations of the components in the phases, by its temperature, and by its pressure (Henderson 1935: 10).

Further on, Henderson argues that this system is characterised by mutual dependence, and that changes in one factor are accompanied by changes in other factors and in the system as a whole. This is however not just a characteristic of physico-chemical systems. With regards to mutual dependency, 'this system is typical of all systems' (Henderson 1935: 12).

Although Henderson points out that 'Gibbs's system is plainly a fiction' as 'no real system can be isolated', he feels no reason to reject the main ideas of Gibbs' concept as they provide 'the well chosen simplifications and abstractions that make possible a systematic treatment of complex phenomena' (Henderson 1935: 15). Perfectly content with Gibbs' conceptualisation, he then turns to Pareto's *General Sociology*, which he claims is 'the construction of a similar conceptual scheme: the social system.' Pareto's social system 'possesses many of the same logical advantages and limitations that are present in the physico-chemical system' (Henderson 1935: 16). Despite emphasising that Pareto was in no way led to his concept of the social system by Gibbs' concept of the physico-chemical system, Henderson starts his discussion by identifying the analogies between the two. Paradoxically, Henderson does not here make a major

point of the fact that Pareto's individuals are heterogeneous when their analogous equivalent in Gibbs' system, i.e. Gibbs' phases, are homogeneous:

Pareto's social system contains individuals; they are roughly analogous to Gibbs's components. It is heterogeneous (cf. Gibbs's phases), for the individuals are of different families, trades, and professions: they are associated with different institutions and are members of different economic and social classes. As Gibbs considers temperature, pressure, and concentrations, so Pareto considers sentiments in words and deeds, verbal elaborations, and the economic interests (Henderson 1935: 16).

Admitting that Gibbs and Pareto 'exclude many factors that are important in special cases', Henderson argues that they both have demonstrated how much can be done within those limitations and 'that such limitations are necessary' (Henderson 1935: 16). And further on, he re-emphasises the point hinted at above, that the main characteristic of the social system, as of the physico-chemical one and of 'all [other] analogical systems', is that it is 'in a state of mutual dependence.' (Henderson 1935: 17). Mutual dependency, which refers to the 'mutually dependent variations of [...] variables' does actually rule out conceiving of systems in terms of cause and effect (Henderson 1935: 18). According to Henderson, Pareto's study of systems is made possible by his knowledge of mathematics and of 'the logical principles that are involved, but also by exceptional skill in diagnosis, and by wide learning and experience' (Henderson 1935: 18). The crux of this, however, is that Pareto's sociology is considered applicable to largely all areas in the human and social sciences.

In order to understand the functioning of the social system, Henderson turns his attention to Pareto's treatment of equilibrium:

The treatment of equilibrium [...] is logically of great significance. Pareto observes that the state of the social system is determined by its conditions. Therefore, as a small modification in the state of the system is imposed upon it, a reaction will take place and this will tend to restore the original state, very slightly modified by the experience. [...] Thus the disturbances produced by short wars, by epidemics that are not too severe, and by all kinds of lesser catastrophes ordinarily disappear and leave hardly a trace behind them (Henderson 1935: 46).

Despite recognising the possibilities for equilibrium being disturbed by heterogeneous elements, residuals and derivations, and equilibrium being unstable, Henderson does on the whole argue that disturbances are not severe. Acknowledging the work of the physiologists Claude Bernard, Walter B. Cannon and Joseph Barcroft, his discussion is here inspired by the notion of the self-healing organism (*vis medicatrix naturae*). According to this principle, the organism is by and large capable of recovering from disturbances and re-attaining equilibrium:

The case of physiological equilibrium is similar [to that of social equilibrium]. In fact it is logically identical. When recovery from disease is in question the process is still often referred to as a result of the *vis medicatrix naturae*. Claude Bernard's discussion of the constancy of the *milieu intérieur* bears on the same point, and so do Cannon's recent discussion of homeostasis and Barcroft's still more recent book (Henderson 1935: 46).

With regards to the body, two main conclusions therefore emerge out of Henderson's thinking. First, that the body, as an organism or organic system, is like any other system. And second, that being a system subject to the same logic as any other system, the body does on the whole enjoy stable equilibrium. As such, the body is not really much of a problem. With regards to the concept of organisation, Henderson gives few explicit clues. But even though he provided no explicit discussion of the concept of organisation and was not primarily interested in the workings of organisational life, his general preoccupation with systems and the equilibrium of systems was a great source of inspiration to his dedicated followers in the HPC. As I hope to show in my discussion of Talcott Parsons below, it is possible to see that the general theme expressed in Henderson's concept of the social system prefigured Parsons' concepts of the social system and organisation, even though Parsons was less explicitly concerned with equilibrium than was Henderson. For example, when Parsons writes about the boundary processes of sub-systems and describes how sub-systems such as formal organisations are integrated into and maintain stable boundaries towards other units in the social system at large, he adopts Henderson's position that on the whole systems enjoy a stable state of equilibrium.

But before discussing Parsons' thinking on social systems in general and formal organisations in particular, I shall direct my attention to Elton Mayo, whose research activities were heavily influenced by Henderson. Not only was Henderson instrumental in setting up the Harvard Fatigue Laboratory, which was the cradle of the Human Relations School of industrial sociology and organisational research and from which Mayo did most of his research. Henderson, who secured Mayo a post at the Fatigue Laboratory, also collaborated with Mayo on research carried out under the

institutional auspices of the Fatigue Laboratory. In 1936, Henderson co-authored an article with Mayo entitled 'The Effects of the Social Environment', and before that, Henderson's influence on Mayo is evident in Mayo's classic study of 1933, *The Human Problems of an Industrial Civilization* (henceforth, *Human Problems*).

In both texts, the notion of the organism does at first play a key role in understanding the human experience of work, and even in the former, Henderson's understanding of the organism influences Mayo's thinking. As I hope to demonstrate below, this conception of the organism continues to have a leading impact upon Mayo and upon the classical organisation theory that starts to develop in the 1940s and 1950s. First, as Mayo privileges the social aspects of work and reduces the organism to a metaphor of social and organisational life. And second, as organisation theory comes to exclude the body from its disciplinary territory. It is in order to elaborate on that which makes possible a particular organism metaphor and the exclusion of the body that I now turn my attention to Mayo.

4.4 Elton Mayo: From the Physiological to the Social Aspects of Work

Mayo, who in his twenties had embarked upon but never finished his medical education, remained strongly committed to a clinical and diagnostic research scheme after arriving at Harvard (cf. Smith 1998), and as suggested above, the organism was a central and genuine preoccupation in his studies of work and organisational life. For Mayo, as for many of his colleagues at the Fatigue Laboratory, knowledge about the physiological functioning of the human organism was key to understanding the parameters of efficiency in the workplace. This was also very much in line with Henderson's thinking, and Mayo took specific notice of Henderson's (1928) most recent physiological treatise *Blood, A Study in General Physiology* as well as of

Henderson's publications in scientific journals. In the chapter on fatigue in *Human Problems*, one thing that particularly triggers Mayo's (1933) interest is how Henderson (1928, 1932), whilst discussing the study of organic processes, proposes the use of mathematical mutual dependence analysis instead of the more simplistic cause-effect analysis.

Living organism is best conceived as a number of variables in equilibrium with each other in such a fashion that a change in any one will induce changes throughout the whole organization. Biological experiment accordingly should not seek to change a factor *a* while keeping factors *b, c, d ... n* constant, for this is impossible. If factors *b, c, d,* are put under constraint in a balanced system, the constraint will affect *a* also. For Henderson, scientific control in biological experiment means not constraint but measurement. The living organism responds to changes as a totality; in order to know the general nature of the response, it is necessary to measure simultaneously as many specified variables as possible – “as few as we may, as many as we must” (Mayo 1933: 11).

But in addition to provide Mayo with a method for scientific analysis, this statement also shows that Henderson informs Mayo's conception of the organism itself. As often is the case, the research method employed to study a particular object is dependent upon what one assumes to be the very nature of that object. In the case of Henderson and Mayo, mathematical mutual dependence analysis is preferred to cause-effect analysis because only the former can gain knowledge about the organism as a total system constituted by mutually interdependent variables existing in equilibrium.

Drawing upon these studies by Henderson and upon work by other researchers at the Fatigue Laboratory, Mayo continues to examine the physiological functioning of the organism. The first series of experiments carried out at the Laboratory was conducted by D. B. Dill (1928) and studied muscular activity in marathon runners. Like Henderson, Dill's research views the organism in terms of numerous factors or variables that are integrated and co-ordinated so as to constitute a system capable of maintaining a stable internal environment. More specifically, Dill highlights the advantageous effect of physical training upon the organism by arguing that the athlete enjoys a superior capacity to meet the organism's demand for oxygen. Consequently, fatigue is not a problem for the athlete. Mayo, who is more explicitly concerned with the performance of industrial workers, makes use of Dill's study without hesitation. Indeed, Mayo finds the same situation amongst industrial workers, and this leads him to insist that the concept of fatigue has little application in industry. This is for two reasons. First, because production tasks in industry are increasingly done by machines, leaving the human to merely direct the operations of the machine. And second, because insofar as industry requires the muscular input of human beings, there is a tendency of a division of labour to develop, which only selects those whose physique can endure this kind of work 'without any significant disturbance of organic balance' (Mayo 1933: 18).

Although Mayo acknowledges other disturbances to the organic balance than those corresponding to the concept of fatigue, he is most committed to demonstrate the stable nature of the human organism engaged in industrial work. This is evident in his discussion of monotony, where Mayo invokes the concept of homeostasis developed by Henderson's interlocutor, the Harvard physiologist Walter B. Cannon:

The physiologists have found that work can be performed in a “steady state.” For them this means that the organism can respond to external effort only as long as an inner equilibrium is maintained between a large number of mutually dependent variables. Dr. W. B. Cannon speaks of this condition as “homeostasis,” an equivalence between the “interofective” and “exteroffective” factors.²³ Given that a steady state is achieved, “the exercise can be carried on infinitely” (Mayo 1933: 27).

But here, Mayo also recognises the possibility that an individual is unable to perform work at a steady state, and this opens up for Mayo’s shift in emphasis from the organic to the social. Although the incapacity to sustain work at a steady state may be organically conditioned, it cannot be understood in purely organic terms. Taking monotony as an example, Mayo argues that this cannot merely be helped by the introduction of rest pauses. Appealing to experimental research by the physiologist Whyatt, Mayo argues that any attempt to explain monotony and ease the problems arising from it must look to the social.

It is however in his analysis of The Hawthorne Experiments at the Western Electric Company about a thousand miles away that Mayo starts to look more closely into the social aspects of work. This is also where probably the most famous aspect of Mayo’s *oeuvre* is documented: that the output and efficiency of a work group is seen to be

²³ It is the organism’s ability for homeostasis that ensures that it achieves a steady state so as to exist in harmony with its environment. Since homeostasis is the equivalence between exteroffective and interofective factors, homeostasis is the balance between factors that influence the organism from its external environment and factors that influence it from its internal environment respectively.

relatively unaffected by the physical conditions of work, but not by its social conditions. And this is why the degree of illumination in the work-room of a group of female telephone operators was seen to have an insignificant effect on efficiency and output, and why the attention shown to the same group by the Harvard researchers was seen to facilitate both output and efficiency. Mayo does by no means abandon the physiological understanding of the organism implied earlier. Instead, this is displaced and complemented by an insistence upon the significance of the social dimensions of work, which Mayo analyses by means of his famous analogy that invokes an organisation with the same general attributes as those possessed by a biological organism. Hence, it is not only the human organism of the individual worker that is constituted by a number of mutually dependent factors existing in equilibrium. This is also the stuff that makes up organisations, or ‘the whole organization which is the organism’, as Mayo (1933: 72) writes.²⁴ Consequently, and similar to the homeostatic functioning of the human organism referred to above, the organisation may cancel out disturbances to its internal environment insofar as it can consolidate the internal equilibrium of its workers. With specific reference to The Western Electric experiment, Mayo puts across this point with the following words:

²⁴ Mayo’s follower Roethlisberger brings out the role of the organism metaphor and the role of equilibrium in Mayo’s thinking: ‘Let’s study organizations as natural organic wholes or systems striving to survive and maintain their equilibrium in different environments. Let’s see if this way of looking at them will allow us to specify better the many factors in a complex situation and “wherever the general effect is unsatisfactory to the worker and to industry, to discover the nature of the disequilibrium and the source of the interference”’ (Roethlisberger 1960: xiv; Mayo quoted in Roethlisberger 1960: xiv).

By strengthening the “temperamental” inner equilibrium of the workers, the company enabled them to achieve a mental “steady state” which offered a high resistance to a variety of external conditions (Mayo 1933: 72).

Stability and equilibrium are major themes in Mayo’s (1933) thinking, and these are developed further in the concluding chapter of *Human Problems*. Developing an argument that starts with the individual biological organism and proceeds via the organically assembled work organisation, Mayo ends his discussion by reflecting upon the problems prevalent at the macro level of human interaction. Here, Mayo invokes Durkheim’s (1947, 1951) concept of *anomie*, which refers to the fundamental confusion and social disorganisation characteristic of modern society. With strong dislike of the direction in which the world was moving, Mayo was troubled by contemporary signs of *anomie*, which he attributed to excessive openness in social life (cf. O’Connor 1999). And although more evident in certain communities, Mayo addressed anomic disorganisation and disorder as a universal problem facing the entire modern world. In his own words, these sentiments are expressed in the following way:

Modern development, Durkheim claims, has brought to an end this [pre-modern] life of satisfactory function for the individual and the group. We are facing a condition of *anomie*, of planlessness in living, which is becoming characteristic both of individual lives and communities. [...] Durkheim contends that individuals increasingly are lapsing into restless movement, planless self-development – a method of living which defeats itself because achievement has no longer any criterion of value; happiness always lies beyond any present achievement. Defeat takes the form of ultimate disillusion – a

disgust with the “futility of endless pursuit.” I quote from Durkheim in order to show that the problems which concern Shaw and Cavan are not peculiar to Chicago. It is true that the problem of social disorganization, with its consequent *anomie*, probably exists in a more acute form in Chicago than in other parts of the United States. It is probable that it is a more immediate issue in the United States than in Europe. But it is a problem of order in social development with which the whole world is concerned (Mayo 1933: 125).

Like Durkheim, we see that Mayo was troubled by the confusion and openness penetrating modern society. But whereas Durkheim regarded *anomie* as a *consequence* of modern *organic* solidarity (a confusing concept since in Durkheim’s sociology it is contrasted with premodern *mechanical* solidarity), Mayo saw in the model of the *organism* a *solution* to the problems of order and disorder confronting modern civilisation. In this context, the organism is however little more than a metaphor for how one is to understand social systems and social interaction.²⁵ Although Mayo demonstrates an interest in and argues for the importance of understanding all aspects of work, there is no doubt that he privileges the social or the sociological. In concluding his joint article with Henderson, for example, Mayo (in Henderson and Mayo 1936: 416) starts by acknowledging that ‘The environment is at once physical, chemical, biological, psychological, economic and sociological’, but ends with the following statement:

²⁵ As such, it continues, in the Durkheimian spirit, to dissociate the emerging fields of social science inquiry from the long-established natural sciences whilst utilising natural science concepts as metaphors for social phenomena and developing a social science with strong natural science underpinnings.

As a rule, we all have the strongest feelings about its sociological properties and the least intellectual awareness of them. Often these are the most important properties of the environment. Let us study, weigh, modify and use them (Henderson and Mayo 1936: 416).

The privileging of the social above the organic does not in itself pose a problem for an organisation theory keen to address the ways in which the body is a problem for organisation. But since the organism and the body are typically treated synonymously, it is not merely the organism that is reduced to a metaphor of social and organisational life. The body as such is given similar treatment, with the consequence that organisation theorists are discouraged from addressing the body as a research topic. Maintaining an interest in the physiological functioning of the organism, as Mayo does in the early chapters of *Human Problems*, is however not necessarily the way to go for organisation theorists keen to re-embodiment organisation theory. By adopting an organic view of the body and by prescribing this as a model for the organisation of society, Mayo and his interlocutors did obviously assume the body itself to be organised.

As we shall see in the subsequent section, Parsons shared Mayo's reductive interest in the organism as a metaphor of social phenomena and dismissed that social research should be interested in the organism beyond the level of metaphor. But before turning to this part of Parsons' sociology, I shall first trace Parsons' interest in organisation back to his translation of Weber. And further on, I shall use most of the section below to comment on Parsons' understanding of the social system and his systemic approach to the study of organisations. It is these elements of Parsons's sociology that have had

the most direct influence upon the entitative concept of organisation in both classical and contemporary mainstream organisation theory. And it is here that Henderson's and Pareto's influence on Parsons is most apparent. On the opening page of *The Social System*, which was Parsons' most serious attempt to provide a systemic approach to sociology, and which preceded his systemic approach to the study of organisations, he states the following:

The title [...] goes back, more than any other source, to the insistence of the late Professor L. J. Henderson on the extreme importance of the concept of the system in scientific theory, and his clear realization that the attempt to delineate the social system was the most important contribution of Pareto's great work (Parsons 1951: vii).

And in the concluding chapter of the same book, he says that 'Pareto stands almost alone in his clear and explicit conception of the social system' (Parsons 1951: 546).

4.5 Talcott Parsons: A Systems Approach to the Study of Organisations

Parsons's first noticeable impact upon organisation theory can be traced back to his work with Weber's *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*. Drawing upon earlier efforts made by the Englishman A. M. Henderson (of whom we know very little), Parsons edited and translated parts of this work, which in 1947 was published under the title *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*. This was the first time that any of Weber's writings were published in English, and Parsons' edition has been so influential amongst the English-speaking readership of Weber in organisation theory and sociology that certain commentators have deemed it a crucial event in what is called the "Parsonisation of Weber" (Cohen, Hazelrigg and Pope 1975; Horowitz

1983). Although organisation theorists have paid most attention to Weber's statements on authority, we can also detect an interesting bias in how Parsons translated Weber's concept of organisation. Influenced by Marshallian economics, Parsons' reference to organisation in this volume is based upon Weber's German term *das Betrieb*, i.e. "the firm". Consequently, Weber's own reference to *Organisation*, which is related to his notion of authority (Weber speaks of *Herrschaft durch Organisation* or "authority through organisation"), is not fully appreciated as a matter of organisation (cf. Bittner 1965). Admittedly, as Weber's concept of organisation as authority is primarily concerned with the distribution of the powers of command, there is even in Weber's original a predominant emphasis on what goes on inside organisational entities as opposed to social organisation. Hence, on an overall level, this does not undermine the privileging of organisational entities in organisation theory. Rather, it goes to show how strongly ingrained it is in the discipline.

Parsons' most specific contribution to early organisation theory did however take place a few years after his English edition of *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*. In a two-part treatise published in the first ever volume of *Administrative Science Quarterly* (ASQ), Parsons (1956a, 1956b) outlines his suggestions for what he calls a sociological approach to the theory of organisations. Although Parsons' understanding of organisation-as-firm is carried forward in these texts, they are first and foremost coloured by Parsons' general sociological project, which is based upon his concept of the social system. Before inquiring into Parsons' theorising of organisation, I shall

therefore give a brief introduction to the main principles of this systemic sociology, first developed in *The Social System* (1951).²⁶

In this classic of twentieth century sociology, Parsons seeks to study the functioning of social systems in terms of social needs and conditions of existence. Taking the concept of social systems of action as his starting point, he is specifically interested in the interaction of individual actors inside social systems and their orientation to one another in particular situations. Parsons' focus is therefore relational and more preoccupied with the structures and processes resulting from the interaction of social units than the internal structures of these units themselves. On a slightly different note, this also means that Parsons' systems theory, which under the influence of Radcliffe-Brown's anthropology is named structural-functional, may be said to be so only *in nomen*, at least if one reserves that term to Radcliffe-Brown's project and projects very much akin to his (cf. Parsons 1951: vii).

Burrell and Morgan (1979) inform us that Parsons invokes a fundamental rewriting of Radcliffe-Brown's structural functionalism, which turns Parsons' sociology into a case of functional imperativism. Whereas Radcliffe-Brown would first identify a set of structures (social morphology), secondly look for the functions performed by these structures (social physiology), and finally examine how new structures come into existence (social evolution), Parsons takes the existence and performance of functions for granted. Inspired by modern biological functionalism, he takes the system as a

²⁶ I shall return to the concept of the system towards the end of this section and in the early sections of the next chapter.

whole as his starting point and analyses ‘the conditions necessary for its survival, functioning, evolution and change’ (Rocher 1979: 155). According to Parsons, all systems (or structures) can therefore be seen to exhibit the following four functions: *Adaptation, Goal Attainment, Integration and Latency* (AGIL). Blau provides this very comprehensive and highly instructive account of AGIL, which is the framework developed by Parsons to think about social systems:

all social systems must solve four basic problems: adaptation to the environment, goal achievement, integration of subunits into the larger system, and latency, that is maintenance of the value patterns over time (Blau 1968: 303).

As Landsberger (1961: 219) points out, there is an underlying antagonism between the resolution of A and G (task or instrumental functions) on the one hand, and I and L (socio-emotional or expressive functions) on the other. And although maximising efforts to resolve one function or problem intensifies other problems, and the progress enjoyed by a system depends on its success in jointly resolving all four functions and problems, those systems referred to as organisations have a bias towards the instrumental functions of Adaptation and Goal Attainment. This bias is brought out in Parsons’ (1956a, 1956b) ASQ feuilleton, to which I turn my attention in the main part of this section. On the opening page, Parsons offers the following definition:

An organization is defined as a social system oriented to the attainment of a relatively specific type of goal, which contributes to a major function of a more comprehensive system, usually society (Parsons 1956a: 63).

Whilst the emphasis on Goal Attainment in this definition is obvious, the organisation's ability to adapt to its environment is a matter of its contribution to the goals of society. Moreover, Parsons states that such an organisation is to be analysed in terms of (i) 'an institutionalized value system, above all defining and legitimizing its goal' (Latency), and (ii) 'the mechanisms by which it is articulated with the rest of the society in which it operates' (Integration) (Parsons 1956a: 63). Three primary dimensions provide the context for this articulation, which integrates the organisation into society at large:

(1) procurement of the necessary resources, financing, personal [read: personnel] services, and "organization" in the economic sense; (2) the operative code centering on decisions which are classified as policy decisions, allocative decisions, and coordinating decisions; and (3) the institutional structure which integrates the organization with others, centering on contract, authority, and the institutionalization of universalistic rules (Parsons 1956a: 63).

The first dimension adheres directly to Adaptation (as the organisation needs a minimum set of resources to adapt to and survive in the environment), the second to Goal Attainment (as the organisation's ability to attain its goals depends on its ability to make the right decisions), and the third is obviously related to Integration and Latency. Following this instrumentally oriented definition, Parsons makes it no secret that he is primarily interested in the 'broad type of collectivity which has assumed a particularly important place in modern industrial societies' (Parsons 1956a: 63), i.e. the bureaucratic organisation. Bureaucratic organisations exist in most sectors of society, Parsons notes, and he is keen to emphasise the common attributes of all

bureaucracies, be it the governmental bureau or department, the business firm, the university or the hospital.

This is also why organisations must be studied from an interdisciplinary angle, and Parsons acknowledges three writers who have been particularly significant in shaping his own thinking on organisations: Max Weber, Chester Barnard, and Herbert Simon. But no matter how interdisciplinary its nature, it is the common elements enjoyed by most organisations that makes the study of organisation part of the sociological study of social structures or social systems.²⁷ This is not to say that all social structures are organisations, and in the next paragraph, given that they are only partly organisations, Parsons firmly excludes families and other kinship groups, local communities, regional subsocieties, nations, and indeed society as a whole, from the concept of organisation that he has in mind for organisation theory. Similarly, informal work groups, cliques of friends, etc., ‘are not in this technical sense organizations’ because it is the ‘*primacy of orientation to the attainment of a specific goal*’ (in Barnard’s terminology the *purpose*) that makes organisations distinct from other social systems.

As Parsons admits, ‘This criterion has implications for both the external relations and the internal structure of the system referred to here as an organization’ (Parsons 1956a: 64). Parsons first elaborates on the nature of these external relations (or boundary processes as he also calls them), which involve environmental Adaptation, and to which Goal Attainment is a fundamental aspect. On the one hand, the organisation’s opportunity to maximise its output is relative to the costs and obstacles

²⁷ Note that at this point, Parsons treats social structure and social systems synonymously.

invoked upon it by objects or systems in its exterior. And on the other hand, the output produced by the organisation's Goal Attainment can be used as input by another social system with which the organisation enjoys an external relationship.

The terms governing this input-output exchange generally follow some contractual pattern, which means that all organisations operate within a market of some sort (cf. also Landsberger 1961: 228).²⁸ In turn, this market of inputs and outputs, consumption and production is a result of the division of labour in society, a characteristic lacking in premodern societies constituted by self-sufficient units. Given the existence of some division of labour between organisations, or between an organisation and other social systems, decisions must be made in order to prioritise those processes that most successfully contribute to the organisation's output or Goal Attainment. Hence, an organisation's exterior is not merely engaged with the organisation as a consumer of its output and as a supplier of its input. Being consumers and suppliers, other social systems and the social system as a whole also influence the organisation's internal decision-making processes. First by influencing the priorities that the organisation makes to best achieve its goal, and second, by influencing the very goal itself, which in turn determines what type of organisation we have in front of us.

Parsons now turns his attention to the internal structure of organisations, identifying two different points of view from which an analysis can be made: the cultural-

²⁸ Parsons' stress on contracts or contractual arrangements for the understanding of boundary processes of input-output flows between systems may be seen in light of his reading of Paretian economics, where the contract curve or the Pareto set includes all the situations in which the market is Pareto efficient.

institutional perspective and the group or role perspective. The former centres its focus on ‘the values of the system and their institutionalization in different functional contexts’ (Latency), and the latter bases its analysis on ‘suborganizations and the roles of individuals participating in the functioning of the organization’ (Integration) (Parsons 1956a: 67). Parsons seeks to examine the relations between the two views, but admits to give primary emphasis to the former because:

This defines the basic orientation of the system (in the present case, the organization) to the situation in which it operates; hence it guides the activities of participant individuals (Parsons 1956a: 67).

Not forgetting the emphasis already given to the organisation’s exterior, the value system of the organisation is based on its acceptance of the general values of society. Furthermore, the organisation must be capable of legitimising its own place in society as a whole. Hence, the organisation’s value system must be directed towards legitimising the goal or purpose pursued by the organisation. First, ‘in terms of the functional significance of its attainment’ for society, and second, in terms of ‘the primacy of this goal over other possible interests and values of the organization and its members’ (Parsons 1956a: 68). This leads Parsons to the following conclusion, also known from Barnard (1938) as the “organization purpose”:

The value system of a business firm in our society is a version of “economic rationality” which legitimizes the goal of economic production [...]. Devotion of the organization [...] to production is legitimized as is the maintenance of the primacy of this goal over other functional interests which may arise within the organization (Parsons 1956a: 68).

As stated above, it is the pursuit of different goals, i.e. the production of different goods or services, which defines the organisational type to which a specific organisation belongs. But Goal Attainment and the value system working to legitimise the organisation's goal or purpose is also the primary factor common to all organisations. Beyond this, all organisations, in one way or another, must legitimise a set of sub-goals and a set of operations needed to achieve these sub-goals, which in turn presumes the organisation's ability to adapt to the superordinate social system of society. Whereas Goal Attainment implies the mobilisation of fluid resources (land, labour, capital and organisation), Adaptation is achieved through the organisation's decision making process or mechanisms of implementation (i.e. policy decisions, allocative decisions and coordination decisions).

Further on, Parsons emphasises the significance of the mechanisms by which the organisation is integrated with (but not adapted to) other organisations. This is fundamentally about the compatibility of the organisation's institutional patterns to the institutional patterns of other organisations. Whereas the Adaptation of the organisation to its surroundings depends on its capacity to pursue and legitimise its goal or purpose, the Integration of the organisation is not simply instrumentally driven. Rather, it is a matter of whether the patterns of procedure adopted in one particular organisation are generalisable into a wider social system and whether they are permissible from a wider social point of view. Hence, it also concerns the degree to which Integration between organisations can take place.

All this amounts to show Parsons' preoccupation with the relations between the organisation and its wider surroundings, be it a larger subsystem or the superordinate social system known as society. It would therefore be fallacious to accuse Parsons of

ignoring the social exterior of organisations. Its need to adapt to and integrate with other organisations and society as a whole, whilst pursuing a particular set of goals and maintaining a particular set of values, makes the organisation dependent on the order prevalent in its outside environment, whether this has to do with authority, loyalty or contractual bindings.

But this does not dispute that Parsons' concept of organisation is one that views organisations as entities. Moreover, the societal environment within which organisations are seen to operate is, according to Parsons' framework, a bounded entity (Cooper 1990). And for Parsons it is the larger yet bounded social system making up the organisation's exterior that influences the behaviour of the organisations located inside its boundaries.

What is more, Parsons' theory of organisations as social systems focuses on a limited set of traits common to all organisations (Landsberger 1961). Although these traits may be more strongly embodied in some organisations than in others, my critique is not so much directed at the deficient attention paid by Parsons to demonstrate exceptions to these traits. Instead, my major concern is that he is more interested in the traits *per se* than in how they come into being and how they might change. When told that all organisations pursue goals, adapt to their environment, integrate with other units within the social system and maintain a set of values employed to legitimate their goals and purposes, we are told what drives organisations to do so. However, no answer is given as to why organisations emerge in the first place as social units expressing these defining characteristics. Parsons therefore takes the being of organisations as given and seems to worry little about how organisations (or indeed organisation) might change and become different. Since the processes and

mechanisms that Parsons talks about take place within the social unit of the organisation, and within the larger subsystem of which organisations are part, they both lack the dynamism and potential to change.

These static underpinnings are also evident in Parsons' concept of power outlined in the second ASQ article, which he views as a central aspect of organisations. Asserting that 'the development of organizations is the principal mechanism by which [...] it is possible to "get things done"' (Parsons 1956b: 225), it is the organisation's capacity to mobilise power that makes it possible for the same organisation to attain its goals. However action-oriented Parsons' concept of power may seem, its primary reference to power in terms of resources makes it quite restrictive:

power is the generalized capacity to mobilize resources in the interest of attainment of a system goal (Parsons 1956b: 225).

Parsons continues:

We may speak of power as a generalized societal resource which is allocated to the attainment of a wide range of subgoals and to organizations as the agents of the attainment of such subgoals. Power is comparable to wealth, which, as a generalized societal resource, is allocated to many different societal subsystems for "consumptions" or for "capital" use (Parsons 1956b: 226).

Different people and different organisations do of course have different preferences and priorities and may wish to pursue a wide range of different goals. And Parsons acknowledges the possible frictions and conflicts arising between people and organisations, between personality and role requirements, and so on. Hence, Parsons

wants to avoid turning the concept and state of equilibrium discussed in previous works into “an empirical generalization” (Parsons 1951: 481). Further on, ‘He deems it unlikely that organizations can set up mechanisms which will successfully counter (let alone prevent) “an inherent centrifugal tendency [...] deriving from the personalities of the participants, from the social adaptive exigencies of their particular job situations; and possibly from other sources”’ (Parsons quoted in Landsberger 1961: 225; Landsberger’s omission). Nevertheless, the emphasis given to frictions and conflicts such as the above merely plays a subservient role in Parsons’ thinking. *In toto*, frictions and conflicts are judged incapable of undermining society’s value system and can therefore not jeopardise the existence of the organisation as an entity.

As Gouldner (1959) and Landsberger (1961) point out, different goals within and across different organisations and within society as a whole does not mean that different functions are pursued. On this level, i.e. on the level of functions (i.e. AGIL), there is an underlying homogeneity, and this is why Parsons, as Landsberger notes, believed that his theory was applicable to all kinds of social systems. Landsberger is disappointed that Parsons attacks the problem of organisations from this angle. Rather than inductively demonstrating the congruence between his own ideas and already existing research in organisation theory step-by-step, Parsons makes a deductive attempt to apply his own general theory to organisations. Furthermore, Landsberger is disappointed to find Parsons’ project lacking in length, elaboration and systematicity. Overall, however, he finds little reason to dismiss Parsons’ perspective, and is generally supportive of his project.

Writing in the same anthology as Landsberger, William Foote Whyte’s (1961) article ‘Parsonian Theory Applied to Organizations’ is a more negative response. Though

noting that Parsons' writings are coloured by him not being an organisation theorist but a sociologist attempting a general theory of society, Whyte's main criticism of Parsons is the emphasis given to boundary relations, which in turn leaves little concern for what goes on inside the boundaries of organisations. According to Whyte, Parsons neither deals with the impact of formal organisational structure upon behaviour in organisations, nor with the impact of the spatial location of people in the organisational architecture.

In *The Sociological Imagination*, C. Wright Mills (1959) launches a more general and quite fierce attack on Parsons' (1951) *The Social System*. Here, Mills criticises Parsons for developing what he calls a Grand Theory of sociology, i.e. 'the associating and dissociating of concepts' (1959: 26). The consequence of this is a theory whose concepts are fetishised and rendered universal, and which itself is seen to be universally valid too. Given that Grand Theory is not readily understandable, Mills admits that it is less influential than the strand of thought that he calls abstracted empiricism. Nevertheless, he argues, its impact cannot be underestimated since there are many 'who do not claim to understand it' yet 'like it very much' (1959: 26). The obscure style of Parsons' work is central to Mills' critique. Offering examples, Mills argues that it is so unintelligible that it needs to be translated into straightforward English, and supports this argument by setting out to demonstrate how this may be done.

On a more substantial note, Mills highlights two main problems with Parsons' theory. First, and given Parsons' assumption that society is always in equilibrium and penetrated by mechanisms of socialisation and control, he argues that Parsons is unable to explain how people deviate from the norms of society. And second, Mills

argues that Parsons' theory is ahistorical in that it is unable to account for social change. In relation to this, one might emphasise that Parsons is incapable of accounting for change because he assumes that social systems are always seen to be in equilibrium. And social systems are seen to be in equilibrium because they are boundary-maintaining systems (i.e. they are capable of maintaining their boundaries against their outside environment). This is also related to the entitative flavour in Parsons' thought, and it can be argued that social systems are able to remain the same exactly because they are entities. The implications of this thinking for organisation theory and Parsons' thinking about organisations is tremendous. As long as organisations are located within the larger bounded entity known as the social system, there should be no surprise that organisations undergo little change and that organisation too is conceived and conceptualised in terms of bounded entities.

Whereas I have much sympathy with Mills' (1959) critique of Parsons, my own critique is different, and it is worth emphasising that it comes from an almost opposite perspective of that pursued by Whyte (1961), Landsberger (1961) and Gouldner (1959). It is beyond doubt that Parsons acknowledges the anthropological and sociological concept of social organisation as a way of understanding the less formal and sometimes informal patterns around which societies and social relations are ordered. It can also not be denied that Parsons' concept of organisation looks beyond the boundaries of individual organisations, thus making possible the study of the social relations between different organisations and their position in the social system at large. In my opinion, however, and as implied by certain critics of Parsons' work (e.g. Lockwood 1956; Dahrendorf 1958; Ellis 1971), Parsons still pays too much attention to the formal and structural aspects of organisation, even when highlighting

inter-organisational relations. And, insofar as the development of organisation theory is concerned, he insists on dropping issues of social organisation from the field. Thus, he makes the reader acutely aware of his favourable stance towards maintaining a division of labour within the social sciences. Based on the ontological assumption that organisation exists in terms of entities, Parsons implies that organisation theorists should adopt an epistemological strategy privileging the study of formal organisations and the relations between them. The topic of social organisation, on the other hand, should remain with their colleagues in sociology. The relational theme in Parsons' proposal for an organisation theory is therefore quite limited.

But Parsons' overall interest in social relations is also rather *limiting*, as it discourages organisation theorists from thinking about the body in their own research. Parsons' bias towards the "relational" and his exclusion of the body is already expressed in the first chapter of *The Social System*. Here, using the organism as an example, he admits an interest in the internal structure of the units only insofar as this has bearings on the relational system:

The frame of reference concerns the "orientation" of one or more actors – in the fundamental individual case biological organisms – to a situation, which excludes other actors. The scheme [...] is a *relational* scheme. It analyzes the structure and processes of the systems built up by the relations of such units to their situations, including other units. It is not as such concerned with the *internal* structure of the units except so far as this bears directly on the relational system (Parsons 1951: 4).

Referring to the functional prerequisites of the social system, Parsons argues that they 'may be said to begin with the biological prerequisites of individual life, like nutrition and physical safety.' This is however not the focus of Parsons' theory of social systems:

The present task is not to attempt to analyze these borderline problems, but only to make clear where they fit in relation to the theory of the social system. (Parsons 1951: 28).

In a similar vein, towards the end of the book, Parsons acknowledges the importance of biological factors upon the social system. But more importantly, he still dissociates these factors from the theory of social systems of action:

These [i.e. the biological ones] are the variables which concern the constitution of the organism insofar as it is independent of the factors of orientation of action, and those which concern the physical environment. It is clear that they are logically independent of the theory of action, but equally clear that their impingement on concrete systems of action is of the first order of empirical significance. [...] It should be quite clear that throughout this work we have deliberately refrained from attempting to deal with the influence on concrete social phenomena of the variables of genetics or physiology or of the variables of the physical aspects of the situation (Parsons 1951: 488).

Nevertheless, Parsons claims that these aspects have not been excluded from his theory and he is concerned that the physical or biological factors that influence the social system need to be investigated. He insists that this can only be done

successfully within a theory of social systems of action. The problem with this is that overall, Parsons devotes little attention to explore these aspects, which remain marginalised within his theory. The wider consequence is that these aspects have only attracted peripheral attention within the social sciences, and few (if any) sociologists and organisation theorists have taken up Parsons' initiative. The closest one might get is Social Darwinism, which according to Parsons himself 'attempted to treat the development of societies in terms of the application of the law of natural selection' and 'climatological explanations of social change' (1951: 489). Also, despite speaking of the interdependence between biological and social systems, Parsons is less interested in the biological or bodily implications of social arrangements and social modes of organisation. His interest seems limited to taking for granted the influence of physical and biological factors without examining how they might influence and change social systems (cf. Parsons 1951: 490-491). Here, Parsons extends his emphasis on boundary-maintenance from the level of systems to the level of academic disciplines. It is not only a *system's* stability and equilibrium that is protected by its ability to maintain the boundaries towards the external environment. Parsons' avoidance of the biological and the bodily also indicates that the identity and interests of sociology as a discipline and the social sciences as a family of disciplines are best protected by the maintenance of boundaries that inhibit topics traditionally associated with the natural sciences from being researched.

Some fifty pages later (in this which is the concluding chapter of *The Social System*), Parsons yet again emphasises that he is interested in the social relations between organisms insofar as individual organisms are actors within social systems, and not in the nature of the organism itself:

the concern of the sciences of action is with the *relations* on a certain level of the concrete entities, which in their biological relevance are called organisms, to their environments. [...] The individual “actor” is a name for the same concrete entity as the organism, but seen as a unit in this relational context. However, only a certain aspect of the concrete relations of the organism-actor to the environment is [...] of interest to the theory of action; this is the aspect we call “action” or “behaviour.” [...] Action involves not a biochemical conceptual scheme but an “orientational” scheme as this conception has been developed here and elsewhere. [...] the physico-chemical interchange of organism and environment is change over the boundaries of the organism as itself a *system*, the internal processes and equilibrium of which are of primary interest to the scientist. [...] But for the theory of action, the organism is *not a system, but a unit point of reference*. The focus of interest for the theory of action is not in the internal equilibrating processes of the organism as a system, but in the equilibrating processes involved in its relations to an environment or situation in which other organisms are of crucial significance. It is *this relational system which is the system of action, not the organism as a system* (Parsons 1951: 541-542).

Consequently, and even though the biological organism is a boundary-maintaining system that Parsons claims is analogous to the social system, he is not interested in the internal functioning of the biological organism at all because it does not constitute a social system as such. Instead, inspired by Durkheim’s (1982) quest for the *sui generis*, he treats individual organisms as mere reference points existing in a wider social context and argues that sociology should preoccupy itself with the social

relations between individual organisms. In his concluding chapter, Parsons returns to abandon the biological organism as a sociological research object, and critiques psychology for reducing their interest in human behaviour to the level of the individual organism, thus missing out on how organisms behave and interact inside social systems. In so doing, Parsons does by all means offer a valuable critique of psychology, at least insofar as psychology aims to present itself as a social science. Moreover, psychology could be critiqued for the particular model through which it seeks to understand the functioning of the human organism. My critique of Parsons is therefore not aimed at his critique of psychology. After all, this goes some way in encouraging a healthy scepticism towards the natural sciences and naturalism in the social sciences. What I find problematic about Parsons' particular scheme is that it discourages sociologists, organisation theorists and other social scientists from dealing with any topic traditionally associated with the natural sciences. The troubling consequence of this is that studies of the body are deemed irrelevant to any social science research.

In my discussion of Parsons' systemic approach to the study of organisations, three main findings have emerged. First, that his concept of the social system preceded, complemented and informed the entitative concept of organisation upon which classical and mainstream organisation theory has been founded. Second, that he envisaged an organisation theory preoccupied with the study of formal organisations and their relations to the social system at large, thus excluding the study of social organisation. And third, that his concept of the social system excluded the body from sociology, organisation theory and social science at large.

Although Parsons is largely ignored in contemporary textbooks in organisation theory, the influence that he has exercised upon early organisation theory should not be underestimated. Three decades ago, Landsberger (1961: 217) stated (perhaps with some surprise) that ‘his influence has been noticeable and growing.’ And, as we learn from Burrell and Morgan’s (1979) inquiry into the role of sociological paradigms in organisational analysis, the functionalist scheme dominating mainstream organisation theory since the founding years of the discipline is strongly coloured by Parsons’ thinking.

Elaborating on the influential role of Harvard sociology after the years of the HPC, the sociologist and organisation theorist Alvin Gouldner (1973) enables us to view Parsons’ influence on sociology and organisation in context. In his discussion of “systematic” theory in sociology between 1945 and 1955, Gouldner emphasises that this area was largely dominated by Harvard sociologists. As the most central works had been published by Sorokin, Znaniecki, Homans and Parsons,

It is noteworthy that all of the above theorists, with the exception of Znaniecki, have done their work at Harvard University and it is quite conceivable that this has contributed to the important convergence found in their books (Gouldner 1973: 173).

Although Parsons was no organisation theorist, and even if institutional centres of organisation theory may be identified at Columbia, Carnegie Mellon, Stanford and Cornell Universities, Parsons did continue to have tremendous impact on the

development of the discipline.²⁹ First, through his important articles in the founding volume of ASQ and through his translation of Weber. And second, through former students moving elsewhere and students of former students carrying the Parsonian ethos forward.

Parsons' influence is perhaps most obvious in other functionalist writings, such as Selznick (1949), Blau (1955), Blau and Scott (1962) and Merton (1949), but can also be seen in the socio-technical systems theory of people like Katz and Kahn (1966) and in the contingency theory of writers such as Lawrence and Lorsch (1967) and Kast and Rosenzweig (1973). Particularly work in the two latter camps has claimed an open systems perspective of organisations, modelled upon Parsons' biological analogy of the living organism and the natural system. Of primary interest here is however the classical writings in organisation theory authored by Selznick, Blau and Scott. But before turning to these three authors, I shall look at the influence of Robert Merton. Despite his own studies on bureaucracy (Merton 1939, 1945) and his important role in heading the Columbia editorial team responsible for the classic anthology *Studies in Bureaucracy* (Merton et al. 1952), Merton was, like Parsons, a general sociologist more than an organisation theorist. And despite his connection to Parsons, what C. Wright Mills (1959) calls Merton's middle-range theory was quite different from Parsons' Grand Theory sociology. However, through his early connection with Parsons and his significant role in mid-twentieth century American

²⁹ Whereas the first three universities mentioned here all hosted significant names in classical organisation theory (Merton and Blau were at Columbia, Simon and March were at Carnegie Mellon, and Scott was at Stanford), Cornell hosted the first and still most prestigious organisation theory journal, *Administrative Science Quarterly*.

sociology, Merton was central in shaping the later work of Selznick, Blau and Scott along a systemic or structural-functionalist research programme.

4.6 Systemic Perspectives in Early Organisation Theory

Head of the American Sociological Association (ASA) in 1957 (eight years after Parsons) and commonly regarded as a discipline builder in American sociology, Merton's relationship with Parsons started to develop during his time in the Sociology Department at Harvard University. First a student of both Henderson and Parsons and a member of the HPC, Merton worked as a tutor in the Sociology Department between 1936 and 1939.

After his arrival at Columbia University in 1941, Merton was dedicated to carry on Parsons' structural-functionalist sociology by other means, and did so most famously in *Social Theory and Social Structure* (1949). Leaving Parsons' Grand Theory sociology, Merton pursued middle-range theory as a means to guide empirical investigations. In Merton's own words:

Middle-range theory is principally used in sociology to guide empirical inquiry. It is intermediate to general theories of social systems which are too remote from particular classes of social behaviour, organization and change to account for what is observed and to those detailed orderly descriptions of particulars that are not generalized at all. Middle-range theory involves abstractions, of course,

but they are close enough to observed data to be incorporated in propositions that permit empirical testing. Middle-range theories deal with delimited aspects of social phenomena, as is indicated by their labels. One speaks of a theory of reference groups, of social mobility, or role-conflict and of the formation of social norms just as one speaks of a theory of prices, a germ theory of disease, or a kinetic theory of gases (Merton quoted in Crothers 1987: 55).

Further on, Merton was committed to reconcile 'objective social structures with the subjective feelings and intentions of social actors' (Crothers 1987: back cover). This is for instance evident in Merton's (1939) study of the relationship between bureaucratic structure and personality. Here, and without associating one particular type of personality with the bureaucratic structure, he emphasises the dysfunctions of bureaucracy (e.g. red tape) and indicates some ways in which particular personalities may result from and support the bureaucratic structure producing such dysfunctions.

In the introduction to the *Reader in Bureaucracy*, Merton et al. (1952) demonstrate a closer interest in the study of organisation. Outlining their book as a collection of different analyses of bureaucracy – from the ancient bureaucracies of China, Egypt and Rome to current types – they also emphasise that the book is 'Intended for the convenience of students of organization'. Despite claiming that the book is 'concerned with the sources of bureaucratization, and [...] its consequences for the life of men in bureaucratized society' and regarding bureaucracy as a form of social organisation (Merton et al. 1952: 11), most of the texts gathered there deal with the internal workings of formal organisations.

Merton's sociology of organisations is therefore little more than a refurbishing of Weber's classic model of bureaucracy, and this fits nicely with Merton's wider sociological project, which had a great influence on organisation theorists at the time. As Crothers argues, both Merton's ideas about bureaucracy and his overall sociology were carried forward by the pioneering organisation theorists March and Simon (1958), who sought to offer a formal model of 'the relationship among the different components of an organization' (Crothers 1987: 139). Moreover, it should be acknowledged that Merton's Columbia seminar on professions influenced what Crothers (1987: 37) calls the 'Columbia commentary by [William] Goode and [Amitai] Etzioni on types of occupations, limits to the professionalizing strategies of occupations and the characteristics of semi-professions.' But rather than focusing on the work of March and Simon (1958) and Goode and Etzioni, I shall turn my attention to the influence that Merton exercised upon Selznick, Blau and Scott. According to Crothers (1987: 37-38), Merton's Columbia seminar on complex organisations and the resulting *Reader in Bureaucracy*, which was particularly influential upon his students Selznick and Blau, was significant in that it led to 'an informal research programme that developed a Mertonian/Columbian model of the dysfunctions and workings of complex organizations.'

In his organisation theory classic entitled *TVA and the Grassroots*, Philip Selznick (1949) argues that it was Merton's (1945) article 'The role of the intellectual in public bureaucracy' that made him emphasise the impact of social structure upon leadership. Further on, Selznick draws attention to the importance that Merton had upon his own understanding of unintended consequences (cf. Selznick 1949: 254n11; cf. also Merton 1936) and his understanding of organisational needs, which is one of two key

elements in Selznick's study of organisations. In a conversation with Selznick, Merton pointed out that organisational needs must be understood in terms of 'stable systems of variables which [...] are independent' (cf. Selznick 1949: 252). Similarly, in the preface to the first edition of *The Dynamics of Bureaucracy*, Peter Blau (1955) highlights the importance of Merton for his own research:

My great intellectual obligation to Professor Robert K. Merton, whose teaching profoundly influenced my sociological thinking, has been further increased by the helpful advice and constructive criticism he furnished for the analysis presented here (Blau 1955: v).

Having drawn a brief but crucial link between Merton on the one hand and his students Selznick and Blau on the other, I shall now, beginning with the former, examine how the entitative concept of organisation is expressed in the work of Selznick (1949) and Blau (1955).

Also known as the founder of institutionalism and for sharing a pursuit of communitarian ethics with his former student at Berkeley, Amitai Etzioni, Selznick's *TVA and the Grassroots* is a study preoccupied with the formal and the bureaucratic. But in addition to draw upon Merton, Selznick reveals that his organisational research is inspired and informed by Parsons. Outlining his research object in the introductory chapter, Selznick introduces a concept of organisation clearly within the tradition of Barnard's organisational thinking and Parsons' and Merton's structural-functionalist and systemic sociology. As Selznick writes, he 'is not [interested in the] dams or reservoirs or power houses or fertilizer' associated with the TVA (i.e. the Tennessee

Valley Authority), 'but [with] the nature of the Authority as an ordered group of working individuals, as a living institution' (Selznick 1949: 9).

In my opinion, there is little reason to criticise Selznick for not focusing on the concrete aspects of the TVA. But even though he does not restrict his study to the formal aspects of organisation, his concern with the ordered relations between the people working at the TVA is expressive of a concept of organisation preoccupied with formal bounded entities rather than the processes of organisation that stretch beyond these same entities. According to Selznick, the TVA is most significantly 'a social instrument' and 'It is this role as instrument with which this study is directly concerned. Or, to emphasise another word, it is TVA as an organization to which our attention is directed' (Selznick 1949: 9).

On the next page, Selznick highlights two aspects that he holds to be the key to studying organisations: organisational needs and organisational structure. Although organisations are tools, an organisation also has a high degree of sovereignty and autonomy, which means that it 'has a life on its own' (Selznick 1949: 10). Consequently, an organisation is directed towards fulfilling the goals and needs of those for whom it is a tool as well as fulfilling its own goals and needs. The combined effect of the organisation's autonomy and its reliance on the outside social environment means that the organisation takes on an internal life that 'tends to become, but never achieves, a closed system.' The organisation is a closed system only insofar as its own needs 'command the attention and energies of leading participants.' More specifically, leading organisational members are commanded to serve 'the need for some continuity of policy and leadership, for a homogeneous outlook, for the achievement of continuous consent and participation in the part of the

ranks.' The result is 'an intricate system of relationships and activities, formal and informal, which have primarily an internal relevance' (Selznick 1949: 10).

But whether formal or informal, the systems referred to as organisations are systems. And they continue to exist as and be treated as systems no matter how much importance Selznick claims to attribute to the external environment of one particular organisation. Indeed, his recognition that 'no organization subsists in a vacuum' grounds his further argument that 'the attention of any bureaucracy must be turned outward, in defending the organization against possible encroachment or attack' (Selznick 1949: 10-11). In other words, Selznick argues that the organisation must look outward in order to maintain its own boundaries against the outside environment and remain separate from that environment.

A similar understanding of organisation is maintained by Blau (1955) in *The Dynamics of Bureaucracy*. Given this title, it is no surprise that Blau is concerned with bureaucracies, and in the pursuit of a Mertonian structural-functional and systemic research programme, he offers the following definition of bureaucracies:

Bureaucracies are complex systems of co-ordinated human activities. The understanding of these social structures requires a knowledge of the patterns of social interaction within them. The goal of this study is to contribute to this knowledge on the basis of an intense investigation of small groups of officials in two government agencies. The inquiry focuses upon these interpersonal relations that developed in these two formal organizations and upon the ways in which these relations influenced operations. This examination of the processes

of social interaction reveals the dynamic character of bureaucratic structure – its mutability (Blau 1955: v).

Although Blau recognises and is interested in what he calls the dynamics of bureaucracy and emphasises that ‘organizations do not statically remain as they had been conceived but always develop into new forms of organization’ (Blau 1955: 3), it is beyond doubt that his study aligns with an entitative and formalistic understanding of organisation. The research object of Blau’s study is bureaucratic structure and how people inside the two bureaucracies under investigation relate to and influence these structures. Moreover, the processes he is concerned with are not general processes of social organisation, but fundamentally about what goes on inside these organisations. And despite Blau’s point that ‘informal organizations are necessary to the operation of formal organizations [...]’ (Barnard quoted in Blau 1955: 2), ‘they are [nevertheless] part of the bureaucratic organization’ (Blau 1955: 3).

Developing an explicitly functional approach to the study of organisations, Blau makes certain references to Merton’s (1949) *Social Theory and Social Structure*. Formal organisations such as bureaucracies are particularly adequate for functional analysis, he argues, as ‘the main organizational objectives in these agencies were clearly defined’ (Blau 1955: 7). In turn, this enables a critical examination of bureaucratic organisations and an opportunity to reveal their dysfunctions, i.e. ‘those observed consequences which lessen the adaptation or adjustment of the system’ (Merton quoted in Blau 1955: 8). It is dysfunction that enables structural change. But whether intended or unintended, formal or informal, functional or dysfunctional, as

long as change is seen to be spurred from within the organisation itself, it is limited how much change will or can take place.

Blau maintains this bias towards organisational entities seven years later in *Formal Organizations*, which was the first textbook devoted exclusively to organisation theory and which was co-authored with W. Richard Scott, Blau's PhD student at the University of Chicago in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Here, Blau and Scott seek to distinguish their subject matter, i.e. formal organisations, from issues of social organisation, and on the opening pages they provide the following, somewhat tautological definition of social organisation:

“Social organization” refers to the ways in which human conduct becomes socially organised, that is, to the observed regularities in the behaviour of people that are due to the social conditions in which they find themselves rather than to their physiological or psychological characteristics as individuals (Blau and Scott 1962: 2).

Further on, they identify two main types of social conditions: social structure and culture. Social structure is ‘the structure of social relations in a group or larger collectivity of people’, whilst culture is ‘the shared beliefs and orientations that unite the members of the collectivity and guide their conduct’ (Blau and Scott 1962: 2). Formal organisations, on the other hand, have been ‘formally established’, and it is ‘this formal establishment for explicit purpose’, Blau and Scott write, which ‘distinguishes our subject matter from the study of social organization in general’ (Blau and Scott 1962: 3).

However, making this choice in favour of formal organisation does not lead Blau and Scott to ignorantly dismiss studies of social organisation. Instead, they make the rather blunt and perhaps naive statement that the study of formal organisations can make great contributions to ‘the advancement of systematic sociology.’ Since formal ‘Organizations are, on the average, smaller and less complex than communities or entire societies,’ they can more easily be subjected to controlled experiments (Blau and Scott 1962: 14). Blau and Scott elaborate:

Since the most serious problem in the investigation of social life is to establish causal relations by disentangling the interplay among a large number of social forces, the fact that some of these are relatively fixed in a formal organization and only others vary simplifies the analysis (Blau and Scott 1962: 14).

And this is why they argue that:

By controlling in this fashion some of the conditions in the situation, the formal organization provides an anchoring point that facilitates deriving and testing generalizations about social organization. In sum, the comparative study of formal organizations offers great promise for advancing systematic knowledge about the organization of social life (Blau and Scott 1962: 14).

This does however not lead them to actually study social organisation, and I have serious doubts as to how much relevance and efficacy the controlled organisational experiment has for our ability to understand the organisational aspects of social life. Not only are there fundamental problems associated with employing experimental and generalising methods in social science research. It is also deeply problematic to

reduce the social to a reified systemic entity, not alone to say an entity that is merely seen as a larger and more complex version of formal organisations. These elements of Blau and Scott's (1962) research agenda are quite unique. But as we have seen – on a more general level – their concept of organisation and privileging of formal organisations are not; the preoccupation with organisational entities and the lack of interest in social organisation is rather typical in mainstream organisation theory.

Twenty odd years after *Formal Organizations*, Scott (1981), by now a prominent veteran in organisation theory based at Stanford University, publishes a study where he tries to combine three different perspectives to the study of organisations: the *rational systems* perspective, the *natural systems* perspective and the *open systems* perspective. But despite Scott's strong commitment to emphasise the importance of organisation-environment relations, his focus on the environment remains secondary to the organisation itself. Whilst the rational systems view emphasises that 'Organizations are social units (or human groupings) deliberately constructed and reconstructed to seek specific goals' (Etzioni quoted in Scott 1981: 20), the natural systems view argues that organisations are 'systems imbued with a strong drive to survive, to maintain themselves as a system' (Scott 1981: 22). According to the open systems view, 'an organization is a coalition of shifting interest groups that develop goals by negotiation' and that 'the structure of the coalition, its activities, and its outcomes are strongly influenced by environmental factors' (Scott 1981: 22-23). Despite significant differences between all three perspectives, Scott pursues a concept of organisation that highlights how organisations on the one hand are 'tools for achieving goals' and on the other are 'actors in their own right' with goals on their own (Scott 1981: 6). Although the open systems view emphasises the temporal nature

of organisational arrangements and the influence exercised by the environment upon the organisation, this does not contradict the overall sense in which organisations are to be viewed as distinct systems. The open systems view does not ignore the importance of organisations being able to maintain their boundaries against the environment. 'At one and the same time, organizations must be open to their environments and attentive to their boundaries' (Scott 1981: 206). As with Selznick's (1949) *TVA and the Grassroots*, this is a central argument in Scott, and goes to reaffirm rather than displace the organisational entity as the subject matter of organisation theory.

Scott remains one of few people in organisation theory to explicitly pursue this kind of systemic approach in the study of organisations. However, the privileging of organisational entities is by no means brought to an end. In the final part of this chapter I shall therefore investigate some of the more recent attempts to conceptualise organisation in mainstream organisation theory. Starting with the Australian organisation theorist Lex Donaldson, who is one of few mainstream researchers to give the concept of organisation any serious thought, the lack of contemporary mainstream commentary means that in the latter half of this section I have to engage with the rather sporadic and brief traces of a concept of organisation found in management and organisation textbooks and encyclopaedia.

4.7 The Contemporary Mainstream in Organisation Theory

Making explicit reference to the American pioneer in organisational thinking Chester Barnard, Lex Donaldson (1985) puts forward an apparently open concept of organisation. Focusing on the goal-directed nature of behaviour in organisations,

Donaldson's conceptualisation includes families, criminal gangs and revolutionary guerrilla bands:

An organization may be understood as a set of roles oriented towards securing a goal (Barnard 1938). It is any social system which comprises the coordinated action of two or more people towards attaining an objective. Organizations are purposeful systems. Most commonly they are corporations, schools, universities, armies, hospitals and like formal organizations. But they could also be families arranging a picnic, or two neighbours helping each other fix a common fence, or a criminal gang making a robbery, or a band of guerrillas making a revolution. While organizations of the former type usually have a legal existence, formal organization and formal boundaries, these characteristics are not necessary for the social system to be an organization (Donaldson 1985: 7).

Further on, however, whilst referring to some of the most prestigious figures in organisation theory, any conceptual openness implied earlier is undermined as Donaldson excludes informal and illegitimate organisations from the subject area of the organisation theorist by emphasising a quite extensive list of phenomena that are characteristic of research in organisation theory:

What seems to be distinctive of organizational studies is the phenomena of goal-oriented behaviour, coordination amongst individuals and other properties such as degree of differentiation, integration mechanisms, extent of concentration of power, authority, communication, legitimation, conflict and so on. This is what forms the subject matter. Contemporary statements of Organization Theory

reemphasize these common underlying abstract variables (Mintzberg 1979, Hage 1980). These are what the writings on organization of Weber, Durkheim, March and Simon, Mintzberg, Child, Galbraith and Hage have in common (Donaldson 1985: 7-8).

A similarly exclusive attitude to organisational phenomena is evident in Donaldson's discussion of levels of analysis in organisation theory. Although Donaldson (1985: 8) cherishes 'Abstraction in the definition of organization' for enabling us 'to study more than one level simultaneously', he is only concerned with a limited range of levels: i.e. the levels of individuals' roles, sections, departments, divisions, subsidiaries and whole organisations. What goes on beyond those levels, for instance in society as a whole, or inside or on the surface of the body of an individual employee, is of no interest. This is made clear later in Donaldson's book, where he rejects the level of society or social organisation as a research topic for organisation theory. Discussing the Marxist macro-approach of Celia Davies (1979), in which an appeal is made to see the organisation of health care in terms of broader societal phenomena, Donaldson argues that this is an all too wide perspective to be suitable for application within organisation theory. And what Davies does, according to Donaldson (1985: 119), is 'not an exercise in broadening Organization Theory', but in 'supplanting it by the framework of sociological theory.' Donaldson continues:

There are issues and problems appropriate to Organization Theory, and there are concerns and concepts appropriate to societal analysis. But in moving from one to another, it is misleading to describe this as if it is a widening of Organization Theory, when it is an abandonment, not only of the framework, but of the objects of study of that theory (Donaldson 1985: 119-120).

According to Donaldson, academics directing their attention to the level of societal analysis are therefore not to be considered as organisation theorists:

issues to do with the different social groups, their perception of their self-interest, their mobilization and manoeuvrings for power – these are conventionally the province of the general sociologist. The organization theorist lay no claim to expertise in the study of such phenomena. Those sociologists who wish to study such societal issues, and who naturally adopt a macro framework, are, whatever their previous origins and interests, no longer acting as organization theorists. To describe such people and their activities as within Organization Theory stretches the meaning of the term beyond any real utility (Donaldson 1985: 120).

This does not mean that Donaldson is totally against a broadening of and development of a more interdisciplinary organisation theory. Mentioning the work of Hirsch (1975) and Pfeffer and Salancik (1978), he welcomes the pursuit and conduct of organisational research that goes beyond the typical field of organisation theory to appreciate the importance of issues such as the relationship between organisations and their environments. These authors have for example studied ‘the structures and processes employed by organizations to influence governments, competitors and other external parties’ (Donaldson 1985: 121). Appreciating these contributions, Donaldson does however emphasise that more can be gained from leaving the detailed studies of such issues to the fields where they have traditionally been conducted. This includes political science, economics, law and consumer behaviour, and Donaldson (1985: 121) adds that ‘Specialists with disciplinary backgrounds other than sociology or organizational studies have much to contribute here.’ In other words, Donaldson’s

perspective implies that organization theorists should not forget that they are organization theorists:

While there is much to commend in scholars drawing upon the work of colleagues from other disciplines there would seem little merit in organization theorists attempting to duplicate the work of others who have distinctive competence. A sounder approach would be for organizational students to pursue enquiries based upon their special expertise and which draw upon their particular frameworks. The way forward for research in organizational behaviour may well include a fuller study of the environment but it would seem sensible to retain as a central reference point the organization within that envioning field (Donaldson 1985: 121).

Consequently, and even though he recognises the importance of studying the relationship between organisations and their environments, Donaldson proposes a research agenda for organisation theory where the former is always more important than the latter. Anything else, it is indicated, will undermine the status of organisation theory as a distinct academic discipline designed to improve organisations:

The field of organizational studies needs to study more fully the interaction of the organization with its environment. [...] Likewise, the impact of the organization on society in terms of perpetuation, change, social stratification, innovation and other outcomes, and the mechanisms by which these are attained require further investigation. This will no doubt lead to an enhancement of the current theoretical framework in organizational studies. However, some continued differentiation between organizational studies and the rest of the

social sciences seems prudent. Complete assimilation into more general or more macroscopic-societal schema to the point that phenomena such as organizational structure, which are distinctive of organizations and which traditionally form core elements in the subject area, are no longer studied, is to be avoided. Considerations of the academic specialization of labour suggest that would be unwise (Donaldson 1985: 121).

In conclusion,

Moves to widen conventional frameworks are to be applauded, moves to eradicate traditional concepts and objects of study are to be resisted (Donaldson 1985: 122).

Although few organisation theorists have argued this kind of research agenda in as assertive terms as Donaldson (1985), his concept of organisation theory is without doubt echoed in more recent accounts in organisation theory (and related areas of organisational studies). It is therefore interesting to highlight two textbook accounts of the concept of organisation, Huczynski and Buchanan's (1991) *Organizational Behaviour* and Thompson and McHugh's (1990) *Work Organisations*. Writing from very different academico-political viewpoints (the latter from a Marxist perspective and the former from a more conservative perspective), it is noteworthy that both are best selling textbooks and that both rely upon rather similar concepts of organisation.

Thompson and McHugh (1990: 13) define organisations 'as consciously created arrangements to achieve goals by collective means', whereas Huczynski and Buchanan (1991: 7) almost synonymously define organisations as 'social

arrangements for the controlled performance of collective goals.’ And, as the latter continue, it is ‘The preoccupation with performance and the need for control [that] distinguish organizations from other social arrangements’ (Huczynski and Buchanan 1991: 9).

In a more recent account in the *International Encyclopedia of Business and Management*, Arndt Sorge (1996), the previous editor of *Organization Studies*, highlights two major concerns that are carried forward with the mainstream concept of organisation dominant in contemporary organisation theory. The first concerns the view that organisation theory should study organisations as opposed to more general issues of how people go about organising their everyday lives. And the second concerns the view that organisation theory should not impinge upon the territory of natural science and extend the concept of organisation to encompass the organisation of inert objects and living beings in nature.

According to Sorge, it is important that organisation theory makes a distinction between the concept of organisation in organisation theory on the one hand, and the natural science and everyday concepts of organisation on the other. In Sorge’s words,

The distinction is important in order to understand further notions and propositions of organization theory (Sorge 1996: 3793).

This is despite, or rather because of the metaphorical relationship between the natural science and everyday concepts of organisation and the concept of organisation in organisation theory. Although ‘metaphorical relations [make] the understanding of

meanings much easier’, ‘metaphor is also a danger because it can make meanings exchangeable which, under rigorous scrutiny, should not be so’ (Sorge 1996: 3794).

Having deemed broader understandings of organisation inadequate because of the danger of metaphor, Sorge offers a narrow conceptualisation of organisation that refers to ‘a particular *social unit or collectivity* [...] which can be demarcated on the basis of the people who belong to them.’ This concept does not refer to just any social unit. ‘Not all social units and collectivities are organizations’, and Sorge argues that ‘neither a tribe, nor a family, nor a complete society can be depicted as such.’ Instead, ‘organizations may include the Methodist Church, a multinational enterprise, a local construction firm, a hospital, and a tank battalion’ (1996: 3794). In conclusion, Sorge offers a conception that not only distinguishes the concept of organisation in organisation theory from uses of the same term used in other contexts. Maintaining the distinction between formal organisations and social organisation, he defines organisations as units or bounded entities to be separated from other phenomena in the social world. The body is one such phenomenon.

4.8 The Absent Body in Organisation Theory

As we have seen throughout this chapter, Sorge is not unique in excluding the body from organisation theory. On the whole, mainstream organisation theory says very little about the body, and in the above I have tried to analyse how the body gets lost within this area of research. Among other things, it is by being reduced to an organismic metaphor of organisation that organisation theory gets rid of the body. But in order to understand *how* the body gets lost from mainstream organisation theory, it is also necessary to say something about *why* mainstream organisation theory says so little about the body. In my introductory chapter, I presented a very concrete and

physical body of flesh and blood, bones and tissue, pains and pleasures, habits and desires, which has been investigated by a number of feminist authors (e.g. Kristeva 1982; Irigaray 1985; Grosz 1994) and which gives rise to a range of issues that some people might find problematic, including gender, race and sexuality, illness, cleanliness and emotionality. If invoked within the Cartesian mind/body dichotomy, this is most certainly a messy body that poses a fundamental problem of regulation, control and governance to the rational mind of the modern individual and the rationalistic discourses and institutions of modern society (cf. Leder 1986; Shilling 1993; Williams and Bendelow 1998).

Though I am necessarily speculating here, it may be possible to understand the absence of embodiment in mainstream organisation theory exactly in relation to the prevalence of Cartesianism in this same disciplinary field of knowledge production. Since (and even before) the days of the HPC, there has been a strong sense in which organisation theorists and other organisational researchers have praised and privileged the rationalistic and the cerebral. Frederick Taylor's (1947) *Scientific Management*, for example, prescribes a strong hierarchical division of labour between executive "thinking tasks" to be performed by an "intelligent" managerial elite, and manual "doing tasks" to be performed by "unintelligent" muscle-strong workers. Though the privileging of the rationalistic and the cerebral may be less explicit in the work of the HPC, there is for example in Mayo's (1933) writings on the Hawthorne Experiments a rather patronising attitude against the manual body-workers studied: that, following some kind of placebo effect, their work effort is more influenced by the mere presence of a group of white-coated Harvard researchers than by "real" changes in the physical work environment. Not only does this confirm the power of management practitioners

and researchers to manipulate the workforce. It also shows a degrading attitude towards everything bodily, including the working body. A similar attitude is evident in the contemporary mainstream of management and organisation theory. Here, a number of authors have pursued the relatively recent areas of knowledge management and e-business almost as if they – at least implicitly – offer the very final solution to get rid of the body from organisational life (cf. e.g. Nonaka and Takeuchi 1995; Boisot 1998; Cortada 1998; Davenport and Prusak 1998; Amor 1999; Brewer and Hewitt-Boorman 2000; Liataud with Hammond 2000; Willcocks et al. 2000). In a business environment where commercial trade is seen to occur through completely disembodied computer networks and services are seen to be produced by the disembodied and rational mind alone – a mind that lives and exists independently of any carnal body – one is no longer chased by the problems of the body. It is almost as if one can eliminate illness, stress and absenteeism, the irritable and upsetting odours of the near-by colleague, the need for cigarette and coffee breaks and visits to the lavatory, and the need to rest, eat and sleep. In conclusion, it seems that the body is absent from organisation theory because of all the problems and disruptions that are seen to emerge in its presence.

4.9 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a brief and selective history of the concept of organisation in twentieth century and contemporary organisation theory. Taking as my starting point a group of people and a body of research preceding organisation theory as a distinct academic discipline, I have tried to demonstrate that the Harvard Pareto Circle (HPC) provided the pre-disciplinary roots from which the classical and contemporary mainstream concept of organisation as organisational entities developed. As such, the

HPC not only steered the focus of students of organisation towards problems associated with the organisation of production. It also provided an important intellectual context from which the concept of organisation – understood as the organisation of production – was produced. Further on, and despite early interest in the biomedical organism (particularly evident in the research of Henderson (1928, 1935) and Mayo (1933)), writers associated with the HPC began to privilege the social above the organismic to such an extent that later organisation theorists and other social scientists were discouraged from exploring issues of embodiment, including ways in which the body poses a problem for organisation. Somewhat paradoxically given Henderson's interest in the biomedical organism and his impact on the HPC membership, Mayo and Parsons were particularly influential in this respect. Overall, it may be argued that the influence of the HPC – and particularly that of Henderson, Mayo and Parsons – lasted right throughout the 1960s, and dominated the work of leading organisation theorists such as Selznick, Blau and Scott. Since their writings, a very similar concept of organisation has been maintained explicitly by the isolated efforts of people such as the mainstream theorist Lex Donaldson. Moreover, it continues to be reiterated in recent textbooks and encyclopaedias. In common for all these conceptualisations is an emphasis on boundaries and an absence of the body. And less explicitly, but just as importantly, this disembodied and entitative concept of organisation is maintained by organisational researchers who typically take organisation for granted in their empirically oriented studies of the organisation of production, whether involving banks, car manufacturers, hospitals or oil companies. Seemingly, mainstream organisation theory deals with the problem of the body by not dealing with it at all. It is as if the problems associated with the body go away or at least become less problematic if ignored and left alone.

To some extent, and even if in a much more simplistic fashion than has been examined here, the disembodiment of organisation through entitative thinking also comes across in certain subject-specific dictionaries for the business and management field. In their *Dictionary of Management*, French and Seward (1983: 309) argue that organisation is ‘a set of definitions and positions which are intended to enable the position holders to work together to carry out certain tasks.’ Moreover, organisation is seen to be about ‘the group of people holding positions in an organisation’ associated with ‘The act or process of organizing’ or ‘A result of organizing’.

Thus far, not even the brief reference to the ‘process of organizing’ departs significantly from the conceptualisations considered throughout this chapter because any such process seems confined within the boundaries of a formal organisation. But if consulting *The Oxford Dictionary for the Business World* (1993), the subject matter becomes more complicated and more open-ended. Here, “organisation” as such is defined as ‘organizing or being organized’ or as an ‘organized body, system or society’. And if one looks up the same term in the second edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED), one finds no direct reference to what organisation theorists tend to speak of as an organisation, i.e. a formal organisational entity such as a business enterprise, a government agency or a voluntary association. Instead, in rather general terms, organisation is defined as ‘The action of organizing or putting into systematic form’ and ‘the arranging and co-ordinating of parts into a systematic whole.’ Further on, organisation is associated with the concept of social organisation in sociology and anthropology. Most importantly, however, the definitions offered in the OED indicate that the word has strong connotations to issues of biology, medicine and embodiment. Organisation is defined as the condition of being organised as a

living being or the fact or process of becoming organised or organic. In rather concrete terms, one is informed that an organisation is an organised structure, body or being, i.e. an organism.

These somewhat paradoxical definitions of organisation found in conventional dictionaries within and outside the fields of management and organisation theory are not simply evidence of errors easily committed by non-specialist encyclopaedists. Rather, they illustrate a strong connotation between organisation and the body and a preoccupation with organising the body. But as I hope to demonstrate in the next chapter, the tradition springing out of the HPC is not total in its domination of the concept of organisation within organisation theory either. In parallel to recent mainstream research on organisations, the concept of organisation has been thought by different bodies of research. For example, springing out of a strand of thought occupying an institutional realm outside the business school and taking inspiration from the Frankfurt School and thinkers such as C. Wright Mills and Ralf Dahrendorf, Marxist and leftist Weberian organisation theorists have approached organisation as a phenomenon manifest and supportive of the class and value structures in society as a whole (e.g. Clegg and Dunkerley 1980). But it is not to this thinking I shall direct my attention in the following chapter. Instead, I shall deal with a group of scholars that, bearing on the ideas of twentieth century social theory and French philosophy *inter alia*, writes from a different periphery of organisation theory. This group, which includes names such as Robert Cooper, Haridimos Tsoukas and Robert Chia (all of whom will be examined below), and which views organisation as a processual matter of the production of organisation, may be seen to open up the concept of organisation in organisation theory. What primarily interests me, however, is the following. How

does this strand of thought deal with the problem of the body? And when it comes to thinking about the body, is this strand of thought much different from the mainstream work examined thus far?

Chapter 5

Organisation Theory and the Production of Organisation

5.1 Introduction

Having examined some key texts in classical and mainstream organisation theory, it is possible to see that the concept of organisation maintained in this body of thought, which is heavily informed by the concepts of the system and the organism, leads to the epistemic privileging of formal organisational entities and the exclusion from organisation theory of issues of social organisation and embodiment. Departing from Burrell et al.'s (1994: 6) position that 'the concept of "organization" and the practice of "organizational analysis" have always been contested intellectual and institutional terrains', I shall in this chapter investigate some of the attempts to think about organisation in terms of processes rather than entities. Whereas the majority of the literature examined in chapter 4 constitutes quite a particular yet dominant strand of thought in organisation theory, it should be noted that the thinkers and ideas that I now turn my attention to – with one major exception – are all part of a very different tradition in social science and organisational research. Not only do most of them write from an institutional base in the UK, but they are concerned with organizational issues beyond the confined sphere of formal organisational entities, and they also draw upon a different body of literature and pursue a different research agenda from their mainstream counterparts. This focal difference is perhaps best summed up by Cooper and Burrell (1988: 106), who draw our attention to the polarisation between these two ways of thinking about organisation. Whereas the former is preoccupied with *the organisation of production* within organisational entities, the latter argues for an approach by which *the production of organisation* within and without organisational

entities is highlighted and becomes a key dimension in its own right. Since I examined the former in the previous chapter and since I am primarily concerned with the latter in this chapter, I shall ask the following two questions. First, what concept of organisation emerges from this alternative stream of thought? And second, how does this strand of organisation theory deal with the problem of the body?

In light of these two questions this chapter focuses on four organisation theorists: Karl Weick, Robert Cooper, Haridimos Tsoukas and Robert Chia – in that order. Although Weick stands out in more than one respect from the other three (*inter alia* he is an American scholar who, as former ASQ editor and long time Professor at the University of Michigan, occupies a central position in mainstream organisation theory), his writings are among the first to suggest a break from the concept of organisation examined in the previous chapter.³⁰ And in some interesting ways, which should become clearer in a moment, his thinking precedes the alternative concept of organisation developed later by Cooper, Tsoukas and Chia. But because Weick precedes, complements and contradicts rather than develops this alternative concept of organisation, it is the ideas of the other three that constitutes my main focus. Although Weick emphasises the importance of studying organisational processes and activities and prefers to speak in terms of organising rather than organisations, the organisational processes and activities examined in his work are typically confined within the boundaries of organisational entities. Cooper's, Tsoukas' and Chia's main

³⁰ Although most readers now rely upon the second edition of Weick's *The Social Psychology of Organizing*, which was published in 1979, ten years after the first edition, the two editions are little different in conceptual terms. It is on this basis that I argue that Weick preceded the processual writings of Cooper, which were first published in 1976.

contribution to organisation theory is significantly different from Weick's in the sense that they are amongst the strongest advocates of an organisation theory committed to the study of organisational processes and activities that stretch beyond the boundaries of organisational entities.

Before moving on to discuss Weick's (1969, 1979) concept of organisation it is necessary to dwell upon the intellectual background that informs processual thinking in organisation theory. Somewhat ironically, Max Weber, who is frequently honoured in mainstream textbooks and commentary as the founder of organisation theory (e.g. in Huczynski and Buchanan 1991), figures prominently in the works of organisation theorists outside the mainstream keen to rethink the concept of organisation beyond the epistemic construct of organisational entities. But whereas mainstream thinkers typically focus on quite a limited dimension of Weber's thinking, especially on his model of the modern bureaucratic organisation and its formal structure, the group of thinkers that I am concerned with here are preoccupied with the broadest aspects of Weber's sociological project. This is brought out by Cooper and Burrell (1988), who elaborate on the relevance of Weber for their own research agenda by emphasising how Weber's thinking serves as an important starting point for conceptualising organisation as a process:

Weber made us see modern organization as a process which emblemized the rationalization and objectification of social life [...]. [...] the object of his analysis was modern bureaucratic organization as a *process* in the continuing mastery of the social and physical environment rather than organizations *per se* (Cooper and Burrell 1988: 92-93).

Cooper and Burrell then contrast Weber's perspective with that of 'contemporary modes of organizational analysis', which they claim views 'the organization as a discrete system which subordinates bureaucratic logic to its hypostatized needs.' For Weber, however, 'the very concept of organization was placed in question as an uneasy fabrication' (Cooper and Burrell 1988: 93).

Ten years later the leading impact of Weber upon this strand of thought is reconfirmed by Chia (1998: 5), who in his *Festschrift* to Cooper alongside Weber lists Durkheim and Foucault as significant in thinking organisation as a 'generic ordering process'. In an interview appearing in the same *Festschrift*, Cooper again emphasises the importance of Weber for thinking about organisation as a 'general force' (cf. Chia and Kallinikos 1998: 154). It is therefore beyond doubt that Weber is central to the alternative conceptualisation of organisation attempted by processual thinkers in organisation theory.

5.2 Karl Weick and the Social Psychology of Organising

Although Karl Weick presents a concept of organisation different from the mainstream view discussed in chapter 4, his intellectual starting point also differs from that of Cooper, Chia and other writers associated with a processual or generic research agenda. Unlike this stream of thought, Weick, who is a social psychologist by training pays no attention to Weber's ideas, for example. His concept of organisation or organising emphasises those activities that seek to reduce uncertainty and achieve what he calls 'a consensually validated grammar':

organizing [...] is defined as a consensually validated grammar for reducing equivocality by means of sensible interlocked behaviors (Weick 1979: 3).

In a similar vein, he argues that to organise is:

to assemble ongoing interdependent actions into sensible sequences that generate sensible outcomes (Weick 1979: 3).

Weick clarifies these definitions by first contrasting them to two more traditional conceptualisations – one by Vickers and one by Hunt – and then by elaborating on his own. Taking an obvious structuralist starting point, Vickers argues that organisations are characterised by structures of mutual role expectancy (what you expect from others and what others expect from you). Given this structural emphasis, it is fairly limited how much change the pattern of roles that constitutes an organisation undergoes. Hunt's structuralism is perhaps more obvious and more in line with the perspective discussed in the previous chapter because he views an organisation as 'an identifiable social entity pursuing multiple objectives through the coordinated activities and relations among members and objects' (Hunt quoted in Weick 1979: 3). What makes Weick's concept different from these two is that he is preoccupied with that which is necessary to establish the kind of structures that Vickers and Hunt are interested in. More specifically, the reduction of uncertainty requires the achievement of consensus through the reduction of disparate perceptions. This is known as consensual validation:

Organizing is first of all grounded in agreements concerning what is real and illusory, a grounding that is called *consensual validation*. [...] The important issues of consensus in organizing concern rules for building social processes out of behaviors and interpretations that can be imposed on the puzzling inputs to these processes.

Here, he also returns to the notion of organising as grammar, effectively making a point central in the mainstream literature, that organisation is about “getting things done”:

Organizing is like a grammar in the sense that it is a systematic account of some rules and conventions by which sets of interlocked behaviors are assembled to form social processes that are intelligible to actors. It is also a grammar in the sense that it consists of rules for forming variables and causal linkages into meaningful structures [...] that summarize the recent experience of the people who are organized. The grammar consists of recipes for getting things done [...] (Weick 1979: 3-4).

Further on, information becomes a central problem in Weick’s conceptualisation. Information is typically ambiguous, uncertain and equivocal, and although full certainty is rarely required and different industries and organisations require different levels of certainty, Weick (1979: 6) argues that organising is about achieving ‘a workable level of certainty.’ What this boils down to is that grammar is the solution to the problem of equivocal information and uncertainty. And as such, applying a particular grammar is the key activity of organising. Weick’s emphasis on grammar, information and “organising” as opposed to “organisation” underlines the processual theme in his work. But in contrast to the work of Cooper (1976, 1990) and other students of the production of organisation, Weick’s (1969, 1979) concept of organisation is overly focused towards the organisation of production.

5.3 Robert Cooper, the Open Field and Organisation/Disorganisation

Less than a decade after Karl Weick's (1969) first emphasis on activities of organising as opposed to the dominant concern amongst organisation theorists with the formal structures of organisations, Robert Cooper (1976), who also is a social psychologist by training, published a piece in *Human Relations* entitled 'The Open Field'. Although some of Weick's concepts recur in Cooper's article, such as grammar and information, Cooper's interest in these concepts takes quite a different form, both in terms of style, the use of intellectual sources³¹ and the research objectives pursued. Whereas Weick writes for both academic, student and practitioner audiences, Cooper's advanced and sometimes obscure style makes his ideas less accessible to the latter two audiences. Cooper may share Weick's view that organisation is about reducing uncertainty, but he avoids turning this into a normative prescription. Being far more critical of organisation than Weick, he also manages to pay more attention to those processes that undermine organisation (e.g. creativity). And despite acknowledging that organisational practices and processes often take place within so-called organisations, he does not, unlike Weick, limit his inquiry to such processes: first, by studying disorganisational or nonorganisational processes that exceed and disrupt the boundaries of organisation, and second, by studying organisational processes that take place outside the boundaries of organisational entities. It is to these two dimensions in Cooper's work that my inquiry here will attend. First, by

³¹ Although Weick (1979) invokes some of the same thinkers as Cooper (e.g. Gregory Bateson and William James), he does so in a way that is far more eclectic and superficial than Cooper.

investigating Cooper's (1976) article 'The Open Field', and second, by investigating his article 'Organization/Disorganization' (1990).

Before turning to 'The Open Field', it might be interesting to make a brief comment on Cooper's relationship to organisation theory. Whereas the worst discourtesy amongst philosophers involves accusing one's colleague of not doing philosophy, similar accusations do not seem to have the same effect in organisation theory. With regards to Cooper, who very rarely associates himself with organisation theory and much rather would like to be associated with social theory and social philosophy, such accusations are likely to have the opposite effect. Partly due to Cooper's uneasiness with the narrow research agenda of mainstream organisation theory, it is likely that Cooper would be more offended to see his own work categorised as organisation theory than not. However, given Cooper's important contribution to organisation theory, and given that his readership consists largely of organisation theorists, I am willing to take this risk here.

Though inscribed in a highly gendered and male-centred language, Cooper's 'The Open Field' is an unusually creative piece of work. Creativity is not, however, a guarantee for clarity and rigour, and Cooper's argument is sometimes opaque and under-developed. Perhaps this is the inevitable result of five years of thinking during which Cooper enjoyed a Baxi Fellowship at Liverpool University and at the end of which he published 'The Open Field'.³²

³² In order to appreciate Cooper's early work, it is also worth noting that he in 1974 published the fairly standard textbook *Job Motivation and Job Design* written in a style and expressing a set of ideas that stand in rather stark contrast to his later publications. Moreover, the kind of ideas that Cooper was

With 'The Open Field', which is not explicitly concerned with the concept of organisation, Cooper not only becomes the first writer within organisation theory to think radically differently about human action, but in doing so, he also comes to mark the beginning of a whole new trend in organisational theorising which is to complement, but more importantly contradict mainstream organisation theory. Although Cooper makes no explicit reference to Weber in this article, he does in the interview with Chia and Kallinikos conducted more than twenty years later confirm the influence that Weber's thinking had upon the theme developed in 'The Open Field':

The concerns addressed by 'The Open Field' were [...] related, I felt, to Max Weber's critique of the modern world's pre-occupation with rationality and purging of magic from the world' (Cooper in Chia and Kallinikos 1998: 153).

More generally, however, what Cooper tried to do with 'The Open Field' was 'to open up social science to neglected and excluded possibilities, to draw attention to its dereliction of intellectual duty, to its lack of vision, to its limiting positivism and its squeamish obeisance to the mundane' (Cooper in Chia and Kallinikos 1998: 152). Although his social psychology background is reflected in 'The Open Field', this concern led Cooper to study intellectual developments in the humanities and the

engaged with at that time were not exposed (to my knowledge) in any publications prior to 'The Open Field'.

natural sciences, including controversial ideas within philosophy, poetry, physics and mathematics.

It is what Cooper calls ‘the wavering balance between structure and process’ that marks the starting point for his analysis of human action in ‘The Open Field’. This, he argues, is something that ‘As social scientists, we are probably less attentive [to] than we should be’. Whereas ‘Structure is the invariant pattern of relationships among functional points in a system, [...] process is the continuous emergence of new elements from those already existing.’ And as becomes clearer throughout the paper, it is the privileging of structure (*qua* stability) above process (*qua* change) that typically leads social scientists to pay insufficient attention to the balance between the two. The problem according to Cooper is that ‘Though seemingly in contrast, structure and process complement each other both as concepts and in the real world’ (Cooper 1976: 999).

From this starting point, Cooper proceeds first by pointing to the limitations of structuralist approaches to human action and perspectives showing a structuralist bias in understanding process, and second by developing a more genuinely processual perspective of human action. Dissatisfied with the initially interesting but teleological conceptualisation of process in systems theory, Cooper (1976: 1001) decides to break out of “social science proper” in search for ‘a conceptualization appropriate to the process view of man.’ This involves two things. First, adopting the Whiteheadian view that ‘man and environment [are] mutually immanent in a unitary field.’ In other words, recognising that humans are neither passive reflectors nor dominating actors but a node in a larger network of “to-and-fro influences”. And second, adopting Heidegger’s concept of *Dasein*, which implies that the human is ever open and

unfinished. That is to say, as humans we experience ourselves and our world as an “open field”. But since concepts pin down and freeze processes, simply defining the open field is insufficient. The really important task is to enact the open field. In the main part of this paper he is therefore concerned with (i) discussing the conditions of process that enable the open field, and (ii) outlining a methodology for how process can be used on a personal level for the creation of an open field. Cooper identifies five such conditions: *unstructured action*, *chance*, *projectability*, *the situation* and *the abstract field*.

First, Cooper examines *unstructured action* or “the primacy of action”, which involves the creation of “pure action”, that is the liberation or independence of action from some guiding image or purpose that would normally put certain constraints and requirements upon action. Here, he highlights three “mechanisms of change” through which action intervenes into the social world. These are (i) the open model form of planned change, (ii) crisis, and (iii) rupture. Exemplified by action research and broad-aim programmes in community development, *the open model form of planned change* is a type of change programme that starts from a broad conception of what change is desired and avoids privileging specific strategies and solutions from the outset. *Crisis* is an externally generated experience that ‘destroys or radically questions’ core values in ways that human actors lose control and leaves humans with no ready means of coping. And *rupture*, which Cooper relates to Surrealism and the May 1968 French Revolution is ‘a self-generated break with established structures’ whereby the human actor may be liberated from oppressive living and working conditions (Cooper 1976: 1003). This emphasis on rupture places Cooper in relation to the *coupurism* of twentieth century French philosophy described in chapter 3 and as

exemplified in the works of Bachelard (1984, 2000), Canguilhem (1989, 1994) and Foucault (1970, 1972, 1979). But like Canguilhem, whose support towards the events of May 1968 was limited – after all, Canguilhem had worked to consolidate the very institutions under attack (Macey 1998) – Cooper’s prescription of rupture is in some contrast to his own personal attitude towards May 1968; Cooper is rather uncomfortable with the activities of student protesters.

Second, Cooper (1976: 1003) discusses the nature and importance of *chance*, i.e. ‘when the unexpected coincide.’ Since it is through chance that human actors start interacting with possibilities, it is chance that augments our capacity for “spontaneous growth”. According to Cooper, the experience of chance and the capacity for spontaneous growth can be realised through two strategies: (i) suspended purpose and (ii) induced disorder. *Suspended purpose*, which is a matter of enhancing the mind’s awareness of the world, means that the mind must give up its right to control. *Induced disorder* is the way in which the human actor can challenge herself through self-imposed chaos – either by disordering herself or the outside world. This may in turn enable her to enter into another beginning of creative renewal. These are however private acts, and even though they enable humans to remake themselves, they must be developed into “a principle of social design” if human beings are to remake each other. For Cooper, this is similar to Richard Sennett’s (1971) ‘vision of urban life where the “brute chance” of spontaneous social intrusions becomes a major means of personal and interpersonal growth’ (Cooper 1976: 1005).

Third, Cooper directs his focus on *projectability*, which he defines as (i) ‘the power of men to project their unconscious forces into the external world’, and (ii) ‘the power of external forms to draw out and give substance to the unconscious content.’ As such,

‘Projectability is [...] a quality that pervades the total field’ (Cooper 1976: 1005). Cooper establishes the project, or ‘that which is “thrown forward” to modify the future’, as the instrument for projectability. As a process moves between projection (i.e. the ‘*coming into being* of [...] inner content’) and construction (i.e. ‘the *form* taken by the projection in the external world’), the project may either move “naturally” from projection to construction or “epigenetically” from construction to projection. The management of individual products and the relations between individual products are central to the former type because the relations between products and the continuous emergence of new products necessitates an ongoing redefinition of any individual product. The latter type of project, which is ‘impatient to be realized’ (Cooper 1976: 1006), realises a form in the outside world before having a content with which to fill that form. Consequently, it is the elaboration and expansion of the project’s repertoire of structures that enables it to change. Unfortunately, Cooper does not confirm whether in this context structure is a matter of form or content or both. However, attacking him for reintroducing a structuralist bias here would be to misunderstand his intentions. As I noted above, Cooper does not want to replace structure with process. In an attempt to move away from the structuralist bias, he shows how structure and process contradict and complement one another. Rather than reaffirming the stability of structure, his emphasis on process in the context of the project undermines any such stability.

Fourth, Cooper examines *the situation*, which is ‘the immediately perceived field of actualities (objects, events), i.e. the concrete context in which we carry out our lives’ (Cooper 1976: 1006). Concreteness is a key dimension here because the situation ‘is full of definite objects and events which strike our perception in definite ways’ and

give us power to act as well as a target at which action can be directed. Further on, since the situation is a matter of difference and autonomy, it necessitates ‘a theory of discontinuous and heterogeneous experience’ (Cooper 1976: 1007). It is this that enables us to view as individually active the multiple parts constituting the situation. And it is this that enables us to understand that it is its local and variable nature that makes the situation unique. The situation is about the here-and-now. Avoiding viewing the thing in terms of abstracted images, Cooper insists that situational experience must focus on the things themselves and their interactions. Indeed, the thing must neither be separated from itself nor from activity. This leads Cooper to two conclusions. First, the somewhat confusing point that the situation follows “the logic of discursive action” rather than “the logic of linear structure”, which is his way of saying that ‘things can and do happen according to their own impulse and action.’ Appreciating Cooper’s point about impulsiveness and self-direction, what I find confusing here is simply Cooper’s use of the term “*discursive* action”, as there is not necessarily anything about the “discursive” which is nonlinear. If it were, Cooper would have to explain what it is about the “discursive” that makes it nonlinear. Second, Cooper concludes that things are both cause and effect. They both act and are acted upon, and as a result, the human cannot merely be understood as a creative being. Whatever is created by a human being ‘turns back and creates him’ (Cooper 1976: 1008). This is a particularly interesting point, as it decentres the human subject and undermines the anthropocentrism of conventional social science and philosophy.

Fifth, Cooper discusses what he terms *the abstract field*, or what Whitehead would call an “extensive continuum” and Bergson and Deleuze would refer to as “the virtual”. As it stretches beyond the situation, it is through the abstract field that

process is given a larger meaning, “the many become one”, and the world becomes one big and united cosmic Whole. Relationship is the central dimension of the abstract field. Relationship as connection is the basis of meaning; relationship is what unites the many into one; and “the combinatorics of relationship” is what enables the many to combine in an infinite number of various ways, thus producing “a unity of difference” (Cooper 1976: 1008). Moreover, it is through the processual cosmology of the abstract field that the development of individuals is connected to the evolution of the world as a Whole. This world is however both noumenal and phenomenal, both abstract and literal, and Cooper insists that it is only through the latter that the human can grasp the former. That is, the human can only make sense of the noumenal abstract field insofar as s/he is firmly grounded in the phenomenal literal field of spatially and temporally discrete and denotable things and events. This is because the abstract field is a continuity of not-yet-realised forms. But sense-making and the search for facts and reason is not really what is at stake here. First and foremost, what Cooper seeks to show here, is that the abstract field enables the human to live amongst uncertainties and in a condition of indeterminacy that expands and diversifies the area in which human action can take place.

In the final section of his paper, drawing upon ideas from the structuralist anthropologist Gregory Bateson, the American poet Charles Olson and yet again Whitehead (whom we know as an affiliate of the HPC), Cooper seeks to envisage how the open field, being the condition of process, can be used rather than just analysed. Use involves two endeavours: “to find out” and “to make”. “To find” out means to acquire knowledge or information about a process. This is achieved by placing oneself within and experiencing the process, and by carefully drawing upon other people’s

experiences of the process. Information in this respect is (i) difference (in the cybernetic sense, which means that one piece of data is compared and contrasted with another piece of data) and (ii) ‘what goes into form, i.e., [that which] in-forms’ (Cooper 1976: 1012; emphasis omitted). In other words, ‘difference is the key to form’ and ‘to find out is to be in form’ (Cooper 1976: 1012). In conclusion, knowing oneself more fully requires knowing oneself in the world and not as separate from the world. “To make”, on the other hand, is to present the content you have found within an adequate form that enables you to express the diverse nature of process (Cooper 1976: 1012). But as well as enabling expression, “to make” is a moral act of impression that has an effect upon the outside world. Consequently, it is clear that “to find out” is also a moral act: ‘the more you find out, the more you can make’ (Cooper 1976: 1012).

Finally, Cooper discusses the challenge of inventing a set of practical mechanisms that may enable people to actually make use of the open field and suggests four starting points from which a practice of process can be developed and activated: *force*, *medium*, *form* and *meaning*. *Force* is central to all processes because process involves the transfer of force from an agent to an object, and because force – being the energy of process – is what makes action possible. Force can be applied in two main ways, either as a means to resolve, complete and bring a process to an end (by which one finally loses force), or (and this is the approach suggested by Cooper), it can be applied continuously as a means to get involved with and stay in a process without terminating it. The human is her own *medium* for process. For process to be possible, however, the human must perceive through her senses rather than through her ego. It is this decentralised kind of perception that enables the human to open up towards the

rest of the world and become attentive to difference. *Form* refers back to Cooper's notions of the abstract field and information discussed above. Rather than forcing content into a categorical form, one must enable form to contain difference and recognise that form is a unity of difference and not unity as such. Consequently, form is an "unfinished business" that continuously changes with the content that dwells inside it. Finally, Cooper argues that *meaning* resides in individuated wholeness, i.e. the process by which the psyche realises itself. The paradox is that whereas individuation means separation, wholeness means integration. The challenge here is therefore to remain united and differentiated at the same time.

What this boils down to is the self-management of all our activities. In order to develop a processual practice for the open field, one must start with oneself, change how one uses oneself and from there move into and change the outside world. Since they work through institutions, Cooper argues that Marxism and democracy do not allow sufficient space for our "real selves". 'Democracy is not enough' (Cooper 1976: 1016). Instead, we are encouraged to recreate everyday life. One might ask what audience it is that Cooper invites and encourages to recreate everyday life. It is unlikely that just anyone and everyone would be attracted by his invitation. First, given the theoretical bias, density and complexity of his argument, it runs the risk of becoming an appeal confined to a small intellectual elite. Second, given his mainstream language, it is more likely to appeal to a male readership than a female one. And third, one might question the politics implied by Cooper in 'The Open Field'. Cooper's (almost one-sided) emphasis on process leaves little feel for the

permanency of social relationships and the boundaries that obstruct resistance and prevent things from changing.³³

Having sought 'to define an epistemology of process as a basis for the development of expressive and creative action' within a world that he understands as an open field (Cooper 1976: 999), Cooper (1990) returns to the problem of process in his article entitled 'Organization/Disorganization'. But whereas 'The Open Field' seeks primarily to develop a processual understanding of the world and a processual strategy for creative human action, 'Organization/Disorganization' applies processual thinking to a rather different problem, which is more strongly related to the concerns of organisation theory and the concept of organisation. Here, Cooper emphasises the point that organisational processes order social life within and more importantly without organisational entities.

The starting point of this text is the concept of organisation in mainstream, or more specifically structural-functionalist organisation theory, which according to Cooper is biased towards the formal-functional aspects of organisation. More specifically, this means that this conceptualisation of organisation, if not exclusively, is at least primarily concerned with organisational entities. This bias amongst organisation theorists is specifically due to their preoccupation with systems. When seeking to understand the relationship between systems (such as an organisation) and their

³³ It is these problems *inter alia* that have been the focus of much work in labour process theory, exemplified by the joint writings of Knights and Willmott (1985, 1989, 1999).

environments, the main focus remains with the system. Little attention is given to the drawing of boundaries that makes the system possible in the first place.

Taking systemic boundaries for granted has important consequences for how we understand systems and environments and the relationship between the two. First, this leads to the privileging of systems above environments and the viewing of the boundary as an attribute of the system rather than of the environment. Consequently, the boundary is not imposed upon the system from the outside, but is instituted by the system to separate it from its environment. Separation is made possible because the boundary instituted by the system is stable and complete. The stable and complete nature of the boundary also means that the system is regarded as a stable entity enjoying a unity and order that stands in stark contrast to the disorder associated with its outside environment. The trouble with this position, Cooper explains, is that a boundary is neither stable, complete nor simply an attribute of the system. Instead, boundaries serve the dual function of both separating and joining systems and environments. They are an attribute of system and environment. And as such, a boundary is a complex and ambiguous structure ‘around which are focused both the formal and informal organizing processes of social life’ (Cooper 1990: 169). In other words, organisation is not just a matter of formal entities, but also a matter of processes residing at the boundaries by which systems are joined with and separated from their environments. In order to understand organisation, we should therefore not limit our inquiry to systems such as formal organisations, but pay more attention to the role of boundaries. Cooper does not say it here, but I would like to add that by taking “boundary” as our centre of attention, it is possible to understand how

organisation operates both within formal organisations and as processes of ordering in the environment outside organisational entities.

Cooper elaborates on the role of boundaries, both by problematising the way in which studies of social and other systems subsume boundaries to systems, and by offering an alternative understanding of boundaries. As in previous paragraphs, what Cooper finds particularly problematic about social science research is that it tends to understand the social world in terms of reified objects and artefacts without showing much appreciation for the medium that actually constitute them. Social scientists do not know the world directly, but typically acquire knowledge about it by distinguishing and differentiating between phenomena. Whereas certain phenomena are selected and included into a particular concept and seen to belong to a particular object, other phenomena are excluded. Consequently, the concepts and objects that emerge are largely homogeneous; when studying systems, one finds unity. In the words of Cooper, 'Systemness relies singularly on a conception of unity' (1990: 169). This means that typically, what lies inside a system's boundaries is assumed to be orderly and organised whilst what lies outside is assumed to be less orderly, less unitary and less organised. And insofar as social scientists privilege the study of systems, what does not belong to a particular system is devalued.

Further on, Cooper argues that boundary-maintenance is seen as a key dimension in the study of systems. In order to maintain its order, a system needs to protect itself from the outside and maintain its boundaries against the environment. Again, Cooper shows that systems are privileged above boundaries and environment. Boundary-maintenance is an activity of the system and not of the environment. In the same paragraph, he deals briefly with the notion of boundaries and boundary maintenance

in relation to the now common distinction between closed and open systems. Despite the general recognition that boundaries are more or less perforated and that systems are more or less closed or more or less open, this has done little to remove the binary distinction between system and environment and systems are still privileged above environments and above the actual boundaries that join and separate systems and environments. The implications of this are somewhat paradoxical. Whereas 'the social system', Cooper explains, 'is defined as a pattern of relationships, the concept of relationship is its least systematically analyzed feature' (Cooper 1990: 170). Since the relationship between system and environment is constituted by a frame or a boundary, the lacking attention to boundaries inhibits an adequate understanding of this relationship.

Cooper's alternative is to view boundary as an attribute of both system and environment. Since this view acknowledges that boundaries perform a function on behalf of systems and environments, it allows a non-static understanding of boundary. But before outlining this alternative in further detail, Cooper critiques a social systems view typical of and influential in organisation theory: that of Parsons and Blau. According to Cooper (1990: 171), Parsons (1951), whom he claims to represent the traditional systems view within the social sciences, understands the system boundary as a 'container which holds the system parts together and thus prevents their dispersal.' Furthermore, Parsons not only conceives of systems as bounded entities. By viewing systems as ordered structures, he also imposes a boundary upon how the system is to be understood. Cooper directs a similar critique on Blau's (1974) work on formal organisation, which shares Parsons' structural-functionalist foundations. More specifically, Cooper argues that Blau's concept of differentiation in organisational

structure, which merely refers to the internal divisions of labour and authority in organisations, presents a static view of differentiation. Preoccupied with the instrumental order of static differences in role and status, Blau ignores the very process of differentiation that makes such differences and such an order come about in the first place. And consequently, he regards the social organisation within which formal organisations are seen to exist as ‘already formed’ (Cooper 1990: 172).

If one were to focus on boundary and conceive of differentiation in processual terms, one would end up with a fundamentally different understanding of organisation; neither as bounded entities characterised by a static internal order nor as an already formed division of social life, but as a process of differentiation that works to transform ‘an intrinsically ambiguous condition into one that is ordered’ (Cooper 1990: 172). And since organisation is not about already established differentiation and order, organisation is always caught up with its disorderly and contrary state, which Cooper calls disorganisation. Cooper seeks to demonstrate that this constant opposition between organisation and disorganisation has serious implications for how one is to understand social organisation and social action.

Given Cooper’s emphasis on process, it may seem ironic and confusing to find that the term structure figures centrally in his definition of social organisation:

Social organization may be defined as a structure which relates people to each other in the general process of managing nature and themselves (Cooper 1990: 172).

But even though some emphasis is removed from the way in which social organisation works as a process and put on the way in which it has the consequence of involving people in “the general process of managing”, Cooper’s reference to structure has not become less dynamic than it was in ‘The Open Field’. His somewhat unfortunate wording does not lead him to reaffirm the static concept of organisation presented by structural-functionalism. Like information, which Cooper also defines as both a process and a structure that makes form out of non-form by dividing matter into sets of binary terms, organisation creates order by drawing boundaries between elements in social life such as social actors. Furthermore, the binary division that Cooper associates with information and organisation is not a simple binary structure that limits focus to the parts lying on each side of the binary divide. Instead, it directs focus on the division itself, which puts simultaneous attention on the parts and the whole that these two parts constitute. In conclusion, the binary divide or boundary that Cooper talks about not only separates, but also joins, and it cannot be subsumed to one part.

Cooper then discusses the undecidable nature of boundary, first in light of Saussure’s structuralist linguistics and Bateson’s structuralist anthropology (focusing on Saussure’s system of signs and on Bateson’s system of difference), and then in light of Derrida’s poststructuralist concept of *différance*. Cooper invokes Saussure’s (1974) *Course in General Linguistics* to show that on the level of semiotic systems (i.e. systems of signifiers and signifieds) the signifier is not simply a static carrier of meaning. Meaning is never given by a particular signifier, but is an outcome of differences between various signifiers. Semiotic systems are constantly caught up in processes of signification by which different meanings are attributed to a certain

signifier depending on the semantic context in which it finds itself. In other words, since the meaning of a signifier depends on which other signifiers it is surrounded by, and since signifiers are constantly moving between different semantic contexts, the meaning of a signifier is always deferred and unfinished and the process of signification is never brought to an end.

In Bateson's (1972) *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*, Cooper finds ammunition to the view that the world is not experienced in terms of reified objects and events, but in terms of differences:

To talk about things in the mind is to commit the intellectual sin of reification.

There is even a problem talking about *the* mind since this gives the impression of a localable place, a thing which contains other things (Cooper 1990: 175).

Difference, on the other hand, is not 'localable' because 'it is dimensionless' (Cooper 1990: 175). That is to say, difference cannot be localised because unlike reified objects it has no spatial dimensions such as length, height, width and depth. Instead, following Bateson, Cooper views difference as some kind of process that guides how we experience the world. Earlier on, Cooper (1990: 170) referred to the boundary as a frame that includes certain phenomena and excludes others. With Bateson's term "framing", the processual nature of frames and boundaries is more clearly recognised.

Derrida's (1982) concept of *différance*, which is influenced by Saussure's thinking on language as a system of differences, can be seen as an even more explicit attempt at thinking about the undecidability of boundary. But *différance* is not simply about differing in space. It is also about deference or deferral, i.e. the postponement of

something in time. More specifically, this means that a word or concept that is invoked to represent a thing currently absent from us can never do so. Not only does the word differ in space from the thing (the word is present, the thing is absent). Since the word succeeds the thing, the word is also a presence deferred in time. Moreover, Derrida's concept of *différance* implies that the meaning of a word is deferred, just as in Saussure's conception of difference, Cooper argues. Consequently, *différance* is the 'ever-active play' of differences that 'cannot be located in any particular place' (Cooper 1990: 179). This heterogeneous nature is obvious with regards to the concept of *différance* itself, which can refer to two different things but never at the same time. But it is also how other words must be understood, according to Derrida, who demonstrates this by deconstructing the Greek word *pharmakon* in his text 'Plato's Pharmacy'. Deconstructing or subjecting *pharmakon* to a process of *différance*, he shows that the word entails two different and deferred meanings (remedy *and* poison) that both cannot be grasped at the same time or in the same place. And it is this that not only invests any and every word or phenomenon with undecidability, but also underlines the undecidability of *différance*, difference and boundary.

According to Cooper, all three ways of thinking difference bring out the undecidable nature of boundary. And as such, they bring out the undecidable nature of the relationship between social systems and environments as well as the undecidable nature of social systems *per se*. In other words, social systems are not as unitary, ordered and organised as one is led to think by conventional ways of thinking. Instead, as results of ambiguous processes of framing, boundary drawing and differentiation, they 'reveal their essentially precarious foundation', a foundation that

is constantly resisted by what Cooper calls processes of disorganisation or the “zero degree of organization” (Cooper 1990: 182).

Cooper (1990: 182) defines the zero degree of organisation as ‘a process of undecidability that pervades all social organization.’ Having no specific order, organisation or direction, the zero degree of organisation can be understood as ‘an excess to order or meaning’. Drawing on Derrida, Cooper (1990: 184) argues that the zero degree of organisation is that which falls outside of and has ‘no founding source or centre’. And similarly, drawing upon Simmel’s inside/outside distinction, he argues that the zero degree of organisation is the outside that is excluded from the inside and therefore lacks what that which is included on the inside has. In conclusion, ‘Zero-degree is [...] a theoretical condition of no meaning, no form, of absolute disorder which one might call the primary source of form or organization’ (Cooper 1990: 187). This does not mean, Cooper insists, that zero-degree is ‘an absolute origin which [is] itself organized’, but simply that it is ‘The disorder of zero degree [...] which energizes and motivates the call to order or organization’ (Cooper 1990: 187).

From this discussion, Cooper moves on to consider organisation itself, arguing that ‘If zero degree is an excess [...], then order and organization must necessarily be a reduction’ (Cooper 1990: 187). In a quest for order and organisation, social systems seek ‘to deny the existence of undecidability by erecting systems of “logical” and “rational” action’ (Cooper 1990: 187). Utilising Marcuse’s (1964) reading of Weber, Cooper adopts the view that rationality is not simply a matter of calculable efficiency, but ‘a form of unacknowledged political domination which serves to privilege the interests of particular groups’ (Cooper 1990: 187-188). This means that rationalisation depends upon the ability to control, master and dominate the excess of disorganisation

or zero-degree that roams all social systems. According to Cooper, such control is specifically aimed at what he calls the “metastructure” and the “metalanguage”, and without explaining these terms, he turns to discuss the issue of communicational domination in an example from Herman Melville’s (1970) novel *Billy Budd, Sailor*. From this discussion, however, Cooper concludes with Marcuse (1964) that the management of language, the elimination of undecidability and the solidification of boundaries is ‘a significant process in the creation of systems of technical rationality’ and ‘formally organized systems’ (Cooper 1990: 191). In other words, if one is to create formal systems of rational organisation, one needs to reaffirm the boundary between disorganisation and organisation.

In the final section of the paper, invoking Canguilhem’s (1978) analysis of the concept of organisation, Cooper deals with what he calls ‘the normalising function’ of organisation (Cooper 1990: 193). Canguilhem’s study, Cooper argues, ‘showed how the concept of organization developed in the nineteenth century through the normal-abnormal opposition’ (Cooper 1990: 195). Requiring the elimination of the abnormal or the pathological across all fields (the social, the biological, the psychological, the linguistic, etc.), organisation was a matter of normalisation. More specifically, the development of normalisation was based upon the institution, formalisation and following of rules and norms. In nineteenth century France this did for example take place through the establishment of a new grammar conveying formal rules for the correct use of language and the institution of the metric system. According to Cooper, the norm had two functions: first, to restore normality by eliminating deviance, and second, by ‘providing an order of knowledge’ that enable particular systems to conceptualise themselves. Although Cooper does not say this, I would like to add that

such an order of knowledge is exactly what gives self-reflexivity to systems, thus enabling them to adjust when necessary and make possible the normative order that they seek to institute.

Canguilhem's conceptualisation has serious implications for the concept of organisation, even for what one might choose to refer to as formal organisation. The component features of formal organisation – be they a hierarchical division of labour, administrative centralisation, standardisation or rational planning – are not simply the innocent inventions of modern administration. Instead, Cooper insists, they must be understood as 'instruments of a process of technological normalization motivated by a therapy of power' (Cooper 1990: 196; emphasis omitted).³⁴

What, then, can we take with us from this highly dense text by Robert Cooper? The emphasis on *boundary* and *process* is obvious. Cooper pursues the challenging idea that boundary, i.e. that which differentiates between a system – such as an organisation – and the environment does not finalise or stabilise the relationship between the two. As they separate *and* join organisations and environments, boundaries are continuously engaged in processes of differentiation. Hence, they define and redefine not only organisations and environments, but also the relationships between them. In other words, boundaries produce and reproduce organisations and environments, becoming processes of organisation and

³⁴ Though not straightforward, Cooper's reference to "therapy of power" simply underlines the point that therapies (of normalisation) are not just concerned with the solving of problems, but always embedded in the politics of what is normal and what is not.

disorganisation themselves, and turning organisation as well as disorganisation – as the zero degree of organisation – into processual rather than static matters. And as such, the notion of disorganisation developed by Cooper is to some extent capable of recognising the ways in which the boundaries of organisation are disrupted and destabilised.

Cooper's final point concerns the social sciences and organisation theory more specifically. Formal organisations do not merely produce objects for consumption. Organisations are produced and reproduced by processes of organisation. But for Cooper, the production of organisation is not merely an ordering process that inscribes itself onto the social world. As a research object, formal organisation is also the result of intensive processes of knowledge production taking place within organisation theory. And by constructing organisation in a particular way through a particular concept of organisation (that of formal organisation), organisation theory also *organises* organisation, thus 'making it impossible to disentangle the content of organization studies from the theory or methodology that frames it' (Cooper 1990: 197). Although Cooper does not spell this out explicitly, the consequence is that the production of the concept of organisation is not only the result of political decisions about the constitution of organisation as a research object. As the concept of organisation is constituted and used in a particular way by the majority of organisation theorists, it will also have certain implications for the events and people who are and are not studied by this organisation theory. Cooper's contribution here lies not only in his problematisation of the concept of organisation. Having complexified and disrupted the boundary relations between organisation and environment by replacing stasis with process, he has also upset the boundary relations between organisation

theory and its neighbouring fields. Not simply by drawing heavily on thinking about organisation from other disciplines, but more importantly by re-producing and re-organising the concept of organisation into a research object that, with its precarious and processual nature, is fundamentally different from the concept of organisation implied by classical and mainstream organisation theory.

Despite the title of his paper, Cooper does not place as much emphasis on the concept of organisation as one might expect, but does instead coin at least the first part of his discussion around the concepts of system and environment. Moreover, given that Cooper attempts a processual understanding of organisation, it may seem ironic that so much of his discussion revolves around the terms system and structure. Dismissing his argument on such grounds would however be to read it in highly dualistic terms, and it is exactly such dualism that Cooper seeks to avoid. Cooper neither argues for the stability of system, structure and organisation, nor does he argue that systems, structures and formal organisations do not exist. Instead, he seeks to undermine any static underpinnings of these terms and rid them of the stable reified nature so typically attributed to them by mainstream organisation theory and social science.

5.4 Haridimos Tsoukas, Chaos and Organisation

As I showed towards the end of the previous section, disorganisation is a central aspect of Cooper's attempt to rethink organisation. Though offering a level of insights into organisation and disorganisation that is rare in organisation theory, he is not alone in using these two notions in conjunction. The distinction between organisation and disorganisation is also discussed by Haridimos Tsoukas (1998a) in his editorial introduction to a themed section in the journal *Organization* on chaos, complexity and organisation theory. Here, Tsoukas notes that certain organisation theorists might find

little relevance in the study of chaos or disorganisation – the absence of organisation – given that organisation is the very *raison d'être* of organisation theory. Tsoukas, however, rejects such reasoning as unconvincing. First, as argued by Cooper (1990), disorganisation cannot be seen as absolutely separate from and opposite to organisation.³⁵ And second, invoking the Greek twentieth century philosopher Cornelius Castoriadis, he privileges epistemology over ontology and argues that ‘the concept of disorganization [...] does not make much sense’ (Tsoukas 1998a: 292). According to Castoriadis:

What is, is not or cannot be, absolutely disordered chaos – a term to which, moreover, no signification can be assigned: a random ensemble still represents as random a formidable organization, the description of which fills the volumes expounding the theory of probabilities. If this were the case, it could not lend itself to any organization at all; in both cases, all coherent discourse and all action would be impossible (Castoriadis quoted in Tsoukas 1998a: 309).

From this statement, Tsoukas infers that disorganisation is not so much the absence of organisation as the presence of some mode of organisation that is typically deemed undesirable. The traffic of cities like Cairo, Athens and Rome is neither disorderly nor disorganised, but exemplifies a self-regulating system with a different kind of order

³⁵ In a sense, modern versions of chaos and complexity theory in the natural sciences precede Cooper in making this point, that disorganisation or chaos is not the opposite of organisation and order. For natural scientists, chaotic systems do indeed possess an order, albeit different from, unpredictable and more complex than the order with which one is usually faced. Systems or phenomena completely void of order are those systems that cannot be studied at all, known to natural scientists as “noise” (cf. e.g. Stewart 1989; Cohen and Stewart 1994). As I will argue in a moment, this is of course a highly problematic assumption by which natural science in this case devalues, disregards and ignores what it cannot understand and reduces chaos to order and difference to sameness.

and organisation to that of the more formalised traffic systems of cities in Northern Europe. Similarly, the crime-infested areas of Los Angeles, Moscow and Manchester, as they are governed and maintained by the felonious underworld, are no more dissociated from order and organisation than the world of the Western metropolitan stock exchange. And they are no less worlds than the latter. Their organisation and order is simply of a different kind, and their world is simply a different world from that which most people regard as desirable, as it is seen to use the wrong means to pursue the wrong ends.³⁶ According to Tsoukas, ethnomethodology, following Gadamer, has always insisted on this fundamentally organised nature of social life.³⁷

social life is de facto organized: we, as sentient beings, have no choice but to organize our world and our actions in it. The interesting questions are how we do it; what we do it for? (Tsoukas 1998a: 292).

³⁶ In a similar fashion, realist theories of international relations (e.g. Hedley Bull 1977) speak of the international system (i.e. the system of external relations *between* sovereign states) as possessing an anarchic order different from the system of government regulating the internal affairs *of* sovereign states.

³⁷ Tsoukas does not explicate the various links between Gadamer and ethnomethodology, but I would like to point out that ethnomethodology, as represented in Garfinkel's (1967) work not only was inspired by Schutz's (e.g. 1967) phenomenology and Winch's (1958) post-Wittgensteinian philosophy of ordinary language (cf. Burrell and Morgan 1979; Giddens 1993). Through Wittgenstein and Winch, who shared with Heidegger and Gadamer the point that 'self-understanding is held to be only possible through the appropriation by the subject of publicly available linguistic forms' (Giddens 1993: 58), it is possible to see an important (though largely indirect) connection between Garfinkel's ethnomethodology and Gadamer's (1989) phenomenology; that both emphasised the role of language in the human's ability to make sense of, order, and live in the world.

The strict distinction between organisation and order on the one hand, and disorganisation, chaos and disorder on the other, Tsoukas argues, has to do with the tradition in both lay discourse and social science research of associating the former with classification, generalisability and predictability. Moreover, all these notions imply the existence of a subject: ‘someone who classifies, generalizes, predicts’ (1998a: 292). This is an undertaking most typically executed by a managerial elite within formal organisations. And on an international or global level, this activity is preoccupied with describing and judging non-Western practices through the lens of a hegemonic Western value-system, which largely deems non-Western practices disorderly and disorganised, chaotic and disturbing.

Despite this all too common separation between organisation and disorganisation, Tsoukas notes an expanding albeit recent interest in “chaos”. Since the dissemination of the writings of people like Bateson, Castoriadis and Cooper, organisation has increasingly been juxtaposed with surprise: ‘that unpredictability does not imply the absence of order; that recurrence does not exclude novelty’ (1998: 292). Even at the centre of organisation theory, prominent figures such as Karl Weick (1979) and James March and Johan P. Olsen (1976) have made important contributions challenging the binary opposition between organisation and disorganisation. Mainstream organisation theory, however (‘at least the kind taught in most OB/OT textbooks’), has paid little attention to ‘this new thinking’ (1998a: 293). Tsoukas then goes on to describe the role of complexity theory and chaos theory in the natural sciences, whereupon he claims a great potential for such thinking in the social sciences, since the latter is preoccupied with a research object at least as complex and unpredictable as, and at least as far from stable equilibrium as that of the former. Recognising the sources

Tsoukas is drawing upon, it is worth noticing that complex thinking in organisation theory and the social sciences is not simply about adopting natural science research from physics, mathematics and biology into the realm of the social and the organisational. Tsoukas seems much to prefer work by philosophers and social scientists such as Bateson, Castoriadis and Cooper, and this is a strategy he shares with his former colleague at Essex University, Robert Chia (1998b). But rather than elaborating on this, I shall see what implications Tsoukas' conceptualisation may have upon the nature and status of organisation.

As noted above, Tsoukas (with Castoriadis and Cooper) renders the concept of "disorganisation" meaningless because of the diverse nature of organisation. Just that something operates by self-regulation and pursues unusual ends by unusual means does not mean that it is in any way disorganised and void of organisation. Its organisation is simply different, and it is our habitual mode of dialectical thought that so easily reduces that which is different and unorthodox to something best characterised in terms of absence and lack. However, the problem with Tsoukas' reasoning is that it reduces all aspects of social life to organisation and runs the risk of ridding the world of disorganisation altogether. Cooper (1990) avoided this in his notion of disorganisation as zero-degree organisation, which recognises the excessive and disruptive nature of disorganisation. Tsoukas fails to recognise those elements of the world that operate independently of organisation, and against which organisation must always negotiate itself.³⁸ Not that I do, but even if one accepts that life becomes

³⁸ Following Deleuze and Guattari's (1988: 86) reading of the Stoics, my understanding of independence is not about that which is completely separate from or in absolute opposition to something else. Independence is about affection and influence and assumes a strong element of

social only insofar as it is organised, life is not simply a matter of organisation because in any case there is also life beyond the social. And since disorganisation is reduced to organisation it is almost as meaningless to speak in terms of disorganisation as it is to only speak in terms of organisation. Not least because if organisation is all there is, any attempt to organise the world would be redundant and obsolete. This is why I prefer the term *nonorganisation*, which not merely indicates bizarre and unusual versions of organisation, but is entirely different from and disrupts, undermines and escapes the boundaries of organisation.

For me, *organisation* – whether a matter of organisational entities or processes – is about the goal-directed institution and maintenance of boundaries that confine and differentiate between people, bodies and other objects in space and time. Hence, organisation produces divisions, hierarchies and value scales that seek to order and regulate the world and how we live in the world. The term *disorganisation* has come to contain little more than “negative” connotations, *normatively* speaking. In everyday usage and in organisation theory (esp. Mayo 1933), disorganisation is typically associated with “anarchy”, “chaos” and “disorder”, not in any “positive” sense, but in the sense of “mayhem”, “havoc” and “ragnarokk”. Though in a slightly different way, Tsoukas (1998a) does also dissociate the term from anything “positive” by relating it to “bizarre”, “unusual” and for many people “undesirable” versions of organisation – the criminal underworld seeming a favourite example. Tsoukas’

reciprocity. That which is independent is that which, as well as being affected by something else, has the power to affect that by which it is affected.

reductive attitude confuses “disorganisation” with “organisation” and removes any uniqueness from the term. *Nonorganisation* is different from organisation and disorganisation altogether and it is beyond the “negative/positive” distinction that follows from the reduction of disorganisation to organisation. Whereas organisation is reactive, nonorganisation is active and creative, though not in terms of an ability to reach a set goal or purpose. Whereas organisation is characterised by its inclination to react and defend itself against nonorganisation, nonorganisation is characterised by its ability to create powerful forces of excess that are beyond purpose, that disrupt the boundaries of organisation, and whose full force or potential we can never know. It is by viewing organisation in the larger context of nonorganisation that we might be able to recognise the *limitations* of organisation. The main characteristics of the concepts of *organisation*, *disorganisation* and *nonorganisation* are summed up in table 5.1 below, where all three concepts are viewed in terms of their “*form*” of *expression* and their *relationship to “purpose” and boundaries*. For lack of a better term, I use the notion of a concept’s “*form*” of *expression* here in order to tease out the ways in which a concept is materialised:

Concept	“Form” of expression	Relationship to “purpose” and boundaries
Organisation	Entities and processes	Purpose-driven and goal-directed; institutes and maintains boundaries
Disorganisation	Bizarre, unusual and “undesirable” forms of organisation	Purpose-driven and goal-directed; institutes and maintains <i>unusual</i> boundaries
Nonorganisation	Active, creative and excessive forces of desire	Beyond purpose; disrupts boundaries

(Table 5.1: *Organisation, Disorganisation and Nonorganisation*)

To be fair, Tsoukas, again drawing on Castoriadis and Gadamer, does actually recognise the limitations of organisation, and supplements the organised nature of the social with the never fully organised nature of the political. Whilst organisations are political entities, the political is never completely organised:

the fact that actors are possessed by history (rather than the other way round); that they lack comprehensive knowledge of their own initial conditions; and, thus, that they cannot base their knowledge and action on transhistorical epistemic foundations, makes organisations (and, social systems in general) inherently *political* entities. Politics is possible only to the extent that the human world is not fully ordered and our knowledge of it is never complete. “If a full and certain knowledge (*episteme*) of the human domain were possible”, observes Castoriadis [...], “politics would immediately come to an end”. It is because we do not – we cannot – obtain an Archimedes’ point from which to view the world and our position in it, that we need to collectively deliberate and, thus, to engage in political activity in order to settle our differences and decide on the course of action to be taken (Tsoukas 1998a: 300).

Whereas the social may inhabit various yet agreed upon types of organisation in different contexts, it is the political, with its conflicting modes of organising, which inhibits one sole kind of organisation from seizing sovereign power. In that sense, the political is neither fully organisational nor, in my terminology, fully nonorganisational. On the one hand, the political has a will to organise. But this is a will that, due to its own internal diversity, cannot be fully accomplished. The problem is that Tsoukas is only concerned with the inherent conflicts between different organisational forces. He does not deal with the nonorganisational forces that are

outside yet in conflict with organisation. He subsumes the political within the organisational and fails to speak in terms of those dimensions and forces that not only precede and exceed, but also disrupt, undermine and exist independently of organisation. Unlike the political (and the disorganisational *qua* the diversity of organisation), nonorganisation is *not* simply a different, controversial or bizarre version of organisation. Nonorganisation, which is beyond boundary and purpose, is of a different world altogether, and it interacts, communicates and negotiates with organisation on a level where neither is fully at home. Nonorganisation is about bodies and matters that openly express desires and forces that charge, discharge and recharge each other by plugging themselves into and unplugging themselves from one another in fashions so multiple that the very concept of organisation all of a sudden seems out of place. But as always, it is in the margins, in the interface between organisation and nonorganisation that the most interesting things happen. This is the unhomely and uncanny borderlands where organisation and nonorganisation meet, where they negotiate with, challenge and affect each other, where the nonorganisational is subjected to the forces of organisation, where new forms of organisation are instituted, and where organisation is disrupted by nonorganisation and sometimes dissolved altogether. Rather than giving organisation the upper hand, this move recognises nonorganisation as a power in itself that cannot simply be defined in terms of absence and lack. Nonorganisation is not a matter of restriction, constraint and inferiority. It does not inhibit things from happening. It is an excess force that is creative and makes things happen, even if these things are unusual, unrecognisable and for some people undesirable. And it is a force whose potential is beyond knowledge.

In sum, Tsoukas' (1998a) text is problematic in that it reduces the social, the political, disorganisation and the world at large to organisation. But given these problems, what does Tsoukas' understanding of disorganisation as organisation do? Clearly, it is another attempt at endowing organisation with a stronger sense of process that undermines its static and entitative aspects. It is obvious from his article that organisation not only takes place inside formal organisational entities, but also under more bizarre circumstances. What Tsoukas does not do, is to deal with the problem of the body – whether as an organisational matter or not. In the next section, I shall investigate Robert Chia's understanding of organisation, which shares much of the processual concerns raised by Cooper and Tsoukas.

5.5 Robert Chia's Process Perspective of Organisation

Robert Chia, a former student of Cooper's in the Department of Behaviour in Organisations at Lancaster University and in some ways Cooper's protégé continues the processual programme of organisation theory. In an *Organization Studies* article entitled 'From Modern to Postmodern Organizational Analysis', Chia (1995) argues for a more postmodern or processual approach to organisation, framing his discussion of processual organisation in terms of an ontology of becoming. As opposed to a typically modern ontology of being that 'privileges thinking in terms of discrete phenomenal "states", static "attributes" and sequential "events"', an ontology of becoming draws our attention to 'a transient, ephemeral and emergent reality' (Chia 1995: 579). Further on, a postmodern style of thought is more concerned with the '*micro-logics* of social organizing practices' or processes than with their 'stabilized "effects" such as "individuals, "organizations" and "society"' (Chia 1995: 580).

Chia notes that processes have become commonplace even in mainstream social science and organisation theory, for example in the sociology of Talcott Parsons. But with Norbert Elias (1978) and Cooper and Law (1995), Chia objects that Parsons and other social scientists reduce social processes to social states, and that they reduce 'complex heterogeneous phenomena to simpler, seemingly homogeneous components' (Elias quoted in Chia 1995: 581). More specifically, Chia (1995: 587) argues that Parsons and likeminded people reduce process to stasis because 'they can only conceive of process in discrete, linear, static and sequential terms.' These kinds of studies are concerned with 'processes occurring within or between social entities (e.g., "decision-making" processes in organizations, interactions between an organization and its environment etc.)' and not like Chia, concerned with 'the micro-organizing processes which enact and re-enact these social entities into existence' (Chia 1995: 587; emphasis omitted). This is also the case, he says, with Karl Weick's concept of equivocality and enactment and Gareth Morgan's (1986) 'image of organization as "flux and transformation"' (Chia 1995: 587). Although they both emphasise the 'processual aspects of organizing', they still express the processual in static terms of control (Chia 1995: 587).

Following Cooper and Law (1995), Chia's alternative is to view organisational processes as 'assemblages of organizings' (Cooper and Law quoted in Chia 1995: 589) 'in which evolving circuits of mediating networks of action remain in continuous contact and motion' (Chia 1995: 589). Behind this dense and unusual term lies the recognition that organisational processes involve various networked acts of organising that are constantly in motion and constantly related to one another. Chia now leaves the explicit discussion of organisational processes until the later sections of his paper

and does little to elaborate on why organisational processes can be seen as “assemblages of organizings”. Anyway, to think organisation in processual terms is. Chia (1995: 594) argues, to make ‘the very idea of organization itself the problematic.’ And if I may add, this is the case because it enables us to ask, as Chia (1995: 595) does, how organisation comes ‘to acquire its apparently concrete status’, and ‘What primary organizing process allows [organization] to take on the semblance of an “already constituted entity”’?

Chia invokes Law’s (1992) conceptualisation, which argues that organising is a ‘process of heterogeneous engineering’ (Chia 1995: 595; emphasis omitted). In this process,

bits and pieces from the social, the technical, the conceptual and the textual are fitted together and so converted (or “translated”) into a set of equally heterogeneous scientific products (Law quoted in Chia 1995: 595).

In other words, organisational processes assemble and transform different bits and pieces into heterogeneous products or assemblages, such as organisations. But in order to understand what an organisation is, there is no use assuming what it is. Instead, Chia’s and Law’s point is that we need to study the organisational processes that make possible the emergence and temporary solidity and unity of organisational entities. For Law and Chia this includes what Chia calls the micro-practices and micro-logics of organising that according to Law borrow and bend, shape and reshape, displace and replace, rebuild, steal and misrepresent heterogeneous materials so as to generate organisational entities with an appearance of unity, identity and permanence. This means that one needs to study the organisational micro-processes

that precede and exceed organisational entities. These processes are significant in that they involve the ‘emergent and precarious *ontological act* of bringing forth an ordered world’ (Chia 1995: 596). More specifically, Chia’s project here is not about ‘the “facts” of organization as *fait accompli* states’, and it is also not specifically concerned with the organisation of work. Instead, Chia views organisation as the activities, practices and processes that work as to organise thought.

From this cognitivist and rationalist bias, Chia argues that it is these organisings that ‘produce the phenomena of organization’ (Chia 1995: 597). Reading Cooper (1989), Chia finds that organisation can be conceptualised as writing, which in the most general sense is ‘the process by which human agents inscribe organization and order on their environment’ (Cooper quoted in Chia 1995: 597). As a technology of the taxonomic urge, writing seeks to ‘fix the flux and flow of the world in temporal and spatial terms’, and it does so by ‘classifying, listing, formulating, routinizing, prescribing, etc.’ (Chia 1995: 597), which are all key functions of administration in formal organisations.

Even if Chia’s concept of organisation seems to begin with the organisation of thought, it might still be argued that this is not where it ends. Briefly appealing to Foucault’s (1977b) *Discipline and Punish*, he does actually note that organisation is written on the body. As the body is organised by means of disciplinary micro-practices, both the body and the human subject associated with that body become ‘more manageable for administrative purposes’ (Chia 1995: 599). And studying such micro-practices is, according to the research agenda that Chia puts up here, not just key to understanding the emergence of organisational entities. Whereas mainstream organisation theory typically reduces such practices to epiphenomena of

organisational entities, it is according to Chia these effects or products that should be viewed as epiphenomena of organisational processes. But Chia (1995), who does not go into detail as to how disciplinary micro-practices actually organise the body, does little to turn the body into an actual phenomenon to be investigated by organisation theorists.

In his introductory note to the second volume of his *Festschrift* to Robert Cooper, which I investigated in chapter 2, Chia (1998a) continues his devotion to a processual organisation theory by arguing for a social theory of organisations.³⁹ If one is to compare this text to his 1995 text examined above, one finds two main differences. First, that Chia's (1995) explicit emphasis on the micro-practices of organisation is replaced by a broader commitment to demonstrate how organisational processes cut across all levels of social life, and second, that he puts stronger, though not primary focus on the organisation of the body. Both themes seem best summed up in one and the same example given by Chia (1998a: 2). This concerns the disciplining of the body for the pursuit of an orderly society in Victorian Britain. Drawing upon the nineteenth century historian Richard Schoenwald, Chia argues that:

The systematic spatial fixing and conceptual location of social habits and attitudes became a founding touchstone of modernity and the concept of the disciplined body in an orderly society grew to be a fundamental but largely unconscious imperative of an increasingly industrialized world (Chia 1998a: 2).

³⁹ Chia's processual understanding of organisation is not, however, limited to social theory, and like his mentor Robert Cooper, he turns to the processual philosophies of Whitehead, Bergson, and Deleuze and Guattari.

Chia's emphasis on the organisation of the body also puts his earlier bias towards the organisation of thought in a wider perspective. He still acknowledges how thought is central to organisational processes and practices and how organisation is a result of the taxonomic urge to organise thought. But at the same time, he draws stronger attention to the ways in which rational thought may be a central tool in the organisation of the body. From the point of view of someone concerned with how organisation theory deals with the problem of the body, it is therefore a promising, if not entirely satisfactory move that takes place in Chia's writing between 1995 and 1998. Moreover, Chia highlights more strongly how the taxonomic urge and the organisation of thought operate through taxonomic technologies that organise people on a grand scale. As I pointed out in chapter 2, statistics is one such taxonomic technology, which in the nineteenth century became a most central means for understanding and knowing, managing and organising the masses. More specifically,

New conceptual terms such as "population densities", "death rate", "birth rate", "cycles of scarcity", provided the formal mechanisms through which the otherwise unwieldy masses could be re-presented and brought under administrative control (Chia 1998a: 3).

In elaborating on what a social theory of organisation might look like Chia first highlights Weber and Foucault as central figures in the study of the organisation of social life. He then asserts (as I do in chapter 4) that mainstream organisation theory typically confines itself to the study of formal organisations, i.e. 'the organization of

productive effort' (Chia 1998a: 5).⁴⁰ Consequently, it reifies “organizations” as discrete, bounded, economic-administrative entities’ and neglects ‘the wider question of the organizational character of modern life’ (Chia 1998a: 6), which in the sociological and anthropological literature is referred to as social organisation. More specifically, Chia explains that it is ‘the rigorous reflection on the underlying social, cultural and historical forces that shape and organize the ways we see, think and act in the institutionalized structures of the modern world’ that is neglected by conventional studies of organisation.

But rather than returning to Weber and Foucault, Chia draws attention to two previous attempts made by somewhat marginal figures in organisation theory to pursue a social theory of organisation. These are Rapoport and Horvath (1968) and Alfred Kuhn (1982). Chia is intrigued by the distinction that Rapoport and Horvath make between a generalised or generic organisation theory and a theory of organisations. Whereas the latter refers to a mainstream organisation theory preoccupied with the study of economic-administrative systems, the former, which is favoured by Rapoport and Horvath (and Chia too), is concerned with ‘the study of the primary organisational processes underpinning any system exhibiting [...] “organized complexity”’ (Chia 1998a: 6). Chia elaborates on the two versions of organisation theory:

In contrast to the theory of organisations which confines itself to the study of formal “organizations” as taken-for-granted social entities with identifiable

⁴⁰ Chia continues by saying that this tradition of organisation theory is also concerned with ‘the organization of control within and without organizations’, but I find little evidence that mainstream organisation theorists have concerned themselves with anything that goes on outside organisational entities.

boundaries and purposes, organization theory, in this expanded understanding, addresses the question of organization as a general logic applicable to the ordering and representation of all forms of social phenomena (Chia 1998a: 6).

Succeeding Rapoport and Horvath by almost a decade and a half, Kuhn argues that organisation theory should construct itself as a proper social science, as opposed to being a mere sub-discipline of business administration picking up the pieces left by sociology, political science, economics and social psychology. Again, this necessitates a broad understanding of organisation as systemness. Organisation theory should therefore be concerned with ‘the logic of information, representation, organization, and the technologies they create’, and not reduce organisation to a matter of ‘self-contained, purposeful social structures which are all ready (and already) presented to us for study’ (Chia 1998a: 7).

As Chia’s text is very much written in honour of Robert Cooper, he highlights that it is exactly the study of systemness that characterises Cooper’s thought and even proclaims Cooper as ‘a philosopher of systemness’ preoccupied with ‘rationality, representation and organization as distinctive features of modernity’ (Chia 1998: 7). This is an interest that Cooper shares with Weber and Foucault, Chia says, and although Chia does not explicitly rank Cooper amongst the likes of Weber and Foucault, there is at least an implicit sense in which Cooper is given such status.

5.6 Conclusion

No matter what status Cooper enjoys as a philosopher of systemness, there is little doubt that he has had a leading impact on recent thinking in the outskirts of organisation theory. Most importantly, his epistemic privileging of organisational process above organisational entity has produced a discontinuity in organisation theory – between the conventional mainstream and the more radical periphery. Whilst the mainstream takes for granted a concept of organisation limited to formal organisational entities and problems having to do with the organisation of production, the radical periphery inspired by Cooper’s thinking problematises the concept of organisation by studying the processes that organise our acting and thinking and social life as a whole – within and without formal organisations. Organisation theorists whose work – more or less easily – seems to fall within this tradition include Gibson Burrell (1984, 1988, 1997), Barbara Czarniawska (1996), Jannis Kallinikos (1995, 1998; cf. also Cooper and Kallinikos 1996), John Law (1994a, 1994b, 1998; cf. also Cooper and Law 1995; Law and Mol 1998), Rolland Munro (2001; cf. also Hetherington and Munro 1998), Martin Parker (1992, 1998; cf. also Parker and Cooper 1998), Richard Sotro (1998), and as we have seen, Haridimos Tsoukas (1998a) and Robert Chia (1995, 1998a). It would be to overemphasise Cooper’s influence to say that these organisation theorists, who are all notable figures themselves, are simply followers of a “Cooperian” paradigm in organisation theory. It seems fair, however, to say that Cooper has inspired and/or provoked these and others to adopt a processual or generic focus in the study of organisation and to do so through serious engagement with thinkers outside organisation theory (e.g. Foucault, Derrida, the Frankfurt School, Whitehead and Bergson). In my opinion, it is this that is Cooper’s main contribution to organisation theory. Beyond this, Cooper – through

‘The Open Field’ and ‘Organization/Disorganization’ – has also gone beyond organisation to an extent that few organisation theorists have realised. His appeal for creative action and his concept of disorganisation are both exercises in the disruption of boundaries.

The efforts made by Cooper and followers such as Tsoukas and Chia in making the body a central problem in organisation theory are more limited and might be related to the meagre attention paid to the power relations that operate upon the body and inhibit us from developing processes of creative action. As noted above, Chia (1998a) pays some attention to the organisation of the body in his introductory note to the Cooper *Festschrift*. Cooper also gives some very minor attention to this subject matter in an essay appearing in the same *Festschrift* (cf. Cooper 1998). Tsoukas does not deal with the problem of the body at all in the text examined here (cf. Tsoukas 1998a), and neither does he seem to do so elsewhere. His main research interest, in addition to complexity, seems to rest with the use of discourse analysis in organisation theory (e.g. Tsoukas 1998b). On the whole, therefore, Cooper, Tsoukas and Chia pay very little attention to issues of embodiment, and Cooper for one does not extend his ideas about creative action (Cooper 1976) and disorganisation (Cooper 1990) to the study of embodiment. Insofar as Cooper has had any influence on the embodiment of organisation theory at all, it seems more accurate to say that this has been merely indirect, indeed very indirect. However, by putting organisation theory in touch with poststructuralism – where issues of power figure centrally – Cooper has opened up organisation theory to a stream of thought in which the body figures as a key dimension. And second, by conceptualising organisation in terms of processes rather than entities, Cooper has developed a way to think about organisation that later

organisation theorists concerned with the body have taken on board (e.g. Brewis and Sinclair 2000; Dale and Burrell 2000; Dale 2001).⁴¹

The absence of embodiment is not necessarily a fundamental problem with Cooper's, Tsoukas' and Chia's work, and the reader might question *why* the body should be brought into the realm of processual organisation theory in the first place. In my opinion, inattentiveness to issues of embodiment means that one misses out on an important opportunity to think critically about how the production of organisation operates throughout social life. It is necessary for example to introduce the body if wanting to study the ways in which an organisational regime such as public health seeks to organise how we live our lives on an everyday basis. Constructions and experiences of health and wellbeing, disease and illness are most certainly embodied. And it is at least problematic to dissociate the activities preoccupying public health – such as eating, drinking, sex and exercise – from the organisation and conduct of the body within and without formal organisations. On a more general level, one should also note that the organisation of thought to which Chia (1995), for example, pays so much attention covers only a part of how social life is organised – through discursive arrangements such as language, statistics and accounting. Whilst it is possible to see how such discourses might organise the body indirectly, it is also necessary to study how the body is actually organised in social life – according to dress codes, expectations about body language, medical notions of what a body is and what a body

⁴¹ Cooper's (1998) notion of raw matter and his discussion of the ways in which raw matter is turned into distinct, reified and manageable things by processes of information and organisation does not directly deal with the body and has not, as far as I know, been utilised by organisation theorists interested in the body (cf. Cooper 1998).

can do, and socio-cultural norms of how particular bodies should behave and move in particular contexts – at work, at home and in public space. Finally, and insofar as the body is an unruly and messy matter of flesh and blood, bones and tissue, pains and pleasure, habits and desires, it also poses a fundamental problem for the production of organisation in a way that underlines the processual, dynamic and unfinished nature of organisation. Because the body disrupts, undermines and escapes the purposive and boundary-drawing processes of organisation, these processes are never brought to an end in a complete state of affairs. Chia (1998a), who, as we know, pays some (albeit scarce) attention to the organisation of the body, pays no attention at all to these aspects of embodiment that resist and destabilise organisation. And even if it might be possible to study the disruption of organisation through more general terms such as Cooper's (1990) concept of disorganisation as the "zero degree of organisation", the carnal body described above gives a very concrete insight into the forces that disrupt the boundaries of organisation. These are three reasons why it is important to bring the body into a processual organisation theory keen to study the production of organisation across modern social life, within and without formal organisational entities. More specific strategies as to *how* the body can be brought into an organisation theory concerned with the production of organisation will be addressed in the next chapter. In the first two sections, I shall examine two strands of thought that may have been more significant than Cooper in directing organisational research towards the body. These two fields are feminism and the sociology of the body. In the third section, I shall deal with some of the work within organisation theory that has studied ways in which the production of organisation seeks to write itself on the body.

Chapter 6

The Body in Feminism, Sociology and Organisation Theory

6.1 Introduction

Despite its significance in developing a processual concept of organisation, the organisation theory pursued by Robert Cooper and many of his followers is neglectful of how the body is a problem for organisation. It is also consciously neglectful of feminist research,⁴² which means that it is unaffected by the stream of thought that has been most significant in turning the body into a research object in the social sciences and humanities. In my continued effort to investigate how organisation theory deals with the problem of the body, I shall in this chapter, therefore, first examine how some writers within the feminist tradition – outside and inside organisation theory – contribute to this project. Since the mid-1980s, sociologists and social theorists within and without feminist research agendas have also started to show an increasing interest in the body. Typically known as the sociology of the body, I shall examine in the second section of this chapter how useful this field is in addressing the ways in which the body is a problem for organisation. Since the late 1990s, organisation theory has also experienced the somewhat late arrival of the body theme into its own disciplinary terrain. In the final section of this chapter I shall examine how this still peripheral field within organisation theory deals with the problem of the body. In this

⁴² I am arguing that it is “*consciously* neglectful” because Cooper and many of his followers are very well aware that there is a long tradition of feminist research in both philosophy, social theory and organisation theory. Hence, they are not merely neglectful of this literature, but they have *chosen* to neglect it in their own work.

investigation, and in relation to all three streams of thought, I shall focus on three themes: (i) the organisation of the body (what organisation does to the body); (ii) the embodiment of organisation (the ways in which bodies make organisation possible); and (iii) nonorganisational embodiment (the ways in which bodies disrupt, undermine and escape the boundaries of organisation, and the ways in which bodies live and work independently of organisation).

6.2 Feminism and the Body

Any man inquiring into feminist research is at a loss as he is necessarily reduced to approach this field from an outsider's position. And a man who in passing invokes the work of a small sample of feminist writers is at an even greater loss, as there is no way in which he only in a few pages can do justice to the massive and diverse body of feminist literature. Feminism is however all too important to be ignored, as many male researchers have chosen to do, and the problems and limitations facing the male student of feminism is no valid excuse for not dealing with feminism and what it has to offer students of organisation and the body.

Whereas malestream social science has traditionally ignored or at least marginalised the body, feminism is the first stream of thought within the social sciences to bring attention to the body and turn issues of embodiment into a most central research object. It should be no surprise that this is so. Within a patriarchal society and within a patriarchal community such as academia, the body rarely poses much of a problem for the male researcher. But for female researchers the body has been and still is perhaps the most central site of difference and discrimination in a world dominated by men, and the female body in particular continues to be objectified and pacified by male-dominated science. Inspired and encouraged by feminism, other streams of thought

such as queer theory, black studies and postcolonialism have later directed their focus on the body for reasons similar to those that have made it such an important issue in feminist research.

Addressing bodily difference in terms of sex and gender, the main line of division within feminism has traditionally been an ontological one. Early feminists tended to explain the oppression of women with reference to the biological nature of the female body. But as Karen Dale (2001) notes, this essentialist or foundationalist biologism started to be seriously challenged in the 1970s by second wave feminism seeking to explain women's subordination through social factors. One significant result of this stream of thought is the division between biological sex and social gender. Unfortunately, this division has resulted in some feminist researchers, much like traditional male social scientists, being exclusively preoccupied with social structures and cultural values, thus failing to question biomedical understandings of the body and reserving the investigation of the female body to mainstream natural science.

Since the 1980s, feminists, writing from a largely social constructivist perspective, have challenged the biomedical understanding of the body that for some time underpinned earlier versions of social constructivist research within feminism. Not only has this line of work challenged popular and scientific assumptions about the objectivity of natural science by drawing attention to the ways in which biomedical research is itself socially constructed. It has also enabled us to see how bodies change and are changed by socio-cultural and material forces in ways that biomedicine is unable to account for.

In *Bodies that Matter*, the American Judith Butler (1993) outlines her constructivist point of view dismissing the idea that constructivism is simply a matter of being able to choose one's body from one day to the next: 'there is no body that decides its gender' (Butler 1993: x). Butler's idea of constructivism is rather that bodies are formed, constituted and inscribed with sex and gender by processes that put normative constraints on what bodies should and should not do.

Butler's book is a response to commentators who critiqued her previous work (especially *Gender Trouble* 1990) for not dealing with the materiality of the body in general and the materiality of sex in particular. Here, Butler argues that 'the materiality of sex is constructed through a ritualized repetition of norms' (1993: x). This necessitates a rethinking of construction itself. Construction does not mean that material experiences such as eating, sleeping, pain, pleasure, illness, violence, life and death are mere constructions. Rather, it means that construction is what enables us to make sense of and live these experiences in the first place. But it also means that construction is a matter of constitutive constraint. As certain constructions make certain bodies intelligible and liveable, they equally make other bodies unthinkable, abject and unliveable. This does not, however, mean that liveable and unliveable bodies are engaged in some dualistic relationship. Since dualism is itself part of intelligibility, Butler rejects any such thinking and does instead argue that unliveable bodies are part of 'the excluded and illegible domain that haunts the former domain as the spectre of its own impossibility' (1993: xi). The challenge, then, is one of rethinking the domain of intelligibility in such a way that unthinkable and unliveable bodies are made thinkable and liveable. More specifically, Butler does this through her concept of gender performativity, which refers to the ways in which discourse

constructs bodies so as to make bodies perform gender in certain ways. Consequently, bodies are not prior to discourse, but effects of discourse, even in terms of the materiality that they live. And in order to rethink the domain of intelligibility, it is bodily materiality that feminist inquiry should take as its research object.

Obviously, Butler's notion of bodily materiality is not one that can be seen independently of discourse. According to Butler, even those who in one way or the other deviate from discursively instituted norms are defined and constructed by that very same discourse (as if having a lack compared to those who conform to the same norms). Although certain forms of embodiment may be constructed only as negations of discursive norms and therefore can benefit from the construction of discursive positivity, Butler's perspective is not unproblematic. As it becomes the responsibility of discourse to yet again invest bodies with a sense of performative positivity, such a positivity will always be limited. Confined to the territory of language, thought and consciousness, any discursive project remains an exclusive one in that the extent to which unliveable bodies can be made liveable is limited by the extent to which the unthinkable can be made thinkable. Two things easily go missing here. First, the actual lived conditions of painful and suffering bodies that many people rather not think about (e.g. the bodies of the slave, the child labourer, the rape victim and the victim of domestic violence). And second, the genuine and more general materiality of bodies that are liveable and might indeed become lived despite our inability to conceive of them in thought (Grosz 1994).

Susan Bordo, another American who was one of the most prominent critics of Butler's (1990) discursive feminism, offers a more materialistic perspective on the oppression of the female body. Although Bordo is no organisation theorist but a

philosopher, she has a lot to offer organisation theorists committed to understand the organisation of bodies in everyday life. Bordo does not conceptualise organisation as such, but she makes frequent references to organisation and to the organisation of bodies beyond the confined space of formal organisations. And by so doing, she gives organisation theorists a wider frame of reference from which organisation can be thought in processual terms. Drawing on Foucault's idea of the docile body and Bourdieu's idea of habitus, Bordo (1993) highlights the different material (rather than purely discursive) practices and processes that organise bodies into habituating a fundamentally docile existence. In the words of Bordo:

through the organization and regulation of the time, space and movements of our daily lives, our bodies are trained, shaped, and impressed with the stamp of prevailing historical forms of selfhood, desire, masculinity, femininity (1993: 165-166).

These organisational practices and processes affect female bodies in particular:

Through the pursuit of an everchanging, homogenizing, elusive ideal of femininity [...] female bodies become docile bodies – bodies whose forces and energies are habituated to external regulation, subjection, transformation, “improvement” (Bordo 1993: 166).

More specifically, the various organisational habits have serious consequences for how women live in the world:

Through the exacting and normalizing disciplines of diet, make-up, and dress – central organizing principles of time and space in the day of many women – we

are rendered less socially oriented and more centripetally focused on self-modification (Bordo 1993: 166).

Continuing in a Foucauldian line of thought, Bordo argues that power is not repressive, but constitutive in that the mechanisms that organise bodies do not prevent, eliminate and destroy, but instead generate, increase and shape bodily forces. On the whole, Bordo is interested in how female bodies take part in 'the symbolisation and reproduction of gender' (1993: 168). Less attention is directed at how female bodies subvert traditional gender patterns and reproduce gender along lines that disrupt and subvert stereotypical gender roles. This is not to say that Bordo views the organisation of the female body as total. She deals extensively with disorders such as hysteria, agoraphobia and anorexia, which most certainly pose a fundamental problem for organisation. Whilst being the target of organisational practices such as medical and psychiatric treatment, these conditions escape the organisational forms that such therapeutic practices seek to impose upon female bodies. The problem with these examples is that, albeit important in their own right, they all seem to exemplify what happens when cultural, social and clinical pressures to organise the female body are taken to their extreme. Although escaping organisation to some extent, disorders are not simply the free expression of bodily forces and desires, but are always in some way related to and often caused by organisation. Indeed, they may be seen as the unintended consequences of organisation.

Like Bordo, Susan Lee Bartky (1988) (yet another American) takes as her starting point Foucault's (1977b) idea of docile bodies. But unlike Bordo, Bartky mounts a significant critique of Foucault by arguing that he neglects those disciplinary

mechanisms that operate specifically upon the female body. Consequently, Foucault's project has sexist implications in that it reaffirms the silence and powerlessness of those who are subjected to these mechanisms of control. Bartky is concerned with how certain practices seek to discipline (i) body shape and size (e.g. eating, dieting and fitness regimes), (ii) bodily gestures, postures and movements (e.g. facial expressions and styles of sitting and walking), and (iii) what she refers to as the body-as-ornamented-surface (e.g. make-up, clothes, plastic surgery). Overall, these disciplinary practices seek to construct a feminine body out of a female body, and the ways in which different women participate in these practices is dependent upon economic wealth. Further on, the success with which different women achieve the ideals of bodily femininity may influence their likelihood of success in working life.

Despite this emphasis on the ways in which the female body is disciplined, Bartky adds that female embodiment needs also to be understood as a site of resistance. Referring to the British philosopher Peter Dews, who critiques Foucault for ignoring the libidinal body of free desire, Bartky argues that women's libidinal bodies do rebel against the various regimes of disciplinary practice. But according to Bartky, resistance against a patriarchal culture does not have its origin in the so-called libidinal body. Instead, resistance, or what Bartky calls "pockets of resistance" (1988: 83), can only emerge from the paradoxical or contradictory relationship between women's growing independence on the one hand and the following intensification of disciplinary practices on the other. Although Bartky, like Foucault, clearly recognises the microphysical nature of power and resistance, her understanding of power and resistance is different from Foucault's in that she operates within a fundamentally dialectic frame of reference. Consequently, she fails to recognise the non-oppositional

yet subversive modes of resistance identified by Foucault in his later works (especially in the three volumes of *The History of Sexuality*). And, whilst acknowledging how lesbians may struggle to pursue a female aesthetic in contradiction to “hegemonic images of femininity” (1988: 83), Bartky does not recognise that the construction of the lesbian body needs not relate to this patriarchal hegemony at all, but might exceed the butch/femme dichotomy completely (cf. Case 1989).⁴³

The French philosopher and practising psychologist Luce Irigaray (1985) avoids the problem arising from Bordo’s and Bartky’s texts by conceptualising female sexuality independently of male sexuality. This does not mean that Irigaray argues that women and men should live in separate communities. It means that unlike male sexuality and mainstream modes of understanding sexuality, female sexuality is not phallogocentric and cannot be reduced to some singularity where all pleasure is seen to be located and from which all pleasure is seen to originate. Women’s sexual pleasure may include, but is certainly not confined to the clitoris or the vulva. This understanding of female sexuality has serious implications for how Irigaray thinks about female embodiment and womanhood. As the very essence of female sexuality is diverse, plural and several, so is the essence of womanhood. This sense of diversity means that womanhood is non-centred and distributed in such a way that it becomes a matter of nearness and otherness. Since woman is never one, but several, she is always near to the other. And it is in this nearness and otherness, which is irreducible to and escapes

⁴³ In addition to recognising the subversive aspects of the butch/femme dichotomy, it is also important to note that, as it is formulated in some relation to patriarchal stereotypes of embodiment, it may restrict lesbian embodiment so as to being pursued within the frames of the either butch or femme.

any patriarchal organisation, that women can experiment with different processes of female embodiment and construct autonomous forms of womanhood. Recognising that Irigaray's authorship is a sophisticated one deserving more in-depth analysis than I can offer here, I shall return to a similar discussion in chapter 7, as I examine Deleuze's attempt to think embodiment in processual and nonorganisational terms. Having briefly examined some parts of the feminist literature on the body outside organisation theory, I shall now turn to some of the feminist literature in organisation theory and see how far this has gone in examining the ways in which the body is a problem for organisation.

In organisation theory, feminist researchers have more implicitly than explicitly drawn some attention to the consequences that discourse has upon bodies. Although Arlie Russell Hochschild (1983) refrains from spelling out a feminist research agenda and makes few references to feminist research, her study of female flight attendants in Delta Airlines is significant in that it demonstrates how crucial emotional constraint and stress control is to work performance. According to Hochschild, emotions are 'socially engineered and transformed into emotional labor for a wage' (1983: x). Particularly important is the manufacture of the smile, and flight attendants are trained to '*Really* lay it on' (Hochschild 1983: 4). 'In the case of the flight attendant, the emotional style of offering the service is part of the service itself', Hochschild continues, and 'Seeming to "love the job" becomes part of the job' (Hochschild 1983: 5-6; emphasis omitted).

Hochschild is however more concerned with emotionality than with bodies. Despite the obvious ways in which emotion is a bodily response in and of itself and emotions are channelled and communicated through bodily expressions and appearances such

as the smile and bodily postures, Hochschild pays little attention to bodily experience and to the oppressive and somatic implications that emotional labour has upon female bodies. As Dale (2001) argues, Hochschild's analysis remains largely cognitive in its discussion of identity, and whereas emotional labour is seen to contradict with a person's "real" identity and feelings, the ways in which emotional labour interferes with any sense of private or personal embodiment remain unexplored.

Since the relatively early research of Hochschild, there has been an expanding interest amongst organisational researchers in issues of sex and gender, often (but far from always) informed by a feminist perspective. Important events in this respect include the founding of the journal *Gender, Work and Organization* in 1994 and the gender streams organised at recent conferences of the European Group of Organization Studies (EGOS) and the Academy of Management (AOM).

Feminist articles in *Gender, Work and Organization* typically fall within a feminist tradition of organisational and industrial sociology, where the primary focus remains with issues of gender difference within organisational entities. Examining the year 2000 volume of the journal, for example, one finds that the vast majority of articles uncritically adopts this narrow and formalistic conceptualisation of organisation whilst examining gender in a characteristically disembodied fashion. Evett (2000) and Greed (2000) are archetypical examples in this respect and more disappointing than most contributions, given the obvious opportunities that their research topics lend to examine the bodily aspects of gender difference in the workplace. In analysing change in women's careers, Evett examines the dimensions of culture, structure and action without paying any attention to the ways in which female embodiment impacts upon the career paths open to women, addressed as we know, by Susan Lee Bartky (1988).

Similarly, in studying women in the construction professions and the possibility for cultural change in the construction industry, Greed points out that women are typically discouraged from entering building sites but offers no discussion of the bodily dimensions that might help explain this phenomenon. Note that I am *not* arguing here that Evett (2000) and Greed (2000) should have dealt with issues of embodiment in their research. But I am saying that readers looking for discussions of embodiment in relation to women's experience of work need to look elsewhere.

In comparison to the articles by Evett (2000) and Greed (2000), Heather Höpfl (2000), utilising the thought of Julia Kristeva, goes a long way in offering a move towards an embodied study of gender and organisation. As Höpfl draws little on other organisational research, her text – at least thematically – bears a stronger resemblance to feminist writings outside organisation theory such as those examined above. And even though she makes sparing references to “the organization”, her primary concern is the more general construction of female and feminine identity resulting from the phallogocentric symbolic orders of language and Christianity. In these orders, women are constructed not in terms of flesh and blood, as bodies, but in terms of the abstract – and rather disembodied – mainstream representations of the Virgin, the Mother and the Whore. As they broaden and embody our understanding of organisation, these insights are interesting in their own right and far more interesting than the somewhat scarce and underdeveloped references that Höpfl makes to women in organisations. Unfortunately, the latter turns out rather obsolete in this context and takes attention away from Höpfl's general conceptualisation of organisation and her understanding of the symbolic ordering of gender, which after all is the underlying theme of her article.

The recent work of Karen Dale (2001) provides a more rigorous, systematic and sophisticated discussion of the organisation of female embodiment than does Höpfl's short essay (2000). Dale's contribution is particularly interesting in two respects. First, in that she demonstrates how the mainstream concept of organisation is based upon fundamentally malestream and masculinist assumptions about what the body is. More specifically, referring to what she calls "the anatomising urge" of organisation theory, Dale shows that organisation theory has created and protected, dissected and analysed its own research object of formal organisations in a rationalistic fashion similar to how male anatomists since the Renaissance have studied the body as an organism. Anatomy has taken life and embodiment out of the body by turning it into an abstract and typically male organism constituted by a set of detailed yet simplistic structures and functions. In a similar vein, organisation theory has constructed a narrow concept of organisation void of life and bodies, largely to be studied in terms of bounded entities characterised by a hierarchical division of labour that is manifested in solidified structures as well as in the predictable working of functions. Moreover, in order to successfully maintain itself as a distinct academic discipline devoted to the study of bounded organisational entities, organisation theory seeks, by including certain bodies of knowledge and excluding others from its epistemic territory, to maintain its own boundaries against the myriad of other disciplines.

Second, whilst utilising a processual concept of organisation inspired by – and adding to – the intellectual endeavours of Robert Cooper, Dale offers an important analysis of the ways in which female bodies and feminine embodiment in particular is organised beyond the borders of organisational entities. Not only does Dale view the masculinist epistemic construction of the organism in anatomy and the organisation in

organisation theory as an organisational process. She also shows how (i) the anatomical dissection of largely female bodies in previous eras, (ii) the contemporary regimes of bodily training and discipline largely aimed at women (e.g. fitness and dieting schemes and dress codes), and (iii) contemporary medical technologies such as ultrasound can be studied as organisational processes. Doing so, her work also bears a stronger affinity to the kind of feminist studies that I examined in the first part of this section, and which is typically conducted in epistemic terrains well outside organisation theory. As this strand of thought may help us view organisation in a greater perspective than that rendered possible by mainstream studies of formal and largely disembodied organisational entities, this is certainly an area that ought to concern a larger number of organisation theorists, both feminists and others, than it does at the present. However, like some of the feminist literature outside organisation theory examined above, what Dale does not do is to analyse the ways in which bodies disrupt, escape and live independently of organisation. As pointed out above, both Irigaray and Deleuze do this.

Although feminist studies of organisation such as Hochschild (1983) have on the whole been important in bringing out the various everyday experiences of women in work organisations, the majority of such studies, like the majority of organisation theory in general, is largely empirical and has made few efforts to rethink the concept of organisation. If feminist studies of organisation are to extend beyond already existing areas of research and become able to examine ways in which organisation seeks to regulate and control female bodies inside and outside of organisational entities, more theoretical work along the lines of Dale (2001) is needed.

On a wider scale, feminist research can make a more general and highly significant contribution to the development of an organisation theory of the body. As we know, feminist research is primarily concerned with sex and gender as matters of bodily difference, and this focus often directs how other bodily dimensions such as age, race and illness are examined from a feminist perspective. Feminist studies of health and illness may for example be primarily concerned with medical problems typically suffered by women. However, since women's experiences of bodily difference is what feminism is and should be about, it would be naive, short-handed and inappropriate to turn this bias into the target of a critique against feminism. Instead, what has already been achieved in feminist studies should be taken as a reminder by any effort to conduct more general studies of the body, be it within sociology or social theory, or within organisation theory. Thus, scholars working from a position outside feminism may be able to recognise the significance of bodily difference – not just in terms of gender and sexuality, but in terms of other bodily dimensions too – and avoid the kind of white malestream bias that has characterised and still characterises both social science at large and even later research within the sociology of the body.⁴⁴ It is to the latter stream of thought that I now turn my attention.

6.3 The Sociology of the Body

The absent presence of the body in the social sciences in general – and in social theory and sociology in particular – marks the starting point of much research in the

⁴⁴ By emphasising the whiteness and maleness of the social sciences. I do not want to dismiss the significance of the able-bodied, middle-class, heterosexual, etc. biases that also influence this family of academic disciplines. However, the former aspects are emphasised because they seem to be the most significant sources of privilege, discrimination, domination and intellectual orientation in the social sciences.

new field of sociological research known as the sociology of the body. In order to explain the absent presence of the body and the privileging of rational and conscious human action in the study of the social, a lot of this literature points to the Cartesian mind/body dualism (e.g. Shilling 1993, Turner 1996, Williams and Bendelow 1998). Seeking to rid sociology of this dualism, sociologists of the body have insisted upon the location of the mind in the body and upon the bodily basis of human action. The theme subjected to most analysis, however, concerns the social control and organisation of bodies, which bears strong affinity to the Cartesian view that the mind should and does control the body. This is for example the case with Bryan Turner's sociology of the body.

Turner, now a sociology professor at Cambridge University and editor of the journal *Body and Society* since its founding in 1995, is a central figure in this field of research. In 1984 he published the path-breaking book *The Body and Society*, which is the first systematic attempt to develop a sociology of the body. The book was revised and republished in 1996. In the introduction to the first edition (republished in the second edition), Turner reveals that it is the question "what is the body?" which guides his inquiry. Seeking to answer this question more thoroughly in a later chapter, Turner draws upon Marx and Nietzsche, arguing that they both, despite idiosyncrasies, provide an "ontology of difference". Although Turner does not spell out directly what he means by an ontology of difference, it seems that he uses this notion to underline the sense in which human society is constructed differently in different contexts. According to Turner, Marx offers a universalistic view of human nature and the body, as all bodies in all societies 'labour collectively on nature to satisfy their needs' (1996: 40). Doing so, they 'transform themselves into sensuous,

practical, conscious agents' and they transform nature. This means that nature both has an independent existence and is a matter of transformative processes of social construction. Turner contrasts Nietzsche with Marx, and claims that Nietzsche offers a relativistic view of the body. In Turner's view, a Marxist version of social constructivism views the body and bodily difference as a result of human agency whilst a Nietzschean social constructivism views the body and bodily difference as a product of language and knowledge. 'In Nietzsche, our corporeal existence does not predate our classificatory systems of knowledge and thus the body is nothing more and nothing less than a social construct' (Turner 1996: 40). This is highly problematic. Turner ends up with this interpretation by reading Nietzsche only in light of Foucault's early works (*Madness and Civilization* and *The Birth of the Clinic*). Although Foucault was highly inspired by Nietzsche, Turner is naive, at best, in reducing Nietzsche to a social constructivist. As Deleuze (1983) shows in *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, Nietzsche's ontology is one of material or non-spiritual forces irreducible to socio-linguistic constructions. A body is therefore the random and astonishing combination of reactive and active forces, the operation of active forces meaning that no body can be fully grasped by consciousness and language.

Turner's misreading of Nietzsche is indicative of the more general theme running through his book and his authorship. As Dale (2001) demonstrates, he is primarily interested in the body as a problem of social order and regulation. The task of society is to regulate the body, and Turner seeks to demonstrate the ways in which this is attempted by examining topics such as patriarchy, religion, discipline, government and discourse. The active forces of embodiment that preoccupied Nietzsche escape Turner's inquiry. He does little to aid this one-sided appreciation of the body in the

second edition of *The Body and Society*, which succeeds the publication of his book *Regulating Bodies* by four years. Despite his recognition that studies of the body give rise to two main themes – what the body does and what is done to the body – and argues for the resolution of the dichotomy between the two, Turner is strongly biased in favour of the latter. What the body does is seen as a set of social practices always organised by training, discipline and socialisation. And even though Turner acknowledges the relevance of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology for understanding what the body does to social relations, he does not follow this up in his own research.

An attempt in this direction is made by Nick Crossley (1995), who critiques Turner's early research for not examining what the body does. Distinguishing between the sociology of the body and what he calls carnal sociology, Crossley (1995: 43) argues that by pursuing the latter, one can address 'the active role of the body in social life.' According to Crossley, it is the body that creates sociological concepts such as self, society and symbolic order. Furthermore, it is the body that experiences the world, and it is the body that relates to things, objects and people in a meaningful way. By acting, the body also creates a social world in which it can be acted upon. It is through this recognition that Crossley tries to resolve the dichotomy between what the body does and what is done to the body. This is in itself a significant and interesting proposition. It is limited, however, in that Crossley's sense of what a body does is bound up with his emphasis on meaningfulness and habit. By arguing that the body acts in meaningful ways and maintaining that the body can do little outside the field of cultural habits, Crossley ends up with a cognitivistic and undynamic perspective of the body. My point would be that bodies may act in contradiction to habit and the meaningful, and thus escape our attempts to make sense out of what bodies do.

Despite differences in focus, it can be argued that Turner's sociology of the body and Crossley's carnal sociology both fall short in embodying sociology. Although Turner, who has a background in medical sociology and the sociology of religion identifies a myriad of sociological topics (consumption, religion, health, gender, sport, etc.) that all give rise to issues of embodiment, his sociology of the body becomes little more than one of many sociological sub-fields. Although the sociology of the body studies the body, it does so in what Williams and Bendelow (1998) call a disembodied way which is not dissimilar to how other sociological sub-fields study other objects of knowledge. Given his cognitivist bias, Crossley's carnal sociology is in this respect not fundamentally different from Turner's sociology of the body. The consequence of the sociology of the body being little more than a sub-discipline of sociology at large may be severe. As a sociological sub-field, the sociology of the body faces fierce competition from sub-fields such as social stratification, political sociology, the sociology of the family and the sociology of work, which have a longer history and enjoy a far more prestigious position within sociology as a whole.

In contrast to these two perspectives, Williams and Bendelow argue for an embodied sociology which takes much inspiration from feminist studies of the body. Rather than analysing the body from the outside in a typically disembodied and mainstream way, they seek to develop a sociology or social theory that thinks from the perspective of lived bodies. In other words, sociologists should not simply study bodies, but write their own bodies and bodily experience into their understanding of the body. And with regards to sociology as a whole, the recognition of the sociologist's own body should not only concern sociologists of the body, but all sociologists, regardless of specialisation. According to Williams and Bendelow (1998: 3), this is the only basis

upon which 'a truly embodied sociology have any real hope of putting minds back into bodies, bodies back into society and society back into the body.' Insofar as one seeks to bring the body into the field of sociology and into the wider territory occupied by the social sciences, this may certainly constitute a preferable research strategy. Unfortunately, it seems rather unlikely that a majority of sociologists and social scientists will gather around an approach that undermines the distanced and allegedly objective position of the researcher that so many take for granted. Organisation theory may be even further away from realising Williams and Bendelow's programme for an embodied sociology. But even though the body theme is marginalised in organisation theory, it has attracted some attention by a small number of scholars within this discipline. It is to this body of research that I now turn.

6.4 The Body and Organisation

Gibson Burrell was one of the first writers in organisation theory to open up the field to studies of embodiment. In 'Sex and Organizational Analysis', Burrell (1984) focuses on what he calls 'the process of organizational desexualization' and the resistance to desexualization amongst organisational subordinates, a phenomenon he claims has been ignored by organisation theorists for too long. This dual process of the control of sex and sexualised resistance has been a feature of organisational life for a long historical period, and Burrell seeks to demonstrate the significance of organisational desexualisation and sexual resistance by utilising a number of historical examples from both pre-industrial and industrial organisations. Examples include the treatment of sex in the Catholic Church, amongst the Quaker industrialists, in the British Navy and in the Ford Motor Company. In addition, Burrell draws some attention to sexual phenomena in contemporary organisations that are less confinable

to the duality between managerial control and subordinate resistance. But even though it is problematic to conceptualise sexual harassment and rape as expressions of resistance amongst organisational subordinates, they are tragic and violent phenomena of a sexual nature that often occur within the context of organisations.

Although Burrell is primarily concerned with sex and sexuality, he also makes sure to relate sexuality to embodiment. Drawing attention to eighteenth and nineteenth century Europe, Burrell argues with Foucault's concept of bio-power that the control of sex became a crucial element in the wider control of individual bodies and populations. This was manifested in several discourses at the time, including Puritan accountancy, demography and psychotherapy. Taking Puritan accountancy as an example, it was held at the time that sexual activity exhausted energy from the body that rather should be utilised for the purpose of economic production. Productive and efficient work organisation therefore necessitated the keeping of sexual activity at a minimum. In demography and population control, sex and sexuality also became crucial criteria for differentiating between and classifying bodies into taxonomic groups and categories. Those found to be sexually deviant from ideal norms (the hysterical woman, the Malthusian couple, the masturbating child and the perverse adult in particular) became the targets of medical, punitive and in later years psychological treatment.

But despite Burrell's interesting discussion of sex as a major arena for controlling bodies, it is obvious that he is more concerned with sex and sexuality than embodiment in general. In his concluding note Burrell complains that despite the significance of sex and sexuality in organisational life, and despite those organisational discourses that thrive on the production of sex and sexuality as social

phenomena and objects of knowledge (e.g. medicine, psychology and sexology), organisation theory contains no discourse of this subject matter. There is no “eroticized” organisation theory, Burrell (1984: 115) argues, and speculates that this has to do with lacking resistance to desexualisation. But rather than developing a proper research agenda for an “eroticized” organisation theory and discussing the role of feminist research in such a project, Burrell merely notes that this is a task that organisational analysts undoubtedly should soon return to. Unfortunately, he has not himself made any systematic attempts in this direction. Had he done so, we might have had some grounding for what an *embodied* organisation theory *à la* Williams and Bendelow’s (1998) embodied sociology could look like.

When Cooper and Burrell (1988: 105) deal very briefly (and almost without prior announcement) with the body four years later (in an article largely written by Cooper), they do actually seek to evaluate the implications that a conceptualisation of ‘the “body” as material flow’ has upon organisational analysis. First, they argue that the notion of flow underlines the instability of the human environment and the human body itself, adding, with Foucault, that this instability inhibits the human subject from self-recognition or from understanding others. This is an epistemological point that challenges the stable position of the organisation theorist and any other human being as a knowing subject. Second, they problematise the stability of the human being as a knowable object. This is an ontological and epistemological point that recognises the limits of knowledge and the excess of materiality. The idea of the body as material flow means that human subjects cannot be reduced to one category, be it manager or worker. Instead, the body is the result of its own processes of production that according to Cooper and Burrell ‘place the subject at the origin of the organizing

process instead of seeing it as an adjunct' (1988: 105). In other words, the body or the embodied human subject is not just that which is organised, but also that which organises. Consequently, organisation cannot be taken for granted as organisational entities, but should rather be seen as a process occurring within society at large. And as such, it is not only less capable of constructing stable objects of knowledge. It is also concerned with a much wider range of objects, including health, emotions, labour and disease. As it is very brief and in need of further analytical elaboration, Cooper and Burrell's discussion of the relationship between the body and organisational analysis comes nowhere near providing a research agenda for an embodied organisation theory or even an organisation theory of the body. Though pointing us in the right direction by arguing for a processual understanding of both body and organisation, they do not offer a thorough discussion of the former. This would be necessary if we were to gain a more adequate understanding of how bodies influence organisation. Not only does this lead to some inaccurate terminology where the body is located at the origin of organisation. It also gives inadequate attention to the nonorganisational aspects of embodiment that precede and exceed, disrupt, undermine and escape organisation.

I was hoping that the essay collection *Body and Organization*, published a decade and a half after Burrell's (1984) first discussion of sex and organisational analysis, would deal more rigorously with the body and how it poses a problem for organisation. The central endeavour in what is the final section of this chapter is therefore to analyse what, if any, conceptualisation of the body and organisation that emerges from *Body and Organization*. That is, how is the body dealt with in this anthology whose

contributors draw upon a wide variety of theoretical sources, especially feminism and poststructuralism?

Body and Organization is a diverse book, most obviously for the wide array of empirical topics covered. But as it is organised into four different sections – ‘Functions and Flows’, ‘Discourse and Representation’, ‘Performance and Regulation’, and ‘Self and Identity’ – the book also shows a diverse range of theoretical interests, both in terms of the problems investigated and in terms of the intellectual sources used. Not only is this what one would normally expect from an essay collection based upon papers from an academic conference in a young field of research. In the interest of intellectual freedom and movement, perhaps this is also what one should want.

The editors John Hassard, Ruth Holliday and Hugh Willmott state two main motives for doing this book. First, that they want to ‘redress a tendency for analyses of organization to be disembodied in ways that marginalize the body as a medium of organizing practices.’ And second, that they want to ‘counteract a marginalization of the realm of employment and work organization within contemporary analyses of the body’ (Hassard et al. 2000: 2). In other words, they want to do something about the absent presence of the body in organisation theory, and they want to do something about the estrangement of work and employment in the study of the body.⁴⁵ The study

⁴⁵ Since I seek to expand the concept of “organisation” beyond the sphere of work organisation and employment, and since I write within the field of organisation theory where the neglect of work organisation and employment has never been much of a problem, it is the first of Hassard et al.’s concerns that is of primary interest to me. Moreover, despite the importance of understanding the body in relation to organisation, it can be argued that this is more the responsibility of organisation theory than the responsibility of the study of the body in general.

of ergonomics, concerned as it is with perfecting the fit or integration between human beings, job tasks and machines, is of a different kind altogether, and should not be taken as a model for how organisation theory should deal with the problem of the body. Reducing human bodies to mere extensions of tools and machines, it does not study bodies in their own right (cf. e.g. Pulat 1992; Bridger 1995; Kroemer 1997).

Two main themes are identified in the editors' introduction: (i) organising practices and embodiment, and (ii) gender and sexuality in organisation studies. It is however difficult to identify in any straightforward manner what either of these themes amounts to.

Outlining the first theme, the editors focus upon the absent presence of the body in social science research, arguing that social scientists rarely examine how social practices are embodied and thus ignore how social and organisational practices can only be accomplished through embodied action. Further on, though in unnecessarily cryptic language, they argue that bodies are themselves organised – both as objects of knowledge and as objects of organisational practices. There are three problems with this discussion. First, that the editors merely acknowledge how bodies are organised within organisational entities and fail to see how bodies might be organised outside the boundaries of such entities. Second, the related problem that the editors underestimate (but do not ignore) those incidences when bodies disrupt, escape and exist independently of organisational practices altogether. And third, instead of elaborating their argument with examples of embodied organising practices, they invoke examples that simply highlight the role of emotions in working life. If this were to be successful, a link between embodiment and emotionality (and I do not dispute that such a link exists) would have to be demonstrated and not simply

assumed. To be fair, however, Hassard et al. take a step in the right direction here. Continuing the focus on emotions, they do not only make the point that Frederick Taylor's (1947) scientific management was largely inconsiderate of managers' and workers' feelings, but also that the scientific management of job design was very much about controlling the bodily movements of manual workers. Further on, in a sub-section entitled 'Managing Hearts As Well As Minds', they argue that corporate culture initiatives not only seek to organise the emotions of employees, but also the bodily aesthetics such as eye contact that may communicate emotions.

Outlining the next theme, 'gender and sexuality in organisation studies', Hassard et al. (2000: 9) return to the problem of emotions, asking 'whether the harnessing and selective expression of emotions within work organizations reflects a distinctively gendered process that privileges a patriarchal and "masculinist" mode of organizing.' Bureaucracy may act as one example of masculine organisation, driven by malestream discourses and practices of rationalisation where stereotypically female emotions are undermined. Fortunately, the editors also draw attention to the role of gendered embodiment *per se*, arguing that women may find that their bodies put them at a disadvantage in the work environment. Not only may women experience that 'few allowances are made for dealing with such body processes as "menstruation, lactation and [...] pre-menstrual tension"' (Hassard et al. 2000: 9; Halford et al. quoted in Hassard et al.). They may also find that the only way to successfully cope – especially career-wise – with a male-dominated working environment is 'by flirting or otherwise playing upon physical attractiveness to highlight femininity' (Hassard et al. 2000: 10). This is not however the only way in which the workplace may be eroticised. There is also the alternative of 'celebrating sexuality in ways that are not colonized by

masculinist desires to conquer and control’, but recognise women as a subject of pleasure.

Outlining this theme, Hassard et al. also emphasise the intertwining of gender and sexuality. More specifically, they do so by invoking an example from Halford et al. (1997) concerning an openly lesbian woman. Not only did her obvious lack of sexual interest in men make her male colleagues completely inept in relating to her. She also experienced that a heterosexual female colleague flirted with her as if she was a man. From this, Hassard et al. make the interesting point that sexuality and gender identity have a great influence on how we interact with other people, and that many people find it problematic to relate to people whose sexuality and/or gender identity is ambiguous or contrary to what is assumed. From this, Hassard et al. outline three alternatives of how one is to deal discursively with sexual and gender diversity. First, one can construct a discourse by which people can be located to fixed categories of gender and sexuality. Second, one can construct a discourse by which sexual and gender differences and complexities are erased, which simply is to ignore the role of sexuality and gender altogether. Finding both of these alternatives untenable, Hassard et al. argue for a third alternative, which is to construct a “postmodern” discourse that allows for the kind of diversity and complexity found in the example above:

In what might be described as a postmodern turn, fluidity, diversity and playfulness are encouraged and celebrated within a discourse of queerness (Hassard et al. 2000: 12).

Although dissatisfied with the lack of rigour with which this alternative is outlined and privileged, I have no reason to oppose such a discursive strategy for dealing with

issues of gender and sexuality. And on the whole, Hassard et al. do well in highlighting the themes of emotions, sexuality and gender, which all are related to embodiment. The reason for this bias may be that these dimensions have already been the focus of high quality scholarship in organisation theory, most notably by feminist researchers (e.g. Ferguson 1984; Halford et al. 1997). An unfortunate consequence of this bias, however, is that Hassard et al. are less than satisfactory in dealing with the body *per se*. I do not dispute the importance of any of these dimensions (i.e. emotions, and gender and sexuality), but they are *not* the only dimensions relevant to the study of the body. By largely examining the body through these two empirical dimensions they are incapable of recognising other empirical dimensions of embodiment such as race and ethnicity, age, health and illness. And they fail to satisfactorily flesh out the two crucial dimensions – theoretical and empirical – that in addition to the appreciation for the embodied nature of organisational practices should preoccupy any investigation of body and organisation. These dimensions are (i) the *organisation of bodies* (what organisation does to bodies), and (ii) the *nonorganisational aspects of embodiment* (what bodies can do to organisation and independently of organisation). Admittedly, the first dimension is examined in some of the articles in *Body and Organization*, for example in the one by Dale and Burrell (2000). The second dimension is to some extent acknowledged through the empirical text by Richardson (2000) on sexual harassment as well as in Dale and Burrell's (2000) and in Linstead's (2000) more theoretical articles. Dale and Burrell (2000) and Linstead (2000) do not take the organisation of the body for granted, but inquire into the processes by which embodiment becomes the target of organisation and through which embodiment comes to be organised. Doing so, they certainly recognise that there is embodiment beyond organisation. But they do not deal thoroughly with the ways in which

embodiment exceeds organisation because they do not provide a detailed account of nonorganisational embodiment. This problem seems more apparent when returning to Hassard et al.'s (2000) editorial introduction and the book as a whole. Insufficient theoretical discussion of the two dimensions – the *organisation of bodies* and *nonorganisational embodiment* – means that the editors (and the volume as a whole) fail to offer a proper conceptualisation of the body and organisation *per se*. And they do not provide a systematic discussion of how organisation theory should deal with the ways in which the body is a problem for organisation. Embodiment seems reduced to emotions, sexuality and gender, whilst organisation is not recognised beyond the boundaries of organisational entities. Consequently, the anthology is of little help in identifying the power of the body and the power of organisation as well as the ways in which bodies make organisation less stable and powerful and more dynamic, processual and fragile.

A third theme given some attention in *Body and Organization*, especially in Lennie's (2000) article, concerns the embodied aspects of organising practices. Similar to the Merleau-Pontian argument of Crossley's (1995) carnal sociology, embodiment is seen as an active force that produces or makes organisation possible. In other words, there is no organisation without embodiment. The successful management of organisations is embodied, and in order to understand the nature of successful management and how we manage organisations, Lennie argues that we need to understand how management and organisation is embodied. Examples given include the "gut feeling" behind certain managerial decisions and the "buzzing excitement" sometimes helping the performance of daily routines. As such, Lennie goes some way in acknowledging the unpredictable nature of these bodily forces. Moreover, this notion seeks to emphasise

what bodies do rather than what is done to bodies. The problem is that it provides a limited appreciation of what bodies can do in that the significance of embodiment is only recognised to the extent that bodies inside an organisation are capable of actions that aid the fulfilment of the rational goals of the same organisation. And in principle, this is because the embodiment that is seen to embody organisation is not simply embodiment. Rather, this is a form of embodiment that is already – to some extent – organised, and Lennie would perhaps have realised this if he had theorised his argument more thoroughly. This is not just because embodiment is confined within the boundaries of organisational entities. This is also because the embodiment concerned is more deeply organised by the rational human mind, by the biomedical and biophilosophical discourse by which embodiment is rendered knowable only in terms of the organised body of the organism, and by the norms and expectations of society as a whole. In conclusion, the “gut feeling” and “buzzing excitement” Lennie is talking about is not very far away from the impression management and dress codes of corporate manuals. And the notion of embodied organisation is not as different from the notion of organised embodiment as we are led to think by Lennie’s account.

In excuse of the shortcomings identified in Hassard et al.’s (2000) anthology, it must be noted that the body theme in organisation theory is a young field of inquiry yet to achieve the sense of coherence characteristic of subfields that have been longer established within this discipline. And perhaps this explains, as Munro (forthcoming) suggests in his review article, the lack of a coherent theme in the first essay collection on the subject matter, *Body and Organization*. What joins these articles is simply their mutual interest in the body and its role in organisational life.

Karen Dale's (2001) research monograph is more interesting with regards to how one, as an organisation theorist, is to deal with the problem of the body. Although her agenda is different from mine in that she is primarily concerned with how the development of organisation theory as a distinct discipline is influenced by the organismic conception of the body, some of the issues she raises are highly relevant to my own inquiry into how organisation theory does and should deal with the problem of the body. As I showed in the introductory chapter, Dale draws attention to the constructed nature of the body itself as well as the constructed nature of our knowledge about the body by pursuing a terminology that privileges "embodiment" above "the body". As a common sense term, the body is typically underwritten by a Western biomedical discourse that subsumes embodiment within the workings of the organism. This has serious implications for both our understanding of the body, organisation, and the relationship between the body and organisation. Viewing the body as an organism (i.e. as an object of natural science) we forget that like any object of knowledge it is constructed as such. And by accepting the notion of the organism we take for granted that the body is already organised. Although Dale could have spelt this out more explicitly, two things are lost in this naturalist conceptualisation. First, the processual nature of the body, which questions the assumption that bodies are already organised as entities systemically functioning in a particular way according to certain expectations, and second, that insofar as bodies are organised, they are subjected to organisational processes by which they can never be fully organised into organisational entities. Rather, the processual nature of organisation implies that organisation is always engaged in an intense and unsettled relationship with bodily processes of a nonorganisational kind. It is this recognition that informs my investigation in the next and penultimate chapter of this thesis, where I shall examine

some of the attempts by Deleuze at developing a conception of embodiment that shatters the organismic assumption that bodies are organised. This is not simply relevant for philosophers who have little reason to care about what goes on in organisation theory. Deleuze's understanding of the body may also prove useful to organisation theorists concerned with how their own field should deal with the problem of the body.

6.5 Conclusion: Towards an Organisation Theory of the Body?

In conclusion, this chapter has argued that feminist studies, particularly outside organisation theory, have played and can play a crucial role in the development of an organisation theory of the body. Specifically, by drawing attention to the construction, organisation and experience of bodily difference, feminism can help organisation theory more readily recognise not only the organisation of the body within and without formal organisations. It can also help organisation theorists recognise and deal with the ways in which bodily difference is constructed by organisational processes inside and outside of formal organisations. And it can help organisation theorists recognise and deal with the ways in which bodily difference disrupts, undermines and escapes such organisational processes and constructions.

The sociology of the body, which pays far less attention to bodily difference and the transgressive powers of embodiment also provides important analyses of the construction, regulation and organisation of the body. But more importantly, the perspective developed by Williams and Bendelow (1998), which is heavily inspired by feminism, can embody organisation theory so that an eventual organisation theory of the body avoids becoming just another subfield in organisation theory.

The already existing work in organisation theory on issues of embodiment is of course important for the future development of an organisation theory of the body. It is however in need of further theoretical and conceptual work. And whilst most existing research focuses on the organisation of the body and the embodiment of organisation, an organisation theory of the body also needs to pay more attention to the nonorganisational aspects of embodiment that disrupt the boundaries of organisation and organised embodiment. Turning to Deleuze's writings on the body, I attempt to examine the nonorganisational aspects of embodiment in the next and penultimate chapter. In the concluding chapter, I shall bring things together by considering what concept of organisation and what organisation theory that might result when paying attention to the nonorganisational aspects of embodiment that disrupt the boundaries of organisation.

Chapter 7

Nonorganisational Embodiment in Deleuze's Philosophy

7.1 Introduction

In the second chapter of this thesis, I tried to show that public health takes the body as its problem, a problem to be resolved by organisation; from certain criteria of health and wellbeing, public health seeks to organise bodies. From a completely different angle, it is possible to argue that the body has been examined by researchers who find their own bodies problematic. As I hinted at the beginning of my discussion of feminism in chapter 6, and as I shall elaborate below, the body is problematised by people for whom it may be seen as giving rise to a set of problems. More specifically, it might be that certain academics have taken the body as a research object because they find their own bodies either to be different from the normalised body of the population average or to be different from the body-images communicated in biomedical discourse and in popular culture; or because they find their own bodies to be under severe pressure from and to be discriminated by dominant cultures, institutions and discourses in society. As their bodies in one way or the other fall outside the narrow boundaries of the normalised, disciplined and organised body, it may be that a significant number of writers have sought to open up the understanding of the body and what it means to be a body.

It is therefore significant to acknowledge, if not to explore in any depth, the biography and sometimes the somatic history of writers whose research on the body we examine. Feminism, black studies and queer theory are perhaps the areas of thought where one finds the most obvious examples of academics whose experience of their own body is

a particularly problematic one. For women, blacks and gays and lesbians, the body continues to be a primary site of discrimination and suffering. A number of feminist researchers become concerned with the body as a research topic as they recognise how the *female* body is the object of control and victim of discrimination and violence in a fundamentally patriarchal society. A number of black researchers focus on the body because of the ways in which the *black* body is the object of control and victim of discrimination and violence in societies dominated by white culture and white political institutions. And a number of lesbian and gay researchers pay attention to the body as they recognise how the *queer* body is the object of control and victim of discrimination, violence and stigmatisation in a largely hetero-normative society. Though Foucault wrote from a starting point prior to the expansion of queer theory, his intellectual project has influenced many of the later developments in queer theory and it might, as does Foucault biographer James Miller (1995), be seen in relation to the ways in which he found his own gay body problematic.

A less obvious example of the relationship between a problematic experience of personal embodiment and the pursuit of research activities may be the sociologist of the body, Chris Shilling, who as a result of his many years as an active long-distance runner supposedly suffers from severe arthritis. Another example of particular relevance here may be Gilles Deleuze, whose interest in the body is perhaps most obvious in the notion of the body without organs that he developed with Felix Guattari, and which may be seen in relation to his own suffering of chronic respiratory illness late in life. On Guattari's part, his interest in embodiment may be seen in relation to his own struggle to come to terms with his own sexuality, childhood and the deaths that he experienced in his immediate family as a young child. Guattari's

father committed suicide, and he himself experienced his grandfather dying from a stroke whilst sitting on the toilet with the door open listening to the radio (Guattari 1984). In order to see how the body can be thought independently of organisation, it is to some of Deleuze's attempts to open up and rethink the body that I turn my attention in this chapter.

In short, I will argue that Deleuze proposes a perspective that not only enables us to recognise the limitations faced by organisational regimes such as public health in its quest to organise bodies, populations and the conditions under which people live. Deleuze's philosophy redefines the human condition itself, challenges and contradicts the biomedical concept of the organism, and gives way to a nonorganic or nonorganisational appreciation of embodiment that changes our understanding of what it means to be a body. This is not to say that Deleuze rejects the idea of the organism altogether, and that the organic understanding of embodiment pursued in the biomedical discourse is wrong. In fact, Deleuze helps us recognise that the biomedical concept of the organism, which reduces bodies to organisation, can say a great deal about what a body is, both in terms of what a body can and cannot do. But as there is no way in which this concept of the organism can say all there is to say about bodies and embodiment, Deleuze's nonorganic analysis offers a necessary supplement to biomedical perspectives on the body.

Deleuze's attempts to philosophise the nonorganic aspects of embodiment must be read in light of his more general philosophical project, which often is characterised as a *philosophy of becoming* opposed to more conventional philosophies of being. Although Deleuze never positions himself explicitly as a philosopher of becoming, the concept of "becoming" keeps recurring throughout many of his works, from

Nietzsche and Philosophy (his first book published in English), via his collaborative writings with Guattari, to his latest published book, the anthology *Essays Critical and Clinical*. Throughout his philosophical career, Deleuze employed the concept of becoming as a means to think through issues of ontology. First and foremost, this amounted to think beyond the human condition by thinking about the non-human becomings of the human, and it is the central attention given to this task in particular that may explain why a number of commentators have characterised Deleuze as no less than a philosopher of becoming (e.g. Braidotti 1993; Holland 1999b; Olkowski 1999). Consequently, if we are to locate Deleuze's attempts to think embodiment in nonorganic terms within the context of a philosophy of becoming, we must recognise that these same attempts are bound up with his more general attempt to think beyond the human condition.

In this chapter, I shall deal with four main areas that all play a central part in Deleuze's endeavour to think beyond the human condition, think non-human becomings of the human, and conceptualise embodiment in nonorganic terms, as nonorganisational embodiment. Hopefully, this discussion can be used as a platform for how organisation theory should develop new strategies for dealing with the problem of the body. The specific areas examined are: (i) *the virtual*, (ii) *the Spinozist body*, (iii) *creative involution and becoming-other*, and (iv) *the body without organs*. In parts, but not in all of this investigation, I shall draw upon the work of Keith Ansell Pearson (1999). I find his account more useful than many other accounts (e.g. Bogue 1989; Goodchild 1996; Holland 1999a; Olkowski 1999; Buchanan 2000; Rajchman 2000). Perhaps because Ansell Pearson is a philosopher reading Deleuze as a philosopher, he is able to offer an account of Deleuze's philosophical project – or

projects – that is more rigorous than that offered by non-philosophers such as Bogue (1989), Goodchild (1996), Buchanan (2000) and Rajchman (2000). More specifically, Ansell Pearson provides a systematic reading of Deleuze that locates the whole of his work in relation, juxtaposition and opposition to the Western philosophical tradition. And rather than simply applying terms and concepts, he cuts through the jargon in Deleuze's sole-authored works and in Deleuze's works with Guattari by fleshing out and problematising terms.

7.2 The Virtual

As pointed out in the introduction, the concept of the virtual, which problematises conventional notions of temporality and spatiality, marks a central starting point in Deleuze's philosophy of becoming and I would argue that it opens up for his later discussions of nonorganic embodiment. It should therefore not be confused with the popular references to virtual organisations and virtual reality that simply confine the virtual to recent developments in information technology. Deleuze takes the concept from one of his main sources of inspiration, the French early twentieth century philosopher Henri Bergson, and it appears centrally in *Bergsonism*, his 1966 study of the same philosophical figure. Two years later, in *Difference and Repetition* (1968), which is his first attempt to develop his own philosophical project without solely focusing on one particular figure in the history of philosophy, Deleuze expands on the concept of the virtual. Whilst guided by certain secondary texts, my investigation here draws upon *Bergsonism* as well as *Difference and Repetition*. But before examining the concept of the virtual in more detail, I shall turn to the concept of the *event*, which Deleuze developed in relation to the concept of the virtual.

I am interested in the *event* here because this is the concept that enables us to extract specific considerations from Deleuze's philosophy of becoming and apply the general premises of this project to issues such as embodiment and organisation. However, typically of Deleuze, his concept of the event is more open yet more specific than that implied by straightforward dictionary definitions. An event is not simply something that happens, such as an organised social occasion, a public lecture, a concert or an item in a sports programme. What makes something an event is none of the above, but the capacity of that something to open up the future and make things happen. As the event is different from that which already exists and as it sticks out from the mundane and the regular, it marks a rupture or discontinuity in history. But by opening up the future, the event also takes its differential nature beyond the moment of its own realisation, thus promising further differentiation. The event is therefore a matter of continuity as well as discontinuity. Deleuze largely inherits this point from Bergson's philosophy of "duration", duration being Bergson's term for becoming. Bergson's emphasis on continuity was actually the main target of Bachelard's attack on him around fifty years ago (cf. Bachelard 2000). And interestingly, Deleuze's emphasis on the continuous nature of the event has been critiqued in more recent years by the French mathematician and Marxist philosopher Alain Badiou (1999, 2000). Badiou, who thinks in terms of set theory, shares Deleuze's view that an event must open up the future, but accuses Deleuze of placing too much emphasis on continuity. However, in doing so, Badiou fails to appreciate the full scope of Deleuze's perspective, which by no means dissociates the event from incidences of rupture and discontinuity. The emphasis given to both discontinuity and the moment on the one hand, and continuity and eternity on the other is brought out in this passage by the philosopher and Deleuze commentator Keith Ansell Pearson:

The event is the event of time (the moment) that both happens to us and which lives beyond us (eternity): “The event is not what occurs (an accident), it is rather inside what occurs, the purely expressed. It signals and awaits us.” [...] Every event can be said to have a double structure. On the one hand, there is necessarily the present moment of its actualization: the event “happens” and gets embodied in a state of affairs and in an individual (“the moment has come”). Here the time of the event, its past and future, are evaluated from the perspective of this definitive present and actual embodiment. On the other hand, the event continues to “live on”, enjoying its own past and future, haunting each present, making the present return as a question of the present, and free of the limits placed upon it by any given state of affairs (Ansell Pearson 1999: 123-124; Deleuze quoted in Ansell Pearson).

In order to understand the role of continuity in Deleuze’s thinking of the event it is necessary to introduce another set of concepts: that of *the virtual*, *the actual*, *the real* and *the possible*. Conventional philosophies of being to which Deleuze provides an alternative tend to think in terms of the real and the possible, where the real is that which really exists, and the possible is that which can exist. In this frame of thought the possible is always determined by the real in such a way that what can exist always depends on what already exists. The possible events that are to be realised in the future therefore depend on the events that are realised in the present. A simple illustration might be helpful.⁴⁶ Imagine a pendulum which, given time, moves from

⁴⁶ I am grateful to Martin Brigham for this example.

one end of a continuum to another. Whereas the pendulum can occupy a whole series of spatial points along this continuum, it only occupies one particular point at one particular point in time. This is the real point of occupation, i.e. the point at which the pendulum is realised here and now. All the other points that the pendulum can, given time, occupy, are possible points to be realised in the future. If the pendulum occupies point s_1 of the continuum at time t_1 , it will occupy point s_2 at time t_2 and so on. So if the pendulum occupies the extreme point at the left-hand side of the continuum at one point in time, it will move down the continuum at the next point in time, steadily getting closer and closer to the extreme point at the opposite side of the same continuum. By knowing the current and previous positions of the pendulum we can predict its next position. In conclusion, by knowing what event is real here and now, we can predict what possible events will be realised in the future. Conventional thinking therefore progresses from the real (a real state of affairs) towards the realisation of the possible. But as we shall see below, Deleuze moves in the opposite direction, from the virtual to the actual and the actualisation of the virtual.

In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze abandons the framework of the real and the possible and replaces it with the idea of the virtual and the actual. Whereas the possible is opposed to the real and ‘the process undergone by the possible is [...] a “realisation”’, the virtual is not even engaged in a relationship with the real (Deleuze 1994: 211). Contrary to most dictionaries, which tend to define the virtual as that which is almost existing or almost real, Deleuze’s conceptualisation of the virtual implies no sense of inferiority. The virtual, for Deleuze, is in no respect less than the real, but more, and ‘possesses a full reality by itself’ (Deleuze 1994: 211). Put simply, this reality possessed by the virtual is the Universe, the One and the All, which means

that the virtual *is* everything and that the virtual is *in* everything. This extended and undivided world of the virtual is then related to the actual, and the process undergone by the virtual is not one of realisation, but one of *actualisation*.

But before proceeding to analyse the process of actualisation, it is necessary to examine the concept of *difference*, which albeit complex, plays a crucial part in Deleuze's understanding of the virtual, the actual and the actualisation of the virtual. Drawing on Leibniz, Deleuze argues that the virtual is populated by Ideas. As Paul Patton (1994: xii) notes in his 'Translator's Preface' to *Difference and Repetition*, most English texts would translate Deleuze's concept of *Ideas* as *Form* if it was to be subsumed within the philosophical framework established by Plato. Deleuze's project, however, is very different from Plato's. Whereas the Idea or the Form in Plato is that which gives identity to the thing, the Deleuzian Idea is a matter of difference permeated by the differential. Here it is important to note the distinction that Deleuze makes between *differentiation* and *differenciation*, and as Constantin Boundas (1996: 91) emphasises in his instructive and critical essay, *differentiation* always comes before *differenciation*. The former refers to the mathematical operation of making something progressively determinate, whilst the latter concerns the more familiar and general sense (normally referred to as *differentiation* in English) of becoming different or making something different. Being virtual Ideas, the Ideas referred to by Deleuze are *differentiated* in the former sense of being differential and becoming progressively determinate. Following Bergson, Deleuze refers to this notion of difference enjoyed by the virtual as *internal* difference. This does not mean that the virtual is constituted by different things, but that it is embodied by different *tendencies* that enable it to differ from itself. It is only by being actualised – i.e.

differenciated – that these tendencies of the virtual are invested with what Deleuze refers to as *external* difference, and it is only following actualisation that these tendencies can be presented (but only presented) as different things differing from one another. It is not completely accurate, and rather essentialist, to say, like Boundas, that internal difference and differentiation comes before external difference and differentiation and that the virtual comes before the actual. Deleuze's ambiguous notion of differentiation/differenciation does actually problematise this notion of a “pure and superior before” and an “inferior after”. It is not only the virtual that continues to exist in the actual, as I shall elaborate below. Through the notion of tendencies, which constitutes the internal difference of the virtual Whole, it is possible to see how the actual also already exists in the virtual.

In *Bergsonism*, Deleuze argues that it is the *élan vital* which enables the actualisation of the virtual. Boundas (1996: 91) emphasises that the ‘*Élan vital* is not an occult power, but rather the name of the force(s) at work each time that a virtuality is being actualized [...]’, and as one reads Deleuze's *Bergsonism*, it is confirmed that ‘The *élan vital* [...] designates the actualization of this virtual [...]’ (1988a: 113). Further on, in *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze (1994: 279) argues that ‘Ideas are actualised by differenciation. For Ideas, to be actualized is to be differenciated.’ As noted above, as the virtual undergoes the processes of actualization and differenciation, it is manifested as different things that differ from one another. But since these things are actualities (rather than things as such), they are not established with stable boundaries and fixed identities and they do not enjoy the same status as they would have within a philosophy concerned with the real state of affairs. This is because the virtual, with its

undivided nature, continues to exist in the actual. In order to understand how the virtual continues to exist in the actual, we need to re-invoke the concept of the *event*.

Deleuze does not speak of the actualisation of the virtual in terms of the thing, but in terms of the event. Consequently, every actualisation of the virtual is an event. And the concept of the event (as opposed to the thing) goes to highlight that the actual does not fix and determine that which has undergone actualisation by offering any definite end point. This is because the event that takes place with the actualisation of the virtual never terminates its connection to the extended and indeterminate world of the virtual Whole. As well as recognising movements from the virtual to the actual, we must therefore equally recognise movement in the opposite direction (i.e. from the actual to the virtual). Within every actualised event there is a virtual pure event, which maintains the connection between the actual and the extended world of the virtual. As James Williams (2000: 215) writes, 'the indication of the extended world of the virtual is the pure event in any event.' Hence, the actualisation of the virtual is not a matter of closure, but openness, because 'events bring together differentiated objects and intensities with the undifferentiated virtual world that they express.' Consequently, the actual is subjected to continuous change and modification and can only enjoy a temporary and momentary existence. Anything can happen to the actual. The pages onto which this text is written, for example, can catch fire, blow away with the wind, disappear at the bottom of some shelf, be used to support a broken leg on a desk, or rot and dematerialise. And a body or an organisation can undergo equally radical changes that open up completely what it means to be a body or an organisation. In more general terms, the relationship between the actual and the virtual means that new events are actualised so as to change already existing

actualities. Sometimes just moderately, other times into something totally different, previously unknown to both thought and experience.

Given that the actual springs out of the virtual, it is never pre-formed. The kind of actualisation undergone by the virtual in order to become actual is therefore far from obvious. Unlike the real, which is ‘the image and likeness of the possible that it realizes, the actual [...] does *not* resemble the virtuality that it embodies’, Deleuze states in *Bergsonism* (1988a: 97). Hence, ‘actualization, differentiation [here Deleuze refers to what he in *Difference and Repetition* specifies as differentiation], are a genuine creation. The Whole must *create* the divergent lines according to which it is actualized and the dissimilar means that it utilizes on each line’ (Deleuze 1988a: 106). As a consequence, actualisation is a matter of creation, which means that the virtual ‘must *create* its own terms of actualisation’ (Hardt 1993: 18). Following Bergson, Deleuze (1988a) argues that this creative act, which also creates bodies and embodiment, takes the form of *creative evolution*. Deleuze first deals with Bergson’s concept of creative evolution in an essay from 1956 (cf. Deleuze 2000), and returns to this project in *Bergsonism* ten years later. Deleuze’s most important contribution in these works was to investigate creative evolution in relation to the virtual and to show how the creative evolution of the Bergsonian organism was due to the connection between the actual organism and the incorporeal virtual Whole.

This point plays an important role in Ansell Pearson’s (1999) Deleuze commentary, where he insists that Deleuze’s Bergsonism and the concept of the virtual underpins Deleuze’s philosophical project throughout. Whilst appreciating the importance of the virtual and recognising the Bergsonian influence on Deleuze, it is however important to notice that the choice made by Ansell Pearson has crucial implications for how one

is to read Deleuze. If advocating a Bergsonian reading of Deleuze that privileges the concept of the virtual – and the virtual as incorporeal – to the extent that Ansell Pearson does, it becomes difficult to fully appreciate the ways in which Deleuze actually deals with the more concrete issues of embodiment. Although Ansell Pearson's study deals in depth with the body without organs for example, and even though this concept with benefit can be read against the conceptual background of the virtual, my emphasis on Deleuze's engagement with the body has the effect of downplaying the significance of the incorporeal virtual somewhat. I appreciate that this may not be entirely in line with how Deleuze himself reflected about his own philosophical projects. I also appreciate, as has been suggested to me by Ansell Pearson, that the virtual is not merely a Bergsonian theme in Deleuze's larger project but rather at the very centre of Deleuze's "Deleuzism". Deleuze does not merely adopt Bergson's understanding of the virtual, but develops it further. This is not a huge problem, though. As we know from my discussion of Deleuze in chapter 3, Deleuze's histories of philosophy – which he characterised as buggery – did not always follow the intentions of the author with which he was grappling at one particular time. And in *A Thousand Plateaus*, one is encouraged by Deleuze and Guattari (1988) to use their writings for one's own particular purpose. This is exactly what I am doing here when I take elements of Deleuze's philosophical project – not to focus on the incorporeal virtual *per se* – but to investigate the ways in which the virtual makes Deleuze deal with the problem of the body.

Returning to the issue of *creative evolution*, it should also be noted that there is a key difference between Bergson and Deleuze on this matter. This is most strongly articulated in Deleuze and Guattari's (1988) discussion of symbiosis and transversal

communication, which makes them replace the concept of creative evolution with the concept of creative *involution*. As the concept of creative evolution is primarily about the connection between the human organism and the virtual, it is a concept in which bodies and embodiment largely figure implicitly. Rather than focusing on the process of creative evolution here, I shall therefore turn to the creative aspects of embodiment in relation to the concept of creative involution, which even though written in a Bergsonian spirit, comes to replace the concept of creative evolution. First, however, I shall examine what Deleuze has to say about the Spinozist body, where he up to a point seems to pursue the superhumanism embarked upon in *Bergsonism*. More specifically, I shall do so by drawing on Deleuze's (1988b, 1992) own texts and on Michael Hardt's (1993) discussion of Deleuze's reading of Spinoza.

7.3 Deleuze's Spinozism: An Ethological Ethic of Affective Bodies

Spinoza turned his attention to the body in order to develop an understanding of ethical practice, which in turn was related to political practice and power. And despite the fact that Spinoza's, like Deleuze's, reference to the body is a general one that goes beyond the notion of the human body, it does by no means exclude the sense of embodiment that is the prime concern of my investigation.⁴⁷ As Deleuze (1992: 212) reminds us, Spinoza starts with an empirical study aimed to investigate the relations and composition of bodies, and according to the Deleuze commentator Michael Hardt, Spinoza does so in order to 'try to determine the laws of the interaction of bodies' (1993: 91). More specifically, Spinoza tries to identify the encounters of bodies, their

⁴⁷ Deleuze (1988b: 126) argues in his second reading of Spinoza that 'A body can be anything; it can be an animal, a mind or an idea; it can be a linguistic corpus, a social body, a collectivity.'

composition and decomposition, their compatibility or composability, and their conflict, and it is this endeavour that makes Spinoza move from the level of bodily physics to the level of bodily ethics. Hardt, who makes this comment in a chapter devoted to Deleuze's reading of Spinoza, gives the following description of the Spinozist body and the interactive encounters between bodies:

A body is not a fixed unit with a stable or static internal structure. On the contrary, a body is a dynamic relationship whose internal structure and external limits are subject to change. What we identify as a body is merely a temporarily stable relationship [...]. This proposition of the dynamic nature of bodies, of the continual flux of their internal dynamic, allows Spinoza a rich understanding of the interaction among bodies. When two bodies meet, there is an encounter between two dynamic relationships: Either they are indifferent to each other, or they are compatible and together compose a new relationship, a new body; or, rather they are incompatible and one body decomposes the relationship of the other, destroying it, just as a poison decomposes the blood [...] (Hardt 1993: 92).

Further on, Hardt shows how this conception of the body enables Spinoza – and thereby Deleuze – to investigate power:

This physical universe of bodies at motion and rest, in union and conflict, will provide the context in which we can delve deeper into the functioning and structure of power: “In order to really think in terms of power, one must first pose the question in relation to the body” (Hardt 1992: 92; Deleuze quoted in Hardt).

The question of power, which most certainly is a question about the body, concerns nothing less than what a body can do. Reading Spinoza’s *Ethics*, it is therefore one statement in particular that attracts Deleuze’s interest:

No one has yet determined *what the body can do* [...]. For no one has yet come to know the structure of the body (Spinoza quoted in Deleuze 1992: 383; Deleuze’s omission).

This emphasis on revealing the internal structures of the body does not lead Spinoza to conduct detailed anatomical dissections or physiological experiments that are to reveal bodily structure in full. His empirical method is not that of the systematic anatomist or physiologist, but that of the speculative and experimental philosopher. Hence, it is only by experimenting with what a body can do that we can understand (i) the structure of the body, (ii) power in general, and (iii) the power of the body in particular. According to Spinoza, the structure of the body is not constituted by organs, but by affective forces, and it is these forces that make the body what it is and determine what a body can do. This position is also put forward in Deleuze’s reading of Spinoza:

A body's structure is the composition of its relation. What a body can do is the nature and the limits of its power to be affected (Deleuze 1992: 218).

In order to know the structure of the body and what a body can do we therefore have to investigate these affective forces. More specifically, affectivity, or the power to be affected is filled by affections of two kinds: *active affections* and *passive affections*. Active affections have to do with our power to act, whilst passive affections have merely to do with our power to feel or suffer (*puissance de pâtir*). Since affectivity (both active and passive) has to do with expression and production, passive affections signify our lack of power. Deleuze provides the following summary of this aspect of Spinoza's philosophy:

We suffer external things, distinct from ourselves; we thus ourselves have a distinct force of passion and action. But our force of suffering is simply the imperfection, the finitude, the limitation of our force of acting itself. Our force of suffering *asserts* nothing, because it expresses nothing at all: it "involves" only our impotence, our servitude, that is to say, *the lowest degree of our power of acting* [...] (Deleuze 1992: 224).

These aspects do however go missing in a purely physical appreciation, which simply affirms the plenitude of affectivity and inhibits us from identifying what a body can do, what affections we are capable of and the extent of our power. An ethical evaluation, on the other hand, is capable of revealing the complexity of affectivity by examining how the power to be affected is actually composed. Hardt (1993: 93) elaborates:

To the extent that it is filled with passive affections, it is reduced to its minimum, and to the extent that it is filled with active affections, it is increased to its maximum.

According to Spinoza, affectivity is however dominated by passive affects, which are not just a matter of chance. As Hardt notes, it is by necessity that

our power to be affected is largely filled with active affections. God, or Nature, is completely filled with active affections, because there is no external cause to it. However, “the force by which a man perseveres in existing is limited, and infinitely surpassed by the power of external causes” (Hardt 1993: 93; Spinoza quoted in Hardt).

This is no straightforward matter, and the consequences for bodies and relations between bodies thus need to be examined in closer detail. Since they are not caused by us, passive affections are matters of chance encounters between our body and other bodies. The complexity of such encounters is further reinforced by the dynamic nature of the body, which does not exist in terms of a fixed entity, but is characterised by flux and flexibility. In the words of Hardt (1993: 94):

one body itself is not a fixed unit with a static structure, but rather a dynamic relationship whose internal structure and external limits are open and continually subject to change. [...] what Spinoza identifies as a body or an individual is simply a temporarily stable assemblage of coordinated elements [...].

This dynamic view of individual bodies then enables us to consider encounters between two different bodies. Depending on the traits of each one of the two bodies, a relationship between them is either composable or incomposable. Whereas the former results in joyful passive affections and enhances your power to act, the latter results in sad passive affections. This is because in the former type of encounter two bodies meet whose internal structures are compatible with one another, whilst in the latter, the internal structures or relations of the two bodies are incompatible because one body does not agree with the nature of the other. The consequence is that 'one body will decompose the relationship of the other or both bodies will be decomposed'. Most importantly, there will be no increase in power (in fact there will be a decrease) because 'a body cannot gain power from something that does not agree with it' (Hardt 1993: 94).

However, the trouble of attempting a radical extension of the activities open to the body is not only that passive affections come more frequently than active affections. According to Spinoza, sad passive affections also come more frequently than joyful passive affections because it is only in principle, or in the abstract that humans agree in nature. Consequently, humans agree very little with one another. At this stage, one can dismiss Spinoza as a fundamental pessimist with regards to what bodies can do. After all, Spinoza's view of passive affections is one of forces entirely negative that affirm nothing and simply cut us off from what a body can do. But as Hardt (1993) points out, this would be to miss the whole point of his project. What may appear as pessimism in Spinoza's appraisal is simply the speculative basis for further ethical practice. Similar to Nietzsche's genealogy, Spinoza seeks to go beyond a human

condition dominated by sad passive affections and enter into a condition in which the human becomes active. As Deleuze (1992: 246) remarks in his reading,

The ethical question falls then, in Spinoza, into two parts: How can we come to produce active affections? But first of all: How can we come to experience a maximum of joyful passions?

What, then, does Deleuze's Spinoza say about how we are to move from joyful passive affections to active affections?

The move from joyful passive affections to active affections takes place via what Spinoza calls common notions, which signify the extent to which two bodies agree with one another. But if a move from joyful passive affections to active affections can only take place to the extent that two bodies do agree with one another, it is difficult to see how Spinoza can help us open up the field of embodiment. Difficult, yes, but not impossible, even if this highlights a problem of invoking Spinoza to think differently about the body. According to Spinoza, despite the fact that active affections come into being from the fact that one body finds a commonality with another body, this does not mean that the two bodies are or are to become the same. Whereas joyful passive affections or joyful passions are caused by some external force, they become active affections whence that same body comprehends, incorporates and internalises them. The result is not that one body is sucked into and colonised by another. As Hardt (1993: 118) rightly points out, 'The joy of the encounter is precisely the composition of the two bodies in a new, more powerful body.' In Deleuzian terms, this new and more powerful body (which has a greater capacity to be affected) is not based upon the homogeneity or sameness of what

initially were two or several bodies. Instead, it is based upon the fact that they both have openly internalised those elements that made them (i.e. the two bodies) different in the first place. As we shall see in the next section, this combination of different bodies resembles Deleuze and Guattari's (1988) notion of the heterogeneous machinic assemblage. And insofar as two bodies constitute an assemblage, this assemblage is more open, has a greater capacity to be affected, and is therefore stronger than one body on its own.

Having discussed the notion of affective bodies in relation to power, it is now necessary to discuss the same notion in relation to ethics. In other words, what is it that makes the movement to a more powerful body assembled by two heterogeneous bodies a matter of ethics?

As Deleuze reminds us, the affectivity of bodies is about ethics because in Spinoza, ethics is about ethology rather than morality:

Spinoza's ethics has nothing to do with a morality; he conceives it as an ethology, that is, as a composition of fast and slow speeds, of capacities for affecting and being affected [...]. That is why Spinoza calls out to us in the way he does: you do not know beforehand what good or bad you are capable of; you do not know beforehand what a body or a mind can do, in a given encounter, a given arrangement, a given combination (Deleuze 1988b: 125).

Deleuze's passage provides quite an obscure understanding of ethology, and before moving on, it might be helpful to see how Deleuze's understanding contrasts with how ethology is defined in other contexts. The *Oxford English Dictionary*, which

offers a definition of ethology based on contemporary scientific usage of the term. writes that ethology is the science of animal behaviour or the study of human behaviour and social organisation from a biological perspective. Similarly, the WordNet (1997) service at Princeton University defines ethology as a brand of zoology that studies the behaviour of animals in their natural habitats. In contrast to these definitions, the Webster Unabridged Dictionary (1913) provides one that is far more ethically oriented, arguing that ethology is the study of ethos or ethics, i.e. of characteristic spirits, beliefs and customs of a community. Whereas the first two definitions reduce ethology to a naturalistic term, the latter runs the risk of conflating ethology with morality. But as we shall see, Deleuze's understanding comes somewhere between – and beyond – these two perspectives. Deleuze tends to think in non-naturalistic and non-moralistic terms about ethology, as the study of habits.

Developing an ethological ethic, Spinoza is not concerned with right and wrong, good and evil, but with what a body can do in a particular relationship with other bodies. Encounter and relationship are key terms in Deleuze's understanding of an ethological ethics, and Deleuze adds that 'ethology studies the compositions of relations or capacities between different things' (Deleuze 1988b: 126). This may seem an abstract statement, but the ethical challenge that it poses is one of forming 'sociabilities and communities'. More specifically, this involves the following problem:

How do individuals enter into composition with one another in order to form a higher individual, *ad infinitum*? How can a being take another being into its world, but while preserving or respecting the other's own relations and world? (Deleuze 1988b: 126).

This is by all means an important task, but it is not just a matter of different individuals living together in social harmony. In order to form what Deleuze rhetorically describes as “a higher individual”, bodies must open themselves up to form relationships with other bodies that make us question, change and express our range of bodily habits and ways of living. In other words, we have to learn to become more than we already are.

But Deleuze’s investigation into Spinoza’s ethology is not the only place where he develops an ethical project. According to Ansell Pearson (1999), Deleuze’s entire philosophy may be characterised as an ethics of Being. Of course, Being must not be interpreted in the conventional sense. The ethics of Being characteristic of Deleuze’s endeavour is an ethics of becoming, which emphasises the heterogeneous, dynamic and open-ended nature of life itself and the bodily habits emerging out of it. This theme is expressed in a variety of ways throughout Deleuze’s philosophy. In *Nietzsche and Philosophy* and in *Difference and Repetition*, for example, he develops an ethics of the eternal return. In *The Logic of Sense* (1990) and in *What Is Philosophy?* (with Guattari 1994) he conceptualises an ethics of the event, and in *A Thousand Plateaus* (with Guattari 1988) he returns to the ethological ethics first embarked upon in the two Spinoza books (Deleuze 1988b, 1992).

In *Bergsonism*, Deleuze (1988a) takes up Bergson’s ethical challenge of learning to exist in duration, which in Deleuzian jargon means to learn to exist in becoming. Deleuze’s Spinozist project is highly coloured by his previous *Bergsonism*. More specifically, this implies that within an ethics of becoming what a body can do is not fixed and determined, but a matter of creative evolution. As Ansell Pearson (1999: 12) reminds us, Deleuze’s *Bergsonism* views life as a ‘play between two creative

dimensions, that of nonorganic life and that of the organism.’ These creative dimensions are then channelled into bodies in ways such that no body is either one or the other, but a matter of ceaseless invention and reinvention where both put their mark upon the body without fixing it within the boundaries of either one. The ethical challenge for bodies is then to equip themselves with the necessary self-knowledge that enables them to handle these dynamic and evolutionary conditions of existence. Bodies must learn how to develop a sense of affectivity that both expands their joyful passions and enhances their relations with other bodies. In other words, bodies must extend their repertoire of habits beyond the current conditions that govern what they can do.

The ethical project which Deleuze (1988a) first embarks upon in *Bergsonism*, and then in the two Spinoza books, is not much different from Bergson’s own attempt at a superior humanism. As he argues in *Bergsonism*, the becoming of the human is a result of how the actualised human body is connected with the virtual Whole, and Bergson, as does Deleuze in his earlier works, refers to this durational process as creative evolution. In his first Spinoza book, however, Deleuze (1992) not only quotes Spinoza by asking what *the* body can do; at another point, in his own words, he also asks what *a* body can do. Although the significance of replacing the definite article with the indefinite article should not be exaggerated, it may signify that already then, Deleuze was becoming more interested in different bodies, whilst Spinoza (despite an initially general concept of the body) was mostly interested in the human body. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, however, Deleuze – and Guattari (1988) – employ Spinoza’s ethological ethics to think the non-human becomings of the human, and this is why they introduce the concept of *creative involution*. Although the challenge brought

upon us here remains one of developing active affects that enable bodies to enter into relationships with other bodies, it does not include just any kinds of relationships. What we are asked to do is to get involved in assemblages that place us on a line of flight through which we can escape with our own bodies and destinations and develop other habits and other ways of life (Malabou 1996: 126). The habits envisaged by Deleuze and Guattari in his later project are therefore quite different from the habits envisaged by Deleuze earlier. The non-human becoming of the human is a machinic becoming where the human becomes a component coupled into a heterogeneous assemblage with other bodies. This is not about abandoning the body as such through some computer-based technophile project, but about living differently with the body, also in terms of how it relates to other bodies. The objective of an ethological ethics is therefore to open up what a body can do. And as ethology is about openness, it is about enabling and encouraging the body to go beyond its own limits.

It can also be argued that it is exactly this ethical challenge posed by Deleuze's Spinozist ethology that is expressed in Deleuze and Guattari's (1988) discussion of the body without organs (sometimes referred to as the BwO). Not because ethology means the total rejection of the organism in favour of the body without organs, but because the body without organs carries many of the same premises that Deleuze expressed in his attempt at an ethological ethic of affective bodies. 'After all', as Deleuze and Guattari (1988: 153) wrote in *A Thousand Plateaus*, 'is not Spinoza's *Ethics* the great book of the BwO?'

But before turning to the body without organs, I shall discuss Deleuze and Guattari's (1988) concept of creative involution. Although this is less explicitly linked to Deleuze's Spinozist theme than is the notion of the body without organs, the emphasis

on heterogeneous assemblages and the machinic and non-human becoming of the human is in affinity with the Spinozian notion of bodily encounters, and it leads Deleuze and Guattari to explore what they refer to as becoming-other. This has some interesting implications for our later understanding of the body without organs. In this section I shall therefore examine two main issues. First, the transversal communication between the wasp and the orchid, which is not only about bodily interaction and development, but also Deleuze and Guattari's prime example of creative involution. And second, the notion of becoming-other, which is an extension of Deleuze and Guattari's discussion of the wasp-orchid relationship and an extension into the body without organs.

7.4 Creative Involution and Becoming-Other

According to Ansell Pearson (1999), the later Deleuze does not abandon the concept of the virtual, but returns to this project in the two Cinema books, for example (Deleuze 1986, 1989). However, it is difficult to see whether the concept of creative involution maintains any affinity to the concept of the virtual. Of course, when discussing the constructed nature of species, it may be argued that the virtual is that which precedes and exceeds these categories, as it is pre-anatomical, pre-morphological, nonorganisational and trans-categorical. But rather than making the virtual the key dimension of creative involution, I shall regard it as the more general background against which a phenomenon and concept such as creative involution can be read.

According to habit, common sense and mainstream science, we not only tend to think of the wasp and the orchid as constituting two different species. In fact, there are between fifteen thousand and thirty-five thousand different species of orchids and

more than one thousand different species of wasps. We also tend to think of them as belonging to two completely different kingdoms – the former to the insect phylum within the animal kingdom and the latter to the plant kingdom. It is unusual to think that the wasp and the orchid would ever be engaged in a symbiotic and sympathetic relationship with one another. But by examining the interaction between the wasp and the orchid in terms of transversal communication, this is exactly what Deleuze and Guattari try to demonstrate. As they often do, Deleuze and Guattari (1988: 10) adopt a style that makes their language opaque and obscure, but that should not prevent us from taking an interest in what they are trying to tell us:

The orchid deterritorializes by forming an image, a tracing of a wasp; but the wasp reterritorializes on that image. The wasp is nevertheless deterritorialized, becoming a piece in the orchid's reproductive apparatus. But it reterritorializes the orchid by transporting its pollen. Wasp and orchid, as heterogeneous elements, form a rhizome (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 10).

Although three concepts in particular make this statement inaccessible to readers unfamiliar with Deleuze and Guattari's authorship ("deterritorialization", "reterritorialization", and "rhizome"), I will not try to explain these concepts in detail here. Instead, I shall elaborate on the more general message that Deleuze and Guattari are trying to get across. When 'The orchid deterritorializes by forming an image, a tracing of the wasp', it frees itself from the elements with which it is typically associated and becomes something else whilst remaining the same. And when 'the wasp reterritorializes on that image', it relates differently to the orchid than it would have done if the orchid had not first deterritorialized itself by forming an image of the wasp. In other words, the wasp behaves like an orchid, and the orchid behaves in such

a way that the wasp thinks the orchid is a wasp. Consequently, and without engaging in intra-species sexual relations, the wasp and the orchid become part of each others' reproductive systems. The relationship between the wasp and the orchid is one of transversal communication because it cuts across the boundaries of species and kingdoms, zoological phyla and botanical divisions, and it is symbiotic because it enables us to see that the wasp depends just as much on the orchid as the orchid depends on the wasp. More specifically, the life of the wasp is as much related to its possibilities to extract nectar from the orchid, as the life of the orchid is linked to its possibilities to contaminate the wasp with its pollen and to be contaminated by pollen transported by wasps from one orchid to the next.

Further on, Deleuze and Guattari argue that the relationship between the wasp and the orchid can be seen in terms of what they call a machinic assemblage. Their reference to the machine must neither be confused with the Freudian view of the machine as a desiring-machine, nor with the Marxist view of the machine, which, being a complex version of the tool, is simply an extension of the human. For Deleuze and Guattari, both these conceptions are flawed with an anthropocentrism that by all means must be avoided. The machinic assemblage therefore refers to the monstrous and heterogeneous couplings between different forms of life, such as those between an orchid and a wasp, a human and her clothes:

We think the material or machinic aspect of an assemblage relates not to the production of goods but rather to a precise state of intermingling of bodies in a society, including all the attractions and repulsions, sympathies and antipathies, alterations, amalgations, penetrations, and expansions that affect bodies of all kinds in their relations to one another (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 90).

Humans are therefore part of machines or machinic assemblages insofar as they combine with other forms of life, whether tools, technical apparatuses, other humans, animals, or the natural environment. Ansell Pearson (1999: 142) deals with this issue in *Germinal Life*:

Humans are both component parts of a machine and combine with other forms of organic and nonorganic life to constitute a machine (or, better, machinic assemblage since there exists no isolated or monadic machine).

But according to Ansell Pearson, this does not mean that Deleuze and Guattari's machinic assemblage resembles the concept of the hybrid referred to by other commentators (e.g. Haraway 1991). Unlike assemblages, 'hybrids simply require a connection of points and do not facilitate a passing between them' (Ansell Pearson 1999: 197). Consequently, the concept of the hybrid such as a "wasp-orchid" still maintains that the two parties involved can be identified as separate beings. The symbiotic relationship of transversal communication, on the other hand, undermines the distinct nature of different forms of life and 'challenges the boundaries of the organism' (Ansell Pearson 1997: 132), and scrambles genealogical and physiological lineages.

By drawing attention to the ways in which the boundaries that separate between different bodies are disturbed, the concept of creative involution also make us realise that the categories of knowledge that define different bodies according to species, phyla, divisions and kingdoms are not naturally given, but the result of powerful processes of discursive construction. Dale (2001) helps us understand why species are usually viewed as distinct. It is when it is dead that a body can be cut open, fully

morphologised and identified in terms of an organic structure and assigned to the bounded categories of different species. This point is even better illustrated with Dale's reference to entomology. In order to categorise an insect, the entomologist literally pins it down by running a pin through it. As soon as the insect is dead, it can be fixed and stabilised so that it can engage in no more processes of transversal communication with members of other species.

As Deleuze and Guattari reject the distinct purity of species, they view the development of bodies in terms of becoming rather than being. Returning to the earlier example about the wasp and the orchid, the heterogeneous interaction between the two means that instead of evolving into a pure wasp perfectly differentiated from its environment, the wasp is becoming-orchid. Similarly, the orchid is becoming-wasp. This aspect is central both to the notion of creativity, and to the notion of involution. First, as the orchid deterritorialises by forming an image of a wasp, it influences the wasp to reterritorialise on that image. The wasp is therefore becoming-orchid because the orchid acts creatively by influencing something beyond itself, and the orchid is becoming-wasp for the exact same reason. Second, it is because the wasp is becoming-orchid and the orchid is becoming-wasp that Deleuze and Guattari (1988) replace the concept of creative evolution with their own concept of creative involution.

Involution should not be interpreted in the Freudian sense, where it would be reduced to a matter of regression. Instead, it should be understood in the mathematical sense where something is folded, caught up, involved and rolled into its introvert. As Deleuze and Guattari (1988: 238-239) emphasise, regression is about something moving 'in the direction of something less differentiated.' Creative involution, on the

other hand, is about something that, whilst engaged in non-filiative, non-sexual and symbiotic relationships with something else, cuts across organic and phyletic boundaries in such a way that it becomes *more* differentiated. Furthermore, Deleuze and Guattari employ the term involution in order to dissociate their own analysis from a belief in evolutionary progression. Since different forms of life creatively influence one another, they are engaged in an open-ended process of becoming, which means that there will be no end to the wasp's process of becoming-orchid, for example. In other words, neither the wasp nor the orchid will achieve a predetermined model of what it means to be a wasp or an orchid. Deleuze and Guattari (1988: 238) elaborate:

becoming is not an evolution, at least not an evolution by descent and filiation. [...] If evolution includes any veritable becomings, it is in the domain of *symbioses* that bring into play beings of totally different scales and kingdoms, with no possible filiation.

But Deleuze and Guattari do not replace the Bergsonian concept of creative evolution with their own concept of creative involution because the former puts forward an evolutionism such as the one above. Bergsonian creative evolution should under no circumstances be confused with this kind of conventional evolutionism. The main difference is that the Bergsonian concept of creative evolution views the change and development of the human organism in terms of the connection between the actual organism and the extended and undivided virtual Whole. Although this does not imply an evolutionary progression towards the achievement of a predetermined model, it focuses on the human organism to such an extent that it runs the risk of an anthropocentrism that ignores the machinic and symbiotic couplings between heterogeneous forms of life.

In contrast, Deleuze and Guattari's (1988) concept of creative involution focuses on the heterogeneous and machinic couplings between different bodies that take place through the symbiotic and sympathetic processes of transversal communication across the (taxonomical) boundaries of the species, the phylum and the kingdom. Through the new concept of creative involution, Deleuze and Guattari therefore avoid the anthropocentric superhumanism that characterises the thinking of Bergson and the early Deleuze. They do so, however, without cutting actual organisms off from the virtual Whole. With reference to the constructed nature of species, phyla, etc., it may be argued that the virtual, which is pre-anatomical, pre-morphological and trans-categorical, is that which precedes and exceeds these categories.

Having focused on creative involution with specific reference to wasp-orchid symbiosis, it should be recognised that the way in which Deleuze and Guattari (1988) theorise the becoming-orchid of the wasp and vice versa is also part of a more general preoccupation with the concept of becoming-other and the non-human becomings of the human. On the whole, this indicates an open-ended process whereby clear-cut identities and subjectivities are undermined and dissolved. More specifically, becoming-other includes the concepts of becoming-woman (which is the most central one in Deleuze and Guattari's discussion), becoming-child, becoming-animal and becoming imperceptible. In her commentary, which is both a critique of Deleuze and Guattari and an attempt to identify what their thought might have to offer feminist research, Elizabeth Grosz (1994) elaborates on becoming-woman, becoming-child and becoming-animal:

Becoming-woman desediments the masculinity of identity; becoming-child, the modes of cohesion and control of the adult; becoming-animal, the

anthropocentrism of philosophical thought; and becoming-imperceptible replaces, dismantles, problematizes the most elementary notions of entity, thingness (Grosz 1994: 178-179).

But as Grosz (1994) notes, the extension of Deleuze's concept of becoming into these concepts is problematic too, and it has been severely critiqued by certain feminist writers, including Alice Jardine, Luce Irigaray and Rosi Braidotti. Assessing some of these commentaries, which are particularly critical of Deleuze and Guattari's concept of becoming-woman, Grosz identifies four key issues that are problematic to a feminist research agenda:

First, the metaphor of "becoming-woman" is a male appropriation of women's politics, struggles, theories, knowledges, insofar as it "borrows" from them while depoliticizing their radicality. [...] Second, these metaphors not only neutralize women's sexual specificity, but, more insidiously, they also neutralize and thereby mask men's specificities, interests, and perspectives. [...] Third, [...] Deleuze and Guattari invest in a romantic elevation of psychoses, schizophrenia, becoming, which on one hand ignores the very real torment of suffering individuals and, on the other hand, positions it as an unliveable ideal for others. Moreover, in making becoming-woman the privileged site of all becomings, Deleuze and Guattari confirm a long historical association between femininity and madness which ignores the sexually specific forms that madness takes. Fourth, in invoking metaphors of machinic functioning, in utilizing the terminology of the technocratic order, Deleuze and Guattari [...] utilize tropes and terms made possible only through women's exclusion and denigration [...] (Grosz 1994: 163).

As Grosz points out, however, the problem with these critiques, which of course are very serious, is that they can be raised against ‘virtually any male philosopher’ and against many female philosophers too. But rather than examining Grosz’ very constructive critique of Deleuze and Guattari in any further detail, I shall turn to some of the basic problems that I find with their notion of becoming-other.

Although Deleuze and Guattari seek to question the conventional metaphysic of being and masculinist anthropomorphism, they run the risk of reaffirming what they try to question. This is not because Deleuze and Guattari view women, children and animals in an Aristotelian fashion in which they are reducible to incomplete matters yet having to reach full maturity. The problem is that they never think explicitly of becoming-man, and this means that they always start from a man’s perspective. Even though men are seen to become something else, the focus is always on men who maintain their foundational identity as men even after entering into a process of becoming (-woman, -child, -animal, etc.). This is a weak point in Deleuze and Guattari’s theory, and it cannot be easily resolved. However, their concept of animal becoming (as opposed to becoming-animal) might still give us a hint as to how the problem might be tackled.

Animal becoming is not about an animal becoming something else, but highlights the sense in which animals never develop a complete and finite identity – be it on the species level or on the level of individuals. This was even illustrated in the case of the wasp becoming-orchid. Animals will always be subject to a process of becoming, which does not define their identity, not even in terms of identity transformations from one identity to another, but simply underlines the point that an identity as such can never be determined or fulfilled. Animal becoming means that the animal

maintains its animality, whilst continuously subjectivating a different animality. In other words, it is animal, but never in exactly the same way. Moreover, animal becoming, as opposed to becoming animal, starts with the animal rather than with man. Given this shift of attention I think a similar perspective with benefit could be developed to study women, men and children, where for example a woman's womanhood is retained but never in the same way. Similarly, a man's or a child's "manhood" or "childhood" is retained but never in the same way. I would however not dismiss the concept of becoming-woman, becoming-animal and becoming-child, etc. What is needed is a turn in focus away from a male starting point, such as man becoming-woman, and towards other starting points, such as animal becoming-man, child becoming-woman, woman becoming-man, and so on. This last example may certainly include drag kings and female-to-male transvestites, which go beyond the rather temporary and more superficial transgendered performances of the carnival, the Dionysean Bacchae and the Shakespearean theatre.

Having discussed embodiment, becoming and the non-human becoming of the human in relation to the Spinozist body, creative involution and becoming-other, I will now turn my attention to the oft-cited, yet often misunderstood, concept in Deleuze and Guattari of the "body without organs".⁴⁸ As we shall see, the body without organs aligns with both the Spinozist ethological ethic of affective bodies, and with the concept of creative involution. First, I would argue that the body without organs

⁴⁸ For example the sociologist Simon Williams (1998), who rightly points out some fair criticisms of the body without organs, takes it out of context and critiques Deleuze and Guattari for wanting to abandon all limits and boundaries. But as we shall see, Deleuze and Guattari (1988) are very concerned that making oneself a body without organs is always a task to be approached with care and moderation.

carries forward the challenge raised by Spinozist ethology in that it encourages people to experiment with and change their habits and ways of life. And second, I would argue that it carries forward the emphasis on dynamism and heterogeneity stressed in the concept of creative involution in that it encourages people to open up towards and relate differently to other bodies than they would normally do. The body without organs is perhaps more dangerous than the other concepts and notions we encounter in Deleuze and in Deleuze's writings with Guattari. This is first because of its rhetorical style and language; second because it speaks very directly to the reader; and third because it can easily be taken on face value and misunderstood as a utopian resolution of the problems of life. The body without organs must therefore be used with caution. But having said this, the body without organs is also more adequate than many of the other notions encountered when reading Deleuze and Deleuze and Guattari, exactly because it speaks so directly and seductively to the reader. What is needed is therefore a reading of the body without organs that recognises its premises, its implications and the philosophical context within which it is launched. And it is such recognition that the other conceptualisations discussed above may help us achieve.

7.5 The Body without Organs

The body without organs first appeared in Deleuze's *The Logic of Sense* from 1969, then in Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus* from 1972, and then in Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus* from 1980. The term was first coined by Antonin Artaud in the 1940s, and Deleuze and Guattari (1988: 150) suggest that Artaud made himself a body without organs when committing suicide on the 28th of November 1947. In order to pursue the affinity between an ethological ethics and the body

without organs, I will however invoke the conceptualisation developed in *A Thousand Plateaus*.

In *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari associate the body without organs with Freudian psychoanalysis, schizophrenia and capitalism (capitalism is given as the cardinal example), and view the body without organs as a non-productive entity that interrupts flows, arrests desire and aims at stasis (cf. Deleuze and Guattari 1984: 10). In *A Thousand Plateaus*, on the other hand, the body without organs is depicted as a force productive in its own right – independent of the purposive and unequivocally goal-directed workings of the capitalist political economy, and irreducible to the Freudian mommy-daddy-me triangle. Invoking the body without organs, Deleuze and Guattari (1988) offer a different way of thinking about the body that contrasts with the biomedically founded notion of the organism. According to the Deleuze and Guattari commentator Ronald Bogue (1989), the Spinozist body is literally a body without organs because it consists not of organs but of affects. However, this is not why I want to invoke a Spinozist reading of the body without organs here. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari are less opposed to the organs than they are to the organism:

A body without organs is not an empty body stripped of organs, but a body upon which that which serves as organs [...] is distributed according to crowd phenomena [...] in the form of molecular multiplicities. [...] Thus the body without organs is opposed less to organs as such than to the organization of the organs insofar as it composes an organism (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 30).

Furthermore, Deleuze and Guattari insist that being opposed to the organism does not make the body without organs a dead body:

The body without organs is not a dead body but a living body all the more alive and teeming once it has blown apart the organism and its organization. Lice hopping on the beach. Skin colonies. The full body without organs is a body populated by multiplicities (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 30).

Deleuze and Guattari introduce the chapter wholly devoted to the body without organs by emphasising its dynamic, experimental and practical nature. The body without organs is not a matter of being reducible to a finished object of metaphysics, but a matter of endless becoming. It is also not a concept, but an experimental practice into which desire must be continuously invested. The body without organs cannot be taken for granted, but needs to be created. In the words of Deleuze and Guattari (1988: 149-150):

At any rate, you have one (or several). It's not so much that it preexists or comes ready-made [...]. At any rate, you make one, you can't desire without making one. And it awaits you; it is an inevitable exercise or experimentation, already accomplished the moment you undertake it, unaccomplished as long as you don't. [...] It is not at all a notion or a concept but a practice, a set of practices. You never reach the Body without Organs, you can't reach it, you are forever attaining it, it is a limit (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 149-150).

As one can see, a lot is going on at the same time in Deleuze and Guattari's treatise of the body without organs, and usually a lot more than in Deleuze's sole-authored

works. It therefore does not take long before they both undermine the organic functioning of the body *with* organs and challenge the psychoanalyst's search for unitary selfhood by emphasising that there is no end to the process of creating a body without organs:

Is it really so sad and dangerous to be fed up with seeing with your eyes, breathing with your lungs, swallowing with your mouth, talking with your tongue, thinking with your brain, having an anus and larynx, head and legs? Why not walk on your head, sing with your sinuses, see through your skin, breathe with your belly [...]. Where psychoanalysis says, "Stop, find yourself again," we should say instead, "Let's go further still, we haven't found our BwO yet, we haven't sufficiently dismantled our self." [...] Find your Body without Organs. Find out how to make it. It's a question of life and death [...], sadness and joy. It is where everything is played out (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 150-151).

Some pages later, they also re-emphasise the opposition between the organism and the body without organs:

The organs are not the enemies of the BwO. The enemy is the organism. The BwO is opposed not to the organs but to the organization of the organs called the organism (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 158).

As hinted at the beginning of their chapter, this statement takes much inspiration from Antonin Artaud:

Artaud wages a struggle against the organs, but at the same time what he is going after, what he has it in for, is the organism: *The body is the body. Alone it stands. And in no need of organs. Organism it never is. Organisms are the enemies of the body.* The BwO is not opposed to the organs; rather, the BwO and its “true organs,” which must be composed and positioned, are opposed to the organism, the organic organization of the organs (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 158).

This highly polemic statement should however not be taken too literally. This becomes clear after Deleuze and Guattari (1988: 159) on the next page ask ‘What does it mean [...] to cease to be an organism?’ In other words, and as the title of their chapter asks, “how do you make yourself a body without organs?” First, they claim that this is an easy task. But it is also a task that must be attacked with caution, ‘since overdose is a danger. You don’t do it with a sledgehammer, you use a very fine file’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 160). Further on, having first invoked Artaud, Deleuze and Guattari dissociate the task of destratifying the organism and creating a body without organs from committing suicide:

You invent self-destructions that have nothing to do with the death-drive. Dismantling the organism never meant killing yourself, but rather opening the body to connections that presuppose an entire assemblage [...]. [...] You have to keep enough of the organism for it to reform each dawn [...]. [...] You don’t reach the BwO [...] by wildly destratifying. [...] If you free it with too violent an action, if you blow apart the strata without taking precautions, then [...] you will be killed, plunged into a black hole, or even dragged toward catastrophe. Staying stratified – organized, signified, subjected – is not the worst that can

happen; the worst that can happen is if you throw the strata into demented or suicidal collapse, which bring them back down on us heavier than ever (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 160-161).

Creating a body without organs is therefore a matter of cautious, patient experimentation. This may however easily be forgotten, as readers become so taken aback by the DeleuzoGuattarian rhetoric that they ignore Deleuze and Guattari's own warnings, warnings that admittedly might work just as much as encouragement to proceed. Although there is a danger that the nonorganic is ignored and the organism is taken for granted, there is also a danger, when reading Deleuze and Guattari, of adopting the body without organs as some utopian solution to all problems of life. I share this scepticism with Ansell Pearson, who rightly points out that Deleuze and Guattari never attributed such a status to the body without organs – most notably because they construed no binary opposition between the body without organs and the organism. In his words:

no abstract opposition is to be set up between the strata and the body without organs. [...] The aim is not, therefore, to negate the organism but to arrive at a more comprehensive understanding of it by situating it within the wider field of forces, intensities, and durations that give rise to it and which do not cease to involve a play between nonorganic and stratified life. Creative processes inform *both* the body without organs and processes of stratification (Ansell Pearson 1999: 154).

This means that the organism as well as the body without organs can be seen in terms of creative involution. The becoming of the body without organs, then, is 'the

“powerful nonorganic life” that escapes the strata and is implicated in transversal modes of communication, which are modes that cut across the evolution of distinct phyletic lineages’ (Ansell Pearson 1999: 154). Furthermore, the organism that is involved in such creative processes is another organism than the one Deleuze and Guattari are attacking. According to Ansell Pearson (1999: 154),

The organism that Deleuze and Guattari are attacking [...] is not a neutral entity but rather the organism construed as a given hierarchized and transcendent organization.⁴⁹

Since the body without organs is not the total negation of the organism or the suicidal solution to life, Ansell Pearson (1999: 154) says that treating this question from the angle of Spinozist ethics is the only way to avoid these traps:

On my reading the ethical question is the only way to make sense of Deleuze and Guattari’s statement that “dismantling the organism has never meant killing yourself”. [...] The ethical question concerns the theory and praxis of opening up the body to connections and relations “that presuppose an entire assemblage” [...] (Ansell Pearson 1999: 154; my omissions).

As we have seen, there is always a danger with opening up too much. Nevertheless, what Deleuze and Guattari encourage us to do when posing to us this Spinozist ethical

⁴⁹ This notion of the organism is explicitly adopted by Deleuze and Guattari (1988: 159): ‘The organism [...] is a substratum on the BwO, in other words, a phenomenon of accumulation, coagulation, and sedimentation that, in order to extract useful labor from the BwO, imposes upon it forms, functions, bonds, dominant and hierarchized organizations, organized transcendences.’

challenge of creating a body without organs, is to openly experiment with new and different bodily habits and ways of life. That is, they encourage us to experiment with what a body can do. In conclusion, the body without organs may enable us to use our bodies and express corporeality in unpredictable ways that disturb and upset the boundaries laid down by the organism and by the guardians of biomedical discipline and social normality.

Having discussed some of the different ways in which Deleuze (sometimes with Guattari) thinks through what I have chosen to call nonorganisational or nonorganic embodiment – i.e. the Spinozist body; creative involution and becoming-other; and the body without organs – I shall in this final section of the chapter bring out the more general relationship between these forms of embodiment and organic embodiment.

7.6 The Nonorganic and the Organic

It is often confusing to read Deleuze with regards to questions of the body, especially if examining his sole-authored texts in relation to his collaborative work with Guattari. Sometimes, and especially when writing with Guattari, Deleuze seems to reject the organism as that which limits life, whilst at other times he seems to speak of the organism in quite different and more favourable terms. As we have seen in *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari's (1988) discussion of the body without organs depicts the organism as the very enemy of the body. But as it also has been argued, it is a particular organism, one that is particularly hierarchical and transcendental, which is the target of Deleuze and Guattari's attack in that book. In *Difference and Repetition*, on the other hand, Deleuze (1994) seems to adopt the organism as a nominal term to present a view of the body that hardly fits the hierarchical and transcendental concept of the organism invoked in *A Thousand*

Plateaus. Instead, the concept employed in *Difference and Repetition* seems to prefigure in *Bergsonism*, where not surprisingly Deleuze (1988a) develops a Bergsonian view of the organism.

According to Ansell Pearson (1999), the task that Bergson announces for philosophy is to “reconcile inorganic and organic life”. Here, I do not think that the inorganic should be confused with the chemical or mechanical term, according to which the inorganic is that which is not organic in the sense of not being carbon-based. The inorganic is not necessarily a matter of synthetic substances or technical apparatuses. Instead, I will argue that the inorganic is equivalent to my previous reference to the nonorganic, which is not organic exactly because it is *not* organised. This also includes Bergson’s term, by which the inorganic is understood as inert matter. Bergson is therefore not concerned with the coupling between humans and machines, fashionably (and somewhat repetitively) referred to as cyborgs (e.g. Haraway 1991). For Bergson, the task of philosophy is to reconcile the organic with inert matter, which in Bergsonian and Deleuzian jargon is also known as the undivided incorporeal virtual Whole. In other words, Bergson – and thereby Deleuze – is concerned with putting the actual organism back in touch with the virtual.⁵⁰ Ansell Pearson argues that this reconciliation is at the centre of philosophy because it changes the very foundations upon which philosophy is to be done as metaphysics. It is by recognising that ‘the division of unorganized matter into separate bodies is relative to our senses and intellect (our tendency to spatialize)’ and by recognising that matter is an

⁵⁰ As Deleuze (1988a: 105) argues in *Bergsonism*, ‘it is not the whole that closes like an organism, it is the organism that opens onto a whole, like this virtual whole.’

undivided virtual Whole, that Bergson proposes a philosophy of duration or becoming (Ansell Pearson 1999: 56). By putting the actual world as we perceive it in touch with the undivided world of the virtual that escapes our sensory perception and knowledge, the result is a dynamic perspective of life as flux rather than as a number of concrete things.

This has important implications for how Bergson understands the organism. Although Bergson, pretty much like the biomedical school of organismic homeostasis emphasises that ‘The “animality” of a higher organism consists in the capacities it enjoys for self-regulation’ (Ansell Pearson 1999: 49), this is only one side of the story. Whereas the organism plays a significant role in the creative evolution, invention and reinvention of life, the key idea that makes Bergson differ from ordinary biomedical perspectives on the self-organising organism is that the Bergsonian organism is embedded within a virtual undivided Whole. And this completely changes what it means to be an organism:

from the perspective of the *virtual* whole, life can be conceived as a ceaseless play between the limited inventions of complex living systems, such as organisms and species, and the desire of the impulse of life for ever renewed vitality. Life requires organisms in its very inventiveness; that is, it requires their limits, since left to its devices it would fail to do all at once and proceed in a straight line (Ansell Pearson 1999: 49).

Although organisms are actual (i.e. actualisations of the virtual) they are only actual insofar as we recognise that the actual is underwritten by the virtual. Consequently, they are only organic insofar as we recognise that they are underwritten by the nonorganic. Hence, the organism is not one that just negatively limits and restricts, constrains and denies life. As Ansell Pearson (1999: 62) emphasises, Bergson's (1960) *Creative Evolution* suggests the opposite: 'in imposing this limit the organism is what makes "life" possible (life as invention and duration).' This is because the limits and boundaries imposed by the Bergsonian organism are not eternally fixed and absolutely static. Instead, they are porous, penetrable and temporary ones subject to change. Consequently, it would be difficult to maintain any opposition between the Bergsonian organism and a Deleuzian (or even DeleuzoGuattarian) conception of embodiment.

It may also, albeit in a less straightforward manner, be argued that Deleuze and Guattari continue to advocate this Bergsonian position in *A Thousand Plateaus*. Although maintaining that 'the organism is merely an expedient invention by which life opposes itself in order to limit and reinvent itself' and that 'The truly intense and powerful life *remains* anorganic', they do by no means write off the organism from their understanding of life. Instead, they recognise, like Bergson, 'the play between the nonorganic and the organismic as one of co-implication [...]' (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 503). As argued earlier, their proposal for a body without organs is therefore not to be interpreted as a rejection of the organism. That would make the evolution of life completely accidental. Instead, the body without organs of nonorganic life and the organised life of the organism must be seen to co-exist, which means that the evolution of life is creative and 'proceeds by indetermination' (Ansell

Pearson 1999: 43). The role of the body without organs is therefore to offer a way of disassembling already existing limits to what a body can do by inventing new habitual lines of divergence that are just as open to disruption and change as the limits and boundaries of the Bergsonian organism described above.

7.7 Conclusion

Having first examined Deleuze's concept of the *virtual* as the fundamental openness by which everything in the world is underwritten, the rest of the chapter discussed the particular areas in which Deleuze thinks about the openness of bodies and embodiment. These were *creative evolution* and the *Spinozist body*, which Deleuze developed in the late 1960s, and *creative involution*, *becoming-other* and the *body without organs*, which Deleuze developed about a decade later in collaboration with Guattari. Whereas the earlier Deleuze focuses on the human organism and how the openness of the actualised human organism is due to its connection into the virtual Whole, the later Deleuze – with Guattari – is more interested in different actualised bodies and how the openness of these bodies is due to the symbiotic and assemblatic relations that connect them. Although Ansell Pearson (1999) is making an important effort in emphasising the influence of Bergson and Bergson's concept of the virtual upon Deleuze, we should be cautious not to turn Deleuze's entire philosophical project into a Bergsonism. This is particularly if one is, as I am, primarily interested in Deleuze's and Deleuze and Guattari's thinking about the body. Bearing in mind that Bergson (and especially his philosophical project of "reconciling the organic and the inorganic") provides some important lessons for how we are to read Deleuze's thinking about the body, we also need to recognise the limitations of Bergson's

superhumanism and that Deleuze and Guattari make a serious attempt to go beyond this superhumanism.

Bergson and the Bergsonian Deleuze make it clear that openness is not all there is. If it were, there would be no such things as bodies at all. The main point that I take from the Bergsonian Deleuze to my understanding of bodies, embodiment and organisation is therefore not one of dualism where organic closure is to be eliminated in the advance of total nonorganic openness. And it is most certainly not a dualism where the organic and the nonorganic are to be neutralised in a new synthesis marking the end of their vital and sometimes violent co-existence. Instead, we are reminded that the world is underwritten by a fundamental openness that disrupts the boundaries that we tend to associate with and continuously assign to bodies and organisations. However, in Deleuze's writings with Guattari, this openness is not just a matter of the human organism opening itself up to the virtual undivided Whole and the virtual being extended into the actual human organism. It is also a matter of the symbiotic and assemblatic relations between different actual bodies. This means that different bodies in general cannot be separated in the ways that we often do. And for us human bodies in particular, this means that we can openly experiment with new bodily habits and express corporeality in unpredictable ways that put us in touch with different bodies. And by so doing, this means that we can disrupt and upset the boundaries that are imposed upon us by the guardians of biomedical discipline and social normality.

As I now approach the end of this thesis, I shall in the next and final chapter assess the implications that this thinking about the body may have upon organisation theory and how we, as organisation theorists, should deal with the problem of the body. As we

shall see, this may also have some serious and very interesting consequences for how we might think about organisation.⁵¹

⁵¹ Again, invoking the term “we” may seem problematic here because many organisation theorists may not be interested in dealing with the problem of the body, or, they may choose not to view the body as a problem of organisation or as a problem to be dealt with within organisation theory. But even though my target group consists primarily of organisation theorists interested in issues of embodiment. I also seek to address organisation theory at large. The “we” employed here therefore includes organisation theorists who do not specialise in issues of embodiment.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

Monstrous Organisation Theory:

Nonorganisation and Embodiment in the Philosophy of Organisation

This final chapter of the thesis is an attempt to bring together the main arguments made so far and to sketch out the main elements of what I choose to call a *monstrous organisation theory*. Using the example of the ammoniapolis, I opened the thesis by arguing that the body is a problem for organisation – both the organisation of production and the production of organisation. Throughout, I have tried to show that this is the case because the body disrupts the boundaries of organisation in ways that – as we shall see – may be regarded as *monstrous*. The notion of the monstrous that I evoke here should not be understood in a derogatory sense, but rather as an analytical term; the monstrous is that which disrupts boundaries; it is that which inhabits the space of boundaries; and it is that through which no clear boundary can be drawn.

A major part of the thesis has also been to discuss the ways in which organisation theory does – or does not – deal with this problem. Despite finding considerable inspiration and guidance in much of the organisation theory literature, this in-depth engagement has also led me to identify some serious shortcomings with how various streams of thought within the discipline deal with the body. For one, the entitative concept of organisation encountered in mainstream organisation theory, by which the body is rendered completely absent (e.g. Sorge 1996) or at best reduced to a metaphor (e.g. Morgan 1986), does not at all recognise the body as a problem for organisation. Indeed, the existence of formal organisations of production is taken for granted and it

is difficult to appreciate how they come into being in the first place, how they might genuinely change, and how they might cease to exist. Unlike this hegemonic tradition, the processual concept of organisation, which pays far more attention to the production processes of organisation that precede and exceed the boundaries of formal organisational entities, makes organisation less static (if not less stable) and more dynamic. However, the literature that has given rise to this concept does not deal with the body, and overall, it seems to render organisation more powerful; we are not simply organised whilst at work in formal organisations; life is further organised to the extent that discourses and institutions manage to organise what we do outside the boundaries of these organisations (e.g. Cooper 1990; Chia 1995, 1998a; Tsoukas 1998a). This is also the case when this processual concept is utilised to study how *bodies* are organised within and, more notably, without formal organisations in the field that has come closest to constitute an organisation theory of the body (e.g. Brewis and Sinclair 2000). Although it is crucial to recognise what is done to bodies by investigating how bodies are organised, this approach runs the risk of pacifying the body and turning organisation into an omnipotent force that dominates any and every body in the whole world unless it is complemented with a view that recognises the monstrosity of bodies – that is, the active, creative and powerful nature of bodies that enables them to disrupt the boundaries of organisation. The few attempts made within organisation theory to study what bodies can do (e.g. Lennie 2000) have typically been limited to recognise the embodiment of management and organisation; that the actions enabling the successful management of formal organisations necessarily are *embodied* actions carried out by already *organised* bodies. Table 8.1 sums up the different ways in which different streams of thought within organisation theory deal with the problem of the body. The bottom row of the table sketches out the position

that will be developed further in this chapter; that bodies are inhabited by nonorganisational forces that disrupt the boundaries of organisation.

Strand of Thought	Concept of Organisation	View of the Body
Mainstream Organisation Theory I	Organisation is a matter of formal organisational entities (the organisation of production)	The body is absent; no explicit view of the body
Mainstream Organisation Theory II (organismic organisation theory)	Formal organisational entities are like biological organisms	The body as organism; the body is reduced to a metaphor of formal organisational entities
Processual Organisation Theory	Organisation is a matter of organisational processes that precede and exceed the boundaries of formal organisational entities (the production of organisation)	The body is largely absent; no explicit view of the body
Organisation Theory of the Body I (the organisation of the body)	Same as Processual Organisation Theory	The body is organised by organisational processes
Organisation Theory of the Body II (the embodiment of organisation)	Similar to Mainstream Organisation Theory I	The body is already organised and enables the successful management of formal organisations
Organisation Theory of the Body III (monstrous nonorganisational embodiment)	Similar to Processual Organisation Theory, but organisation is also disrupted by nonorganisation and nonorganisational embodiment	The body is a matter of active, creative and excessive forces of desire

(Table 8.1: Organisation Theory and the Problem of the Body)

The body disrupts the boundaries of organisation in a number of different ways. Specifically, the body disrupts the boundaries that separate formal organisational entities from their external environments; it disrupts the organisational processes that produce these bounded entities in the first place; and it disrupts the more general organisational processes that seek to institute and maintain those boundaries that separate people without formal organisations and produce order on a societal level. It is even capable of disrupting the organisational boundaries that we seek to impose upon the body itself. This is why I have drawn so much attention to the nonorganisational aspects of embodiment, and this is why I in this chapter choose to

highlight the monstrous. From this perspective, which takes much inspiration from Deleuze and Guattari and Deleuze's readings of Spinoza, Bergson and Nietzsche, the body emerges as an unbounded, excess and monstrous force that cannot merely be understood in terms of organisation. The body is not simply a passive objectified entity and it conforms neither to the organisational regime of the biomedical organism nor to the everyday organisation of sociocultural normality. Consequently, it is not sufficient to ask what is done to the body or, more precisely, what *organisation* does to the body. In addition, it is necessary to ask what a body can do *to* organisation and *irrespective* of organisation. Such an understanding of embodiment not only disrupts organisation, but also disrupts the ways in which we as organisation theorists tend to think about organisation and the body.

Of course, boundary-disruption is not easy. It is both difficult and problematic to actually disrupt the boundaries of how we think about organisation and the body whilst simultaneously trying to submit to the conventional format of the social science doctoral thesis. Accepting certain topics and arguments to be legitimate and permissible whilst deeming others illegitimate and impermissible, the format of the doctoral thesis puts certain restrictions upon the kind of topics and arguments that can be pursued within its boundaries. In particular, the notion of the *subject-specific* thesis, which requires the organisation theorist to submit to the disciplinary norms of organisation theory and pretty much keep herself within the boundaries of the discipline's literature, discourages the pursuit of any topic that forces one to engage in depth and at length with literature outside of what is normally regarded as the territory of organisation theory and the social sciences. This thesis format also puts certain restrictions on the style of exposition that can be adopted. The structuring of the thesis

argument in terms of individual chapters and subsections within chapters constitutes a boundary or a set of boundaries that not only enables the systematic, clear and coherent exposition of ideas, but also makes it a strenuous task to draw links between different ideas. Indeed, it seems that the concluding chapter is the only place where these rules can be bypassed. The advantage (or blessing) of the concluding chapter, then, is that it can allow itself to be monstrous. Instead of repeating what has already been said and effectively keep boundaries in place, it may transgress the boundaries between different chapters and bring together ideas and arguments that previously have been kept apart.

Before moving on, it may however be useful to reflect upon some of the apparent contradictions in this thesis, which draw attention to my own shortcomings in disrupting boundaries. First, and as recognised in section 3.10, I have drawn very narrow boundaries around organisation theory as a discipline whilst investigating how this academic field deals with the problem of the body. Even though this has been necessary in order to develop a manageable research project, it stands in some contrast to my own attempt at disrupting the disciplinary boundaries of organisation theory and opening up the field towards philosophy. But whereas the keeping and reinforcement of organisation theory's boundaries against organisational behaviour and industrial sociology is part of an attempt to avoid further de-theoretisation, disrupting the boundaries of organisation theory towards philosophy is an attempt to open up the discipline to new methodologies, new issues and concerns, and new movements in thought that may enable organisation theorists to reflect more openly about their discipline's explicit and implicit assumptions.

Second, whilst talking of the body, the thesis is highly cognitive. Whereas the focus is on concepts that give rather abstract insights into embodiment, there are few detailed accounts of the everyday and extraordinary activities of living and working bodies. This is because the thesis is theoretical rather than empirical. Instead of contributing to the increasing amount of empirical descriptions of bodies in and out of the workplace, I felt it was more important – at least for my own sake – to provide some systematic overview of how various strands of organisation theory deal with the body. This is not least because it enables one to identify gaps in the existing literature and develop new ways of dealing with the body in future theoretical as well as empirical work.

Third, whilst talking of breaking conventional sexual and gender boundaries, the thesis is written in a very masculinist and highly impersonal style. I have not said anything about my own personal interest in disrupting sexual and gender boundaries. Though having much respect and admiration for people who are open about their own unconventional experiences of sexuality and gender, the silence on my behalf is not only related to the fact that this is a primarily theoretical thesis. It also has to do with the politics of research. I feel that the academic profession shows less appreciation for junior academics being personal than established academics being personal. The following sentiment seems to dominate across several academic fields: “why should one be interested in the personal life of a junior academic whose academic work one knows so little about?” Moreover, it is more risky for the junior academic seeking to position herself within the labour market and the institutional environment of the field to show signs of sexual and gender deviance, as sexuality and gender still are obvious

grounds of discrimination, stigmatisation and exclusion in society at large and in a conservative discipline like organisation theory.

Finally, whilst obeying the conventions of the doctoral thesis, this thesis is void of stylistic experimentation and emotional outbursts, and its argument is put forward in a linear manner. This is because I felt it is was important to adopt a prudent style of writing in order to communicate my argument as effectively as possible and in order to avoid moving the attention away from the key ideas argued in the thesis. Furthermore, this has provided a practical solution to the problem of actually getting the thesis written. And it has provided a political solution (i) to the constraints imposed by the format of the doctoral thesis (which I have not dared violate) and (ii) to my interest in communicating with both mainstream and more radical organisation theorists. Nevertheless, in spite of my many shortcomings in disrupting boundaries, one may argue that the inconsistency between the style and argument of this thesis, in itself, constitutes a boundary-disrupting monstrosity.

The monstrosity of the conclusion takes us back to Robert Cooper's (1990) emphasis on the ambiguous and unstable nature of boundaries, which I discussed in chapter 5. Boundaries not only keep things apart. They are also interstices that bring things together. In this sense, a boundary is a bound or a bind that actually disrupts the distinctions it is supposed to maintain. In addition to help us *dis*-tinguish between things, it *ex*-tinguishes and makes distinctions *extinct*. Although the capacity of State borders to keep people separate may have been obvious in the cases of the Berlin wall and the border running across the Korean peninsula, it is also not difficult to see how these borders have been contested and disrupted, not least by the people they were – or, in the case of the latter, still are – intended to separate. As *targets* of disruption,

borders become places to which people are drawn, at least from one side and at least on a temporary basis. And *when* disrupted, borders become monstrous meeting places for the worlds they are meant to keep apart. However, this is not the only reason why people are attracted to boundaries such as State borders. Being a monstrous place where two worlds meet, a State border may become a still monstrous interface where various activities are played out in the longer term. For example, several towns on the Swedish side of the border between Norway and Sweden, which still is subject to considerable customs control, have, because of increasing price margins in popular consumables such as alcoholic beverages, meat, tobacco and petrol, experienced notable economic growth following the moment of Sweden's agreement to join and Norway's refusal to join the European Union in 1994 (cf. Ericsson 2001). Similarly, the borderlands between Mexico and the US, which are subject to strict border controls, have for the past decade or so also been host to an expanding textile industry (cf. US Department of Commerce 2000). And the county of Scania, which is located on the Swedish side of the rather open border between Denmark and Sweden in the Öresund region and which since July 2000 has been connected to Copenhagen and Continental Europe through the world's longest road and railway bridge, has during the past decade undergone vast industrial expansion, especially in the pharmaceutical sector (cf. Statistiska Centralbyrån 2000a). Moreover, it is worth noting that the seaport Malmö, which is Scania's main city and the third largest city in Sweden, has one of the most vibrant and fast-expanding communities in Scandinavia of first and second generation immigrants from Europe and other countries (Statistiska Centralbyrån 2000b). My own equivalent of these examples from the monstrous borderlands is at least twofold. My intention is (i) that the thesis constitutes a monstrous borderland where organisation theory meets philosophy, and (ii) that the

body, as theorised in both organisation theory and philosophy, provides a particular bridge that enables organisation theory and philosophy to meet in the first place.

The thesis is therefore not solely an attempt to disrupt the boundaries of how we as organisation theorists tend to think about the body and organisation. More fluidity in the discipline is not an end in itself – in fact, such an approach might easily be turned into a *cul-de-sac* where little new may be created in place of previous concepts and bodies of knowledge. Moreover, the disruption of boundaries may itself accentuate and reinforce the same boundaries as there can be no disruption if there are no boundaries to be disrupted in the first place. Nevertheless, drawing attention to, problematising and disrupting conceptual and disciplinary boundaries that often make sure to keep ideas and topics separate is part of a constructive and creative project. Like the examples sketched out above, I want to exploit boundaries as monstrous meeting places or interfaces where different discourses clash, where monstrous movements in thought can be made, and where new – and monstrous – concepts can be created.

The notion of the monstrous meeting is also the crux of the conceptualist and caesurist methodology employed in this thesis. That is, with a basis in the works of Canguilhem, Foucault and Deleuze, to show contradictions and ruptures between different schools of thought and their conceptualisations of organisation and embodiment, and to invent new conceptualisations at the end of these empires that relate to, communicate with and disrupt their conceptualisations. This is what I am trying to do when putting organisation theory in contact with other disciplines – philosophy in particular – and when putting different schools of thought from within organisation theory in contact with each other. And this is what I am trying to do

through the monstrous concepts of nonorganisation and nonorganisational embodiment, which disrupt the boundaries of the body, of organisation and of organisation theory.

Of course, one might argue against the novelty of this project. It might be argued that the boundaries of organisation theory have always been unstable and permeable, and that doing interdisciplinary – and monstrous – research represents little new within this field that initially sprung out of several disciplines, of which sociology, psychology, political science and economics have been the most significant. Moreover, in the UK in particular (but also in other European countries), there has for some years been a growing community of scholars who have broadened the lexical archive of organisation theory to include research in cultural studies, literary theory, and philosophy (e.g. Burrell 1984, 1988, 1997; Czarniawska-Joerges 1995; Czarniawska 1997, 1998; Chia 1995, 1998a; Linstead 1997). This thesis, which draws heavily on philosophy, is therefore no separate or isolate attempt, but continues in a tradition increasingly popular amongst the growing number of organisation theorists who might identify with the area of critical management studies (cf. Alvesson and Willmott 1992, 1996). However, at the same time, it tries to go further than much of this work by rethinking the body and organisation. Putting organisation theory in touch with other disciplines and bringing process into our thinking about the body and organisation, two concepts which still are heavily underpinned by structuralist thought, does not provide an end point or final resolution for this monstrous project. Processual and interdisciplinary moves can only provide starting points from which new monstrous beginnings can be embarked upon.

The notion of “nonorganisation” may provide a monstrous beginning where our thinking about the body and organisation can be taken beyond existing boundaries and towards new “frontiers”. In addition to recognising how bodies are organised, through discursive and institutional practices such as corporate dress codes, public health campaigns and the biomedical understanding of the body as an organism, the notion of nonorganisation makes it possible to see how bodies disrupt these regimes by exercising more or less common habits and lifestyles. In chapter 2, I drew attention to some of the ways in which the organisational and lifestyle-oriented regime of the New Public Health is disrupted and subverted by everyday habits and socio-corporeal relations that might be seen as nonorganisational; smoking amongst teenage girls, excessive sunbathing amongst people born pale, and bare-backing amongst gay men. A related example might include the anorexic, who defies the dietary requirements of nutritional scientists and health officials and clashes with the criteria of beauty and attractiveness commonly held in Western societies. Furthermore, the notion of nonorganisation may enable us to see how bodies disrupt, undermine and escape other organisational regimes too by enacting more unusual, unpredictable and monstrous habits, behaviours and ways of life. And it may enable us to analyse the dynamic and monstrous nature of embodiment, i.e. how bodies change and how bodies encounter and engage with other bodies in complex relationships that disturb and transgress the taxonomical orders through which we normally seek to make sense of bodies and bodily relationships.

Once again, the wasp-orchid assemblage from Deleuze and Guattari’s (1988) book *A Thousand Plateaus* returns as an obvious, illuminating and relevant example. Rather than keeping the wasp and the orchid apart, species boundaries become grotesque and

monstrous meeting places of non-sexual yet reproductive activities between heterogeneous bodies whose very own alliance also becomes grotesque and monstrous. But this is not the only example from Deleuze and Guattari that is relevant to this discussion of monstrous nonorganisational embodiment. Read through Deleuze's (1988b, 1992) Spinozist and ethological ethic of affective bodies, the "body without organs" provides another and more general example from the same book by Deleuze and Guattari. Encouraging people to experiment with and invent new bodily habits that may take us into unusual and dynamic, grotesque and monstrous encounters with other bodies, the body without organs disrupts the boundaries often imposed upon what a body can do as well as the boundaries that govern relationships between bodies. Hence, it may give rise to heterogeneous relationships and alliances other than that of the wasp-orchid assemblage. Yet other examples that can be theorised along these lines include transgendered bodies that disrupt the boundaries between the female and the male and extend the boundaries of what it may mean to be a woman or a man. Another example may be the sadomasochistic body, which disrupts and operates on the boundaries between pleasure and pain; or the lesbian or gay parent couple who disrupt the boundaries of the traditional parent role and redefine the make-up of the modern nuclear family; or the health freak whose diet and fitness regime pushes her body to such an extent that she operates on the borderline between what is generally regarded as healthy and unhealthy. In addition, and even though one might easily exaggerate the radical significance of the rather commonplace couplings and interactions between humans and machines, cyborg characters from the science fiction literature and cinema may constitute examples of complex, grotesque and monstrous forms of life whose nature it is difficult to define as either human or machine – not just because such bodies may be seen as *both and*

(and therefore as *neither*), but also because the difficulty of identifying the boundary where one aspect ends and the other begins means that such bodies are themselves monstrous borderlands (cf. Wood 1998).

Interestingly, the monstrous organisation theory that springs out of this concern with boundary-disruption can also be seen as a body without organs. Instead of following the mainstream logic of unilinear, causality-based and/or teleological arguments, and instead of relying on concepts already established within the boundaries of the mainstream hegemony, it seriously engages with other disciplines and their intellectual heritage, makes unusual and unexpected twists and turns towards bizarre problematiques, and creates new concepts by means of experimentation. The concepts of this organisation theory “without organs”, which are created in the liminal, are necessarily grotesque and monstrous “matters out of place”. Of course, the grotesque and the monstrous carries different connotations for different people, and it is likely that those whose interests and values are served and protected by maintaining the status quo of organisation theory as a discipline will further deem these concepts, which challenge already existing concepts, both threatening and dangerous to the future of organisation theory. Mainstream scholars may argue quite strongly that these concepts are nothing but the nonsensical works of irrelevant theorisation that will lead organisation theory into “chaos” and despair (cf. e.g. Donaldson 1985). Insofar as this grotesque and monstrous organisation theory is met by little more than a cold shoulder of discouragement from the majority of organisation theorists, those who contemplate to pursue it should foresee a lonely and peripheral existence containing much pain, strain and poverty. Nevertheless, scholars who seek to be different from the mainstream norm and choose to inhabit these peripheral borderlands of organisation

theory may also find that it can be a very fertile and habitable place for serious and indeed very important academic work. It is exactly in the liminal borderlands – or frontier worlds – that it may be possible to claim some sort of intellectual independence, be inventive and create some very powerful ideas that challenge both previous and current orthodoxies.

Both on the level of organisation theory as a discipline and on the level of the concepts akin to it, this pursuit of the grotesque and the monstrous complicates the relationship – and boundary – between the inside and the outside.⁵² What traditionally is considered to lie outside one single body is incorporated to become part of that same body. And what is traditionally considered to belong to the inside of a body is brought out and expressed in social encounters with other bodies. For example, the male-to-female transvestite body, who is initially regarded as male, incorporates from the outside characteristics typically associated with the female and the feminine. And, whilst these characteristics are combined with other characteristics and emotions of the inside, the male-to-female transvestite expresses a new sense of corporeality that is both female and male yet neither. Of course, the same is the case with the female-to-male transvestite, though in the opposite direction. On a more theoretical issue akin to this thesis, it is possible to see how a complication of the inside/outside relationship may affect thinking about organisation and the body in organisation theory. When

⁵² This is much like Deleuze's (1988c) take on the inside/outside relationship. Here, Deleuze develops a complex notion of the inside and the outside as a means to analyse how Foucault understands the ways in which discursive, institutional and "subjective" regimes change, are discontinued and replaced with new regimes. Similar problematisations have also been developed by Merleau-Ponty (1973) and Derrida (e.g. 1981). Using the term "invagination", they both take the female body as the model of the inside/outside relationship.

organisation theory, which may be thought of as a single discipline with a set of clearly defined problematiques, concepts, methods and literatures is put into contact with and made to incorporate problematiques, concepts, methods and literature from outside disciplines, it may rethink and express these initially outside elements in new monstrous ways. The body, which in traditional and conventional organisation theory is regarded as having very little to do with organisation at all, may, when brought in from the outside of organisation theory give rise to new monstrous ways of thinking about organisation.

The emphasis on the liminal and nonorganisational forces of embodiment that disrupt, undermine and escape the boundaries of organisation does exactly this. It presses for a new monstrous way of thinking about organisation. At its centre is an ability to recognise the limitations of organisation; both formal organisational entities and the organisational processes that precede and exceed these entities become less stable and less powerful, more fragile and more ephemeral than we tend to think. Organisation is not all there is and all there can be. Bodies – which in this thesis have been conceived in very concrete and carnal terms of flesh and blood, bones and tissue, pains and pleasures, habits and desires – are capable of doing things that are unexpected, unpredictable, and sometimes unappreciated by the guardians of order and normality, things that have nothing to do with organisation whatsoever. This means that bringing embodiment into the organisational discourse leaves less space for organisation.

The monstrous concept of organisation that I propose, and from which a philosophy of organisation can be developed, is a concept that somewhat ironically talks less about organisation and more about nonorganisation. It is a concept that recognises both the boundaries and purposive nature of organisation and the bounded energy of

organisation. It is the latter recognition – that the energy of organisation is bounded – which is most crucial here. It is this that enables us to recognise the ways in which organisational boundaries and the purposive drive behind any organisational project are disrupted by nonorganisation. As I discussed at some length in chapter 5, the concept of disorganisation does not enable us to draw this radical conclusion because it is itself little more than another – albeit bizarre, unusual and often deemed undesirable – version of organisation. If wanting to recognise the limitations and fragility of organisation, it is indeed necessary to put the concept of organisation in contact with a concept of nonorganisation which is unbound and independent of any clear sense of a set purpose or final goal. For clarification, I reproduce the table from chapter 5:

Concept	“Form” of expression	Relationship to “purpose” and boundaries
Organisation	Entities and processes	Purpose-driven and goal-directed; institutes and maintains boundaries
Disorganisation	Bizarre, unusual and “undesirable” forms of organisation	Purpose-driven and goal-directed; institutes and maintains <i>unusual</i> boundaries
Nonorganisation	Active, creative and excessive forces of desire	Beyond purpose; disrupts boundaries

(Table 8.2: Organisation, Disorganisation and Nonorganisation)

There are two particular dangers with this monstrous and nonorganisational concept of organisation. First, that it might make the organisers of this world try to tighten the grip in an attempt to avoid organisation slipping through their hands and melting into air. In my view, however, any attempt to tighten the grip is futile because bodies have a number of ways to respond to such initiatives, of which passive submission is not the only one. Second, there is the danger that this concept of organisation – and the

concept of nonorganisation with it – will be colonised and co-opted by mainstream organisation theory and by organisational practitioners keen to expand their own organisational projects within a political economy supposedly characterised by speed and openness, freedom and flexibility. But the danger of co-optation is a danger affecting any concept – not just the one I have tried to develop here.⁵³ Moreover, attempts to co-opt and capitalise on new and radical concepts such as this one face a fundamental problem. When introduced into a mainstream setting – for example managerialist organisation theory or management consultancy – radical concepts may become more subversive and more powerful as they turn upside down and disrupt – in unexpected ways – what their colonisers try to make them do. Some times, the tighter the grip, the more easily a concept may slip through the hands of its colonisers, disappearing from reach. This is also the case with the concept of organisation proposed here. Insofar as organisation is continuously caught up with and disrupted by nonorganisation, which is beyond boundaries and beyond purpose, this concept of organisation cannot be employed in a quest for more organisation. In other words, nonorganisation means that this concept of organisation, as long as it is taken on its own monstrous terms and not conflated with something else, is out of bounds for the colonisers in mainstream organisation theory and management consultancy because it resists and escapes co-optation.

Attempts to colonise, co-opt and capitalise on the monstrous have a long history in the circuses, side shows and freak shows touring the towns and villages of Western

⁵³ Cf. e.g. Burrell and Morgan's (1979) discussion of the Marxist concept of alienation being co-opted by functionalist organisation theory and management to be turned into a seemingly innocent matter of job design.

countries. The popularity of these events is related to a strong fascination with monstrous and grotesque bodies, which, found both disturbing and attractive, constitute a *mysterium tremendum et fascinatum*. Fred Wilson from Somerville, Massachusetts, who was known as “Lobster Boy Fred Wilson”, remains one of the most famous examples of the monstrous body (see fig. 8.1). In his classic film *Freaks* (1932), the gay Hollywood director Tod Browning (whose fascination with monstrous and grotesque bodies is also evident in his making of the movies *Dracula* (1931) and *Mark of the Vampire* (1935)) portrays for a mainstream audience a number of people regarded as having monstrous bodies. Browning’s movie is not, however, simply an attempt to make money on or contribute to the further ridicule and stigmatisation of these people. Rather, Browning sought to make a sympathetic portrayal of them where we see famous “freaks” such as the opera-singing Siamese twins Daisy and Violet Hilton and “The Bearded Lady” Olga Roderick in everyday situations (see figures 8.2 and 8.3). Tami Gold’s movie *Juggling Gender* (1992), which is a loving portrait of Jennifer Miller (a lesbian performer who lives her life with a full beard), does in some way continue Browning’s tradition. The movie, which portrays Miller both in the everyday and during stage performances, explores the fluidity of gender, raises important questions about the construction of sexual and gender identity, and draws attention to the difficulty of defining anyone as either masculine or feminine. Moreover, it shows that Miller, who often is mistaken for a man, handles these experiences with the wit and intelligence that characterise her stage performances (see

fig. 8.4). I take much inspiration from Browning, Gold and Miller in my own attempt to develop a monstrous organisation theory with a monstrous concept of organisation. Rather than lending the notions of nonorganisation and nonorganisational embodiment to managerialist projects of colonisation, co-optation and capitalisation, I seek to maximise their very monstrosity as a means to do something new and radical at the frontiers of organisation theory.



(Figure 8.1: "Lobster Boy Fred Wilson from Somerville, Massachusetts, as a young man in the 1890s)



(Figure 8.2: The opera-singing Siamese twins Daisy and Violet Hilton on stage)



(Figure 8.3: "The Bearded Lady" Olga Roderick)



(Figure 8.4: Jennifer Miller performing on stage)

A third criticism of this monstrous and nonorganisational concept of organisation would be to consider it dualistic, as it construes organisation and nonorganisation as extremities along a continuum. Similar criticism could be raised against the work of Deleuze and Guattari (1988), where they for example oppose the “body without organs” to the “organism”, the “nomad” to the “State”, “Go!” to “chess”, the “rhizome” to the “tree”, and against Deleuze’s (1994) sole-authored works, where he for example differentiates between “differentiation” and “differenciation” and between the “real-possible” and the “virtual-actual”. But insofar as these constellations are dualistic, they are not so in a Hegelian sense. No attempt is made to synthesise them and no attempt is made to keep them absolutely separate. Rather,

these “ideal” terms are employed in order to enable new and monstrous movements in thought; such movement might make it possible to take things to their extremes and show how much things differ from one another, and they might enable us to see how different things (such as organisation, nonorganisation and embodiment) interact without being reduced to one another. If this monstrosity is dualism, I do not have any problem with my conceptualisation of organisation, nonorganisation and embodiment being called dualistic.

The monstrous and nonorganisational concept of organisation therefore has much to offer. And what it has to offer is more significant than the dangers attributed to its use. Moreover, it is not just a concept. As I argued in chapter 3, Deleuze and Guattari’s (1994) understanding of philosophy as the creation and invention of concepts does not mean that concepts are to be created in isolation from the rest of the world, just for the sake of creating concepts. Deleuze and Guattari’s understanding of philosophy puts philosophy in close contact with non-philosophy and it puts concepts in close contact with pre-conceptual and post-conceptual problems. With regards to the Deleuzian or DeleuzoGuattarian philosophy of organisation proposed here, which is an attempt to work with and redevelop organisation theory as a monstrous organisation theory, this means that any new concept of organisation must be created in relation to empirical problems. Simply philosophising about the ways in which nonorganisation and nonorganisational embodiment disrupt the boundaries of organisation is insufficient. It is most crucial that one also pursues empirical studies of how nonorganisation and nonorganisational embodiment disrupt the boundaries of organisation. This might include, among other things, studies of subcultures, gender and sexuality, disease and illness, age, fitness and disability, be it through the examples of the transgendered,

sadomasochistic, lesbian, anorexic and health freak bodies referred to above, or through other monstrous examples. In any case, more in-depth studies of these and other activities would provide a non-philosophical account of how nonorganisational bodies disrupt the boundaries that organisational regimes – such as the New Public Health – seek to impose on people's lifestyles.

The spectrum of non-philosophical research akin to this monstrous philosophy of organisation is broad. Other non-philosophical studies to be pursued might include inquiries into how sexually different and deviant bodies disrupt the organisational boundaries, not only of public health, but also of the legal system, religious institutions and the dominant norms of society as a whole. Yet other non-philosophical studies might inquire into how youth subcultures might disrupt the organisational purpose and boundaries of the tube station, the shopping mall and the public square, for example by hanging around rather than purchasing a ticket, shopping or passing through on their way to work or school. Of course, such studies must be carried out in relation to a serious concern with the actual regimes that seek to organise the bodies and movements, thoughts and actions of the people in question. And they must be carried out in relation to some theoretical concern with the monstrous and nonorganisational concept of organisation, concerns that might take us beyond Deleuze and Guattari and the other writers used here. There is for example a strong sense of nonorganisation in ancient Greek, Norse and other mythologies, where boundary-disruptions are identified in the relations between women and men, humans and plants, gods and animals, so as to construct fascinating and unusual monstrosities. Similar monstrosities might also be identified in Actor-Network Theory, science fiction, the Great European Novel, cinema, queer theory and feminism, and these can

certainly inform a future monstrous philosophy of organisation, nonorganisation and embodiment.

All this means that the task of this monstrous organisation theory or philosophy of organisation is a complex one. In order for it to be able to deal with non-philosophical problems of everyday life and embodiment, problems whose nonorganisational character disrupt the boundaries of organisation, it must also pursue empirical studies such as the ones sketched out above. It is never a question of *either* philosophy *or* non-philosophy, *either* organisation *or* nonorganisation. For this organisation theory and philosophy of organisation to deal with the problem of the body, it must be a question of philosophy *and* non-philosophy, organisation *and* nonorganisation. It is from this monstrous starting point that it becomes possible to recognise the limitations of organisation and the power of embodiment.

This monstrous organisation theory also carries a practical message for the practice of everyday life. Albeit developed in terms of a philosophy of organisation, it encourages us to live differently – and in monstrosity – in and out of the workplace. It encourages us to change our habits and open up and experiment with our own bodies so as to pursue unusual, heterogeneous and monstrous relationships with other bodies that are not governed by organisation.

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