
On the Medicalisation of Welfare

Towards a genealogy of dependency

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requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

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Summary

The thesis combines genealogical investigation with an 'analytics of government' to diagnose present reforms of Australian Social Security. The Australian example poses a new diagram of knowledge/power relations linked to early nineteenth century debates on pauperism and poor policy. Characteristic of 'advanced' liberal government, social welfare is transformed from an income redistribution scheme to a behaviour modification regime. This raises serious implications for contemporary citizenship, subjectification and the apparent flexibility of wage-labour. By re-tracing modern welfare's conditions of possibility, the present is reconstructed to breach the naturalness and self-evidence with which we accept the current crisis of welfare as problems of 'community', 'dependency' and 'participation'. The case is made that present control strategies rapidly recycle clients into flexible wage-labour via human technologies that seek the ethical and moral reconstruction of the poor. But diagnosis is a limited enterprise if it fails to consult the experiences of those to which these reforms are applied. A discursive analysis of 12 interview participants deemed 'at risk' of welfare dependency explores themes of labour market activity, welfare regulation and practices of freedom to understand how welfare subjects manage and transform their lives. Interviews confirm the existence of discourses that reinscribe distinctions between the deserving and undeserving poor, intensify stigma of welfare receipt, and increase ambivalence about labour market security. Furthermore, a psychological subject emerges as one of two positions: it reactivates the pathologies of abject sectors of the population, while shoring-up capacities for rational self-management. Arguably, psychology has become a key technology for the ethical reconstruction of conduct and the calculated management of risk. Discourses of poverty are now recast as problems of 'the excluded' as welfare rationalities monitor and prevent behaviours that lead to market passivity. Like early nineteenth century statements on poverty, citizenship is now conditional upon moral improvement. And while neo-classical solutions have succeeded in moving the welfare debate away from contradictions of political economy, welfare reform risks producing a sector of the population that is low paid, casualised, under-protected from risk, insecure and desocialised.

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On the Medicalisation of Welfare

Towards a genealogy of dependency

Introduction: medicalisation of welfare

In November 1999, the Australian Federal minister for Family and Community Services, Senator Jocelyn Newman, released a discussion paper on the Federal Government's proposal to reform the Australian welfare system. The paper, titled: *The challenge of welfare dependency in the 21st century*, signalled the Government's intention to combat the growing incidence of 'welfare dependency' among people of workforce-age. Statistical indicators outlining 'the impact of long-term dependency' showed a steady increase of the workforce-age population in receipt of income support (from approx. 10% in 1978 to 18% in 1998), despite sharp falls in unemployment rates since 1993 (over 10.5% in 1993 to 7.8% in 1998). Further, in June 1998, there was a reported four and three-quarter million Australians receiving income support payments, representing a five-fold increase since 1965 (Newman, 1999a; 1999b). Excluding those in receipt of payment above retirement age, or an additional 400,000 receiving student assistance, there were estimated to be over two and a quarter million people receiving some form of income assistance in other categories. The most significant categories comprise of those receiving unemployment allowances (35%), Disability Support Pension (24%) or Parenting Payment (27%). These three categories of welfare assistance constitute the groups most 'at risk' of long-term dependency, and form the main objects around which the future of Australia welfare is reformed.

The past few decades have witnessed a disproportionate expansion of these three target groups – the unemployed, the chronically ill/disabled, and the lone parent – where the number of single parents receiving payments has increased by a factor of twelve since 1965; those receiving the Disability Support Pension have increased fivefold; and those on unemployment allowances have increased by a factor of sixty (ie. from 13,000 in the mid-sixties to 790,000 by 1998). At present, the commonwealth government spends approximately 50 billion each year on welfare payments, representing a third of all government expenditure. However, since the 1960's, welfare expenditure has risen much

faster than rates of population, economy and government revenue. Peter Saunders, Research Manager for the Australian Institute of Family Studies, provides a succinct summary of the current problem facing the Howard Government:

Today, more than 18 percent of the population of workforce age is receiving income support payments as compared with just 3% in the early- and mid-sixties... GDP per head has doubled since 1960, the real value of taxes has tripled, but the real cost of welfare spending has gone up five-fold. It is not difficult to see why the government is worried about these trends (2000, p.15).

For Senator Newman (1999a), these statistical indicators give existence to what she describes as 'our entrenched culture of welfare dependency' which, despite being a burden to governments and communities, also diminishes one's capacity to 'participate fully in society'. Long term dependency leads to the 'erosion of work skills, lower incomes, poorer health and risk of isolation from the community' (Newman, 1999a, p.6). For these reasons, the term 'welfare dependency' has formed the centrepiece of government discussion and the central problematic by which to justify the Howard government's commitment to welfare reform.

Arguably, since the expansion of eligibility in the 1960's and 70's, and the wave of neo-liberal critiques in the 80's and 90's, the recent practices focused on 'welfare dependency' have achieved legitimacy by adopting a return to more traditional assumptions of reform. Political rhetoric resurrects the old dichotomy of the 'deserving' and 'undeserving poor' in a context where the distinction between the 'genuinely needy' and the 'incorrigibly idle' are increasingly blurred. As such, welfare dependency has the commonsense appeal of conjuring immutable stereotypes of a welfare system inundated with 'free-riders', 'dole-bludgers' and 'single mothers' who exploit the common good for their own selfish purposes. This is certainly the image Senator Newman conveyed in her speech for the launch of the government's reform initiatives:

Where there is a genuine failure of the labour market and people are unable to find employment despite their best efforts, the community, must and should provide income support. However, there are examples around Australia where job opportunities are available and our entrenched culture of welfare dependency has meant that certain members of our community are not only prepared, but feel entitled to exploit the social safety net instead. In doing so, they abuse the essential decency of the Australian community and undermine public confidence in the integrity of the social security system (Newman, 1999b, p.5-6).

In the current climate of reform, the re-emergence of assumptions predating the 1960's clearly invoke a moral contempt for those whose reliance upon income support exceeds anything other than short durations of assistance. In the new millennium, welfare dependency has become a keyword among government rhetoric, describing a universal deficiency, or more precisely, a chronic passivity that forms a self-destructive reliance on income support. The cost of welfare dependency presents major social and economic consequences. Economically, the drain on government expenditure undermines the existing system of assisting the genuinely needy, and, socially, it supports a sector of worklessness which leads to erosion of work skills, lower incomes, poorer health and isolation from community.

It is the conviction of the following thesis that the appearance of welfare dependency marks a distinct moment in contemporary strategies of advanced liberal governance, wherein a kind of remoralisation of the poor resurrects nineteenth century statements on the regulation of poverty and idleness. There are numerous questions that can be raised in relation to this phenomenon, but the kind I wish to develop here concern a method of critique that is necessarily twofold in its application: it takes the 'politics of the present' as the object of diagnosis, and establishes the conditions of political thought and action as a matter of historical inquiry. We must therefore ask ourselves what political objectives and strategies do the *production* of welfare dependency serve? And, what are the *conditions of possibility* by which this form of political argument is rendered intelligible? The remainder of the introduction constructs both a platform and an overview of how the thesis addresses these questions. The first task is to reconstruct problematisations of welfare reform in ways that make it amenable to empirical enquiry. Secondly, I provide an overview of the form of the argument as it relates to both parts of the thesis; and, lastly, I give a brief sketch of the contents of each chapter.

Problematizing welfare reform

The appearance of welfare dependency in 1999 marks a tactical event in the history of Australian political thought inasmuch as it forecasts a strategy for restructuring the welfare system. This event is 'tactical' because it claims to discover a phenomenon that

threatens to undermine the ethos of ‘fairness’ that once defined the Australian way of life. Frank Castles (1985) once coined Australia the ‘wage earners’ welfare state’ to describe how welfare provision serves as a liberal reward offered in return for citizens’ participation in the labour market (Thomson, 2000). Welfare dependency is antithetical to principles of fairness and participation, but even more than this it constitutes a form of resistance to the principles of freedom which, I will argue, increasingly define contemporary citizenship. The figure of the welfare dependent is an aberration of freedom, a particular discovery of an ‘anti-citizen’, which must be reformed and reintegrated back into the normal, moral circuits of work, family and community. Beyond its natural and rhetorical appeal, the thesis begins by asking: what political rationalities, strategies and regimes of intelligibility inform current initiatives of the Coalition government? If the discovery of welfare dependency is a particular *problematization of conduct* then what is the solution? I will return to these questions later in the section. but for now I want to outline the empirical strategy for reconstructing this problematisation.

To be clear, the purpose of the thesis is to conduct a kind of interrogation of the present. This mode of interrogation draws from Foucauldian principles of critical-historical reflection that refers to the present as an historical plane of thought and action. Foucault himself referred to this project as ‘an ontology of the present’ (1986a, p.96), a decomposition of those certainties that otherwise frame the self-evidence of our historical location in the present. An ontology of the present begins by posing questions that allow us to detach ourselves from the naturalness of these certainties, to disturb the normative terrain of knowledge and interrupt the implicit seduction of continuity, identity and teleology. But the present also forms an object of ‘diagnosis’, that is, by taking the appearance of welfare dependency as both a *symptom* and a point of departure for interrogating our contemporary regimes of truth.

With this project in mind, there are two questions addressed by the thesis: why do present reforms of the Australian welfare system take the *form* that they do? And, what are the *effects* of these reforms? The first question demands an interrogation of the historical conditions through which it has become possible to invoke arguments of

dependency. The second question addresses the materiality of these effects upon subjectivity and experience. The first question specifies current problematisations of social welfare as the basis for conducting an 'historical ontology'. The second question builds on the first by exploring the impact of reform upon practices of 'subjectification'. The thesis is therefore composed of two parts – a history of the present and an interpretive analysis of subject-formation – together they form the basis of conducting a diagnosis of the politics of the present.

Nonetheless, if diagnosis is what combines both thesis questions under one mode of inquiry, then what precisely are we diagnosing? On this point, I refer to the kind of Foucauldian sociology conducted by governmentality theorists, the most exemplary of which is the work of Nikolas Rose. For Rose, the role of diagnosis is a kind of empirical investigation that applies 'an analytics of governmentality' to investigate how various regimes of truth constitute relations of knowing and acting (1999a, p.19). Rose draws his own sociology of the present from Foucault's work on the history of governmentality which traces 'the ensemble formed by institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, the calculations and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific albeit complex form of power' (Foucault, 1991, p.102). In other words, the diagnostic role of empirical investigation is nothing less than an analytics of political power.

The work of Rose and that of other governmentality scholars (Miller & Rose, 1990, 1991; Osborne, 1994, 1996; Burchell, 1991, 1993; Castell, 1991; Dean, 1991, 1992, 1994, 1995; Barry, 1996; Hindess, 1993, 1996, 1997; O'Malley, 1992, 1996, 1998; Walters, 1994, 1996, 1997) extends Foucault's hypotheses on governmentality to show how the exercise of modern forms of political power operate precisely through our freedom. In this sense, the concept of 'government' is not, as it is normatively understood, the opposite of freedom. We should not think of government as strictly repressive, dominating and constraining. Rather, freedom is an important precondition for the exercise of political power.

Having said this, there is a persistent tension between the two questions posed by the thesis which attempt to think through a presumed division between Foucault's earlier and later work. If the first part of the thesis invokes a kind of Foucauldian inspired historical sociology of political power, the same cannot be said for the second part. Analyses of subjectification do not sit well with governmentality studies since it is argued by the latter that subjectivity is merely the effect of an ensemble of power, in which case analysis should privilege the apparatuses, assemblages and practices through which subjectivity is produced and regulated (Rose, 1996a). In line with those arguments extended by critical psychologists (Henriques, et al., 1984), the local and specific character of subjectivity also provides an important site for understanding 'how people live and transform their lives' (Walkerline et al., 2001, p.15) and conceptualising strategies for political engagement and social change (Stephenson, 2003).

Critical psychology proposes that the subject is more than the sum total of all positions in discourse since birth (Henriques et al., 1984). The issue, then, is how modes of subjection form the subject as an *assemblage* of multiple and contradictory sites and relays of power whereby subjects engage in complex practices and techniques of self-management. In this sense, welfare reform is linked to what Foucault (1988a) described towards the end of his career as the 'technologies of the self'¹. In Part II of the thesis, I take the experiences of twelve interview participants as the basis for investigating practices of subjectification. Here, an analysis of subject-formation proceeds in two directions: it examines how contemporary welfare politics, with their principles of mutual obligation and social participation, intervene in practices of subject-formation to promote, seduce or compel active citizenship; in another sense, I want to investigate the local and specific instances in which subjects, in the name of various techniques of the self, styles of self-reflection, aspirations of autonomy, freedom and virtue, engage in practices of self-management for the active construction of ethical life. It is my argument that to fully

¹ 'Technologies of the self' are primarily techniques 'which permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thought, conduct and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality' (Foucault, 1988a, p.18).

understand the phenomenon of ‘welfare dependency’, we need to combine genealogy with an account of the specific production of welfare subjects.

Given that the thesis traces European events which led to the formation of state welfare, the following work assembles a unique collection of scholarship – from Foucauldian genealogies of the social, to governmentality studies and critical psychology – all of which are applied to a set of policies and arguments made in the present. If there is an original contribution to be made here it is the way genealogy decomposes the certainty of recent policy statements which seek to remoralise the conduct of the poor. Further, the thesis brings together historical arguments about pauperism, poor policy, and social medicine with a genealogy of the social in a way not undertaken before. This allows us to trace the liberal transformation of government and to show the place of the subject of welfare within it. But genealogy is only a partial contribution if it cannot link these claims to contemporary problems of experience. In a way that is quite unique for genealogical work, the thesis combines policy critique with a detailed investigation of subject-formation. By inviting subjects to make an object of their experience, narrative analysis reveals complex conditions of subjectification which are themselves symptoms of broader processes of social and economic change.

Form of the argument

In this section, I want to outline the form of my historical argument undertaken in chapters 2 to 6. The point here is to construct the ‘event’ of welfare dependency in Australia as an assemblage – a complex, polyvalent terrain of diverse elements, personages, rationalities, practices and linkages – an event that begins to lose its familiarity, necessity and identity. To put it succinctly: the event of welfare dependency forms both an object and a question for which a method of decomposition investigates the antecedent conditions that frame the current intelligibility of welfare reform.

Historical argument

I admit, it may seem odd to undertake genealogical work which takes the events of Europe and Britain as the basis of critical historical reflection rather than those pertaining to nineteenth century Australia welfare. The reason for this is because the present work

traces an event in Britain which marks something of a revolution of administration, a decisive break from the past, whereby new human and intellectual technologies were assembled for the purpose of creating a utopian market economy. My argument is that the 'invention of poverty' is something that precedes the events of Australian welfare, and yet would later come to structure the field of possibilities by which its own domain of state assistance emerged. In short, the thesis seeks to understand the *liberal transformation of government as the conditions of possibility for welfare reform in Australia*. It is, I believe, the task of retracing these events that enables the genealogist to empirically engage in a diagnosis of our present.

The historical argument I develop begins with a departure from those normative and conventional accounts of the origins of modern welfare. It is easy, for instance, to recover at least two kinds of historical accounts that bear a common origin. The most natural and familiar accounts locate the birth of modern welfare among liberal reforms of the 1830's and 1840's where centralised government systematically addressed the problem of poverty and industrialism with the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 (Roberts, 1960; Bruce, 1968; Fraser, 1973). From these accounts welfare emerged as a domain of public assistance, the effect of social policies that sought to intervene in the affairs of the state. In other accounts, these reforms were not attributed to any conscious formation of welfare which, after all, contained elements of social and economic regulation that were decidedly non-welfarist, but nonetheless instrumental to the formation of the modern nation state with its stronger emphasis upon economic regulation and central governance (Gilbert, 1966; Clark, 1966, 1967; Richards, 1980).

Both histories presuppose the conjunction of the state and welfare through centrally administered and professionally informed systems of health and public assistance. The origins of social welfare, then, are thought to lie among those formative acts where the state intervenes in matters of destitution, sickness and squalor. But as Hewitt (1991) observes, these dominant historical narratives also 'presuppose a break between welfare's pre-history and its substantive history' (p.236). Prior to the emergence of the modern state, social welfare lacks any clearly identifiable existence. This period is further

occluded by a whole tradition of post-war historical sociology which charted a somewhat smooth, uninterrupted passage from ancient poor law to modern welfare. For instance, Bruce (1968) locates the essence of the welfare state among Elizabethan notions of the 'common weal'; Marshall (1943), the great champion of modern welfare, traces it to the evolution of citizenship in which Elizabethan poor laws became the precocious embodiment of modern social rights; Beales (1946), on the other hand, sketches a broad societal logic where the development of social policy is thought to resemble an 'organic' process of industrialism. Each of these arguments posit the arrival of the welfare state as the end product of a determinative logic where teleology is thought to reveal an essential, global, ahistorical process played out among moral, political, economic and technological domains.

This functional and spontaneous relationship between state and welfare, and the suggestion of some underlying continuity, essence or teleology are, as they stand, unsatisfactory points for mounting a critique because each of these assumptions preserves the naturalness and necessity of our present institutions and social policies. A more decisive point of departure is found in Karl Polanyi's *The Great Transformation* (1957) where the Poor Law Reform of 1834 figures much less as a benevolent domain of public assistance than an attempt to create a utopian market economy (pp.77-110). The significance of the latter demands a different understanding of 'economic liberalism' – not the kind that holds '*laissez faire*' and 'interventionism' as mutually exclusive enterprises, but requires 'the intervention of the state in order to establish it, and once established, in order to maintain it' (Polanyi, 1957, p.149). Polanyi argues that it was not exclusively the concern for poverty that gave rise to the Poor Law Reform of 1834, but the increasingly important relationship between poverty and the self-regulating market. The Poor Law had all the effect of creating a national labour market by virtue of constituting a figure that represented an aberration to the free market economy – it was not poverty itself that formed the proper object of regulation, but the haunting pathology and moral abyss of *pauperism*. Thus, the object is not poverty but wealth.

How did nineteenth century debate on pauperism establish the conditions of existence for modern welfare? A useful response is found in Mitchell Dean's genealogical treatment of poverty that analyses the debate on pauperism as a key component in the transformation of liberal governance. In *The Constitution of Poverty* (1991), Dean applies Polanyi's observation that poverty formed the basis of a new reflection of life in terms of 'society': an emergent reality that placed pauperism and political economy in a new kind of relationship. By treating pauperism as an *event*, Dean sketches out a terrain of investigation which not only calls into question the assumptions of contemporary political rationalities, but constructs alternative trajectories of events, discourses and practices to 'increase the intelligibility of debate in our own period' (1991, p.6).

Drawing from the intellectual histories of Polanyi (1957) and J. R. Poynter (1969), Dean specifies the temporal boundaries of 1795 and 1834 as the 'event of pauperism' which marks a dramatic transformation of poor policy. The strategic implications of critique are twofold: firstly, it demonstrates the possibility of undermining the paradigm of identity and continuity, the necessity of which becomes all the more fragile if, for example, we contrast the debate on pauperism of the late eighteenth century with the passing of the Poor Law Reform in 1834; secondly, it assembles diverse and multiple elements, partial and competing references, along alternative trajectories which, in contrast to post-war accounts of welfare, strictly oppose a determinative origin or teleology (Minson, 1985). Dean expresses this point clearly when outlining the purpose of his inquiry: 'If this study seeks to 'eventalise' pauperism, it is because pauperism-as-event reveals something more than is found in inexorable logics which serve only to reassure us of the necessity and virtue of current forms of state and its policies' (1991, p.5). By returning to debates on pauperism and re-constituting the complex conditions out of which a concept of poverty emerged, Dean shows that the origins of welfare are not reducible to histories of ideology, morality or economics but transposed into a set of competing rationalities, practices and techniques for governing the poor. What he proposes is not a simple or uniform transformation of state assistance, but a complex and meticulous reconstruction in terms of practices of *government*.

The historical argument I develop here revisits Polanyi's thesis to show how the problem of poverty found temporary resolution among *laissez faire* principles of free market economy. This was not a spontaneous or purely functional encounter between welfare and the state, but one that was systematically enforced by liberal techniques of government: 'Economic history reveals that the emergence of national markets was in no way the result of a gradual and spontaneous emancipation of the economic sphere from governmental control. On the contrary, the market has been the outcome of a conscious and often violent intervention on the part of government which imposed the market organisation on society for noneconomic ends' (Polanyi, 1957, p.250). The invention of pauperism was itself a tactic in the production of economic life; the pauper was the anti-thesis of the new requirements for the free market economy – independence, self-discipline and economic responsibility. The task is to therefore locate the origins of welfare at the intersection of pauperism and political economy. For this reason it becomes absolutely necessary to reconstruct Dean's event of pauperism and investigate the administrative discourses and practices that sought to make the self-regulating market a utopian reality.

But where Dean eventualises pauperism to increase the intelligibility of welfare rationalities up to the early 1990's, the argument I develop in part one of the thesis diagnoses more recent examples of welfare reform. Each chapter begins with an event and a question formed in the present, and pertains to different policy aspects of welfare reform in Australia. For example, chapters 2-6 explore the 'governing statements' of policy development since the mid 80's, and focuses more closely on the arguments of the 'McClure Report' which was recently commissioned by the present Howard government to explore future directions of welfare reform. The strategic purpose of each chapter is to identify and isolate key technologies, political rationalities and technical practices that form the present ensemble of power relations as they pertain to current problematisations of Australian welfare reform. Contemporary welfare policy are used as points of departure with which to revisit Dean's event of pauperism to illustrate the historical conditions by which these arguments are structured in the present.

Genealogy, however, must proceed with caution. Some policy experts and economic historians are keen to observe the strong parallels between the political arguments surrounding the establishment of social welfare in the early nineteenth century, and the current push by neo-liberal and neo-conservative politicians who now campaign for the de-regulation of welfare and the privatization of employment services by way of moral and market-based arguments. Indeed, there would seem to be a strong case for stating that current welfare policies produce the same kind of moral statements about the poor and unemployed as were made by poor law reformers in the first half of the nineteenth century. This analogy is so compelling that some are tempted to view present welfare politics as a return to the principles of 1834 (Block & Somers, 2003; Quigley, 1998; Kern, 1998). The present historical analysis eschews making the same kind of statements. Rather than resemblance, genealogy attends to a meticulous analysis of the irreducible singularity and particularity of statements, discourses and practices relating to poverty. The argument made here is that what seems like a startling resemblance, or a return to nineteenth century politics, is in fact the *reactivation* of arguments that were first established by utilitarian and *laissez faire* interventionism. We are not doomed to repeat the past, but rather forced to put into circulation the frames of reference that were first established by classical liberal thought.

But in making the argument that present welfare rationalities are a reactivation of the past, there is a risk of fabricating a continuity that is at odds with genealogy. Genealogy, after all, is concerned with dispelling the chimera of the origin and dislodging events from where there is a 'temptation to invoke a historical constant, an immediate anthropological trait, or an obviousness that imposes itself uniformly on all' (Foucault, 2000b, p.226). The problem is how does one think in terms of discontinuities while at the same time analyse the present in terms of its conditions of possibility. Again, genealogy must proceed with caution. In stipulating a reactivation – a term that Foucault (1978) himself uses to conceptualise the limits and forms of a discursive formation – is not the same as stipulating an unalterable resemblance of statements from one historical event to another. It is not the same discourse of the pauper, for instance, that reappears some one hundred and fifty years later in the form of the welfare dependent. So without invoking a

continuity, then, there must be a case for arguing that current strategies of power draw on an array of discursive resources – morality, economics, statistics, psychology – to mobilise a politics of conduct which draw from distant memories of what is both loathsome and familiar. Reactivation is not a resemblance, a recurrence or a ‘primitive foundation’ but the recapitulation of arguments which find their conditions of emergence among nineteenth century debates on pauperism.

As it stands, the thesis is both a continuation of, and a departure from, Mitchell Dean’s work in the sense that what I hope to achieve is the decomposition of a different problematic regarding the politics of the present. The politics of medicalisation, community, risk and dependency are expected to establish the conditions of existence of those strategies which seek to de-emphasise poverty and assemble in its place programmes for the remoralisation of conduct. The present investigation shows that the historical constitution of poverty can be alternatively read in terms of ‘government’, in which case the complex linkages between discourse, policies and practices of poor administration are utilised to increase the intelligibility and contestability of welfare reform in our own period. The work of genealogy highlights the punitive, illiberal and unsavoury origins of social policy in such ways that reject the putative assumption that rational mastery of the human world was an inevitable and benevolent project. The case is made that the possibility of welfare resides among all those legislative and intellectual attempts to create a national labour market, and transform human labour into a commodity.

Reforming subjectivity

In the first part of the thesis, the aim is to investigate the conditions of existence by which the present politics of welfare is transformed by medicalising technologies of administration. What I refer to as the ‘medicalisation of welfare’ is more or less a diagnosis of a configuration of power relations which take subjectivity as the basis of remoralisation and ethical reconstruction. In the second part, an analytics of subjectification examines the effects of a new kind of conditionality that highlights the ethical formations and self-technologies found among narratives of welfare recipients.

It is important to stipulate that while an analytics of subjectification reveals certain ethical formations and self-technologies that are indeed manifestations of contemporary political power, we cannot simply read off these narratives as general features of advanced liberal democracies. Rather we should understand these narratives as symptoms of a particular sector in which ethical forms of self-governance and self-management are posed as solutions to problems of security, well-being, autonomy and responsibility. In the Australian case of reform, welfare recipients reveal a range of techniques and procedures that mix coercion, exhortation and constant surveillance to produce active forms of citizenship. But income support presupposes a position where ethical activity is already precarious or impossible to achieve, in which case narratives confirm an intensification of moral management, self-blame, ambivalence, and psychological reconstruction. We should therefore understand these ethical practices of self-formation as a sector in which subjects are governed through their freedom.

The group of welfare recipients comprised those who, from the point of welfare authorities, are, or have been, at risk of welfare dependency. The group falls into three governmental categories of assistance: those receiving unemployment benefits in the form of Newstart Allowance, women in receipt of Parenting Payment, and those whose incapacity qualifies them for Disability Pension. The ages of the sample range from 19 years to 50 years, and cover a range of practices in which the nature of work and welfare has undergone considerable change. Six female and six male participants were recruited for the study, reflecting a range of differences in educational attainment, demography (ie. whether they lived in the country or the city), ethnicity and duration of welfare receipt. With the exception of 'Mike', a 50 year old male whose educational trajectory marked a professional career as a successful and celebrated journalist, the sample conformed, in a quite striking way, to personal histories of low-skilled, casual employment².

² I am mindful that we might think of the commonality of recipient experiences in terms of social class. And while such a classification would enable us to theorise historical, cultural and structural differences in the way that subjectivity is experienced and managed, the present work does not draw on class analysis. But this is not to ignore a growing body of post-foundational, feminist scholarship which investigates the discursive production of experience precisely in terms of class (Blackman, 1996; Skeggs, 1997; Lawler, 1999; Walkerdine, Lucey & Melody, 2001). The genealogical dimension of the present work, however, attempts to show how the historical category of 'the poor' is just as effective in making sense of the experiences of welfare recipients.

So, what kind of effects would medicalisation have on the production of subjectivity? We know, for instance, the radical overhaul of the Australian welfare system since 1993 has meant that welfare recipients have to perform certain kinds of activity in order to remain eligible for income support. The writing of job diaries, regular interviews with case managers, and the development of 'soft skills' that encourage recipients to improve relationships skills, to engage in career counselling and manage self-presentation, are consistent with new preventive strategies for accessing the self-regulating capacities of individuals. Again, this is expected to elicit forms of responsibility, moral and psychological adjustment, to cultivate forms of motivation and self-esteem, and develop an ethic of work to increase one's employability. Arguably, the present conditions of assistance are designed to elicit the self-managing capacities for whom psychological training ensures the moral reformation of self, the ethical reconstruction of will, so that recipients might be reinserted into relations of family, work and community.

In another sense, the medicalisation of welfare is expected to produce its own highly medicalised forms of resistance, in which case welfare recipients are left no other option but to identify themselves as sick and in need of medicalised treatment so as to meet the eligibility requirements of income support. Welfare recipients are therefore encouraged to assemble themselves in such ways that are intelligible to medical and psychological inquiry. In terms of subjectification, these effects may either be *repressive* or *constitutive*, meaning that medicalising discourses are either met by forms of resistance that imitate and exploit medical discourses, or recipients literally reconfigure themselves as medical and psychological subjects. Whatever the reason for reproducing medicalising discourses, the medicalisation of welfare becomes a self-legitimizing phenomenon: the medicalisation of eligibility reproduces the very object it claims to resolve.

There are three themes that are explored in terms of the production and regulation of welfare subjects. The first relates to 'activity', in which case analysis seeks to answer the following question: 'How are neo-liberal subjects transformed into welfare dependents?' Analysis of subjectification draws from different familial, demographic, educational and

labour-market statements that are expected make up the experience of active citizenship. Rather than taking the theme of activity as a taken-for-granted category of socially responsible participation, the strategy is to show how activity is at times rendered contradictory, problematic, or even fails to conform with the life-conduct of rational, enterprising subjects. The strategy is to re-politicise the domain of labour-market activity to show how subjectivity is capable of being read in ways that refuse the kind of autonomous and rational decision-making implied by welfare policy.

The second theme addressed in this section examines the forms of 'regulation' employed by welfare programmes to elicit ethical conduct as well as the kinds of technologies individuals utilise to manage their experiences. The questions addressed here are: 'How are subjects regulated as welfare dependents?' and 'How do welfare recipients manage their subjectivity?' The point is to show that transformation is effected by various practices which solicit and compel individuals to realise their obligations to community and restore the kind of self-regarding behaviour synonymous with economic participation. The domain of welfare regulation employs a range of preventive techniques that embody the deterrent functions of nineteenth century poor-relief. But beyond the old enclosures of 'disciplinary society', we find modern welfare programmes also operate through techniques of 'modulation', where control is designed into new circuits of obligation and activity. The recent turn towards more Deleuzian inspired conceptions of modulation are perhaps better suited to explaining contemporary forms of power which increasingly function via information technology and electronic network surveillance (Hardt, 1998; Massumi, 1998; Rose, 1999a). We are no longer simply 'disciplined' according to the fixed confines of institutional spaces, but controlled among open networks of information and through continuous practices of transformation. In the case of welfare, new networks of electronic surveillance, lifelong learning and continuous obligation are designed to make the conditions of welfare less tolerable than that of independent conduct. In the words of one participant commenting on their welfare experiences: '*They [the government] are trying to intimidate people to get them off unemployment benefits*'.

The third, and final, theme in this section investigates subjectivity from the point of 'freedom'. If neo-liberalism takes the liberty of individuals as central to the project of governance, then notions of freedom are expected to operate as potent fantasies of self-formation. Notions of 'autonomy', 'independence', 'self-determination' and 'self-realisation' exemplify aspirational fantasises of a self projected into the future, the kinds of persons we are expected to become or in a state of becoming. This notion of *fantasy*³ is central to understanding how 'government of the self' – whether by external authorities, via cultural norms, or through forms of governance exercised by the self over the self – operates through certain fictions, expectations and demands to be free subjects. Welfare is almost certainly the domain where subjects are thought to lack the capacity to be free. The thesis raises a number questions that address the tension between fantasies and counter-narratives of freedom. For instance, 'what is the price paid by those who, for one reason or another, are incapable of autonomous activity? 'How do fantasises of welfare subjects demonstrate the impossibility of freedom in a context where freedom, through secure and reliable work, is no longer guaranteed?' These questions approach the new conditionality of citizenship: that one must be free in order to gain full citizenship rights, and for those who are disadvantaged, who bear the signs of personal failure and pathology, are subject to continuous monitoring and obligation. In this sense, participant statements are expected to reveal some of the value judgements implicit within welfare regulation, and demonstrate the structural difficulties in which labour-markets, communities and mentors of participation fail to deliver the promise of freedom.

As subjects are increasingly caught up in the machinery of the new welfare administration, medical discourses are expected to have a constitutive effect on subjectivity; that is to say, medical discourses may well succeed in reinscribing the invidious distinctions of medical and psychological pathologies. In this case, medicalisation will reinscribe the marginal status of low-income persons and

³ The term fantasy is used here within very particular conceptual limits. Rather than the expression of unconscious material via a psychodynamic conception of the subject, I take fantasy to mean the *discursive* production of an imagined and temporally projected self. In other words, what imagined relation to the self are we capable of maintaining and through which technologies do we imagine ourselves as possible selves? This, to me, does not require a psychoanalytic account of hidden motivations or latent desires, but a discursive account of how different relations to self emerge as practical possibilities for subjectification.

communities as incapable of providing for themselves. While these discourses are expected to integrate subjects in post-industrial society, they are also expected to mark the points of exclusion and endless regulation. Among the accounts of the excluded, marginal and abject, we find that pathology is the departure from freedom *par excellence*, becoming the fate of those who lack the resources to practice freedom. The following analysis of interview data is expected to provide a range of events, practices, and experiences that refuse to be fully reconciled by governmental discourses of participation.

Contents

The remainder of the thesis will set out to decompose the problem presented in the Introduction. Chapter 1 assembles the methodological tools of historico-critical reflection. The task is to elaborate the principles of genealogy, to examine its theoretical and philosophical underpinnings as a mode of interrogating the present. ‘Producing the present’ refers to the productive and positive characterisation of critique as a way of not only re-writing the history of social policy, but generating new ways of rethinking the relation between political power and being. The task, then, is to establish links between genealogy, governmentality and a coherent analysis of subjectification. The argument made here is that an historical ontology of the present is rendered effective insofar as left critique is capable of diagnosing the modes of regulation through which subjectivity is produced. In terms of the given problem, this involves understanding a two-way process: the transformation of neo-liberal subjects into welfare dependents, and the subsequent transformation of welfare dependents into active citizens.

Chapter 2 examines the invention of ‘society’ as a domain of institutions, practices and political processes that sought to act upon individual and collective conduct in the name of the social (Rose, 1999a; 1996c). By tracing the art of government from sovereignty up until the end of the eighteenth century, society emerges as the invention of liberal political thought. The formation of the welfare state in Britain is linked to the birth of biopolitics – the emergence of a political rationality that attended to the problems that were characteristic of a *population*, its birthrate, health, mortality, sanitation, economy, public safety, poverty, etc. The problem that confronted liberalism was one of

establishing the limits of government, and rationalising the practice of political rule in such ways that were 'anxious to have the respect of legal subjects and to ensure the free enterprise of individuals' (Foucault, 1997c, p.73). This rationalisation marked a departure from the totalising forms of administration characterised by a 'reason of state'. What is unique to liberal thought is not the government of a state, but that of a society existing as an independent realm of semi-autonomous processes. State intervention no longer conformed to a universal logic, but a series of haphazard interventions deployed locally around issues of poverty, disease, economy, criminality, etc. which increasingly assume a 'social' character. Under this new schema of governing *in terms* of the social, poverty is associated with epidemics, idleness, hygiene and sanitation, all of which emerged as a potent form of 'social danger'.

There are two sets of arguments that are developed here. First, the invention of poverty is understood as a solution to the legislative paralysis of poor-relief between 1795 and 1834 in that moral technologies of discipline sought to transform pauperism and indigence into the ethical conduct of the independent labourer. That is to say, the virtues of civil society were now embodied in the logic of economic liberalism (Dean, 1992). Under the new administration of the Poor Law of 1834, pauperism and indigence would symbolise everything that was anti-social, a transgression of the natural laws of subsistence and civility, and subject to a new regime of control and assistance. Everything that resembled dependency, contingency, pauperism, idleness and transgression would be consigned to the domain of pauper administration. The second argument attends to transformation of the social in the present. Here, a new space of governance is said to have emerged as a solution to the recent 'crisis of the welfare state'. The appearance of 'community' among contemporary policy constitutes a reshaping of the very territory of government, delineating a moral domain of family, work, and responsibility. It is argued that the social has neither diminished nor disappeared – whether from globalisation, post-industrialisation or moral decline – but is currently undergoing a process of mutation and reinvention.

Chapter 3 deals with the part that medical knowledge has played in making up the social, examining in particular the medicalisation of the poor in early nineteenth century Britain. The 'birth of social medicine' traces the development of medicalisation and its relation to the administration of life. There are three stages in the formation of social medicine: first, state medicine, then urban medicine, and finally, labour force medicine. As this trajectory of medicalisation implies, the body was not the first object to be subjected to medical power, rather it was the administration of the state, and the health of populations under which this administration applied. Under state medicine that developed primarily in Germany in the beginning of the eighteenth century, we find the conditions under which the doctor assumes the power of an administrator of the state. The appearance of the 'medical police', for instance, illustrates the close links between medical and political knowledge. The poor, which had long been an object of the police, become subject to medical observation insofar as it was an object of the state. It was not until the development of the city and the expansion of urban structures, however, that the problem of poverty was associated with overcrowding, epidemic phenomena, and sources of urban disturbances.

The transformation of 'the poor' into objects of poverty is made complete with the final development of social medicine: 'labour force medicine'. Under labour force medicine 'the problem of the sickness of the poor' emerges from the relationship of labour supply to the demands of production. The argument is made that the medicalisation of the poor served two purposes: it guaranteed the health and wealth of the nation by optimising the health of the labour force, but in another sense it ensured that the poor would no longer constitute a medical danger to the rest of the population. This was the objective of the Poor Law of 1834: the medicalisation of the poor would enforce a system of obligatory medical controls. The Poor law of 1834 essentially converted English medicine into a social medicine insofar as this law implied a medical control of the destitute (Foucault, 2000d, pp.151-4). The direction taken here is to show how the event of pauperism is linked to the medicalisation of the poor, whereby medical knowledge specifies the sickness of the poor as a legitimate condition of poverty. The purpose of this argument is to illustrate the historical conditions out of which it is now

possible to install around the poor a preventive regime for the medicalisation of conduct. Medical knowledge is therefore an ideal technology for problematising subjectivity in terms of pathologies of will, and thereby monitoring and reshaping the ethical capacities of citizens.

Chapters 4 and 5 attend to the historical constitution of 'poverty' as a discursive category that paves the way for the establishment of a system of social welfare. First, the architecture of a 'discourse of the Poor' is traced in terms of how an object of 'the poor' featured among debates over the increasing numbers of the poor, and in relation to practical matters of transforming idleness into forms of industry and employment. The problem of the poor remained a stubborn paradox for the discourse of political oeconomy⁴ which operated under the assumption that increasing the numbers of the population would increase the 'wealth, strength and greatness of the nation'. 'Setting the poor to work' formed a practical solution for preventing idleness, and disciplining the habits of the poor, but the mechanism of the workhouse remained a continued source of criticism and failure. This was incisively illustrated by Daniel Defoe who saw in the workhouse not a solution to poverty, but a displacement of the existing system of manufacturers. For Defoe, it was not the transformation of idleness into industry, but of industry into idleness that had become ingrained in the customs and habits of the labouring poor. Various attempts were made to regulate the idleness of the poor – the doctrine of low wages, the campaigns against recreation, the proletarianisation of the labouring classes – all of which attempted to fix the poor to the apparatus of production.

In chapter 5, I discuss the emergence of a concept of poverty which marks a break with patriarchal relations of political governance, with a mercantilist tradition of political oeconomy and, more importantly, with a discourse of the poor. Poverty would emerge from the conceptual elaboration of 'population', 'economy', 'pauperism', and 'police' to define 'a *particular* condition of individuals and groups' resulting from the 'general

⁴ Political 'oeconomy' applied to a patriarchal form of household government (derived from Aristotelian accounts of 'good' management) (Tribe, 1978; Dean, 1991). For Foucault, this concern, which develops more fully in the late eighteenth century, marks the beginning of the conceptual shift towards our contemporary use of the word 'economy' to designate an autonomous region of social relations (Curtis, 2002).

condition of humankind' (Dean, 1992). Here, I argue the constitution of poverty supported the new economic discourse, 'political economy', in creating a national labour market which sealed off poverty from pauperism, and promoted the ethical ideals of the independent labourer as the exemplar of rational, moral conduct. These objectives were framed by the Poor Law of 1834, which abolished out-door relief for able-bodied men, and signalled the State's responsibility for assisting those legitimately excluded from wage-labour (eg. women and children). The new Poor Law would incorporate principles of Malthusianism – poverty was a natural and inevitable consequence of population and subsistence – and principles of Benthamism – pauperism was an aberration of the self-provision of subsistence afforded by labour. Together, Bentham's hyper-administration and Malthus' anti-administration become composite principles in the new liberal mode of government. In the current climate of welfare administration, it is argued that technologies of 'advanced' liberal government reactivate arguments about pauperism and indigence to constitute dependency as a form of 'post-industrial idleness', and thereby transform the life-conduct of the poor into active citizenship.

Chapter 6 continues the work of diagnosis by investigating key legislative events that trace recent transformations of Australian welfare policy. The argument made here is that the production of an ethical space and of technologies for accessing the relations by which the 'self maintains a relation to the self' is crucial to grasping key shifts in Australian policy. The aim is to identify the emergence of control strategies whereby reform assumed a new direction in mid-80's. Social welfare would adopt the ethos of an 'active society' in order to encourage active participation rather than passive income support. This strategic direction was extended when the Coalition Government commissioned a Reference Group to outline a framework for the reorientation of Australia's social support system in 2000. The new blueprint for reform, the McClure Report, is subject to a detailed examination of the discourses and control strategies that frame 'mutual obligation' as the centrepiece for driving the new conditionality of welfare support. The claim is made that mutual obligation principles aim to produce a sector of the labouring population that is casualised, under protected against risk, insecure and desocialised. Arguably, the contemporary politics of welfare reform is conceived as a

new organisation of power operating in the field of 'life-politics'. Contemporary politics of welfare is not to be understood as a return to these principles, but more a reactivation of arguments that were first established within a liberal framework of political governance. Part one of the thesis aims to show how nineteenth century debates about pauperism established the conditions of a liberal framework of social welfare through which it became possible to pathologise the conduct of the poor, and activate moral distinctions between the deserving and undeserving.

Chapter 7 discusses the various forms of labour-market participation among the sample of interview participants. The theme of activity seeks to understand how neo-liberal subjects are transformed into 'welfare dependents', in which case an analysis of discourse and subjectification problematises the kind of rational, autonomous conduct that underpins much of contemporary welfare policy. Chapter 9 discusses the theme of 'regulation' from the point of view of control technologies that seek to integrate, monitor and adjust the conduct of welfare recipients. The regulation of subjectivity is also examined in terms of various hybrid technologies of the self, in which case an analysis of subjectification seeks to understand how interview participants manage their subjectivity, and act on the self in the name of certain ideals, aspirations and objectives. Chapter 10 examines practices of subjectification from the point of 'freedom'. Analysis of ethical practices of self-formation serve as the basis for assessing the kinds of difficulties and contradictions subjects face in transforming themselves as free subjects. In this case, the possibility of social and economic participation, of secure, reliable and interesting work, is measured against those experiences in which subjects either exceed or fall-short of their own expectations of freedom.

The thesis embarks on unravelling the present condition of neo-liberal governance to show that the precepts upon which welfare reform are founded are neither natural nor self-evident. I am unconvinced that the active promotion of free market economy at the expense of social welfare is the *only* solution to the problem of wealth and freedom. From the point of view of history and subjectivity, I think it is entirely possible to mount a critique that questions the founding assumptions by which we are enjoined to manage

ourselves as responsible and free. The following is a work of thought that challenges the kind of political rationalities that constitute an ethical subject in the face of those uncertainties and contradictions that now characterise the competitive game of freedom. In the next section, I assemble and discuss the theoretical tools by which this challenge is undertaken.

1 Producing the present

...criticism is no longer going to be practiced in the search for formal structures with universal value but, rather, as a historical investigation into the events that have led us to constitute ourselves and to recognize ourselves as subjects of what we are doing, thinking, saying. In that sense, this criticism is not transcendental, and its goal is not that of making a metaphysics possible: it is genealogical in its design and archaeological in its method. Archaeological—and not transcendental—in the sense that it will not seek to identify the universal structures of all knowledge or of all possible moral action, but will seek to treat the instances of discourse that articulate what we think, say, and do as so many historical events. And this critique will be genealogical in the sense that it will not deduce from the form of what we are what it is impossible for us to do and to know: but it will separate out, from the contingency that has made us what we are, the possibility of no longer being, doing, or thinking what we are, do, or think. It is not seeking to make possible a metaphysics that has become a science; it is seeking to give new impetus, as far and wide as possible, to the undefined work of freedom (Foucault, 1997b, pp.315-6).

In *What is enlightenment?* Foucault presents what I think is an exemplary statement on the direction and purpose of critique. He develops this position by citing an event in eighteenth century Germany where Kant offers an original way of engaging philosophical problems. In posing the question *Was ist Aufklärung?* Kant presents a reflection on the present that neither refers to an epoch nor an omen of the future, but establishes an entirely new relationship between thought and the present. He poses the question of *Aufklärung* in a rather negative way, as a ‘way out’, an ‘exit’, from the present, to establish a relation of difference: How can we escape the present and by doing so change our very relation to it? For Foucault this event marks an important direction for the possibility of thought; he transforms Kant’s question thus: ‘What difference does today introduce with respect to yesterday?’ (1997b, p.305). Where Kant establishes the problem in terms of the immaturity of thought and its dependency on authority, for Foucault, it is a matter of working at the limits of ourselves, of establishing an ‘attitude’ rather than an epoch, that opens up historical inquiry to reflect upon the limits of contemporary existence. This is a practical critique insofar as it eschews the problem of transcendental values, and a positive ethos insofar as the relationship between thought and the present is transformed. Foucault summarises this project as follows: ‘I shall thus characterize the philosophical ethos appropriate to the critical ontology of ourselves as a historico-practical test of the limits we may go beyond, and thus as work carried out by ourselves

upon ourselves as free beings' (p.316). A 'critical ontology of ourselves' provides an important basis for mounting a critique of political power. Historical investigation not only engages in the forms of authority that make up our present, but also the myriad events of which we come to recognise ourselves as particular kinds of subjects. If the role of critique takes the present as the basis of historical problems it does so by linking complex relations of authority to problems of experience. What is at stake here is the kind of analysis that might otherwise intervene, transform or modify these relations of authority through which we become ethical subjects. Ethics is therefore central to my present inquiry.

Before launching into the theoretical framework, I want to briefly elaborate why I am using genealogy. I think there are aspects about the rationalities of contemporary welfare reform which work to remind us of what we should think, say or do about poverty and unemployability, as well as exclude and *forget* other explanations or solutions. If 'welfare dependency' has emerged as a recent crisis of the welfare state it is because certain authorities draw upon historical discourses and arguments that render these problems *familiar* – dependency, like nineteenth century arguments about pauperism, remind us that 'the problem of the poor' stems from an individual failure, an immorality or idleness that warrants popular solutions of remoralising the conduct of the poor. The prominence and familiarity with which these problems are raised and their solutions proposed are like so many tactics that persuade us to think only of the moral history of poverty. Genealogy is therefore a 'counter-memory' (Colwell, 1997), a technique that helps us recover all those minor arguments and statements of which, in our contemporary moment of government, we are at risk of forgetting. In calling this chapter 'Producing the Present'. I want to demonstrate the possibility of assembling the present differently, along intelligible and entirely plausible trajectories that might show a 'way out' from our contemporary regimes of truth.

Genealogy

What is genealogy? And what is genealogy against? Before proceeding to elaborate its technical and stylistic principles, I want to first establish some distance from the conventional mode of historiography that genealogy displaces.

It is well known that Foucault's shift to genealogy is an appropriation of Nietzsche's 'campaign against morality' through a *revaluation* of all values. This was the direction that Nietzsche sought in *Daybreak*, that is, to undertake an evaluation of the existence of moral motivations (Owen, 2003). The most commonly recognised use of the genealogical method is found in *On the Genealogy of Morals*, where history is put to work as a revolutionary critique, an examination of the origin of moral preconceptions, a mode of questioning values in terms of whether 'values have been progressive or regressive, whether values have contributed to our advancement and prosperity' (Mahon, 1992, p.95). Apart from problematising the conditions of existence of morality, Nietzsche's genealogical legacy can also be seen as problematising the place of language alongside the 'problem of man': 'By throwing into question the subject-object grammatical structure of our language, he removed human consciousness from its exalted place at the source of activity and dismantled the doer-deed model for understanding any event' (Mahon, p.100). Morality, language, power, and the subject are crucial targets of Nietzschean genealogy. Genealogy overcomes the obstacles presented by metaphysical thought and establishes the minor, relational, and concrete conditions of existence for any object or thing.

These themes are picked up and developed in Foucault's essay *Nietzsche. Genealogy. History* where he signals his explicit adoption of Nietzschean critique. For Foucault, genealogy principally rejects the pursuit of the origin (*Ursprung*): 'the meta-historical deployment of ideal significations and indefinite teleologies. It opposes itself to the search for 'origins'' (1977a, p.140). This is an important departure from the kind of essentialism that metaphysical philosophies of history presuppose; the search for origins is 'an attempt to capture the exact essence of things, their purest possibilities, and their carefully protected identities, because this search assumes the existence of immobile

forms that precede the external world of accident and succession' (p.142). The genealogist turns away from metaphysics and 'listens to history'; there is an altogether different movement animating historical processes: 'not a timeless and essential secret, but the secret that they have no essence or their essence was fabricated in a piecemeal fashion from alien forms' (p.142). The history of reason is neither an original identity nor an essential logic structuring the instantiation of events, it is fashioned by chance, devotion to truth, from the passion of scholars, their unending conflicts, discussions and spirit of competition. Having turned to the history of things, the genealogist finds 'not the inviolable identity of their origin', but rather 'the dissension of other things' (p.142).

There are two remaining postulates of the origin that genealogy seeks to disrupt. Firstly, history would have us think that the origin refers to a lofty beginning, a moment of perfection and dazzling creation. Rather than a metaphysical beginning of divine creation, origins are lowly, even derisive events. Secondly, the origin assumes an absolute, transcendental vantage point, untouched by positive knowledge; it marks a field of knowledge whose end is to recover the origin. Foucault argues for a 'new cruelty of history' that effects an overturning of the origin to show not the repetition of its recovery but 'the ancient proliferation of errors'. Genealogy dispels the chimera of the origin to reveal not the identity, essence and continuity of history, but its vicissitudes and heterogeneity, its irreducible difference and particularity – 'its jolts, its surprises, its unsteady victories and unpalatable defeats' (1977a, p.143-4).

While genealogy distances itself from metaphysics and turns to history, it likewise rejects history in its traditional form. Traditional history assumes a suprahistorical perspective: its point of view is eternal, outside of time. The traditional historian's suprahistorical perspective, desires total knowledge; he avoids the exceptional and reduces it to the lowest common denominator, and dominates those of the present with his pretensions of knowledge; he is a demagogue masked under the cloak of universals. Divided against himself, he discloses an eternal will in his object of study, rejecting his subjectivity for a higher objectivity: 'As the demagogue is obliged to invoke truth, laws of essences, and eternal necessity, the historian must invoke objectivity, the accuracy of

facts, and the permanence of the past'. To turn history to its genealogical uses, Foucault argues we must first return to the conditions of its birth, and release it from a suprahistorical perspective (Foucault, 1977a, pp.152-8).

Genealogy maintains its anti-foundational stance by dispensing with metaphysical assumptions that maintain the idea of the transcendental subject and the correspondence theory of truth (Owen, 1994); this move requires 'perverting Platonism' and therefore opposing three Platonic modalities of history:

The first is parodic, directed against reality, and opposes the theme of history as reminiscence or recognition; the second is dissociative, directed against identity, and opposes history given as continuity or representative of a tradition; the third is sacrificial, directed against truth, and opposes history as knowledge. They imply a use of history that severs its connection to memory, its metaphysical and anthropological model, and constructs a counter-memory—a transformation of history into a totally different form of time (Foucault, 1977a, p.160).

Foucault's attack on Platonism systematically dislodges genealogy from the primacy of origins, the doctrine of progress and development, and the discovery of ideal significations and original truths. The genealogist is opposed to a perspective that seeks to totalise history, to trace its internal logic of development, to recognise ourselves in a comfortable relation to the past, to offer the reassurance of an end towards which history moves (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1983). In short, there are no constants, no illusions of identity, no absolute certainties: 'Nothing in man – not even his body – is sufficiently stable to serve as the basis for self-recognition or for understanding other men' (Foucault, 1977a, p.153).

Once released from traditional history, what is left for history to do? In other words, what is genealogy? Genealogy, in contrast, is 'effective history'. Foucault invokes a different sense of 'origin' (*Herkunft*) as 'stock' or 'descent'. Genealogy as the analysis of descent identifies a trait⁵, 'the subtle, singular and subindividual marks' that form 'a network that is difficult to unravel' (Foucault, 1977a, p.145). Through the analysis of descent, genealogy reveals the miscellaneous and discontinuous nature of beginning

⁵ A 'trait' is not a category of resemblance, species, or family that might otherwise fabricate a coherent identity; rather the genealogist's analysis of descent effects the dissociation of the self, 'its recognition and displacement as an empty synthesis, in liberating a profusion of lost events' (Foucault, 1977a, pp.145-6).

(Prado, 1994). Instead of unifying in terms of continuity or evolution, genealogy maintains events in their dispersion. Its task is ‘to identify the accidents, the minute deviations – or conversely, the complete reversals – the errors, the false appraisals, and the faulty calculations that gave birth to those things that continue to exist and have value for us; it is to discover that truth or being did not lie at the root of what we know and what we are, but the exteriority of accidents’. In the Nietzschean sense, exteriority allows the object of analysis to be composed in terms of its relations, as opposed to some hidden principle of unity. Where *Herkunft* describes the birth of things in terms of a ‘heritage’, we are not to think of a unity that grows, progresses and solidifies, but rather ‘an unstable assemblage of faults, fissures and heterogeneous layers’ which are as fragile as they are diffuse in composition (Foucault, 1977a, p.146). An analysis of descent therefore replaces foundation and determination with assemblage and chance.

For Nietzsche, ‘Reason’ is the cause of our falsification of the evidence of the senses’. we are destined to persist in error to ‘the extent that our prejudice in favour of reason compels us to posit unity, identity, duration, substance, cause, materiality, being’ (Nietzsche, cited in Mahon, 1992, p.111). Reason’s denial of sensory evidence directs us to attach genealogy to the body. ‘Genealogy’, according to Foucault, ‘is thus situated within the articulation of the body and history. Its task is to expose a body totally imprinted by history and the process of history’s destruction of the body’. Genealogy therefore attaches itself to the body since the body is ‘the inscribed surface of events (traced by language and dissolved by ideas), the locus of a dissociated Self (adopting the illusion of a substantial unity), and a volume in perpetual disintegration’ (Foucault, 1977a, p.148). Genealogy, as the analysis of descent, exposes all the ‘tiny influences’ on a body that produce the illusion that a subject is a substantial, autonomous unity.

Foucault translates *Entstehung* as *emergence*, ‘the moment of arising’ (1977a, p.148). When genealogy searches for emergence it must take care to avoid the metaphysician’s temptation to impose present needs and the present state of affairs at the point of arising, allowing one to point out the discovery of a continuous, teleological development culminating in the present. The genealogist, in contrast, ‘seeks to reestablish the various

systems of subjection: not the anticipatory power of meaning, but the hazardous play of domination' (Foucault, 1977a, p.148). The genealogist views the present not as the result of a meaningful development, but as the resultant formation of struggle and relations of force and domination⁶. The analysis of emergence denies historical progressive evolution by showing that what comes-to-be is not the result of teleological processes but 'is always produced through a particular stage of forces' (pp.148-9). But because genealogy circumvents the tendency to impose meaningful intentions onto what are otherwise relations of force, means 'no one is responsible for an emergence; no one can glory in it, since it always occurs in the interstice' (p.150). This is an important and rather unique point developed by Foucault: 'The play of forces in any particular historical situation is made possible by the space which defines them. It is this field or clearing which is primary' (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1983, p.109). In *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, we are told that such a space is governed by a system of rules, a network of practices, meticulous rituals of power, through which these rules are discontinuously applied. The elaboration of practices, the movements that take place on this field, is not decided by what is meaningful and intelligible, but rather by what is strategically and tactically possible⁷.

Effective history, *wirkliche Historie*, is therefore the recourse of the genealogist who seeks to place everything in historical motion, and place it beyond the objectivity of the historian. Effective history avoids metaphysics by refusing any absolutes that might pertain to a tradition that establishes immutable feelings, a constant instinctual being, and a body governed by the laws of physiology; instead, it 'distinguishes, separates and disperses'. Foucault characterises effective history as 'the kind of dissociating view that is capable of decomposing itself, capable of shattering the unity of man's being through which it was thought that he could extend his sovereignty to the events of the past' (1977a, p.153). By eschewing the categories of continuity, teleology and destiny 'History

⁶ 'The domination of certain men over others leads to the differentiation of values; class domination generates the idea of liberty; and the forceful appropriation of things necessary to survival and imposition of a duration not intrinsic to them for the origin of logic' (Foucault, 1977a, p.150).

⁷ 'The genealogist does not seek to discover substantial entities (subjects, virtues, forces) or to reveal their relationships with other such entities. Rather, he or she studies the emergence of a battle which defines and clears a space. Subjects do not preexist and later enter into combat or harmony. In genealogy subjects emerge on a field of battle and play their roles, there and there alone. The world is not a play which simply masks a truer reality that exists behind the scenes. It is as it appears. This is the profundity of the genealogist's insight' (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1983, p.109).

becomes 'effective' to the degree that it introduces discontinuity into our very being' (p.154).

But there is one last trait that affirms the ethos of genealogical inquiry: knowledge as perspective. Effective history is perspectival in that it eschews the kind of grounding on which historians reveal 'a particular time and place, their preferences in a controversy, the unavoidable obstacles of their passion' (Foucault, 1977a, p.156). Genealogy avoids the search for depth, and by doing so, views things from a distance: 'the moment of interpretation is like an overview, from higher and higher up, which allow the depths to be laid out in front of him in a more and more profound visibility; depth is resituated as an absolutely superficial secret' (Foucault, 1967, p.187). From such a vantage point, the interpreter of effective history seeks out the surfaces of events, their meticulous arrangement, their shifts and subtle contours. In short, the perspectival gaze of the genealogist seeks out a vision of particularity and complexity as opposed to the kind of objectivity that dissolves the 'singular event' into a deep or hidden meaning.

The historical a priori

A discussion of genealogy is, I think, somewhat incomplete without integrating some of the methodological principles of Foucault's earlier work. While some claim that genealogy and archaeology are completely different enterprises, I want to show that archaeology elaborates a methodological framework that is still retained within genealogy, and deserves consideration⁸.

To understand more clearly the relation between genealogy and archaeology, I refer to an interview with the historian Martin Jay, where Foucault is asked about this shift in methodological focus: 'Is this a significant and radical break in your work, or can we conceive of genealogy as basically similar to archaeology...? How would you describe

⁸ Some critics claim archaeology was abandoned by Foucault in favour of the discovery of the role of power played in discourse. The concepts and categories he carefully constructed in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* were, according to Barry Smart, 'almost totally subverted' by Foucault's shift to genealogy, leaving the reader the choice of 'archaeologist of ideas or genealogist of power' (1985, p.42). Jeffrey Minson, on the other hand, claims that the reader of Foucault's later genealogies must return to *The Archaeology of Knowledge* to put genealogy back on course (1985, p.115). For Minson, genealogy would have been a blind endeavour had he not archaeology to help it find its way.

the difference between archaeology and genealogy as an historical method?' Foucault asserts that the difference between archaeology and genealogy is that between method and goal:

What I mean by archaeology is a methodological framework for my analysis. What I mean by genealogy is both the reason and the target of analyzing those discourses as events, and what I am trying to show is how those discursive events have determined in a certain way what constitutes our present and what constitutes ourselves—either our knowledge, our practices, our type of rationality, our relationship to ourselves or to others... the genealogy is the finality of the analysis, and the archaeology is the material and the methodological framework (cited in Mahon. 1992, p.105).

For genealogy, the analysis of 'discursive events' frees up a new field of study: 'this field is made up of the totality of all effective statements (whether spoken or written), in their dispersion as events and in the occurrence that is proper to them'. The task entails 'a *pure description of discursive events* as the horizon for the search for the unities that form within (Foucault, 1972, pp.26-7). This is precisely the project of 'archaeology' – a term Foucault borrows from Kant who used it 'to designate the history of that which renders necessary a certain form of thought' (1971b, p.60). Archaeology, like genealogy, interrogates the conditions of existence by which these events are composed. But to properly understand its potential, I want to examine more carefully archaeology's elementary unit of analysis: the *statements* of discourse. The purpose is to explain the positivity of discourse in terms of an *historical a priori* that serves as the condition of reality for statements.

A central theme developed in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972) is the function of the statement (*énoncé*). The statement is a unique formulation because it is not a sentence, a proposition nor a speech act – the typical objects of linguistic analysis. Rather, it pertains to the threshold of an existential function of signs: 'it is a function that cuts across a domain of structures and possible unities, and which reveals them, with concrete contents, in time and space' (1972, p.87). The conditions of the statement are found among its *enunciative function* whereby signs group as statements which can be identified according to several criteria, each of which emerges from Foucault's suspension of the categories of continuity, a consistent focus in his historical work.

The relation between the statement and what it states, first, is a unique one, not to be confused with the relation between signifier and signified, between proposition and referent. Searle, for example, calls a 'referring expression' any utterance that 'serves to pick out or identify one 'object' or 'entity' or 'particular' apart from other objects, about which the speaker then goes on to say something or ask some question, etc.' (1969, p.26). But Foucault argues that a statement's 'referential' is not a permanent object, thing or fact, but a set of 'laws of possibility, rules of existence for the objects that are named, designated, or described within it, and for the relations that are affirmed or denied in it' (1972, p.91). Dreyfus and Rabinow observe this production of statements in a manner that is similar to, yet distinguished from, the production of speech acts. The kinds of speech act that statements refer to are those that 'gain their autonomy by passing some sort of institutional test, such as the rules of dialectical argument, inquisitional interrogation, or empirical confirmation' (1983, p.48).

What we are to understand as the referential of a statement is the set of historical, practical and institutional conditions that account for the existence of the objects of discourse⁹. Foucault is not interested in the kind of statements that specify the 'internal' conditions governing commentary and exegesis, but what is actually said or written and how the regularities exhibited by their relations with other statements fit into a relatively autonomous system, that is to say, a distinguishable formation of statements in which they are produced (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1983, pp.48-9). A methodological precaution of archaeology, then, is that statements are not interpretations of things as such; truth claims must be neutralised or 'bracketed' since statements are not intrinsically true or false – what is of greater concern is how they function as the effects of truth.

A second methodological precaution refers to the relation between the statement and the subject. This relation is equally peculiar yet consistent with the decentring operation

⁹ For instance, in *Madness and Civilization* (1965), Foucault shows how a set of rules functioned whereby the objects of psychiatric discourse were constituted through an ensemble of factors – economic, political, religious, medical, moral – which brought about the formation of the object, madness. The analysis of its rules of formation entails mapping its surfaces of emergence – the heterogeneous arrangement of elements, authorities, and practices – that grant this object coherence, the truth of which brought about serious social consequences, confinement.

Foucault insists on effecting. Firstly, the subject of a statement is not equivalent to the author of its formulation; rather, the position of the subject determines the relation between statement and subject; the changing position of the physician in the houses of confinement or the medical clinic exemplifies this: 'To describe a formulation *qua* statement does not consist in analysing the relations between the author and what he says (or wanted to say, or said without wanting to); but in determining what position can and must be occupied by any individual if he is to be subject of it' (Foucault, 1972, pp.95-6). This suggests that the interpreter interprets neither the signifier nor the signified, but the one who imposes the interpretation. Interpretation is always 'interpretation for the 'who?''¹⁰ (Foucault, 1986b, p.191).

Far from indicating the synthetic function of a unitary subject, Foucault's analysis reveals the speaker's dispersion in status, the institutional sites they occupy, and their position within a network of relational functions¹¹. The practical, material, historical and discursive conditions constitutive of madness, the domain of medical objects, life, labour and language make it apparent to Foucault that statements only operate in conjunction with their associated domain of conditions. This space of relationality and exteriority characterises the third criteria of the enunciative function. Refusing to assume that concepts are the organising principles of discourse, archaeology treats concepts as elements dispersed throughout discourse that are ordered and whose relations are governed by systems of rules peculiar to the type of discourse in question. These rules account for the formation of concepts. The organisation of concepts, objects, and

¹⁰ In *The Birth of the Clinic* (1973), for example, Foucault became aware of the importance of the position of the subject of discourse, and the rules governing this subjective position calls for analysis. Who has the qualification, the prestige, the status or eminence to speak a certain type of discourse, and from what institutional site does he or she speak? 'Medical statements cannot come from anybody; their value, efficacy, even their therapeutic powers, and, generally speaking, their existence as medical statements cannot be dissociated from the statutorily defined person who has the right to make them, and to claim for them the power to overcome suffering and death' (Foucault, 1972, p.51).

¹¹ 'The enunciative modalities of a discourse is linked to the discontinuity of the planes from which he speaks. And if these planes are linked to a system of relations, this system is not established by the synthetic activity of a consciousness identical with itself, dumb and anterior to all speech, but by the specificity of a discursive practice. I shall abandon any attempt, therefore, to see discourse as a phenomenon of expression—the verbal translation of a previously established synthesis; instead, I shall look for a field of regularity for various positions of subjectivity. Thus conceived, discourse is not the majestically unfolding manifestation of a thinking, knowing, speaking subject, but, on the contrary, a totality, in which the dispersion of the subject and his discontinuity with himself may be determined' (Foucault, 1972, pp.54-55).

statements into themes, theories and intellectual strategies is similarly governed by sets of rules which account for the formation of these strategies.

Finally, a repeatable materiality is constitutive of the statement. While it is true that 'a statement must have a substance, a support, a place, and a date', its spatio-temporal character bears less importance than the institutional character it carries (Foucault, 1972, p.101). A formulation's institutional setting, whether asylum, clinic, university, or parliamentary floor, is constitutive of its efficacy as a statement. Archaeological analysis investigates the formulation of signs as statements in their social historical existence. Statements never function in isolation; its social and historical character implies its embedded-ness in a system of statements which Foucault describes as a 'discursive formation'. Statements governed by the same 'rules of formation' belong to a single discursive formation. In accordance with these rules, the objects, concepts, and theoretical strategies with which we are familiar are constituted; these rules are their conditions of existence. A central task of archaeology is to make these conditions explicit in their historical and practical functioning.

Archaeology is therefore concerned with the historicity of statements, their rules of formation through which objects, subjects, concepts and strategies are produced. With the analysis of rules of formation, Foucault seeks to specify the conditions of existence of a discursive formation, this is what he calls the 'historical *a priori*'. Since his concern is with statements *actually* made – i.e. actually written and spoken – the historical *a priori* does not reveal the conditions of validity for judgments, but the conditions of reality for statements: 'An *a priori* not of truths that might never be said, or really given to experience; but the *a priori* of a history that is given, since it is that of things actually said' (Foucault, 1972, p.127). Foucault's archaeological focus is not interested in the formal possibilities of a language but the real existence of discourse; his object is not language but the accumulated existence of discourse, the practical analysis of which he calls the *archive*¹².

¹² The archive is first the law of what can be said, the system that governs the appearance of statements as unique events. But the archive is also that which determines that all these things said do not accumulate endlessly in an amorphous mass, nor are they inscribed in an unbroken linearity, nor do they disappear at

It is beyond the scope of the present discussion to consider the methodological shortcomings of archaeology, but it would seem that by integrating the rarity of statements (effected by rules of formation), and the effective formation of discourse by non-discursive practices (effected by power relations) overcomes Foucault's initial methodological difficulties regarding the autonomy of discourse and the archaeologist's own detachment. Foucault's revised methodological enterprise effectively reverses the polarity of archaeology and genealogy¹³. Genealogy now takes precedence over archaeology, and discourse is now secondary to 'a whole technology of power' (Foucault, 1977b, p.30).

Producing the present

What I have elaborated so far is the philosophical underpinnings of a critical approach that assembles an *epistemological* history of a contemporary problem. If genealogy serves as the basis of historico-critical reflection it is because there is something recoverable from the past with which to view the present differently. To recover a history of chance, of unsavoury origins, brutal oppression and intellectual imagination, produces an altogether different lesson from history; that our arrival is not structured by some underlying, identity, continuity or teleology; that the present is not the necessary outcome of human rationality. This has important implications for how we think about contemporary forms of neo-liberal governance which maintain, by popular persuasion, that free market economics, the devolution of state responsibilities and the reinvention of self-sufficiency are natural and self-evident solutions to the problems of freedom, wealth and security. Genealogy disrupts and disperses these fictions.

the mercy of chance external accidents; but they are grouped together in distinct figures, composed together in accordance with multiple relations, maintained or blurred in accordance with specific regularities... it is that which, at the very root of the statement-event, and in that which embodies it, defines at the outset the *system of its enunciability* (Foucault, 1972, p.129).

¹³ This new combination between genealogy and archaeology is, however, a strange one because from the archaeological side we have the bracketing of truth (and while the truth function of statements are neutralised, they are still taken seriously by the archaeologist). On the other side, we have a lighthearted analysis of the positivity of discourse: 'This leads to a strange and complex attitude: one has to take the world of serious discourse seriously because it is the one we are in, and yet one can't take it seriously, first because we have arduously divorced ourselves from it, and second because it is not grounded' (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1983, p.105).

‘Producing the Present’ is the work of thought that not only endeavours to produce the present differently, but performs a *diagnosis* of contemporary problems. Diagnosis is both genealogical *and* ethical in that subjects are constituted through relations of power as they are constituted by their own practices of freedom. What is needed now is a method of diagnosing the domains in which subjects are made up: ‘the ensemble formed by the institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, the calculations and tactics that allow the exercise of [a] very specific albeit complex form of power’ (Foucault, 1991, 102). In the next section, I elaborate how the concept of ‘governmentality’ undertakes a diagnosis of the ethical dimension of power.

Governmentality

I am saying that “governmentality” implies the relationship of the self to itself, and I intend this concept of “governmentality” to cover the whole range of practices that constitute, define, organize, and instrumentalize the strategies that individuals in their freedom can use in dealing with each other. Those who try to control, determine, and limit the freedom of others are themselves free individuals who have at their disposal certain instruments they can use to govern others. Thus, the basis for all this is freedom, the relationship of the self to itself and the relationship to the other... I believe that the concept of governmentality makes it possible to bring out the freedom of the subject and its relationship to others—which constitutes the very stuff of ethics (Foucault, 1997, p.300).

Of all the descriptions Foucault offers on ‘governmentality’ I prefer the one above because it stresses an ethical relationship in the way that government acts upon relations of self on self. If governmentality applies to the practical regulation of individuals – through various techniques, instruments, strategies and procedures of knowledge and power – this is because it is formulated as a way of thinking about how power is capable of governing free individuals. Freedom is essential for the exercise of contemporary political power inasmuch as it is essential for the possibility of self-formation. In this section, I want to elaborate the work of diagnosis as a particular *ethos* ‘marked by a desire to analyse contemporary political rationalities as technical embodiments of mentalities for the government of conduct’ (Barry, Osborne, & Rose, 1993, p.265). This kind of analysis pursues two methodological directions. Firstly, it renders thinkable the technologies of domination and subjection, the practical systems and disciplines, through which individuals are governed; we might call this direction an analysis of the axis of power/domination. Secondly, the government of individuals attends to certain *techniques*

of the self; we might call this an analysis of the ‘axis of self-formation’ (Dean, 1995). In what follows, I will elaborate a number of conceptual tools for analysing relations between techniques of self-government and techniques of the government of individuals¹⁴.

‘Governmental rationality’ refers to a relatively new domain of investigation¹⁵. Colin Gordon (1991) reminds us that Foucault employed the concept of government in both a wide and a narrow sense. In the case of the former, ‘government’ was defined generally as ‘the conduct of conduct’, that is, the forms of reflection and action that aim to shape, guide, regulate, or modify the conduct of persons. Government is not only the relations of subjection, domination and discipline, but also the private interpersonal relations in which a principle of control is exercised over the self. In the narrower sense, government specifies ‘relations concerned with the exercise of political sovereignty’ (Gordon, 1991, p.3), that is, the kinds of problematisation, reflection and calculation of the means and ends of political rule (Rose, 1993). In this latter sense, governmental rationality specifically addresses the concerns of a political domain; the ordering and maintenance of a territory and population subject to specific kinds of authority and administration. In both senses, Foucault was interested in government as *practices*, and rendering the activity of government thinkable and practicable not only to its practitioners, but to those subject to this form of rationality.

Governmentality marks an important departure from the realism that has defined much historical and political sociology (Mann, 1986; Hall, 1985). The concept of government is nominalistic in its application since it does not seek to discover an underlying necessity or functionality of the state; nor does it seek to reveal the ‘actual configurations of persons, organisations and events at particular historical periods’ (Rose,

¹⁴ ‘I think that if one wants to analyze the genealogy of the subject in Western societies, one has to take account not only techniques of domination, but also techniques of the self. Let’s say one has to take into account the interaction of these two types of techniques’ (Foucault, 1980, cited in Burchell, 1993, p.268).

¹⁵ Foucault developed his analysis out of two annual courses delivered in 1978 and 1979, entitled respectively ‘Security, territory and population’, and ‘The birth of biopolitics’. From these lectures series, the governmental theme became the focus of an intellectual enterprise that combined a genealogical treatment of certain ‘techniques of power’, or of ‘power/knowledge’ relations, to a number of historical domains that were opened to ethical and political consideration (Gordon, 1991).

1993, p.188). Rather, the state itself appears as a discursive device for rendering the 'political' or 'non-political' sphere amenable to certain forms of regulation. The vocabularies of the state are historically variable devices for articulating, discriminating and specifying the functions, realities, institutions and problems that belong to a specific domain of governance. This kind of political discourse exceeds the function of ideology and rhetoric, and, as Rose suggests, should be viewed as an 'intellectual machinery for rendering reality thinkable in such a way that it is amenable to political deliberations' (p.189). This re-description of political power allows diagnosis to engage in 'the problematics of government in the present', to diagnose changes in the domain of power, and to evaluate the constitutive effects of contemporary technologies of government (p.200).

Once we eschew a normative understanding of government, an analytics of government formulates new concepts to investigate the exercise of political power. An alternative approach considers the complex and variable strategies of political rule that sought to organise and arrange, regulate and calculate, the capacities of a population in terms of what Foucault called a 'microphysics of power'; that is, the kind of power functioning at a capillary level within a multitude of practices and locations that extend across a territory. In contrast to classical notions of power that function by way of domination and repression, Foucault observes the shift from sovereign power to disciplinary power as no longer a matter of deciding between life and death. Beginning in the seventeenth century, political power had 'assigned itself the task of administering life' (1979, p.139). What Foucault describes as *biopower*¹⁶ emerged in the form of a general technology of rationalities that rendered visible and intelligible the forces, dimensions and capacities of a target population. The task was not to promote life by virtue of taking it away, but of assuming increasing responsibility over the biological

¹⁶ Foucault's genealogy of political authority locates the specific concerns of the human sciences alongside transformations in medical practice and government policy. He describes these distinct distributions of knowledge and their converging relations as governmentality or 'bio-politics'. Despite their different emphases, both terms are interchangeable in describing the mode by which power functions in modern western societies. That is to say, modern power is characterised by the increasing significance of spatialising knowledges and the use of immanent techniques for disciplining and administering a population (McHoul & Grace, 1993; Curt, 1994).

processes of the population¹⁷. The government of life itself, in both its individual and composite forms, constitutes the defining feature of modern western society: biological existence was reflected by political existence to the extent that power was invested in life. Strategies of government became a series of interventions that converged around questions of life: births, deaths, sexuality, infirmity and disease, sanity and bodily hygiene.

An analytics of government does not offer a new theory of power as such, but a perspective with which to investigate events and domains in which power is exercised. A particular concern for the present thesis is that of interrogating the problematisations through which 'being' has been shaped and rendered thinkable and manageable among various sites from which these problems emerge, and through various authorities whose statements assemble techniques and mechanisms for shaping conduct, for establishing modes of subjectification and technologies for ethical life. An analytics of government takes various instruments and mechanisms of power – vocabularies, policies, legislation, institutions, programmes, initiatives, calculations, surveillance, expertise – as the proper objects of diagnosis as they relate to an individual, a family, an economy, a community. Lastly, this form of diagnosis is interested in how these technologies of power took shape among liberal societies from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century which can be reorganised in terms of the field of governmentality.

Political rationalities

In *Omnes et Singulim*, Foucault (1981) investigates the links between rationalisation and political power by grounding his analysis in certain experiences such as madness, illness, death, crime, sexuality, etc. The task is not to establish whether these problems conform to principles of rationality, but rather to evaluate which kind of rationality is being used. How do these rationalities come to bear on the problems of experience? How are they linked to practices of confinement, exclusion; techniques of repression or

¹⁷ 'The disciplines of the body and the regulations of the population constituted two poles around which the organisation of power over life was deployed. The setting up, in the course of the classical age, of this great bipolar technology—anatomic and biological, individualizing and specifying, directed towards the performances of the body, with attention to the processes of life—characterised a power whose highest function was perhaps no longer to kill, but to invest life through and through' (Foucault, 1979, p.139).

correction; the multiple functions of the workhouse, the hospital, the prison, the asylum? Foucault argues that through analysis of various coherent systems of thought, we find evidence of rationalised ways of thinking and acting that were embodied in particular texts and were linked to a range of regulatory practices for the purpose of organising authority and maintaining the order of an inhabitants, a flock, a community, a state.

Rose and Miller (1992) extend this thesis by arguing that political discourse refers to a domain of idealised schemata for representing, analysing and modifying reality. They argue that this discursive domain can be discerned in terms of 'political rationalities'. Firstly, political rationalities are characterised by their *moral* form: political discourse embody certain conceptions regarding the legitimate use and distribution of authority across different domains and sectors of governance which conform to principles that *ought* to guide the exercise of political power: freedom, justice, equality, responsibility, citizenship and autonomy. Political rationalities also possess an *epistemological* character in that they are 'articulated in relation to some conception of the nature of the objects governed – society, the nation, the population, the economy' (Rose & Miller, 1992, p.175). The objects of political rationalities embody intrinsic characteristics, qualities, assumptions and presuppositions which account for the way that power is exercised over governable phenomena. Lastly, they are articulated within a distinctive *idiom* or language. They confer to the objects of government a knowledge of the field of reality upon which it is to intervene and calculate in ways that bring these objects, elements and processes into being (Gordon, 1980).

The emergence of political liberalism, for instance, signals a particular formula of governance that no longer refers to a 'reason of state' (*raison d'état*) whereby a sovereign exercised a totalising control over a national territory. By the late eighteenth century, political power had abandoned the dream of producing a totally administered society and was instead confronted with a separate domain, whose interiority and naturalness disqualified the use of sovereign power. Liberalism coincides with the emergence of

‘civil society’, designating a natural domain of independent norms and freedoms¹⁸. Between the sovereignty of free individuals and the principle of free enterprise *between* individuals, power must instead draw from disciplinary technologies with the aim of achieving the optimum functioning of civil society. Liberal mentalities of rule must therefore assemble a mode of power that is capable of acting upon the actions of this non-political sphere of conduct by *acting at a distance* (Callon & Latour, 1981; Rose & Miller, 1992).

Technologies of government

One of the characteristics of power is its coextension with social space and its relation to forces: ‘power has no essence; it is simply operational’ (Deleuze, 1988, p.27). As it applies to government, power assumes a governmental form at which point it becomes *technical*. Power/knowledge relations are distributed, circulated and operationalised by virtue of a technology that achieves its practical realisation. Here, the term ‘technology’ has a specific application: the constitution of knowledge is not exclusively the production of ideas, concepts or truth, but formed in relation to what is knowable and practicable (Rose, 1996a). It is the practical constitution of epistemology that distinguishes between scientific thought that merely ‘works on the world as it finds it’ (Bachelard, 1984) or ‘an active process of intervening in the world’ (Danzinger, 1990). Technology recognises the presuppositions of social practices – the political objectives of techniques, instruments and mechanisms – and the conditions which are immanent to the formation of knowledge. That is to say, all technologies are underpinned by presuppositions which not only occupy transcendental grounds for claiming knowledge, but also *immanent causes* whereby power is realised, integrated and distinguished in its effects (Deleuze, 1988).

Technologies of government are therefore a complex and heterogeneous assemblage of rationalities, techniques for programming the real, mechanistic devices, practical objectives, architectural forms, through which knowledge/power relations are rendered

¹⁸ As Burchell (1993) observes, liberalism is characterised by the mode of power which is confronted, on the one hand, by rights and freedoms of subjects that must not be restrained by government while, on the other hand, government addresses a domain of processes that it cannot govern through direct, overt and explicit intervention. A key characteristic of modern government is the designation of a realm beyond ‘politics’ which it seeks to manage without undermining its naturalness and autonomy.

effective. A technology of government will seek the practical inculcation of conduct, the reshaping of forms of life, the modulation and regulation of behaviour through such inscriptions, devices, programmes and techniques that render government possible and effective¹⁹. In this sense, a technology does not conform to any single will to govern; it has no essence. Rather, it is a strategy of power that finds utility among the conditions of its own operation – to manage, inculcate, modify, aggregate and separate forms of life – according to principles of normalisation, moralisation, amelioration, productivity, efficiency, etc.

An important argument developed in the thesis is the diagnosis of ‘advanced’²⁰ liberal rationalities which target subjectivity as the basis of moral and ethical transformation. The new technologies of welfare seek to promote active forms of citizenship by not only problematising subjectivity at the level of pathology and individual capacity, but by inserting welfare recipients in programmes of activity, surveillance, mentoring and confidence-building to promote useful forms of labour market participation. A whole range of devices and mechanisms are installed to meet these governmental objectives –

¹⁹ For example, ‘Discipline’, writes Foucault, should be ‘identified neither with an institution nor with an apparatus; it is a type of power, a modality for its exercise, comprising a whole set of instruments, techniques, procedures, levels of application, targets; it is a ‘physics’ or an ‘anatomy’ of power, a technology’ (1977b, p.215).

²⁰ ‘Advanced’ or ‘neo-liberal’ government can be contrasted with liberalism in a number of ways. Firstly, liberalism establishes its proper mode of government by conjoining the rationalisation of governmental activity with the rationality of the free conduct of governed individuals. As Burchell observes, ‘the rational conduct of government must be intrinsically linked to the *natural*, private interest... of free, market *exchanging* individuals because the rationality of these individuals’ conduct is, precisely, what enables the market to function optimally in accordance with its nature’. Neo-liberalism, on the other hand, expresses a different formula of governance. Here, ‘the rational principle for regulating and limiting governmental activity must be determined by reference to *artificially* arranged or contrived forms of the free, *entrepreneurial* and *competitive* conduct of economic-rational individuals. Like liberalism, the rationality of government must be grafted to a form of ‘rational self-conduct of the governed’, but unlike liberalism, neo-liberalism is tied to ‘a form which is not so much given of human nature than a consciously contrived style of conduct’ (1993, p.271). Rose diagnoses the difference between liberalism and neo-liberalism in similar ways but stresses the transformation of control technologies. Neo-liberalism, for example, embodies a kind of ‘de-governmentalisation of the state’ via a double movement of strategies that seek the autonomisation and responsabilisation of entities. These strategies are realised by three key transformations for the conduct of conduct: (1) a new relation between expertise and politics: territories of governance are now inscribed by new calculative regimes for the conduct of conduct; (2) a new pluralisation of social technologies: control technologies now seek to shape the conduct and powers of autonomous entities, and; (3) a new specification of the subject of government: strategies of governance reshape individual conduct in terms of activity whereby actors are transformed into agents who are supported by a whole ensemble of medical, psychological and prudential technologies which circulate among *reversible* relations of authority (1993, pp.294-6).

statistical calculations, continuous monitoring, counselling and activity testing, risk assessments and computer modelling, psychological profiling and training – with the outcome of reconstructing the moral and ethical capacities of those excluded from the labour market. The general technology power in which welfare recipients are captured and ‘reformed’ demonstrates how the freedom of individuals to be autonomous, self-sufficient and self-directing is the outcome of a whole ensemble of human technologies.

Programmes and strategies

Foucault at times distinguishes between programmes, strategies and tactics of power. Programmes are ‘sets of calculated, reasoned prescriptions’ through which institutional mechanisms are recognised in the way they arrange space and regulate conduct (Foucault, 2000, p.230). In terms of government, programmes are fixed to, and aligned with, problematic aspects of an object; they specify ‘a problematising activity’ in the sense that the ideals of government are intrinsically linked to the appearance of problematisations which they seek to rectify and modify by restoring them to some state of normality, productivity or efficacy (Rose & Miller, 1992). But apart from problematising objects, programmes possess the ingenious facility of ‘positing a real mechanism which itself ‘programmes’ the appropriate form of intervention upon it’ (Gordon, 1980, 249). That is to say, the efficacy of power is the ability to bring into being certain objects which are amenable to specific kinds of regulation. For example, the constitution of the ‘welfare dependent’ as a problematic object of reform is conferred the kind of qualities that necessitate contractual obligation. As Rose and Miller points out, ‘programmes presuppose that the real is programmable, that it is a domain subject to certain determinants, rules, norms and processes that can be acted upon and improved by authorities’ (1992, p.183).

In the 1976 lectures Foucault had experimented with the ‘hypothesis of war’ – the idea that the conditions of war and struggle might serve as a tool for political analysis²¹. The efficacy of this analogy is to underline the attributes of power as a moving substrate of multiple force relations, most visible among struggles, confrontations, contradictions,

²¹ These ideas were further developed in *Discipline and Punish* wherein Foucault proposes a reversal of Von Clausewitz’s maxim that politics is war pursued by other means.

inequalities, transformations and reversible force relations. Strategies are concerned with the formation of the real, and characterise the artificial and improvisational nature of power relations as they seek to: achieve a certain goal or end (objective); designate a method for achieving that end (means); anticipate the actions of others that might block or thwart a manoeuvre (tactics)²². Often there is a risk of conflating programmes with strategies, the difference being that unlike the programme, strategies of power are essentially a non-discursive rationality. It is particularly among instances where power is described as an ‘anonymous’ practice that most reflects the functionality of strategy.

Government and ethical self-formation

Given the general definition of government as the ‘conduct of conduct’, rationalities and technologies tend to focus on the first term of this phrase by underlining the centrality of the axis of truth and power. The axis of self-formation, however, would seem to point to the latter sense of this phrase in that conduct is construed as *human* action and behaviour. If we understand government as the form of power involving some degree of calculation and regulation of human conduct, there is a deliberate implication then that power is not strictly determining, but invokes the possibility of acting otherwise: it is this flexible and relational definition of power that leads to the consideration of *freedom*. In contemporary forms of ‘advanced’ liberalism, the object of government is, among other things, the conduct of the ‘free subject’, but we should be cautious about how we make this formulation. The conduct of the free subject needs further qualification about what is meant by ‘free’, and certainly what is meant by the ‘subject’ of self-formation.

If government is more or less the calculated and rational means of directing human action, this does not necessarily presuppose a ‘free subject’ if we take this to mean a self-determining agent existing as the autonomous centre of consciousness, will and action. The liberal government of conduct presupposes a free subject, only if a *free* subject is

²² Gordon gives a more rigorous description of strategy as ‘the minimum form of rationality of the exercise of power in general which consists in the mobile sets of operations whereby a multiplicity of heterogeneous elements (forces, resources, the features of a terrain, the disposition and relation of objects in space-time) are invested with a particular functionality relative to a dynamic and variable set of objectives’ (1980, p.251).

defined in terms of a self-governing agent replete with a repertoire of choice, and a free *subject* as one whose condition of subjection operates ‘through the promotion and calculated regulation of spaces in which choice is to be exercised’ (Dean, 1995, p.562). Freedom is a precondition of governance and eschews those libratory utopian conceptions of a state of illimitable freedoms existing independently of historically contingent norms and regulations. A history of the subject of government would discriminate different forms of government by examining the multiple objectifications through which human beings are governed by discourse, and the modes of subjectification they give rise to among diverse practices and techniques of subject-formation²³ (Rose, 1999a).

What we take to be the ‘subject’ of government is a culturally and historically variable category we call the self²⁴. But diagnosis is not particularly interested in the *category* of self, but more the kind of work performed on the self by the self. From Foucault’s ‘On the Genealogy of Ethics’ (1997e) we can draw upon a formal analytic of this work on the self by elaborating four dimensions of self-formation: ethical substance, asceticism, mode of subjectification, and teleology. The *ethical substance* refers to that part of the self or others we seek to govern, the material worked upon through acts linked to pleasure or *aphrodisia* in Greece, the flesh in Christianity, sexuality in contemporary ethics. *Ascetics* refers to the practices through which we seek to govern ourselves, the self-forming techniques of meditation, prayer, documentation, recollection, self-examination, confession, etc. *Deontology* specifies the mode of subjectification, the position we occupy in relation to rules and norms, and how we are obligated to put these into practice. *Teleology* constitutes the end or goal of these practices, the mode of being we hope to become through acts of self-mastery, moderation, renunciation or

²³ There is a case for distinguishing between ‘the government of the self’ and ‘practices of ethical self-formation’. The former concerns ‘the ways in which authorities and agencies seek to shape the conduct aspirations, needs, desires and capacities of specified political and social categories, to enlist them in particular strategies and to seek definite goals’; the latter concerns ‘practices, techniques and rationalities concerning the regulation of the self by the self, and by means of which individuals seek to question, form, know, decipher and act on themselves’ (Dean, 1995, p.563). But Dean and Rose both caution that this is not a discrete or absolute distinction. To specify what Foucault (1988) calls the ‘techniques of the self’ is not to exclude the possibility that self-formation is already sanctioned by particular authorities and therefore mediated through historically specific practices.

²⁴ The term ‘self’ is used here in the neutral sense of distinguishing a particular space that is the locus of conduct and capacities; it is a ‘thin’ conception of the subject as a material form composed of forces and endowed with capacities (Patton, 1992, cited in Dean, 1995, p.563).

emancipation (Foucault, 1997e, pp.265-7). Rather than think of these relations as confined to practices of self on self, it becomes possible to analyse government *through* these practices of self-formation (Dean, 1995; Rose, 1994a).

Diagnosis

An analytics of government is reflection that engages in a different kind of empiricism. Governmentality does not subscribe to positivist inquiry where the truth of discourse is determined by the truth of its object. It is perhaps a symptom of our times that the human sciences can no longer guarantee the production of facts, the neutrality of investigation, or the objectivity of the empiricist. All observations are theory-laden, all facts are interpretations, and objectivity is the rarity of value by techniques that would otherwise claim to remove value. The empirical is not the valorisation of experience, that is, if we take empiricism to mean the transparent correspondence between the observer and the observed. But governmentality studies are perhaps too cautious in avoiding experience on the grounds that it is simply an effect of power, in which case analysis is consigned to the 'apparatuses' (*dispositifs*) through which these effects are produced. While it is agreed that experience is not a stable foundation from which to discriminate the truth of discourse and its objects, it remains essential to the project of diagnosis.

Where diagnosis is effective in treating a domain of phenomena as symptoms of force-relations, it gives very little attention to the axis of self-formation, the domain of subjectivity and ethics. In other words, analyses of government are reluctant to link historical problems to symptoms of experience, and investigate how subjects conduct and manage themselves. Following Deleuze (1988), we might think of practices of self-formation as the 'folding' and 'doubling' of relations of power, in which case it is not the category of the self we are directly concerned with but 'the practices of enfolding themselves, the forms of authority they enfold, the material they seek to work with and upon, and the results they promise' (Dean, 1995, p.564). The domain of subjectification is itself a condition and an effect of power; it is less an entity than a series of foldings in which the outside is interiorised as a space of conduct and action. This notion of folding is a novel approach for thinking of self-formation by way of a spatial metaphor to explain

how power relations are ‘folded back to create a doubling [which] allows a relation to oneself to emerge, and constitute an inside which is hollowed out and develops its own unique dimension’ (Deleuze, 1988, p.100).

The productive relationship between government of the self (subjection) and practices of ethical self-formation (subjectification) presents a strong case for diagnosing power *in terms* of subjectivity²⁵. This is the case I make for including interview material in the corpus of empirical data. If diagnosis cannot consult subjects, if it cannot take the problems of experience as the basis of historico-critical reflection then governmentality is itself a partial enterprise. Experience is not simply evidence of the real (Scott, 1992) or confirmation of a theory; it does not seek to ‘prove’ genealogy, or give testimony to the effects of political power. Rather, the work of diagnosis seeks to elaborate experience as the site of singularity, contestability and endless ethical work.

Unlike positivist traditions, the empirical work conducted here is informed by a whole tradition of French thought on the history of the sciences. This involves meticulous re-description and evaluation of historical events, and practices a kind of ‘field work’ in history that disturbs the naturalness of our contemporary regimes of truth. Historico-critical reflection demonstrates how thought itself is capable of intervening in the real, and has therefore a stake in its production. Genealogy is not simply an act of ‘deconstructing’ or ‘levelling’ truth, but re-describing the procedures through which contemporary objects of the real have been fabricated. If empiricism is an interpretative enterprise, we should not think of it as a form of hermeneutics; it is not a matter of decoding or interpreting hidden motives, of discovering latent truths or class interests; nor is it an endless re-description of forms of thought. Against this kind of interpretation we might say empirical work is that of *symptomatology*²⁶. ‘Genealogies of government seek

²⁵ This case seems all the more important if we consider Deleuze’s reading of Foucault’s later work as concerned with a relation to oneself that is both derivative and *independent* of power: ‘Foucault’s fundamental idea is that of a dimension of subjectivity derived from power and knowledge without being dependent on them’ (1988, p.101).

²⁶ In *The Birth of the Clinic*, for example, Foucault shows us that nineteenth century medicine ceased to be problematised in terms of species, typologies or essences, but that disease could be diagnosed in terms of a lesion that formed part of the body; disease formed a singularity within a whole set of relations by means of new techniques of visualisation, touch and symptomatology.

to establish the singularity of particular strategies within a field of relations of truth, power and subjectivity by means of a work on symptoms' (Rose, 1999a, p.57). This is not a new idea but similar to the role Nietzsche adopted when he called himself 'physician of culture'. Finally, diagnosis is a meticulous reconstruction of problematisations in ways that demand new solutions. The key to generating these solutions lies among the conditions of possibility of symptoms.

Empirical framework

In the last two sections, I gave a broad and schematic view of the role of critique, elaborating what a history of the present eschews, and demonstrating the inventiveness of historical thought that treats the present as symptoms of power and freedom. In what follows, I give an overview of how I executed my historical analysis, showing how principles of genealogy are translated into a formal set of procedures for problematising Australian welfare policy. Furthermore, I discuss the methodological framework for analysing a corpus of participant statements which are treated as symptoms of individual experience, and which are considered alongside transformations of work, welfare and freedom. My interest is to investigate 'ethical problematisations' of experience, the techniques of self-management, the possibilities of self-formation and the constraints in which free subjects desire autonomy, success, fulfilment and self-realisation.

Genealogy begins by asking a series of questions about the present: how did it become possible for welfare dependency to problematise subjectivity? Why does welfare reform take the present form that it does? And, more generally, if we take reform as a symptom of advanced liberal government, how do problems of welfare relate to problems of freedom? These are questions addressed by the first part of the thesis. The second part broaches questions of effectivity: what are the specific effects of welfare reform? Again, this question forces us to return to the problem of the subject: given recent transformations of welfare administration, what kind of subjects do we take ourselves to be? Who are we required to become? If liberal rationalities govern individuals *through* their freedom, then what is the price for failing to govern ourselves responsibly? These questions form the *parameters* of the thesis. It is only by asking a series of related

questions about the politics of the present that we can narrow the domain of investigation and seek its conditions of existence.

Historical analysis

Historical analysis begins with *decomposition* of a recent event of Australian welfare politics. The appearance of ‘welfare dependency’ in 1999 is treated as a symptom and a point of departure for genealogical investigation. Analysis begins by asking ‘what kind of object does the problem of dependency presuppose?’ ‘What solutions does it propose?’ And ‘what strategies and programmes do authorities seek to install?’ The language of dependency not only confers the existence of social and individual pathologies, but programmes the existence of an object that becomes the target of certain ethical and moral interventions. Welfare policies are articulated in the language of *pathology* and *prevention*, in the language of *society* and *risk*, for the purposes of reconstructing the capacities of the poor, and reinserting ‘the excluded’ into work and community. A whole ensemble of human technologies are designed to achieve this – medicine, statistics, epidemiology, psychology, political philosophy, economics – together they form a ‘diagram’ of advanced liberal government. The task is to investigate the conditions of possibility and the lines of descent that make up this present configuration of control.

Genealogy begins by investigating the origins of social welfare but in terms of which displace conventional historiography. The historical argument traces marginal histories of the welfare state, placing it at the intersection of the discovery of society and nineteenth century debates on pauperism. The intellectual histories of Karl Polanyi (1957), J. R. Poynter (1969), and Mitchell Dean (1991) provide a clearing with which to construct intelligible trajectories of discursive events, and locate modern welfare systems among transformations of liberal government. Following Polanyi’s lead, it is possible to displace the putative origins of social welfare as a functional domain of state responsibility by linking the events preceding the Poor Law of 1834 to the creation and calculated management of a self-regulating market system. Debates on pauperism, for instance, had the effect of distinguishing the undeserving from the deserving poor, and effecting a reversal of good and bad forms of dependency. It was not the ‘natural’ sphere of poverty

that became the object of governmental concern, but the invention of pauperism that established the 'less eligible' conditions of the workhouse. Pauperism would serve to deflect the able-bodied male onto a national labour market, while absorbing women and children bereft of a male breadwinner. The reforms of 1834 sought to replicate a natural order in which men were responsible for their families, and thus define the family as a natural unit of private economic responsibility.

Using Foucault's technique of *eventualisation*²⁷, it is possible to delineate the temporal boundaries of 1795 and 1834 to specify what Dean (1992) calls the 'event of pauperism' – a phase of peculiar intensity, contradiction, systemic failure, and eventually, a break from existing historical continuities insofar as practices of poor administration were radically transformed. Aside from food shortages, the increasing poor rate and vigorous legislative activity, 1795 also marked the appearance of major statements on poor policy made by such English intellectuals as Thomas Malthus, David Ricardo, Jeremy Bentham, F. M. Eden and others. Cast within this milieu of problematisation, the concept of poverty emerged with all the clarity and urgency of an invention which, after having been first naturalised by social and political economy, now described 'a *particular* condition of individuals and groups that results from a *general* condition of population, subsistence and capital' (Dean, p.235). Once released from its fixed juridical classification, the concept of poverty gave rise to a new object that warranted even greater specificity and intervention, pauperism.

In the first part of the thesis, each chapter begins with an event and a question formed in the present which relate to different policy aspects of Australian welfare reform. Chapters 2-6 explore the governing statements of policy development since the mid 80's, and focuses more closely on the arguments of the 'McClure Report', which was recently commissioned by the Howard government to explore future directions of welfare reform.

²⁷ Foucault describes his genealogical treatment of events as a technique of eventualisation which differs from conventional historiography in that it attempts to understand its object in terms of a *singularity*. Singularity implies the possibility of establishing difference and individuation at the heart of an event, and serves as a means by which self-evidence about the nature of present social arrangements may be breached. Eventualisation lends itself to the multiplication of causes, a concern for complex conditions of emergence and existence, and seeks a partial understanding of aspects of the past rather than a reconstruction of a social totality (Foucault, 2000b, pp.223-38).

Contemporary welfare policy are used as points of departure with which to revisit Dean's event of pauperism for 'rediscovering the connections, encounters, supports, blockages, plays of forces, strategies, and so on, that at a given moment establish what subsequently counts as being self-evident, universal, and necessary' (Foucault, 2000b, pp.226-7). The strategic purpose of each chapter is to isolate key technologies, political rationalities and technical practices that form the present ensemble of power relations as they pertain to current problematisations of Australian welfare reform.

Finally, historical analysis must distinguish the kind of materials used by genealogy. This methodology proceeds by way of case-histories and case-studies which replace conventional historiographic criteria of exhaustiveness with those of intelligibility (Dean, 1992). The intelligibility of historical thought, the meticulous analysis of an *archive* (taken here to mean the totality of discursive practice falling within the domain of the research parameters) is always partial and open to continuous revision and extension. Furthermore, genealogy distinguishes between primary and secondary material. Primary material is preferred over secondary since analysis seeks the construction of events expressed in its own terms, that is, in terms of its own discourses, practices and statements as opposed to secondary material which is subject to the filtration and interpretation of an author from a later period. However, where primary material is unavailable certain decisions are made about whether discursive samples are typical or representative of a certain practice or period (Fairclough, 1992). The genealogist is critically selective of authors' interpretations, presuppositions and objectives. This is not to say that secondary material is at risk of constructing right or wrong observations, reliable or unreliable interpretations, but such material will, as a matter of course, reflect the ethos, values and knowledge-assumptions of its own period. For these reasons, the genealogist must assess whether discursive samples are consistent with the aims of exegesis, whether samples reflect, for instance the diversity and transformation of practice across different domains, speakers, disciplines and institutions.

The empirical corpus refers to a number of documentary sources, namely, recent policy documents, key legislative events, primary and secondary materials²⁸. Where primary statements of a particular period were unobtainable, I had to acknowledge the context in which these secondary texts were written, and establish a critical distance in such ways that remained consistent with the aims of my analysis. In its ideal setting genealogy is, as Foucault claims, ‘grey, meticulous and patiently documentary’ (1977a, p.139), and where my own experience has, at times, not necessarily reflected this kind of archival work, it has required reading against the grain a whole tradition of conventional historiography.

Subjectification

It is true, genealogical research rarely considers the subject from the point of view of their own statements or even the micro operations of power whereby individuals submit themselves to their own domination, or transform themselves in accordance to ethical ideals or objectives. The first part of the thesis is certainly faithful to the objective of tracing various technologies of domination by which human beings are made subjects. From this view, we should think of subjectivity as the effect of power relations inasmuch as apparatuses assemble technologies of subjection. But what specifically are these effects? Here, the awkward term ‘subjectification’ (*assujettissement*) invokes the double meaning ‘to produce subjectivity’ and ‘to make subject’ in order to outline the *condition of being* a subject (Henriques, et. al., 1984). In this section, I want to investigate subjectivity in terms of the effectivity of power. This is not a genealogical enterprise. I am not concerned here with producing a history of how individuals act upon themselves, but to extend the work of diagnosis. If welfare reform is understood as an ensemble of technologies, rationalities, strategies and programmes that can be analysed along dimensions of truth and power, then the task of this section is to continue this analysis along an *ethical* dimension: what kind of subjects are we to become? And what forms of self-authority and resistance to authority might we identify from narratives of experience?

²⁸ Given the bulk of historical analysis was conducted in Australia, the difficulty in obtaining primary documents meant cautiously selecting what might be described as ‘authoritative’ texts on English poor policy, public health, welfare history, medical history and academic literature.

Discourse analysis

Before outlining a methodological approach for analysing participant statements, I want to briefly clarify the epistemological conditions that inform the present analysis. Firstly, participant statements and narratives are treated as an instance of *discourse*, and thereby require a form of ‘discourse analysis’. Contemporary discourse analysis has a diffuse history and may be undertaken in a variety of different ways²⁹. The manner in which discourse is applied here signifies a reversal of traditional approaches in that it eschews theories of representation, structural linguistics or communication models of language. In fact, reducing discourse to language runs the risk of reintroducing a formal linguistic analysis though, as McHoul and Grace (1993) argue, not all formalist versions of discourse can be dismissed out of hand. Nonetheless, a minimum level of concern is that approaches such as ‘social semiotics’ or ‘critical linguistics’ are articulated at the level of ideology and therefore miss the kind of material and epistemological analysis carried out by Foucault. A more extreme concern is that formal linguistic methods are mechanistic in that they attempt to establish general underlying rules of linguistic or communicative function. Because Foucault is more interested in the *conditions* of discourse, the *formation* of objects, and the *position* of statements, we are not to conflate discourse analysis with a formal, logical, linguistic or even language-like system³⁰. Rather, our concern is that of investigating the *techniques* for what can and cannot be

²⁹ ‘Discourse analysis’ has emerged from Anglo-American and French traditions to refer to a field of analyses that is conscious of the production of knowledge. However, the types of discourse analysis which examine utterances have generally emerged from the Anglo-American tradition of ethnomethodology (Garfinkel, 1967), conversation analysis (Sacks & Schelgoff, 1973), and cognitive linguistics (Chomsky, 1957). A common criticism of this tradition is their tendency to emphasise language structures at the expense of content or meaning. For instance, psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic approaches often over-emphasise the role of the individual, presupposing a rational subject who produces knowledge as if unconstrained by a social context. More recently, French critical discourse analysis has presented an interesting reversal of traditional studies of language: discourse is not an instance of language use, rather, language use is an instance of discourse (Pennycook, 1994). This reversal has been taken up in the work of critical linguistics (Hodge & Kress, 1988, Fairclough, 1992; Poynton, 1993; Threadgold, 1998) and critical social psychology (Henriques et al., 1984; Hollway, 1989; Parker, 1990) to show how discourses produce social realities and objects of social regulation.

³⁰ Foucault specifically rejected both formal and empirical approaches to discourse as they privilege what he referred to as the side of enunciation (*énonciation*), meaning, the ‘techniques, the structures, the forms of know-how by which people are able to produce and recognise an utterance’ (McHoul & Grace, 1993, p.35). Such an approach to language accounts for only the ‘surface’ effects of its usage. Foucault proposes a different view of discourse, where the analysis of institutional or disciplinary statements must work at the level of the enounced (*énoncé*), emphasising the positioning effects of utterances and practices. Rather than think of discourse as an instance of language, we should think of language as an instance of discourse.

stated. The appearance of an utterance, no matter how official or mundane the setting, is already constrained by certain historical limits of what is statable, thinkable and knowable.

Foucault's position on discourse is unique in the way he eschews foundationalism without necessarily sliding into nihilism, relativism or realism. This raises a curious ambivalence in relation to discourse and 'the real'. It is often assumed that because objects only exist within discourse that truth is merely an illusion, an empty effect of power, in which case we might deduce that nothing is true (nihilism), or even worse, the status of 'hard truth', like science, is no more true than the haphazard beliefs of the public domain (relativism). We could extend this kind of thinking further by saying that if truth is merely the effect of power then power itself is responsible for distinguishing between true or false propositions, in which case truth is simply a conspiracy of domination (false consciousness). Methods of guaranteeing rational knowledge through techniques of neutrality and objectivity are simply an elaborate ruse, a contrived procedure for obfuscating reality in ways that serve the interests of the powerful. All these positions misinterpret the relation between discourse, power and truth because they are informed by the same rationalist tradition that assumes the existence of an independent reality, the access of which is regulated by power. All these positions (enlightenment, humanism and Marxism) misinterpret the *productivity* of power and its relation to the real. If discourse eschews the possibility of apprehending a reality independent of discourse, it is because there are no foundational certainties (whether in truth itself or within the subject) for guaranteeing knowledge. But at the same time we must avoid the kind of universal suspicion that maintains that truth is consciously concealed. The productivity of power insists that truth, or what we confer as 'the real', is in fact produced, contested and regulated in such ways that maintain a positive plurality. If the relation between discourse and truth is plural, positive and transformative, then this is not to say that our faith in truth is fundamentally undermined, but that the positivity and contestability of truth is *affirmative* – this new relation between discourse and the real suggests an open future that is continuously variable and changeable.

Having briefly outlined some of the epistemological criteria of discourse analysis, I want to clarify the proper object of analysis, participant statements. The epistemology that governs genealogy must somehow be adapted to the analysis of participant talk. The problem, however, is that statements of ‘discursive formations’ are not the same kind of statements issuing from an interactional context like an interview. Again, the difference is between ‘enunciation’ (*énonciation*) and the ‘enounced’ (*énoncé*), the difference between the *mode* of articulation and the *position* of articulation. Dreyfus and Rabinow (1983) liken this to a difference between ‘serious speech acts’ and ‘everyday speech acts’, in which case it is the former that seems to delineate what Foucault means by a statement. Rose (1996a) expresses a similar kind of reservation when stating that a study of subjectification cannot be reduced to an understanding of language, meanings and narratives since they themselves are part of the very regimes of self that must remain the object of genealogical inquiry³¹. While I partly agree with Rose’s pronouncement that subjectification requires a rather technical analysis of the relations of power through which subjects are constituted, I am not so sure whether critical psychology is actually engaged in the kind of ‘phenomenology’ or ‘ethnography’ he seems to be referring to. I am also unconvinced by those arguments that claim subjectivity has little to offer a critical history of the present. Such statements are perhaps indicative of the reluctance of some enclosures of sociology to theorise political power from the point of view of experience. The view put forward by Foucauldian inspired analyses of ‘government’ quite rightly claim that subjectification is embedded among the ‘complex of apparatuses, practices, machinations and assemblages’ which are prior to the formation of subjects (Rose, 1996a). But I think this kind of sociology also risks a partial critique if it seeks to historicise subjectification without actually consulting subjects, or directing critique to the *problem of experience*.

³¹ ‘And while there is much of value in the attention directed by critical psychology to the conditions of the birth and functioning of the discipline, the focus on language and narrative, on the subjectification as a matter of the stories we tell ourselves about ourselves, is, at best, partial, at worst misguided. Subjectification is not to be understood by locating it in a universe of meaning or an interactional context of narratives, but in a complex of apparatuses, practices, machinations, and assemblages within which human being has been fabricated, and which presuppose and enjoin particular relations with ourselves’ (Rose, 1996a, p.10).

If governmentality implies a relationship between the government of others (subjection) and the government of self (ethics) then I cannot see how diagnosis can overlook the links between political power and individual practices of self-formation. There are indeed different kinds of statements that can be recovered from a biography of discursive practices, from a personal history of transformation, from the ethical techniques and private aspirations that are linked to wider processes of social, political and economic change. Other authors have also explored the possibility of combining a Foucauldian analysis of ethics, subjectivity and power to analyse experience from the point of view of the subject's own statements (Bordo, 1993; Nixon, 1996; Blackman, 2000; Hodges, 2002). In view of this possibility, I propose a kind of narrative analysis that takes the appearance of statements as indicators of shifting discursive practices and positions within practices. With this in mind, there is a strong case for recovering statements from the stories people tell about themselves, the kind of positions they assume in telling these stories, and the appearance of statements they call upon to render these stories intelligible. All these features are located in talk and texts, and mark out a domain of experience that can be linked to the effects of political power. Everyday speech and narratives are certainly not the site for the production of statements, but the site for their *reactivation* and *resistance*. Narratives reveal complex investments and resistances, and specify an ensemble of discursive practices which, I think, *re-present* the subject's engagement in force relations.

Case-studies and recruitment

Selection of participants did not conform to 'representative' sampling techniques³². It is neither experience nor talk that form the proper object of analysis, but the position from which discursive statements are produced and the discursive practices through which experience is constituted. A discursive analysis of 12 in-depth interviews was carried out to establish the effectivity of 'official' as well as 'counter' discourses of different subject positions – the jobseeker, the dole bludger, the single mother, the

³² The number of participants is small in comparison to representative forms of social research, where positivist techniques are thought to guarantee research-validity by forming samples that represent larger cohorts. This is not, however, the purpose of the current research. While each participant was considered representative of governmental categories of welfare assistance, they were not recruited to represent the population at large, but rather to share testimonies and experiences relevant to diagnosing social change at the level of political governance and subjectification.

chronically ill, the wage-labourer, the free citizen, etc. The criteria for recruiting participants were based on labour market experience and welfare receipt. Participants were recruited from each of the following governmental categories of assistance:

- (i) 'unemployed' recipients receiving *Newstart Allowance*
- (ii) 'disability' recipients receiving *Disability Support Pensions*
- (iii) 'lone parents' receiving *Parenting Payment*

Narrative case-studies were designed to reflect what government authorities attest as the three largest groups most *at risk* of welfare dependency – the unemployed, the disabled and the lone parent. Unlike positivist techniques which position the researcher as revealing the truth of the researched, post-structuralist techniques attend to the participant's view of truth, and, therefore, the discursive resources or statements they use to articulate experiences regarding welfare receipt, work history, practices of self-management, personal transformation. In this sense, the research is pluralist and descriptive. Rather than represent the world as 'it really is', post-structuralist techniques endeavour to describe and differentiate the way discourses are taken-up in participant narratives and how they materialise through social practice.

Formal guidelines were formulated for contacting prospective participants through formal organisations and community groups. These procedures were designed to ensure the ethical, responsible and professional conduct of the researcher, and to ensure that interview participants were recruited free from coercion or psycho-social harm. As a matter of course, however, participants were recruited through more informal contacts among the researcher's social network, or by several degrees of separation. By 'informal techniques' I mean contacting people by word-of-mouth and snowballing, in which case I invited participants who were known to me, or those who were unknown, were contacted via a third party who would pass on their consent. For reasons that remain unclear, female participants were easier to contact than the men. The difficulty of recruiting men was perhaps related to the invisibility of the marginal and the poor.

Interviewing

Interviewing techniques renounce the hope of producing data that is free of contamination. In fact, the very idea of 'contamination' implies that the researcher's subjectivity is an intrusion, threatening to undermine the neutrality and objectivity of any rational, well-formulated methodology. These are certainly the concerns of positivist research that otherwise fantasise about the purity and authenticity of a research context. The critical psychologist is well rehearsed in the problems of experimentalism, demand characteristics, experimenter bias, and the elaborate attempts to create artificial conditions with which to suppress subjectivity and investigate human behaviour 'as it really is'. Rather than view subjectivity as a problem, critical psychology recognises subjectivity as a resource (Bannister, et al., 1994). Once we overcome the anxieties of suppressing and deceiving subjectivity, interview techniques emerge from a space in which the subjectivities of 'the researcher' and 'the researched' enter into a relational and dynamic process of mutually constituting the thing we call 'data'. In this case, data is the 'talk' issuing from a context, the conditions of which are deliberately manufactured by the researcher's desire to invite the researched to speak about their experiences. There is neither contamination nor deception, but a relational encounter that varies according to social circumstances.

What does the researcher bring into this context? Firstly, a desire to know, but more specifically, a set of questions, prompts, careful interventions so as to co-produce a story in relation to experiences surrounding the conditions of welfare receipt. In this sense, my own desire was not to interrogate the research subject, but prompt them to produce a biography of themselves. This is not to say the researcher occupies a passive role in this process; there is a *strategic* dimension. To use the language of research methods, the interviews were 'semi-structured' in that I wanted people's narratives to conform to a loose template or form. In each of the interviews, I asked participants to describe their background in terms of class, education, family context, early working experiences. I wanted subjects to build a context, as rich or as detailed as they were prepared to give, so as to place the event/s of welfare and work within a broader context of social practices, conditions and relations. My own questions and desires were certainly interventions that

would, apart from managing how stories were told, focus on minute events relating to employment history, the conditions of leaving or finding work, as well as the subject's encounters with welfare authorities and institutions.

It would be naive to dismiss my own involvement as a kind of tactical intervention in the narrative about which I wanted my participants to say more or less. But aside from the power of asking a question, or prompting a subject to say more, the ability to listen to a subject's story, to carefully track a time-line of events, to jot down terms, dates and places, was indispensable to the task of building a narrative. At times, based on my interview notes, I would ask participants to backtrack and elaborate, always keeping in mind an artificial sense of *trajectory*. The notion of trajectory allowed me to impose a chronological organisation on events, to capture the instantiation of experience, and place key events along a continuum of social practice. Lastly, the interviews concluded with questions of *fantasy* – a sense of hope, longing, and freedom – the rationale of which is to evaluate how subjects project themselves into a future, to investigate an ethical dimension of becoming 'other than oneself' or even transcending one's material circumstances. The fantasy of freedom would serve as an important device for describing how subjects work on themselves through the very fictions and real obligations of modern neo-liberal governance.

Transcription

Interviews were documented using audio equipment to *translate* talk into text. I use the term translate here in two senses. Firstly, I borrow from Latour and Callon (1981) the notion of technically transforming an event into an object, the text. By means of inscription, a reality is made stable, concrete and transferable so that concepts and techniques of analysis can perform diagnosis from a distance. Secondly, I refer to translation as an *interpretation*, an act of force, by which an event is transformed into a work of thought.

Transcription is itself a technology of qualitative social research that takes many different forms. An acute form of transcription is found among ethnomethodological

research for encoding 'fine-grain' details and nuances of social interaction. The recording of turn-taking, pauses, the meticulous documentation of overlapping speech, intonation, stress, etc., locates the emerging rules for managing 'accounts' and accomplishing social actions. I do not subscribe to this method of analysing talk as it seeks to encode a level of detail that captures the accuracy and authenticity of what is said. Like positivist methods, ethnomethodology seeks to guarantee validity by claiming to reproduce a context and reality 'as it really is'. As Walkerdine, et al. (2001) argue, this tradition of research deletes subjectivity by appealing instead to the realism of a context that is bracketed and analysed in terms of its own rules and specificities of interaction. At the other extreme, we have a method of transcription that is suitable for 'content analysis' (Burns, 1997). Content analysis is more or less concerned with the 'nominal' and surface features of language, and follows a tradition of quantitative research whereby texts are treated as a transparent medium of thought, and consigned to enumerating the frequency of linguistic categories (Lupton, 1992). Because this is not an interpretive exercise, content analysis finds little or no need to encode specificities other than distinguishing the semantic features of text.

The kind of transcription used here establishes a middle ground in the detail encoded in text. This is not to say that fine grain transcription used in formal textual analysis is superfluous, but I am unconvinced that this level of detail is necessary for an analysis of subjectification. The approach taken here is less concerned with the minute breakdown of turn-taking, and more concerned with the larger organisation of talk. By clearly demarcating 'chunks' of talk (cf. Halliday, 1992), transcription encodes patterns of coherence and organisation of themes which privilege the continuity of talk. As a matter of course, this approach privileges the monologues of participants and illustrates the contours of 'natural' breaks characteristic of the interview context whereby modes of speech are governed by 'question' and 'answer'. When, for instance, research participants are speaking and the interviewer makes minor interventions which do not disrupt the flow of talk, then the interviewer is embedded in the former. Furthermore, specific variables or differences within modes of speech are encoded – intonation, stress, pausing, tempo, false starts or repairs, and non verbal directions – to provide the minimum indication that

speech is *embodied* by particular speakers. As such, transcription attempts to strike a balance between accuracy and valid social knowledge (Silverman, 1993).

Coding and analysis

Coding and selecting samples from the corpus of interview material is a way of managing a rich volume of data. Coding and selection is a strategic exercise since the researcher is organising material to find instances of narration that are illustrative of practices of subjectification, styles of self-management and an ethos of subjectivity. One way of organising the material was to encode specific instances of ‘official’ and ‘unofficial’ discourses. As mentioned earlier, I arranged the interview chapters under three thematic headings: ‘activity’, ‘regulation’ and ‘freedom’. These themes are broad demarcations for conjoining political and personal practices under which I identify instances of *counter discourses*: statements of resistance, counter normative practices and reflections, examples of problems and contradictions. One selection strategy I used focussed on *problematizations* – moments of crisis, contradictions, ruptures or ‘disfluencies’ in the production or continuity of talk (Fairclough, 1992). Another strategy focussed on *binary relations*, in which case participants would express patterns of difference and opposition, inclusion and exclusion. I should mention, however, that the purpose of selecting these binaries is not to reproduce these distinctions, but to show how they are used, in some cases systematically, to articulate patterns of difference, similarity and equivalence. One last comment about coding and selection is that they are used flexibly rather than rigidly. Interpretive work is not necessarily a systematic procedure, but one that uses a range of different devices and strategies to guide analysis and draw out aspects of the data that address the research question.

Previously, I attempted to show how the statements of discourse specify a mode of subjectification by linking political power with subject positions and discursive practices. To express this relation simply, the task is to somehow link the personal and political in such ways that extends the project of critique. To achieve this, analysis proceeds within a framework comprised of three levels of investigation: narrative-mapping, statement analysis and subjectification.

At the first level, analysis emphasises ‘mapping’ the subject’s narrative by tracing chronology, place and event, as well as the use of metaphor to construct a story as a particular version of reality (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). In other words, this initial level of analysis examines the individual narrative at face value, to estimate what kind of story is being told (Walkerdine, et al., 2001; Silverman, 1993). The understanding developed here is that the structure of a narrative provides orientation for the analysis of statements; it provides a particular narrative context of how discourses are utilised, the significance of their presence and absence, and what kind of speaking positions they give rise to. The assumption is that narratives provide a broader structure for the instantiation of talk – encoding a sense of time, place, events and relations – which are composed of discursive statements.

The second level of analysis refers to the appearance and function of statements themselves. The criteria of a ‘statement’ used here is similar to that of Foucauldian analysis: they are functional in the sense they do things rather than ‘represent’ states of affairs; they act to constrain or enable what it is possible to know, and are therefore linked to systems of knowledge; and they occur within particular social technologies, and within historical limits, and form part of the techniques for the production of human subjects (Foucault, 1972). The statement is designed to circumscribe a *position* from which the subject speaks and acts; it might be from within a particular social technology – psychology, biology, spiritualism, etc. – which are linked to a broader field of statements from which they are produced, the discursive formation. But statements are never purely singular positions, knowledges or practices, but may arise in multiple and contradictory ways; they may converge around the emergence of a problem or contradiction, or comprise a hybrid formation in which a number of discourses are combined or mutated. Finally, statements are linked to systems of subjection, the technologies of power and forms of regulation that produce subjectivity under a specific form, for a specific purpose, according to specific strategies and objectives. In this sense, statements perform an intermediary relation (*savoir*) between systems of knowledge that give a narrative its coherence and the subjects to which it produces.

The third level of analysis refers to the ethical mode of subjectification, and ties together the preceding levels of analysis by identifying technologies through which the self establishes a relation with itself. The purpose is to identify at the level of *practice* the various ways subjectivity is managed, modified and transformed. Where a political diagnosis performs analysis of the mode of subjectification – the moral obligations, norms, rules of practice that subjects are enjoined to – an analysis of subjectification examines how, and by what means, we are to become ethical subjects. An important aspect of linking the domain of subjectification to a diagnosis of political power is to examine the manner of being to which individuals aspire: what does the subject desire to become? In other words, analysis endeavours to understand the *telos* of which certain practices and knowledges are applied to oneself. Drawing from Valerie Walkerdine's work on subjectivity (1988, 1989, 1991), I use the concept of *fantasy* to examine the way individuals project a sense of becoming-a-subject into the future – an aspiration, desire, hope or longing – the implication of which being subjects work on themselves to be free, autonomous, financially independent, secure, happy, etc. An important theme of the ensuing analysis is that notions of freedom, now more than ever, operate as potent fantasies and fictions among contemporary regimes of self-formation.

In the next section, I examine how notions of civil society figure among contemporary Australian welfare politics and, more specifically, how they are taken up in the 'McClure Report' to argue for the ethical reconstruction of welfare recipients. The 'rise of the social' explores both primary and secondary literature and aspects of Foucault's argument on the 'art of government' to show how political thought assembled a territory amenable to rule. The case is made that debates on pauperism rested upon the 'idea of society' which structured the terms of the Poor Law of 1834. This event is contrasted with contemporary transformations of political rule. For instance, advanced liberal rationalities are consistent with a transformation of political territory; it no longer makes sense to regulate the conduct of welfare recipients in the name of 'civil society', but upon a certain conception of a domain comprised of social obligations. This new space of government has recently emerged in the form of *community*.

PART ONE

HISTORY OF THE PRESENT

2 Rise of the social

In this chapter, I examine the kind of policy statements that constitute a ‘social’ domain as a political object of thought and action. What kinds of territory do political rationalities assemble in the name of security and freedom? And how are these linked to the present moral and ethical reconstruction of the poor? Neo-liberal strategies of welfare reform, like those proposed by the Howard government, are historicised in terms of the relationship they pose between unemployability and notions of ‘social obligation’ and ‘community’. Contemporary welfare politics are interrogated alongside early nineteenth century debates that placed pauperism and society in a new kind of relationship. The task is to show how the liberal discovery of society emerged as a moral-political solution to an economic problem. The problem of poverty emerges not from the scarcity and inequality of a nascent free market economy, but from the moral aberration of those who were unfit to take part in the project of society. The *pauper* would serve to distinguish and sharpen the values of economic responsibility upon which the whole of society depended. The recent appearance of welfare dependency is considered in terms of a similar project, though what is at stake is no longer ‘civil society’ but the moral and ethical spaces of *community*.

Language of the social

On 29th October 1999, Senator Newman commissioned a Reference Group to outline possible directions for reforming Australia’s social support system. The Reference Group, chaired by Patrick McClure, and comprised of welfare leaders, academics and public servants, tabled the Final Report, *Participation Support for a More Equitable Society*, in July 2000. Unlike Senator Newman’s scare campaign on ‘welfare dependency’ the year before, the ‘McClure Report’ is moderate in tone and, in certain instances, sympathetic to claimants’ interests. Nonetheless, its key recommendations are widely received as ratifying the Federal Government’s strategy for expanding a framework of ‘mutual obligations’.

For the moment, I want to refrain from engaging in those ethical and political debates which either view the McClure Report as endorsing the Howard Government's 'war on welfare' or whether it constitutes a serious rethinking of a system that has failed to keep pace with recent economic, social and demographic changes. What is of more interest here is the shift in focus from 'simply meeting people's immediate financial needs to helping them maximise social and economic participation over the longer term' (2000b, p.12). The term *social participation* demonstrates a curious shift in the present politics of welfare reform in that 'a framework of reciprocity' emerges as a solution to 'passive income support'. The renewed awareness of reciprocity, responsibilities, obligations presuppose a view of 'free' political culture – a society comprised of 'dense, reliable networks of mutual expectations' (Mead, 1986, p.6). The rhetoric of 'mutual obligation' and 'participation' is a positive reworking of these ideas: a particular moral formula given a new ethical gloss.

For now, the point of departure is not the ethical and moral mode of activity suggested by discourses of participation, but the *terrain* of activity they mark out. Consider the following statement cited in the Report's Introduction:

The Reference Group considers that a broad concept of economic and social participation can provide a positive underpinning for the Participation Support System [...] One of the important principles that underpin our approach to welfare reform is that there are social obligations that apply to everyone. Alongside a growing emphasis on individual choice, we must also recognise the importance of obligations and responsibilities... The Reference Group has used the social obligations framework to develop a wide concept of mutual obligations. Obligations are reciprocal and they extend across the whole community, not just between government (on behalf of the community) and the individual in receipt of income support (McClure, 2000b, p.4).

And consider this statement on the Key Features of Mutual Obligation:

Within the social support system these social obligations are defined as mutual obligations, whereby the whole of the *society* has an obligation to provide assistance to those in most need. Similarly, those who receive assistance and opportunities through the social support system have a responsibility to themselves and the rest of *society* to seek to take advantage of such opportunities. The Reference Group believes that the mutual obligations of governments, business and community are of no less importance than the obligations of individuals. In our view, the whole social support system, with its various components, is a very tangible expression of the mutual obligations of the *community* as a whole towards its more vulnerable members. Thus, the whole of this report should be seen as addressing the respective responsibilities of all sectors of *society* (2000b, p.34, emphasis added).

In the first statement the Reference Group argue for the expansion of participation to include one's moral responsibility to others. Obligation is a reasonable expectation if we accept that community is already comprised of emotional and moral allegiances. In the second statement, society is the embodiment of state responsibility over its members – pluralism bounded by natural moral responsibilities – but the language of mutual obligation assembles a non-hierarchical field of relations between stakeholders and communities. Since the mid 80's 'community' has emerged as a *sector*³³ of society – a quasi-autonomous domain, an 'ecological' utopia – capable of generating its own solutions to the problems of welfare and security.

If we take 'the social' to mean not an abstract and independent domain, but a plane of thought and action that was central to political thought since the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, then how are we to diagnose this new configuration of government? In the context of the McClure Report, what are we to take *the* social to mean? I will argue 'the social' is no longer synonymous with the 'civil state of society' but, in line with advanced liberal rationalities, has shifted to 'community'. In this chapter, I want to interrogate the conditions under which this shift occurs. The present task is to explore the historical relationship between political economy and society, and show we cannot consider the origins and subsequent problems of modern welfare without historically revisiting the problem of wealth and poverty. In the following sections, I begin to develop some themes for thinking about the mode of political reason that gave rise to the 'idea of society'.

Art of government

In this section, I apply aspects of Foucault's analysis of political rationalities to explore the theme of the *art of government* and trace the conditions in which it was first possible for the social to appear as a distinctly new and 'liberal' phenomenon. The rise of the social must first be considered in terms of a new spatialisation of knowledge which,

³³ If community specifies a *particular sector* of phenomena it is because it forms a grouping of diverse problems, programmes, and relations which are ascribed a social character (Deleuze, cited in Donzelot, 1979, ix). Though it is true community is not a new invention, the way it has been recently posed as a solution to the welfare state corresponds to the devolution of state responsibility whereby 'community' emerges as an ethical and moral space comprised of associational bonds and reciprocal obligations.

from the seventeenth century onwards, came to regard *population* as a particular object of thought. It was out of diverse concerns regarding the health, wealth and greatness of a population that gave rise to 'the idea of society' as a complex and independent reality.

In his essay 'Governmentality', Foucault (1991) observes that from the middle of the sixteenth up until the end of the eighteenth century there emerges a series of diverse questions and political treatises which no longer serve as technologies for the advise of the prince, but are marked by new concerns regarding the 'art of government'. During the sixteenth century, the problem of government appears at the intersection of two movements: one, having broken with the structures of feudalism, led to the establishment of territorial and administrative states, and the other, a certain liberal interpretation of Christian (Protestant) conduct, questioned the means of spiritual salvation. Foucault describes this 'double movement' as the tendency towards state centralisation, and the distribution of religious dissidence, which together produce with 'peculiar intensity' the problem of how to be ruled. The problem of government was also framed by its opposition to Machiavelli's *The prince*, which was criticised not only for its scandalous and amoral rationality, but because it took the prince as the sole object and principle of rationality³⁴. The art of government was differentiated from the capacities of the prince, to find 'a plurality of forms of government and their immanence to the state: the multiplicity and immanence of these activities distinguishes them radically from the transcendent singularity of Machiavelli's prince' (p.91).

Among the various forms of government that emerge in opposition to Machiavellianism there also emerged 'one special and precise form' of question regarding the form of government which can be applied to the state as a whole (Foucault, 1991, p.91). The key questions raised in this period are: What are the principles and methods which should be applied to govern a state? How to introduce the economy

³⁴ Foucault argues *The Prince* is characterised by one principle: the prince 'stood in a relation of singularity and externality, and thus transcendence, to his principality'. The prince is a single and separate source of power pursuing a single objective: exercising power to reinforce, strengthen and protect his principality, not for the benefit of the principality in itself, but in order to secure his own relation with what he *owns*, the territory he has inherited: 'one can say that Machiavelli's *The Prince*, as profiled in all these implicitly and explicitly anti-Machiavellian treatises, is essentially a treatise about the prince's ability to keep his principality' (1991, pp.80-90).

governing the family to promote wealth into the management of the state? Political treatises of this period poured over the minutiae of different forms of government, producing a typology of governable forms – governing the self, the family, the state – but it was in response to questions of how to introduce *economy* that became essential to the art of government. Where in the eighteenth century ‘economy’ acquires its modern meaning as an independent domain of complex processes, in the sixteenth century *oeconomy* refers to a form of government.

By the sixteenth century, government moves away from feudal state forms towards the ‘administration of the state’. It was during this period that a theory of the art of government would assemble more specific instruments for the management of the state. For instance, Foucault claims that a theory of ‘managing things’, and the introduction of economy into political practice, allowed the development of more specific instruments for the tactical intervention of processes and relations. This view would by-pass the old problematic whereby the good of sovereignty was determined not by the public good, but the good of obeying sovereignty – this circularity had remained a constant problem for theories of sovereignty from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries³⁵. It was the shift from imposing law to employing tactics, from deriving knowledge of the state that pertained to the complex relations of men and things *internal* to a territory, which enabled the art of government to be linked to the administrative apparatuses of the territorial monarchies³⁶. The art of government, then, ceased to establish its operation on the external boundaries of the state; it was now *inside* the state, and referred to those elements, factors and forces that would later form the objects for ‘a science of the state’ in the form of statistics.

³⁵ ‘In every case, what characterises the end of sovereignty, this common and general good, is in sum nothing other than submission to sovereignty. This means that the end of sovereignty is circular: the end of sovereignty is the exercise of sovereignty. The good is obedience to the law, hence the good for sovereignty is that people should obey it’ (Foucault, 1991, p.95).

³⁶ Foucault observes knowledge of the state assumes increasing importance during the seventeenth century – eg. the analyses of different elements and dimensions of power, the use of statistics and the appearance of a science of the state – the emergence of governmental apparatuses became increasingly linked to ‘mercantilism and the Cameralists’ science of police’ (Foucault, 1991, p.96).

From the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the art of government began to organise itself around the theme of ‘reason of state’. Rational principles were no longer derived from natural or divine laws, but were now intrinsic to the state. However, it was this same reason of state which, up until the eighteenth century, acted as an obstacle to the art of government, blocking it within the pre-eminence of the problem of exercising sovereignty. The art of government could not acquire autonomy while the problem of sovereignty remained the central question. Foucault suggests it was ‘mercantilism’ that became the first rationalisation of the practice of government: ‘for the first time with mercantilism we see the development of a *savoir* of state that can be used as a tactic of government’ (1991, pp.97-8). With mercantilism we find a knowledge of the state reinserted through a consciously conceived art of government, but the expansion of mercantilism was itself blocked by the *might* of the sovereign who, rather than increase the wealth of a country, would accumulate wealth and raise armies in order to carry out his own policies.

The appearance of contract theory sought to reconcile the art of government with theories of sovereignty by deriving general principles of government from the shaping of public law³⁷. Though contract theory played an important role in theories of public law and deriving the origins of government, it still took sovereignty as its point of departure and was thus confined to the development of public law in order to derive the ruling principles of government:

On the one hand, there was this framework of sovereignty which was too large, too abstract and too rigid; and on the other, the theory of government suffered from its reliance on a model which was too thin, too weak and too insubstantial, that of the family: an economy of enrichment still based on a model of the family was unlikely to be able to respond adequately to the importance of territorial possession and royal finance (Foucault, 1991, p.98).

The art of government finds an outlet from these obstacles as a new problem begins to emerge in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, the problem of population. It was the perception of specific problems of the population which allowed a science of government to recentre the theme of the economy around a wider realm of processes as

³⁷ Contract theory, though logically indefensible, was rhetorically effective in insisting that the authority of rulers rest not on the will of god or mere custom, but on being used to defend the interests and rights of the people (Plamenatz, 1963).

opposed to the model of the family. Foucault proposes that the development of 'statistics' which, during the mercantilist tradition functioned according to the juridical framework of sovereignty, now functioned outside this framework in the form of a new technology for the government of populations. For instance, statistics rendered a whole new set of observations regarding specific attributes of the population – rates of birth, death and disease, cycles of scarcity, increments of labour and wealth – together they portrayed a range of phenomena which were not only intrinsic to a population, but irreducible to the family. The population was shown to possess its own regularities specific to the dimension of the family. For this reason, Foucault argues that the emergence of population, the realignment of economy and the irreducibility of the family, are essential to showing how the family is no longer a model for government, but 'a privileged instrument for the government of the population' (1991, p.100). By the middle of the eighteenth century, the family appears as an instrument for reducing mortality, promoting marriage and implementing vaccination (Foucault, 1979, 1980, 1991).

Quite different to the structures of sovereignty, the art of government by the eighteenth century was no longer concerned with deriving abstract rights and formulating public laws to consolidate sovereign power, but referred to the welfare of the population – the optimisation of its capacities, the improvement of health, the increase of wealth – as conditions *immanent* to a population. Beginning from the sixteenth century, what became known as the *savoir* of government was by the eighteenth century conflated with the processes of population, now referred to as economy. The science of political economy emerged precisely from a *savoir* of government, marking out a field of 'continuous and multiple relations between populations, territory and wealth', thereby allowing the transposition of elements of economy and population into objects that were amenable to techniques of intervention (Foucault, 1991, p.101). One should not assume, however, that sovereignty was swept aside as the art of government rose to become a political science. Rather, the problem of sovereignty was now posed with even greater intensity as to how juridical and institutional forms might superimpose the foundations of sovereignty upon this new differentiated field of processes. Nor was discipline eliminated either; all the institutions in which discipline was organised – schools, protoindustries, armies, etc. –

were based on the great administrative monarchies of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Yet as the art of government shifted its attention to a complex economy of processes, 'discipline was never more important or more valorised than at the moment when it became important to manage a population' (ibid: 102). Population was more than simply knowing and regulating the surface-effects of collective phenomena, but required a network of apparatuses that could penetrate the depths of 'a complex and independent reality' that was now thought to comprise 'its own laws and mechanisms of reaction' (Foucault, 2000c).

Though we have not quite reached the stage at which the social begins to emerge, Foucault presents a history of government as a series of specific transformations which lay down its conditions of existence. The overturning of the structures of sovereignty and the transformation of government into an ensemble of institutions, tactics and calculations find their fullest expression not within the 'problem of the state'³⁸ but the problem of population. In the next section, I want to demonstrate how the invention of society was linked to liberal thought, a technology of government that begins to establish the limitations of political rule. Society is the discovery of liberalism, a newly emerging territory distinguished in terms of its own complexity and independence of political power.

Discovery of society

What remains an issue is how the activity of government transformed space to create a clearing for the emergence of society. How did government rationalities apply to a whole territory? In the 1982 interview, *Space, knowledge and power*, Foucault (2000c) provides a clue as to how technologies of government came to think of territory as the object of various concerns. For instance, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, political discussions regarding the government of large states converged around the question of the city: should not a territory be governed in much the same way as one

³⁸ Foucault suggests that one might avoid over-valuing the 'problem of the state' as if it were a looming entity (*monstre froid*), or a reduction of social and economic functions which are said to find their essential expression in the state. The state possessed neither an imposing unity, nor a reduction of privileged functions; rather, it was a 'mythical abstraction' of only limited importance within the field of government (Rose & Miller, 1992).

would govern a city? The model of the city emerged as a clearly formulated idea: one could understand a city as a spatial metaphor or symbol which could be applied to a whole territory: 'The city was no longer perceived as a place of privilege, as an exception in a territory of fields, forests and roads. The cities were no longer islands beyond the common law' (pp.350-51). The characteristics of the city and the problems to which they referred served as models for governmental rationality. By the eighteenth century, the effects of urbanism, the use of collective facilities, precepts of hygiene, public and private architecture, areas of squalor and disease, were now subject to governmental techniques whereby phenomena were rendered visible and calculable according to temporal and spatial dimensions (Foucault, 1980, 1997d; Rose, 1994b).

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the effective administration of a state was considered well organised when a system of policing cities extended across the entire territory. The notion of 'police' (*polizeiwissenschaft*), a corp of governing personages and qualified personnel, applied to those forms of regulation that assured the strength of the state and the tranquillity of the city (Foucault, 1997d, 2000c). But the police also embodied the very *type* of governmental rationality capable of regulating the whole territory: 'The model of the territory became the matrix for the regulation that apply to a whole state' (Foucault, 2000c, p.351). No doubt, the police functioned as a centralised mechanism for the surveillance and discipline of a field of differences (Foucault, 1977b, 1980). During the eighteenth century, the deployment of police magistrates and the method with which they radiated from the periphery of a city to the administrative centre – the magistrate-general – was not specific to sovereignty itself, but more the exercise of power which functioned coextensively with an entire state: 'Police power must bear 'over everything': it is not however the totality of the state nor of the kingdom as visible and invisible body of the monarch; it is the dust of events, actions, behaviour, opinions – 'everything that happens'' (Foucault, 1977b, p.213).

The disciplinary function of the police did not operate in a single direction, nor did it function unilaterally from a single source of power. Rather, the police function resembled a system of 'double-entry', a lateral distribution of functions mediating between the

desires of the king, the reports and registrations of the juridical machinery, as well as the concerns of families, priests and nobles. The police was a complex function linking the absolute power of the monarch with the lowest levels of power disseminated among the state; it enabled power to extend to the discipline of spaces exceeding the intervention of the monarch. In fact, it was the multiplicity of its functions – the myriad of visibilities it generated and the immense network of spaces to which it extended – that engendered ‘a society of the disciplinary type’ (Foucault, 1977b, p.215). It was the transformation from sovereign to disciplinary power that led to one of the great political discoveries of the late eighteenth century, the very idea of *society* (Foucault, 2000c).

With the discovery of ‘society’ – an independent realm possessing its own natural freedoms and activities – political rationalities began to engage in new questions that no longer required an absolute penetration of the body politic, but formed questions around the limits of government. Between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the type of questions responsible for shaping political thought no longer asked *what* is government, but rather *how* is government possible? Why must one govern? (Foucault, 2000c, 1997c). The answer could not and did not lie within the apparatus of the police, whose degree of interpenetration and field of ‘policies’ might render the functions of society automatic³⁹. Rather, the questions of the late eighteenth century approached the possibility of government by establishing its own limits – one must govern without governing *too much*: ‘that if one governed too much one did not govern at all’ (Foucault, 2000c, p.352). Liberalism – the political discovery of the limitation of governmental actions as they apply to the phenomenon of population – is the form of reflections, practices and problems that is ‘anxious to have the respect of legal subjects and to ensure the free enterprise of individuals’ (Foucault, 1997c, p.73).

³⁹ Liberalism emerges from a critique of government by ‘police’ – not to be confused with its modern, negative meaning, but one that applied to seventeenth and eighteenth century Europe. Police, in this sense, was responsible for the detailed regulation of collective life with the purpose of maintaining the *good order* of a territorial community. I think it would be a misnomer to assume that with the advent of liberalism a system of policing had disappeared altogether, rather we might cautiously state that a practice of policing had mutated at which point it became tied to principles of population growth and economic activity. As Barry Hindess observes, liberalism does not dispute the view that the task of police should discipline the production and maintenance of good order, but rather ‘the workings of society could not be known in the manner supposed by the theory of police, and therefore... could not be governed entirely in accordance with police prescriptions’ (2001, p.96).

So, what marks the beginnings of liberalism is not a theory of state, the functions of police nor founded upon a definition of government. Rather, with the notion of society liberal thought finds its expression within the complex relations of interiority and exteriority of the state:

Society, as both precondition and a final end, is what enables one to no longer ask the question: How can one govern as much as possible and at the least possible cost? Instead, the question becomes: Why must one govern? In other words, what makes it necessary for there to be a government, and what ends should it pursue with regard to society in order to justify its existence? The idea of society enables a technology of government to be developed based on the principle that it itself is already “too much,” “in excess” – or at least that it is added on as a supplement which can and must always be questioned as to its necessity and its usefulness (Foucault, 1997c, p.75).

For Foucault, liberalism is both a principle and a method of rationalising the exercise of government by restricting itself to ‘the internal rule of maximum economy’. That is to say, the process by which government maximises its effects and minimises its costs is only possible inasmuch as it is never an end for itself, but rather a multiplicity of ends for which the idea of society became its principle object. Political power abandoned the dream of a totally administered society and was instead confronted with a separate domain, whose interiority and naturalness disqualified the use of sovereign power.

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault (1977b) poses the question ‘How will power, by increasing its forces, be able to increase those of society instead of confiscating them or impeding them?’ Again, the problem is one of freedom; power cannot reside within the body of the king whose ‘strange material and physical presence’ can only resort to ‘sudden, violent and discontinuous forms’ of regulation (p.208). The form of power synonymous with liberal technologies must refer to that ‘whole lower region’, the heterogeneous forces, the multiple movements, the irregularities and contingencies, found among populations. Liberalism refers to both the period and practice where the exercise of power no longer requires the expansion of a force that either overwhelms a collective or dissolves an individual, but exemplifies the *intensification of power* itself – the art of increasing the production of force-relations circulating throughout a social body. For these purposes:

...what are required are mechanisms that analyse distributions, gaps, series, combinations, and which use instruments that render visible, record, differentiate and compare: a physics of relational and multiple power, which has its maximum intensity not in the person of the king, but in the bodies that can be individualized by these relations (Foucault, 1977b, p.208).

That a population must be free in order to be governed is not only a condition for the exercise of liberalism, but also a precondition of disciplinary power, since no relationship of power can exist outside of freedom. The art of liberal government, having freed itself from sovereignty, came to elaborate the subjective conditions for which liberalism could install a more 'contractual' notion of freedom, and articulate the fabric of the social as the aggregate of mutual relations between 'citizen' and 'society' (Rose & Miller, 1992).

The social emerges at which point it becomes possible to *problematise* the behaviour of individuals on the basis of having rejected their responsibilities to liberal society. For instance, the social would come to describe 'unnatural' or 'anti-social' forms of conduct around which converged a number of apparatuses – medicine, law, psychology, pedagogy – to calibrate a field of differences in the name of the social; it would come to naturalise the contractual consensus of civil society while at the same time *problematise* behaviour in ways that demanded intervention: medicine cured the sick; law reformed the criminal; legislation assisted the destitute; education inculcated the dull and ignorant. In short, the emergence of liberal society would arrange a new order of problems and concomitant programmes for optimising the freedom and productivity of populations.

In raising the capacities of life and governing population from a distance, the rise of the social was the effect of early liberal practices of *problematization*. The social becomes a means of programming space according to its relative functions, vectors and capacities as they take shape around certain problems, failures and concerns. By attaching themselves to these problem-events, programmes would seek to configure specific locales and relations for the purpose of optimising the latent and manifest capacities of the population. The art of government, and the liberal technologies they deploy, would come to organise space so that individuals conducted themselves freely, and embodied the liberal vocation of acting rationally, healthy and normal (Rose & Miller, 1992).

In this section, I briefly traced how the discovery of society was linked to the principle of limited government at which point liberal political thought begins to govern through the idea of population. Political rationalities were confronted by an independent domain of autonomous, self-regulating processes, the likes of which prepared a clearing for the new economic discourse. So far I have only described aspects of Foucault's historical argument; in the next section, I want to examine both primary and secondary sources to take my historical argument further, and show how the discovery of society was tied to discourses of pauperism and economy.

Pauperism and society

By the nineteenth century practices of government are confronted by the complexity of a domain that begins to assume the contours of a self-regulating system. Arguably, there are many heterogeneous formulations, disciplines and practices that were responsible for this complex and autonomous view of society, but for now I want to examine two examples that form part of a general thesis of liberal political thought: the principles of population and political economy. These formulations did not form part of a single logic of 'state intervention', but were deployed around, and attached to, a series of problematisations. In this section, I explore how together the problem of population and political economy transformed nineteenth debates on pauperism. I want to show how an emergent social science placed the lowly figure of the pauper alongside one of the greatest events of the nineteenth century, the discovery of society⁴⁰. Before elaborating how classical political economy featured among debates on pauperism, it is worth considering what the new economic discourse displaced.

From oeconomy to economy

Adam Smith's, *An inquiry into the nature and causes of the wealth of nations* (1776), is considered the first comprehensive system of economic and social development, and the birthplace of social science (Tribe, 1981; Tribe and Mizuta, 2002). As much as the *Wealth of Nations* formed a treatise on economic development and of policies that either

⁴⁰ This argument is partly a rehearsal of a similar thesis put forward by Polanyi, who, in *The Great Transformation* states: 'The problem of poverty centred around two closely related subjects: pauperism and political economy. Though we deal with their impact on modern consciousness separately, they formed part of one indivisible whole: the discovery of society' (Polanyi, 1957, p.103).

hindered or promoted wealth, it was also partly an exposition of a much larger scheme of historical evolution. We can place Smith's analysis of wealth alongside the dominant themes of enlightenment, which viewed principles of economic growth as consistent with the historical progress of society. Insofar as Smith elaborates a theoretical conception of economy as a natural and independent sphere of exchange, the Adamite economy had to first break with the 'mercantile system'.

Mercantilism was economic nationalism for the purpose of building the 'wealth, strength and greatness of the nation'. Smith coined the term 'mercantile system' to describe the system of political oeconomy that sought to enrich the country by restraining imports and encouraging exports. This system dominated Western European economic thought from the sixteenth to the late eighteenth century. The goal of these policies was to achieve a 'favourable' balance of trade that would bring gold and silver into the country. In contrast to the agricultural system of the Physiocrats, or the *laissez-faire* doctrine, the mercantile system served the interests of merchants and producers such as the British East India Company, whose activities were protected by the state (Appleby, 1978; Tribe, 1978).

Political 'oeconomy' and political 'economy' are distinguishable in that the latter is rendered conceptually autonomous from the political order (Tribe, 1978). In political oeconomy⁴¹, national wealth is not equivalent to the aggregate of value produced within definite political boundaries, but a process of circulation within the polity of trading households (Dean, 1991). As Bruland and Smith observe, economic operation is domestic finance in which 'households of the oeconomy trade with each other, realising circulatory gains in so far as they can buy cheap and sell dear' (1981, p.475). A strong nation, according to mercantilist theory, is a large population that can guarantee a supply of labour, a market and soldiers to protect against competing foreign markets. The

⁴¹ There are four assumptions under which the salient features of political oeconomy are recognised: (1) it relies upon a householding conception of proper economic management; (2) it presupposes the absolute agency of a sovereign or statesman prior to economic activity; (3) it assumes a patriarchal system of relations among monarch and subjects, between the heads of a households and their wives, children, servants, and labourers; (4) and it presupposes a distributional problematic insofar as a wise administration refers to the proper maintenance of all objects (population, persons, and things) internal to a territory (Tribe, 1978; Dean, 1991; Bruland & Smith, 1981).

consumption of luxuries were considered an anathema to prosperity and therefore minimised by tariffs on imported goods. The protection of domestic markets were maintained by a ‘sumptuary police’ to ensure that human wants were kept to a minimum: good order of a territory was realised by laws, ordinances and customs that regulated the profligate and dissolute tendencies of the population: frugality, thrift and even parsimony were considered virtues for the creation and accumulation of wealth (cf. Steuart, 1767).

Smith was strongly critical of the protectionism and aggressive foreign trade of mercantilist policies. Like the French Physiocrats, he argued there was no substantive difference between domestic and foreign trade, and that all forms of exchange were beneficial to the trader and to the public. Furthermore, the aggregate of bullion that a state required would be automatically adjusted, and that money, like any other commodity, could exist in excess. Lastly, he denied the idea that a nation could accumulate wealth only at the expense of another. Political economy begins to displace mercantilism by asserting that wealth operated autonomously, among relations of supply and demand, the value and division of labour, and the benign effects of the competitive market – all of which posited a separate and distinctive form of economics known as *laissez-faire*. This new conception of *the* economy believed wealth operated ‘naturally’ through internal mechanisms that should, in any wise polity, be left alone by government.

In the early nineteenth century, the appearance of ‘classical political economy’ was responsible for separating a domain of ‘economic’ events, with its own laws and mechanisms, from a moral domain (Rose, 1999a). Economic events effectively opened a space that was amenable to political rule, to which mechanisms of governance were grafted onto a national space with its own customs, borders, functional relations, its own system of manufacturers, as well as those relations that applied to an extra-political space of international economies. The utility of nineteenth century economic thought was the tracing out of a plane to which ‘economic policies’ were applied, and its labour force optimised by the language of supply and demand (Rose, 1999a).

Historians of English poor policy such as E. P. Thompson (1971) and Himmelfarb (1984) argue that political economy in fact displaced a pre-existing 'moral economy'. That is to say, a foundational morality based on principles of compassion, pity and the natural distress of inequality were motivating principles behind poor policy prior to the emergence of political economy, which later insisted upon a legal-economic foundation of reform. Dean, however, carefully argues that such moral statements exemplified by Bishop Woodward (1768) and William Paley (1794) who, after all, maintained that relief based on natural justice ought to be guaranteed by legislation, were in fact a response to the failure of a 'police of the Poor'. In other words, it was the collapse of oeconomic or mercantilist forms of police towards the end of the eighteenth century that led to the ensuing crisis in poor administration (Dean, 1991, pp.118-121).

We should not think, then, that political economy simply displaced or overturned a previous administration of moral governance. Rather, by the first half of the nineteenth century, the emergence of an economic order was both related to and distinguished from a 'moral' dimension of collective existence. Practices of government were not only limited to laws, principles and causalities of the newly discovered 'economy', but applied to a moral domain of social behaviours (Rose, 1999a, pp.102-3).

If we cannot look for an opposition between moral and economic conceptions of poverty to understand transformations of English poor policy, then how did moral and ethical themes feature among economic arguments? For this purpose, we must look for a discursive reference point within classical political economy that was critical of its own precepts. In the next section, I show how Malthus' discussion of population opened up a new space for the inspection and discipline of conduct. It was 'social' and not political economy that would provide a moral-political framework for grafting moral arguments onto an economic domain of quasi-autonomous processes. This new linkage between the social, the moral and the economic would provide the conditions for formulating new problematisations of conduct. Malthus' 'social' analysis of economy would have two important effects on poor policy: it would naturalise the sphere of *poverty* as a general condition of populations, and link everything that was unnatural and anti-social under the

term *pauperism*. Like welfare reform in our own period, problematisations of conduct were enjoined to a project of socialisation that attempted to create a utopian market economy.

Social economy

Giovanna Procacci (1991) observes that it was the minor field of analysis known as *social economy*⁴² which provided a critical reference point for understanding how the ‘social question’ was turned against the economic by drawing its central arguments from the discourse of *pauperism*. Thus, among the form of arguments that take population as an object of thought, we discover not a rejection of ethical and moral themes but precisely their emplacement within what might be described as the *bioeconomic* laws of population and subsistence (Dean, 1991). Through the problem of overpopulation, the poor become both the target of moral restraint and the source of wealth. In Britain, the clearest example of social economy was Thomas Malthus’ *An Essay on the Principle of Population* (1798).

Malthus recapitulates earlier arguments about population and subsistence, repeating the familiar eighteenth century proposition from the likes of Robert Wallace (1761) and Joseph Townsend (1786): ‘It is an obvious truth which has been taken notice of by many writers, that population must always be kept down to the means of subsistence’ (1798, *iii*). However, Malthus breaks with the utopian opinion of mercantilists who claimed in any properly organised society progress was consistent with the level of population, since population was itself the principal factor determining the amount of resources. The utopian view held that population and subsistence was governed by a natural self-adjusting mechanism as demonstrated by Townsend’s fable about the island of goats⁴³.

⁴²This ‘vulgar’ field of knowledge refers to a marginal branch of economic theory which, by the mid to late nineteenth century, became known as *Sozialpolitik* in Germany and *économie sociale* in France; for German examples, see Carl Menger’s *Grundsätze der Volkswirtschaftslehre* (1871) and Friedrich Von Weiser’s *Grundriss der Sozialökonomik* (1914) both of whom are regarded as the key figures of the ‘Austrian School’ of economics. French examples of *économie sociale* include Jean Sismondi’s *Nouveaux principes d’économie politique* (1819), Antoine Buret’s *Revue mensuelle d’économie politique* (1833), and Firmin Marbeau’s *Du paupérisme en France et des moyens d’y remédier au principes d’économie charitable* (1847).

⁴³ This story refers to a South Sea Island whereby Spanish seafarers were said to have placed a couple of goats that subsequently multiplied under plentiful conditions. The number of goats increased until they

But Malthus introduces a fundamental disequilibrium at the heart of the natural order, an insurmountable *scarcity*, which had not yet appeared among discussions of population. For instance, where Townsend locates the problem of overpopulation within the fragile relations between population and subsistence, exacerbated by the compulsory provision of the poor laws, Malthus locates such tendencies within nature itself. Malthus therefore recasts the problem of poverty to create a linkage between political economy and population (as opposed to labour) providing more varied and flexible instruments that were otherwise absent in political economy.

The political significance of Malthus' discourse on poverty 'resides in the double meaning of poverty, as both the limit to economic discourse and the key to economic conquest' (Procacci, 1991, p.153). In Smith's discourse of political economy, for example, there is only an implicit poor policy, in which case the capacity of the poor to exchange their labour makes them beneficiaries of a progressive state of society. Apart from this wide gesture, however, poverty is merely the underside of wealth⁴⁴. In Smith's labour theory of value, poverty possesses no independent meaning other than serving as a counterpoint from which abundance is theoretically and practically realised. Poverty found no other utilisation insofar as 'classical political economy did not discover the utility of a *politics of poverty*' (Procacci, 1991, p.155). Even the Poor Law Amendment of 1834 never examined the poor in Britain beyond the aims of protecting the labour

began to suffer hunger. Under these new conditions of relative scarcity, the weakest died and the rest restored to harmony. Townsend concluded that, for the goats, there was a constant fluctuation between happiness and misery and that except in periods of famine or human intervention, their numbers were 'nearly balancing at all times their quantity of food' (1786, p.37). A second event, however, upset this equilibrium. Some 'English privateers' who were using the island for their provisions, set out to destroy the population of goats by setting on shore a pair of greyhounds who likewise multiplied by preying on the goats. In turn, the number of goats diminished until a certain number were able to escape the predations of the greyhounds by occupying the craggy rocks of the island. As a result, a new equilibrium between greyhounds and goats were established. Townsend concludes: 'The weakest of both species were among the first to pay the debt of nature; the active and most vigorous preserved their lives. It is the quantity of food which regulates the numbers of the human species' (Townsend, 1786, p.38).

⁴⁴ 'Is this improvement in the circumstances of the lower ranks of the people to be regarded as an advantage or as an inconveniency to the society? The answer seems at first sight abundantly plain. Servants, labourers and workmen of different kinds, make up the far greater part of every great political society. But what improves the circumstances of the greater part can never be regarded as an inconveniency to the whole. No society can surely be flourishing and happy, of which the far greater part of the members are poor and miserable. It is but equity, besides, that they who feed, cloath and lodge the whole body of the people, should have such a share of the produce of their own labour as to be themselves tolerably well fed, cloathed and lodged' (Smith, 1.8.35).

market, beyond easing the burdens of the taxpayer or endorsing wage-labour as a means of subsistence. Poverty, as an object of economic thought, never presented itself as the basis of administrative knowledge other than providing the conditions of its negation and elimination⁴⁵.

If poverty was a natural consequence of economic activity, then the poor's stubborn resistance towards the expansion of needs was unnatural and subversive. In the lesser-known text, *Principle of Political Economy*, Malthus cites the example of the Irish who serve 'to show how poverty is not the external limit of the economy, but rather its internal limit' (Procacci, 1991, p.155). The poor Irish peasant 'who lives on potatoes and dresses in rags' is a model of subversion to the expanding market of needs, and testifies to the futility of producing goods if there has been no previous attempt to 'create the consumer'. The Irish peasant embodies the figure of subversion as well as the privileged subject of political economy insofar as he is the ideal model for the expansion of needs. Poverty, Procacci argues, begins to figure as 'the territory of unfulfilled needs, or of needs not yet invented; a territory that extends indefinitely, the symbol of a market without limits' (p.154). Social economy must demonstrate the moral *and* economic fact that poverty threatens the production of wealth. Hence, the problem of economic equilibrium is embedded in the problem of *social* equilibrium, in which case wealth is merely a constituent within a wider, more complex, field of scientific inquiry⁴⁶.

The new problem which surfaces with Malthus in Britain and Sismondi in France is the emplacement of a moral discourse within political economy for the proper

⁴⁵ This economic effacing of poverty as an object devoid of any independent or useful meaning is also clear when Ricardo calls for the abolition of all Poor Laws: 'The clear and direct tendency of the poor laws, is in direct opposition to these obvious principles: it is not, as the legislature benevolently intended, to amend the condition of the poor, but to deteriorate the condition of both poor and rich; instead of making the poor rich, they are calculated to make the rich poor; and whilst the present laws are in force, it is quite in the natural order of things that the fund for the maintenance of the poor should progressively increase, till it has absorbed all the net revenue of the country, or at least so much of it as the state shall leave to us, after satisfying its own never failing demands for the public expenditure. This pernicious tendency of these laws is no longer a mystery, since it has been fully developed by the able hand of Mr Malthus; and every friend to the poor must ardently wish for their abolition' (1821, Chapter V).

⁴⁶ 'The theory of wealth neither can nor should constitute an independent science because the facts on which it rests are connected indissolubly to facts of a moral and political order, which determine its meaning and its value' (Buret, 1840, cited in Procacci, 1978, p.157).

management of population. We find evidence of this in Malthus' discussion on 'preventive' and 'positive checks'. Given that population has the *capacity* to increase in geometrical ratio while subsistence is said to *actually* increase only in an arithmetical ratio, there is a fundamental tendency for population to outgrow the means of subsistence. Where the preventive check arises from 'a foresight of the difficulties attending the rearing of a family' (1798, pp.19-20) '... and the fear of dependent poverty' (1798, p.39) its operation applies to all ranks of society. The positive check 'by which I mean the check that represses an increase which is already begun' operates chiefly among lower classes in providing proper food and care for their children (1798, pp.23).

According to Malthus, it is the poor who conspire in their own fate, their manner and customs making them peculiarly susceptible to misery and vice. Though he does not attribute to the poor a more primitive and brutish nature than the upper classes, the principle of population and the universality of the laws of human nature are more acutely felt among the lower classes⁴⁷. In terms of easing or preventing these burdens, Malthus advises methods of 'moral restraint', which in later editions of the *Essay* he defines as 'a restraint from marriage from prudential motives, with a conduct strictly moral during the period of this restraint' (1872, p.8). It was the responsibility of male breadwinners, earning low wages, to exercise moral restraint for fear that improvidence led to poverty and dependence. By corollary, the existing poor laws undermine this moral imperative by eradicating the 'spirit of independence':

If men are induced to marry from a prospect of parish provision, with little or no chance of maintaining their families in independence, they are not only unjustly tempted to bring unhappiness and dependence upon themselves and children, but are tempted, without knowing it, to injure all I the same class with themselves. A labourer who marries without being able to support a family in some respects be considered as an enemy to all his fellow-labourers (Malthus, 1798, p.27).

The management of population must therefore proceed along new and careful lines: first it must counter the socialists who would abolish private property (like William Godwin to whom Malthus' *Essay* is a rejoinder), and approach the problem of assistance

⁴⁷ Similar to the observations made by Hume, Malthus argues it is the *habits* or *behaviours* of the labouring poor that require moral restraint: 'The labouring poor, to use a vulgar expression, seem always to live from hand to mouth. Their present wants employ their whole attention, and they seldom think of the future. Even when they have the opportunity of saving they seldom exercise it, but all that is beyond their present necessities goes, generally speaking, to the ale-house' (1798, p.27).

without resurrecting the old type of charity. Malthus' genius was to discriminate the poor by banishing all forms of dependence outside the economic responsibility of the family⁴⁸. The social economists, like Malthus, Sismondi, Gérando, Chevalier, Dunoyer, Villermé, Dupin, and others, would uphold the family as the site of economic independence. In *The Policing of Families* (1979), Donzelot draws attention to how the transformation of public assistance from material aid to that of giving 'advice' coincided with the rehabilitation of the family in becoming a cornerstone of 'moral advisability'⁴⁹. By the early nineteenth century, '*morality was systematically linked to the economic factor*' which, in the form of policies, performed the dual discursive function of inventing a politics of poverty, calling for the elimination of pauperism, while conceding a natural state of inequality.

Beyond the abstract gaze of economic analysis, morality became a novel technique of investigating the habits and circumstances surrounding the 'life of the poor' if for no other purpose than to distinguish genuine poverty from artificial indigence⁵⁰. This grafting of morality onto economics opened poverty, and more particularly *pauperism*, to a whole set of examinations and descriptions. Philanthropy was the first to perform the dual function of surveillance and remoralisation, and, hence, supplement a politics of poverty by constituting an independent domain of social *behaviours*. Where classical political economy could only render 'poverty' as a deficiency of labour and the limits of wealth, social economy, by contrast, relocates the object within a field of relationships upon which intervention is possible (Procacci, 1991, pp.156-7). Social economy would

⁴⁸ 'Hard as it may appear in individual instances, dependent poverty ought to be held disgraceful' (1798, p.27).

⁴⁹ This is most clearly seen in Malthus' conviction that marriage implied an absolute limitation on the responsibility of the state for *all* wives and their children. The dependence of wives and children upon the breadwinner was consummated by the state, while the independence of the breadwinner was paramount to his responsibility to the family. To encode the solemnity of these principles, Malthus insisted that every marriage include a sermon on the evils of matrimony without adequate means, a suggestion that was widely ridiculed by his critics (Dean, 1991, pp.84-5; Poynter, 1969, p.157).

⁵⁰ 'Since it was a matter of giving advice, of not giving material aid except insofar as it would make for the penetration of these pieces of advice, the displacement of the old form of charity in favour of philanthropic benevolence was to rely for the most part on the perfection of new modes for allocating assistance, on the search for a procedure that would make it possible both to discriminate between 'artificial indigence' and genuine poverty', and to incorporate into social assistance the demand for its elimination ... In order to distinguish between genuine poverty and artificial indigence, it is preferable to probe into the life of the poor rather than being moved by the sight of ragged clothing and open sores' (Donzelot, 1979, pp.68-9).

therefore open space to a whole range of moral technologies for the inspection and discipline of pauperism.

By the nineteenth century, pauperism was distilled from poverty; it became associated with mobile and indiscernible acts of dissension and nuisance. Social economy provided a moral-political framework for linking pauperism directly to the spectre of the mob and the threat of 'social danger'. The new problem was one of preventing poverty from deteriorating into pauperism:

Poverty... derives from inequality of conditions... It is humanly impossible to destroy inequality. There will always therefore be rich and poor. But in a well-governed state, poverty must not degenerate into indigence... It is in the interests of the rich as much as of the poor that this should be so (Marbeau, 1847, cited in Procacci, 1991, p.159).

Again, Procacci cites only the French example when illustrating the distinction between poverty and pauperism: the former was a lamentable consequence of the development of wealth, while pauperism was an unnatural deformity of civilised society⁵¹. The discourse on pauperism did not seek to eliminate poverty, but distinguish *difference*, rather than inequality, among the poor: 'And here 'moral' language finds its exact meaning. By the term 'difference' I want to underline that the essential significance of the term 'pauperism' consists in indicating a series of *different forms of conduct*, namely those which are not amenable to the project of socialisation which is being elaborated' (1978, p.160).

A discourse of pauperism applied a more discriminating gaze over the behaviour of populations; indeed, poverty became a favoured site of observation. It was no accident that the factory had not yet emerged as the privileged site of inspection; instead, it was the myriad reports of squalor and disease that provided the optimum conditions for

⁵¹ Though Procacci cites examples specific to the kind of social investigation in France known as *l'économie sociale* they share a striking resemblances with the problem of pauperism posed in Britain. There are nonetheless important differences between the notion of pauperism in *l'économie sociale* and early nineteenth century debates on pauperism in Britain. For example, in France, pauperism was usually defined as an urban phenomenon, while the poor law debate construed pauperism as an agrarian problem 'associated with the stagnation in the mobility of labour caused by poor-relief practices and the law of settlement' (Dean, 1991, pp.199-200; Chevalier, 1973, pp.139-144). However, for the purpose of constructing the present argument both groups of statements, despite their contextual differences, employ similar strategies of posing the 'social question' as a means of problematising pauperism as a set of anti-social behaviours.

developing techniques for bringing these sectors under management. In response to these challenges, various instruments and experts would be deployed – the statistician, the public hygienist, the educator – together, these figures were responsible for constructing a grid of observations from which disorder was given an orderly and decipherable form. By the late nineteenth century such instruments became indispensable for the good administration of the newly formed object of the social sciences, *society*.

Malthusianism would introduce two useful principles to the debate on pauperism: first it naturalised the domain of poverty as a fundamental condition of scarcity; and second, it advocated moral restraint as the basis for exercising economic responsibility. Political economy was able to separate poverty from the question of need and transpose it into a problem of social integration. But if all these programmes of medicalisation, education and remoralisation sought to *prevent* pauperism, they also wanted to constitute the poor as politically responsible subjects. Procacci (1991) reminds us that these technical interventions also had another more positive function: to elicit forms of *participation* and *association*. Moralisation could only succeed if the dangerous classes were recruited into the political machinery of representation⁵². Participation would ensure property ownership became a ‘liberal reward’ for labour and self-discipline; in political activity it would act as an instrument for co-opting decisions, for diffusing political conflict, and constructing useful forms of association. Practices of *differentiation* (pauperism), *solidarity* (society) and *wealth* (economy) were the organising principles for the invention of society, and the birth of state welfare.

The point of this historical detail is to show how, by the early nineteenth century, liberal rationalities had stumbled upon a unique solution to the problem of the poor. With the collapse of the mercantilist police of the poor, we find through the principle of limited government that liberalism sought to govern collective life through population; that is, in terms of a territory that began to assume its own complex and autonomous reality. It was not the opposition between morality and political economy that radically transformed

⁵² After all ‘an institution is not stable unless sanctioned by public opinion’ (Alexandre de Laborde, 1821, cited in Procacci, 1991, p.166).

English poor policy, but the grafting of morality onto economic factors, the clearest example of which is found among the minor field of analysis known as social economy. By taking population as an object of thought, Malthus was exemplary of those liberal solutions which recast the problem of poverty by establishing a link between ‘moral restraint’ and the new economic discourse. A new field of intervention emerged: the task was not one of eliminating poverty – poverty was, after all, a natural and lamentable consequence of population and subsistence – but *preventing* poverty from degenerating into pauperism. The origins of welfare are therefore found among the myriad programmes that sought to remoralise and reintegrate the pauper into the liberal project of society.

I think we can apply this formula of government to increase our understanding of contemporary welfare politics in our own period. For instance, current neo-liberal reforms reactivate discourses of pauperism to propose new forms of solidarity based on ‘social partners and individual citizens, new procedures for the acceptance and sharing of responsibilities (permanent retraining, self-management, decentralization)’ (Donzelot, 1991, p.178). Where nineteenth century discourses of pauperism were enjoined to a moral project of ‘society’, the discovery of modern welfare dependency is enjoined to an ethical project of ‘community’. In the next section, I want to examine how notions of community emerged within Australian welfare politics, and show how contemporary practices of government now act on an ethical space of relational responsibilities.

Governing through community

The concept of ‘solidarity’, to use the language of Jacques Donzelot, emerges in a distinct way from that of sovereignty; it specifies the framework and scope of state intervention that begin to mark out the foundations of social welfare. In the name of solidarity, the state acts in accordance to principles of social advancement, and establishes ‘the welfare state’ as a means of standing outside society to become the guarantor of its progress. The emergence of society accords with a breaking down of antagonisms and hostilities between liberals and communists, traditionalists and

revolutionaries, finding its mode of legitimation in the realisation of a 'consensus society'.⁵³

By the 1960's, there begins to emerge in the West a 'crisis of governmentality' that draws new lines regarding the mutual roles of state and society⁵⁴. Right wing reformists attacked the extrinsic position of the state which had shifted away from the role as external guarantor of the progress of society to that of manager directly responsible for its destiny: the state had become an entity enlarged by its own bureaucratic logic and made redundant by its separation from society. The left would denounce the very principle of the reality of progress in which change becomes increasing more nebulous and difficult to control for those disaffected and excluded by progress: the state is denounced for usurping the sovereignty that properly belongs to society. On one side, we have the argument that the expansion of the state underlies the inflation of social expenditure, hence the increasing benefit function of the state. On the other, we have a critique of the technocratic nature of social intervention – the unitary language of statistics – insisting on new categories and distinctions with which to estimate the deleterious effects of elitism, exclusion and coercion.

By the early 80's the debate between neo-social democracy and neo-liberalism had come to frame the 'crisis of the welfare state' where themes of change were substituted for that of progress. The breakdown of social democracy's utopian ideal of a society that was both democratic and socialist implied that we can no longer place our faith in the future prospect of social harmony, instead solidarity and sovereignty are forced to coincide in the present which 'implies a new relation of society and time'. It is the breakdown of this promise that signalled the crisis of the welfare state. But at the very

⁵³ The welfare state, according to Donzelot, emerges out of two operations: that is, 'by enlarging opportunities, by the social promotion of the individual, it acts as a force for emancipation, and creates freedom'; and 'by reducing risks, by the promotion of the social and the corresponding limitation of the irrationalities of the economic, it acts as a force for socialization, and creates collective security' (1991, p.174).

⁵⁴ Donzelot summarises the debates as follows: 'given that the state has changed from a guarantor to a manager of destiny, charged with providing a form of security whose cost weighs ever more heavily on the economy, while being faced with a citizenry whose liberty has been widened by the decline of traditional forms of authority which the state itself has helped to displace, and yet been emptied of content by the state's monopoly of the levers of change – what is the state to do?' (1991, p.176).

moment politicians, economists and intellectuals began to speak of this crisis, the events of May 68 announced the end of socialist revolution – a turning away from communism, and the renunciation of revolution as a technique for effecting change. Debates between right and left no longer threatened any direct and decisive confrontation of the structure of society; instead, their opposition converged around ‘the best way of utilising conflicts to make society more dynamic’. Hence, with the breakdown of utopianism, and the falling away of socialist revolution, Donzelot argues that the debate between left and right is now conducted on the terrain of social democracy: ‘it has to do with the forms to be taken by the social bond, not with the structure of society itself’ (1991, pp.176-7).

It is precisely the notion of the ‘social bond’ that marks the entry, in a rather unexpected way, of a new theme regarding the governability of liberal democracies and market-based economies since the collapse of state socialism. With the rise of neo-liberalism in the 1980’s, it was argued that far from promoting social cohesion and social justice, modern welfare systems created social fragmentation and fostered a ‘dependency culture’ (Murray, 1984; Moore, 1987). In the United States, debates on welfare reform effectively shifted from the ‘war on poverty’ in the 60’s to the ‘war on welfare’ in the 90’s (Gilder, 1981; Katz, 1989). Nonetheless, the kind of market-based individualism executed by the New Right governments of Reagan and Thatcher were not met without sustained criticism from both left and right. Some claimed that market-based solutions to the social and economic problems addressed by welfare effectively hollowed out the state and eroded social bonds (Fukuyama, 1995). Ironically, where the classic welfare state was thought to undermine an ethic of solidarity and self-reliance, market individualism produced an ethos of isolation and passivity (MacIntyre, 1981), and contributed to the ‘demoralisation’ (Himmelfarb, 1995) of traditional norms upon which the social order and the functioning of free-markets presumably depends. By the closing decades of the twentieth century a new solution claimed to identify a ‘third way’ (Giddens, 1998; Blair and Schroder, 1999). Now, the problem of the classic welfare state is that it was ‘passive’ rather than ‘active’; it offered a ‘hand out’ rather than a ‘hand-up’. Contemporary rationalities of government revitalise the social bond in the form of *community* to restore

civic participation and foster a new ethic of self-governance (Bauman, 1993; Rose, 1996, 1999a).

Of course, community is not a new idea but one that has emerged at various points, and in different ways, to specify a natural, extra-political space of positive human relations (Rose, 1999a). The innovation that lies in this novel conception of community is its peculiar *spatial* and *technical* relation to power. If community is said to counter market individualism and exceed direct political intervention, this is not say it is a remote or artificial space of society⁵⁵. The idea of ‘community’ is both spontaneous and real in the sense that political rationalities bring into existence the very vectors, forces and relations through which processes of identification, self-management and responsible conduct are assembled. We might think of community as a strategy to simultaneously collectivise and autonomise a sector in terms of its own intrinsic, relational properties.

So to what is community a solution? As the territory of political power shifts from centralised forms of governance, liberal government finds in the principle of the social bond the means of relieving political power of its obligations and responsibilities. The state is no longer the sole guarantor of progress, and no longer required to answer all society’s needs for order, security, health and productivity. Individuals, families, organisations and businesses are now recruited to take on as much of the responsibility as possible for the management of these issues. Together these new ensembles of agencies, authorities and individuals are to form their own ‘partnerships’, to assemble their own ‘social coalitions’ with which to engage in issues that were once the charge of civil society. In response to fluctuations and downturns of the labour market, individuals are now expected to undertake life-long learning, permanent retraining and constant self-management. In response to the risks of working and living, families, workers and communities are expected to shoulder some of the burden for managing these risks

⁵⁵ The particular notion of community diagnosed here breaks from conventional meanings. For instance, it is not a geographical domain – defined by its neighbourhood, its demography or social services, though it may be realised by any one of these – but a domain reconfigured in terms of the naturalness of its own networks, capacities and contours. At best, community is a plane of thought and action, a schema for understanding the processes of objectification and instrumentalisation through which individuals are morally and ethically bound to a project of autonomous and responsible conduct.

through private insurance, community development, not-for-profit organisations, volunteering and charity. As Rose (1999a) points out, community forms the technical embodiment of a space that is fabricated out of the purpose of realising its own autonomy and responsibility⁵⁶. Community emerges as a solution to the problems of the social insofar as these 'third sectors' are constituted as new domains of knowledge and action. New authorities, distinctions, visibilities and boundaries are made up to assemble new forces in the government of conduct. It is certainly the contention of this thesis that Australian welfare reform draws from the same kind of technologies which, in line with Rose's observation, seek to govern in terms of community (Rose, 1996, 1999a). Before discussing how notions of community feature in Australian welfare reform, I want to firstly examine some of the statements and arguments that frame this sector as a solution to welfare.

Politics of community

The peculiar resolve of community is the way it responds to the difficulties of pluralism and difference⁵⁷. Communitarians like Amitai Etzioni (1993, 1997) have responded to these difficulties by affirming moral codes of diverse 'cultural' communities. It is not the unitary, authoritative idea that must reconcile difference, but something approximating 'core values' and 'moral voices' that emerge from different sectors of the social⁵⁸. To avoid the fragmentation and excessive relativism of unbound

⁵⁶ 'Organizations and other actors that were once enmeshed in the complex and bureaucratic lines of force of the social state are to be set free to find their own destiny. Yet, at the same time, they are to be made responsible for that destiny, and for the destiny of society as a whole, in new ways. Politics is to be returned to society itself, but no longer in a social form: in the form of individual morality, organizational responsibility and ethical community' (Rose, 1999, p.174).

⁵⁷ Alistair MacIntyre in *After Virtue* (1981) reflected on community as a way of reconstructing the virtues of citizenship. Using Aristotelian principles to make his case, he argued for the return of a single authoritative conception of the *good* which might be agreed upon and exercised within a community to counter the effects of liberal individualism eroding civil society. The problems encountered by this neo-Aristotelian account is that it seemed unable to reconcile the civic republican idea of consensual political virtues among the diversity of qualities exemplified by multi-racial, multi-cultural and multi-religious groups of society.

⁵⁸ On this point, Etzioni claims: 'some concepts of multiculturalism do not favor maintaining one overarching community, in which various subcultures will find a legitimate place. I speak not of the constituent communities – neighborhoods, ethnic groups, and so on – but of the community of communities, of the American society. Without a firm sense of one supra-community, there is considerable danger that the constituent communities will turn on one another. Indeed, *the more one favors strengthening communities*, a core of the Communitarian agenda, *the more one must concern oneself with ensuring that they see themselves as parts of a more encompassing whole*, rather than as fully independent



pluralism, Etzioni insists that different communities are capable of being unified around a shared core and a common constitutional framework.

Often citing Alexis de Tocqueville's nineteenth century observations of America, the communitarian thesis contends that a 'moral vacuum' has followed the challenge to traditional mores in the 1960's and greatly weakened the social fabric of contemporary America (Bellah, 1985). In support of his argument, Etzioni cites family breakdown, malingering at work, drug and alcohol abuse, public scandals, insider trading and other unethical business dealings (1996, pp.27-8). His solution lies in a return to a site of moral regeneration since it is 'through communities that individuals and groups in a good society encourage one another to adhere to behaviour that reflect shared values' (Etzioni, 1997, p. 124). The 1970's and 1980's witnessed a return of coercion as means of restoring order which, Etzioni maintains, only fuelled further increase in social disorder and anti-social behaviour. The 'new communitarian' formula is one that strikes a balance between autonomy and community, individual rights and social responsibilities. The aim of good governance is not to block individual freedom, but utilise it to restore the 'good society beyond state or market' (Etzioni, 2000, x-xii). Community is therefore sustained and guided by the informal web of social bonds and moral voices that encompass a stock of shared meanings and values. More importantly, it is an active network, a responsive and self-adjusting mechanism, always seeking the balance between responsibility and freedom.

The main set of statements endorsing an ethic of obligation and participation are from arguments put forward by associationalists. For example, it is the version of 'social capital' developed by Robert Putnam (1993, 1995, 2000) that most exemplifies the term's recent popularity among contemporary political thought. In *Making Democracy Work* (1993), Putnam uses the term social capital to compare political reform in Northern and Southern Italy. He found that regions with strong democratic and economic institutions

and antagonistic... there is the even more important matter of a set of shared core values, especially the commitment to democracy, the Bill of Rights, and mutual respect among subgroups. Constituent communities can follow their own subsets of values without endangering the social body, as long as they accept these shared values, they provide the frame of unity to contain the "plurals" from falling out (Etzioni, 1993, pp.155-7).

were 'blessed with vibrant networks and norms of civic engagement', while those with weak institutions were 'cursed with a vertically structured politics, a social life of fragmentation and isolation, and a culture of isolation' (Putnam, 1993, p.15). Societies 'rich' in social capital are said to possess dense networks and cultures of association (esp. voluntary association) exemplified by sporting, religious, community and neighbourhood activity. These various memberships sustain trust and an ethos of reciprocity and cooperation.

Where Putnam develops his account about the creation and destruction of social capital from James Coleman (1988), he tends to theorise it as an attribute of collective life, specifying the resources a collective draws on to overcome 'dilemmas of collective action'. The main thesis is that a whole range of social ills – drugs, crime, unemployment, alienation, education and family breakdown – are more readily and effectively addressed in these natural settings. The assumption is that public policies should act upon supportive norms of civic engagement embedded in community networks: 'the quality of life and the performance of institutions (and not only in America) are indeed powerfully influenced by norms and networks of civic engagement ... successful outcomes in education, urban poverty, unemployment, the control of crime and drug abuse, and even health... are more likely in civically engaged communities' (Putnam, 1995, p.66).

So how does social capital imagine the space of economic life? Firstly, it combines the very contemporary language of networks, with the much older register of community: its rationality assembles a much different political territory from that of the 'macropolitical' or the 'hierarchical'. Instead, it seeks to enhance the 'performance of democratic institutions' (Putnam, 1993, p.3). The performative aspects of 'bridging' and 'bonding' social capital are not merely concerned with achieving agreement, but achieving purposes⁵⁹. Performance renders processes intrinsic to social activity measurable and calculable, translating them into objective criteria – rates of participation and distribution, performance auditing and accounting. Internal to performance is a self-

⁵⁹ 'We want government to *do* things, not just decide things – to educate children, pay pensioners, stop crime, create jobs, hold down prices, encourage family values, and so' (Putnam, et al. 1993, pp.8-9).

interested, self-maximising agent much closer to the methodological individualism of rational choice theory, but whose ontological position is enhanced by the mutual benefits of cooperation and reciprocity. Social capital enhances performance in two ways: through *skills* and *practices* of cooperation acquired through active forms of participation; and, through patterns of *self-governance* that emerge from expectations of trust and cooperation. In other words, social capital is *a regulatory mechanism immanent to practices of interaction and networks of community*. Community is affirmed via a different conceptual route: it enjoins us to perceive cooperation, trust and community as instruments for improving the performance and competitiveness of society (Walters, 2002).

Reform

The idea of 'community' as a new political space begins to creep into Australian welfare debates in the mid 90's. In a speech accompanying the release of a position paper outlining recent policy directions, Alexander Downer committed a Coalition government to restoring 'basic community networks of action and responsibility built on the commitment of individuals, families, neighbourhoods, small and medium size businesses, and governments which are accountable as directly as practicable to the communities they serve' (*The Things that Matter*, 1994). After winning office two years later, the Coalition government, under the leadership of John Howard, announced their proposal for a 'work-for-the-dole' scheme. When the legislation was introduced by Dr Kemp (Minister for Vocational Education and Training), the obligations of the young unemployed were further stressed in terms of obligations to community: 'Many Australians believe that it is fair and reasonable that those being supported by the community should make a contribution in return' (1997a, p.2459). In the debates that followed the introduction of the Bill, the government was assiduous in its defence of mutual obligation and the responsibilities of welfare beneficiaries. According to Kemp, it was 'fair to require the person receiving that support to put something back into their community'⁶⁰ (1997b, p.4097). In response to Kemp's endorsement of mutual obligation,

⁶⁰ He went onto to say: 'A lot of people in this community are working very hard to provide support for unemployed people to assist them in gaining worthwhile work experience. Families are giving up money to

the Leader of the Opposition, Kim Beazley, intervened to point out that these were originally Labor policies that had been picked up in turn by 'New' Labour in Britain under Tony Blair (Beazley, 1997a, p.9205). The difference in the Parties' policies was, according to Beazley, that ALP offered a genuinely mutual set of responsibilities between government and people whereas, under the Coalition 'mutual obligation is self-provision' as the government withdraws from 'its role as partner in the community' (Beazley, 1997b).

Communitarianism and associationalist themes also find their way into Mark Latham's deliberations over policy options for Labor. In *Civilising Global Capital* (1998), he makes the case for policies based on the 'reciprocation of responsibility' because only a 'genuine sharing of responsibility' will provide members of the community with the social capabilities required for 'active citizenship'. For Latham, mutual obligation can only work if there is an acceptance by the government of its 'positive responsibilities' towards the community to deliver welfare that 'enhances labour force skills and personal capabilities and, through them gives a degree of social mobility that will enable escape from a cycle of poverty and dependency' (Latham, 1998, p.205). Since 1998, Latham was also active in reworking much of the ALP's economic policy using Third Way principles for the 'renewal of social democracy'⁶¹. Often citing Putnam, Latham goes on to argue that a 'strong society' with bonds of trust and mutuality between citizens leads to a 'strong economy'. The rationale being that people in a society with dense networks of respect and cooperation tend to value interdependence as much as self-interest, thereby facilitating economic transaction (1998, pp.262-273, pp.309-12).

Pre-empting the recommendations of the McClure Report, Jocelyn Newman also links the problem of welfare dependency to ethical solutions of 'partnership' and 'participation':

do that and this government believes that the principle of mutual obligation is a very important principle which should underlie programs in this area' (Kemp, 1997c, p.600).

⁶¹ 'The recasting of social democratic ideology draws from the most attractive aspects of liberalism and socialism: liberal in the sense of selectively pursuing state powers for the creation of social and economic freedoms; socialist in the sense of wanting to foster a dense web of social responsibility and respect for the common good' (Latham, 1998, p.326).

We need to build new partnerships between all levels of government, business and local communities. This social coalition is essential to expanding available opportunities for economic and social participation and to providing many of the supports that people need to maximize their potential and contribution to society (Newman, 1999a, p.7).

This accent on community and collaboration is greatly strengthened in the Report, becoming more central than either 'self-sufficiency' or 'giving something back to community'. The authors of the Report stress the importance of social capital as 'the bonds of trust and relationships and shared norms that communities build and renew when people interact with each other in families, workplaces, neighbourhoods, local associations'. In these nostalgic settings social participation helps 'people grow and flourish as human beings and be full members of Australian society' (McClure, 2000b, p.13).

We could apply these ethical themes of 'community', 'participation' and 'responsibility' to give several overlapping readings of the concept of mutual obligation. Firstly, the contractual features of mutual obligation are pluralised and expanded to a whole framework of mutual obligations. Secondly, the concept of 'social obligations' redefines the social in terms of 'all obligations that everyone has to the rest of society' (McClure, 2000b, p.51). Third, the social/mutual obligations framework endorses a wide range of participation activities through a philosophy that 'recognises, supports and validates voluntary work and caring, without prescribing any particular form of social participation' (McClure, 2000b, p.9). Finally, the Report argues for a widened concept of mutual obligations to include all forms of 'responsibility for economic and social contribution':

The Reference Group believes that the mutual obligations of governments, business and community are of no less importance than the obligations of individuals. In our view, the whole social support system, with its various components, is a very tangible expression of the mutual obligations of the community as a whole towards its more vulnerable members. Thus, the whole of this report should be read as addressing the responsibilities of all sectors of society (McClure, 2000b, p.52).

What if we resisted the implicit seduction of thinking of these communities, associations and responsibilities as the actual descriptions of states of affairs, and thought of them in terms of government? If political rationalities have a characteristically moral form in that they seek to encode the proper principles of relations between the governing

and the governed, then communitarians and associationalists offer the promise of a new moral contract, a new partnership between the state and the responsible citizen. By targeting the social bond, they locate the problem of the welfare state in the breakdown of solidarity; the ‘culture of welfare dependency’ is symptomatic of the erosion of community and collective identity. The moral programme of community seeks to give civility a definite shape by prescribing ethical forms of conduct – autonomy, responsibility and activity. The rise of community ensures that governance is naturalised and remoralised in terms of both the social bond and the autonomy of individuals: ‘the self must govern itself communally in the service of its own liberty, autonomy and responsibility’ (Rose, 1999a, p.186).

To understand how the politics of community remoralises the welfare dependent in the name of the social bond we must revisit the politics of poverty that begins to emerge in the early nineteenth century. Earlier, I argued that under classical political economy the poor were implicitly beneficiaries of a progressive state of society in that they could exchange their labour for subsistence, but poverty possessed no independent meaning other than specifying the underside of wealth. A politics of poverty begins to reformulate the ‘social question’ by turning to a discursive reference point that was critical of classical political economy, social economy. It was by making population a specific object of thought that Malthus was able to prescribe principles of moral restraint to able-bodied males and breadwinners, thereby naturalising the economic responsibility of the family while at the same time making poverty a natural condition of human struggle⁶². The remoralisation of the poor emerged from the political significance of Malthus’ double meaning of poverty: poverty was not simply the limit of political economy but the key to its expansion. In the case of social economy, morality was systematically linked to political economy claiming it was pauperism, and not poverty, that threatened the production of wealth.

⁶² ‘Essentially, economic society was founded on the grim realities of Nature; if man disobeyed the laws which ruled that society, the fell executioner would strangle the offspring of the improvident. The laws of a competitive society were put under the sanction of the jungle’ (Polanyi, 1957, p.125).

Under social economy notions of pauperism were distilled from poverty. Pauperism signalled not the economic contradiction of the free market system – this was apparently a natural and lamentable consequence of the human condition – but it was the unnatural conduct of the pauper who represented an aberration to the project of socialisation. We can say that a politics of poverty coincides with a politics of conduct at which point the pauper emerges from the intersection of political *and* social economy. The steadily emerging view of ‘complex society’ – a domain possessing its own naturalness and independence – was an economic project in that society coincided with the establishment of the free market system, but it was also a moral project in that pauperism formed the limits of the market. The remoralisation of pauperism was therefore a moral-political solution to the problem of *wealth*, and it was the production of the latter upon which the whole of society depended. The project of ‘society’ would therefore follow two concomitant courses: the conversion of poverty into wealth, and the prevention of poverty degenerating into pauperism.

Politics of the present

So, the antecedent conditions for the remoralisation of the poor can be located among a politics of poverty that begins to emerge from the early nineteenth century. The crucial difference, however, is that the production of wealth and the politics of conduct we now find among advanced liberalism is no longer based on the project of civil society. Certainly Thatcherism in the early 80’s begins to signal the death knell of this project. With the elimination of society as an abstract entity in which the state played the role of guarantor and upon which the welfare state was founded, we find a new political game emerging, one that must satisfy two principal concerns: how does political power increase its capacities for governing at a distance without at the same time undermining the security and liberty of the state? Community would emerge as a novel solution to these problems.

The problem faced by Australian welfare politics is that of enhancing both security and liberty without increasing the powers of the state. I think an important dimension to this problem is the politics of risk. If it is true that welfare is no longer concerned with

meeting needs but of managing risks⁶³ (Beck, 1992; Giddens, 1994), then the call to community is a strategy of re-distributing and re-individualising social risk (Braithwaite, et al., 2002). The sharing of risk accords well with these programmes of solidarity and collaboration which appeals to us to absorb some of the personal and social cost of health, productivity and unemployment. From the point of view of risk, it is possible to pose a new diagram between security, authority and liberty. In the name of community, security is partly transferred to the natural responsibilities of community: risk is no longer shored up by the state, but dispersed among micro-cultures of value and meaning. And in the name of security, we find a different set of control strategies strongly resembling Mead's 'new paternalism'. In both the American and Australian example, welfare authorities are to assume direct responsibility for the management of the most risky, subjecting those at risk of dependency and unemployability to behavioural controls which are widely recognised as moralistic and punitive (Schram, 2000; Moss, 2001; Harris, 2002; Braithwaite, et al., 2002; Shaver, 2002).

In each of these diagrams, liberty is 'not merely the active exercise by each individual of authority over themselves, but, at the same time, the voluntary acceptance of the authority of particular moral code as the basis for the government of our own conduct' (Rose, 1999a, p.187). Either way, the generalisability of mutual obligation lends itself to authoritarian and liberal interpretations, communitarian and paternalistic perspectives: it is capable of specifying the control feature of individual obligations, while at the same time specifying a communal framework of obligations. But as policy, mutual obligation runs the risk of offering a vague solution to even more vaguely posed questions ranging from concerns about perceived growth of welfare dependency through to concerns about meeting social obligations to care for vulnerable citizens (Harris, 2002).

⁶³ Beck's work offers some insight to a range of new risks arising from increasingly global and complex societies – risks which the current welfare state is manifestly unable to deal with, and is constantly being stretched to accommodate (Beck, 1992). An example of these new risks range from increasing breaks in employment continuity; dealing with the uncertainties arising from casual employment; the possibility of becoming a sole parent or a primary care provider during prime earning years; and the possibility that wage-earners may have to re-train or re-skill more than twice in their lifetime (Mitchell, 2001, cited in Braithwaite et al., 2002, p. 229).

In terms of mapping the future direction of welfare reform in Australia, the McClure Report is a bland document. Despite its generous tones of community, its rhetorical appeal remains ambiguous and troubling. While the term ‘community’ is cited some 256 times in the report, ‘poverty’ is mentioned only 8 times. This numerical flourish is by no means offered as persuasive evidence but simply to direct our attention to what is being produced. By deflecting attention from the national and structural towards the local and individual, the appeal to community suggests that the problem of welfare resides in the affected communities themselves, rather than in the economic forces which have dramatically altered the nature and distribution of work (Harris, 2002). But what is unambiguously and correctly represented in the report is the widespread concern and anxiety over issues of responsibility, security and risk (Braithwaite et al., 2002). The new risk politics of post-welfare regimes and the future management of security and autonomy form part of a new game of power. Rose suggests this new game of advanced liberal democracies operate in a field of *ethico-politics*⁶⁴. It would seem that in the absence of any guarantees for the security and freedom, we are all obliged to think and act ethically.

In this chapter, I take a critical historical view of Australian reform initiatives to demonstrate how advanced liberal solutions to problems of participation and dependency are a reworking of an older problem. Using Foucauldian themes of governmentality, it is possible to reconstruct classical liberalism as a particular conception of civil society that emerged from the failure of total government (police & oeconomy), and the discovery of an independent domain possessing its own complex and autonomous reality (population & economy). The rise of the social was not so much the discovery of an abstract and independent domain, but the formation of a plane of thought and action that begins to express a new kind of relationship between moral, economic and political problematisations of human conduct. Among nineteenth century debates on pauperism, the idea of society forms a tactic of remoralisation which, according to principles of

⁶⁴ This is quite different to Foucault’s schema of *bio-power* which socialises and collectivises its objects. Rather, the shift from society to community is understood as ‘the *self-techniques necessary for responsible self-government* and the *relations between one’s obligation to oneself and one’s obligations to others*’ (Rose, 1999, p.188).

population, begins to distinguish a natural domain of scarcity from the class of social behaviours which are incompatible with the new economic discourse. Malthus' innovation was to show that the failure of poor policy and the crisis of dependent poverty stemmed from the lack of moral restraint which posed a threat to society. It was not political economy that radically transformed English poor policy, but a field of social analysis known as 'social economy' which succeeded in grafting morality onto a domain of economic processes. The figure of the pauper served to distinguish the values of economic and familial responsibility upon which the whole of society depended.

The recent emergence of 'community' constitutes a relatively new plane of thought and action which responds to the presumed threat of fragmentation and dependency by setting politics free of the social state to find its own solutions to problems of security and freedom. As the state retreats from its role as sole guarantor of progress, community emerges as a new terrain of government, one that revitalises the social bond in a context where political authorities seek to autonomise and stabilise free markets. Since the mid 80's, the idea of community has steadily emerged within Australian politics as a popular moral and ethical solution, signalling a tactical advance in the liberal tradition of limited government. Community responds to the dual problems of enhancing security and freedom with the politics of risk. Beyond its benign rhetorical appeal, we might think of community as the technical embodiment for re-distributing and re-individualising social risk. Community emerges as a new space in the game of 'ethico-politics' where obligations to oneself and others enjoin individuals to engage in private calculation of risk and rational self-governance. But for those unable or unwilling to manage their own risk, the politics of mutual obligation ensures that the most risky are subjected to paternalistic control. Like the remoralisation programmes of the nineteenth century, welfare reform construes the irresponsibility of others as a social danger. In the next chapter, I explore how a medical perception of populations gave rise to new technologies for the management of conduct.

3 Birth of social medicine

In this chapter, I explore the conditions of which it is now possible to problematise the conduct of the poor through a collective medical perception of populations. The ‘birth of social medicine’ traces a history of medicalisation at the intersection of medical and political rationalities, and begins to constitute a liberal mode of administration that systematically linked poverty to a moral topography of control. But rather than reproduce a conventional history of medicalisation, it becomes necessary to recover from the margins a notion of ‘medical police’ as a way of thinking about contemporary politics of conduct. The theme of social medicine describes how, since the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the biological and political formed specific alignments and arrangements for the calculated management of life. The present task is to demonstrate how medical knowledge transformed the poor as an object of regulation.

To make this argument, it is necessary to link contemporary welfare strategies of ‘long-term prevention’ and ‘early intervention’ to a Foucauldian history of bio-power, and show how a form of social medicine was responsible for linking the conduct of the poor to nineteenth century debates on pauperism. Here, medical knowledge would serve two purposes: to prevent poverty from degenerating into pauperism, and to render poverty more useful by fixing it to the apparatus of production. Where ‘public health’ emerged as a liberal technology for controlling the conduct of the poor, the post-welfare regime draws from a medical perception of populations for the continuous supervision and differentiated management of the poor. As we shall see, the ‘language of prevention’ emerges as a solution to welfare in the event that the social is already constituted as a moral topography of pathological behaviours.

Language of prevention

In *The Challenge of Welfare Dependency in the 21st Century* (1999a), Senator Newman outlines the Government’s commitment to reducing welfare dependency by suggesting four ‘initiatives and strategies’: ‘long term prevention, early intervention,

improved incentives for self-reliance, and active assistance to help people get off welfare'. Examples of preventive programmes include 'improving relationship skills', 'domestic violence prevention', 'youth suicide' and 'youth homelessness prevention'. Newman also cites the National Families Strategy and the Stronger Communities Strategy as responsible for the guidance and development of 'further initiatives to prevent the emergence of social problems'. Early intervention programmes seem specifically geared towards youth: the Illicit Drugs Strategy and the new Youth Pathways Action Plan aims to 'help young people at risk cope with the transitions in their lives and to become independent and active community members' Newman, 1999, pp.8-9).

Under improved incentives for self-reliance, again, the target group is young people. For example, the introduction of Youth Allowance in July 1998 replaced Youth Training and Newstart Allowances, thereby ending 'the situation where unemployment was a more attractive option than staying on in education'. Furthermore, the introduction of the Mutual Obligation Initiative and Work for the Dole in 1997 would ensure 'younger unemployed people undertake economic or community activity in return for taxpayer support. This builds their self-confidence and labour-market contacts, improves their employability and should, in the longer term, reduce their reliance on income support'. Lastly, the improvement of education and training systems, including \$143 million to 'improve literacy and numeracy, especially among young people' will enhance skills development. Despite Newman's 'dependency rates' indicating people between the ages of 55 to 64 are 'much more likely than younger people to be dependent on income support', it seems reducing welfare dependency begins with the young (Newman, 1999a, p.5).

Implicit to Newman's prevention regime are certain pathological characteristics of welfare dependency. For instance, welfare reform in the US – particularly after Clinton's 1992 campaign promise to 'end welfare as we know it' – reflects increased interest in the idea that welfare dependency is 'intergenerational' and 'transmittable like a virus spreading from mother to daughter' (Schram, 2000, p.84). Though reference to intergenerational dependency is scarcely mentioned in Newman's Discussion Paper.

these concerns are more explicitly stated in her Press announcement, *The Future of Welfare in the 21st Century*, on 29th September 1999. With regard to modernising the social safety net, she argues the previous Labor government made it more attractive for young people to be unemployed than to undertake education or training: 'Persevering with Labor's system in a modern, global, knowledge-based economy would have been plain lunacy, abandoning youth to a cycle of inter-generational welfare dependency' (Newman, 1999b, p.3). Furthermore, she observes:

We are also starting to see the transfer of welfare dependency across generations. For example, teenage children of people on welfare are more than twice as likely to depend on welfare themselves by age 19. And they are much more likely to leave school early. All these figures and trends tell us we must do something more to stem the tide of growing dependence on welfare. An important part of the answer lies in strengthening families and communities, so they can become more self-reliant. This, more than anything, will build a strong social foundation for the next century (Newman, 1999b, p.4).

The term 'intergenerational dependency' is a reworking of the left wing conception of the 'culture of poverty' that emerged among American welfare debates in the 60's. Michael Harrington (1962), Oscar Lewis (1966) and a small group of left-liberal intellectuals concerned with explaining the causes of poverty in America argued that poverty in the 1950's and 1960's differed significantly from that of the Depression. To explain its persistence in the post-war era, they contended that the poor were often trapped in a culture of poverty that consigned them to intergenerational destitution (O'Connor, 2001). In Britain during the 70's the now popular 'cycle of poverty' proposed by Sir Keith Joseph also gave support to the thesis that multiple deprivation and social disadvantage could be intergenerationally transmitted⁶⁵ (Joseph, 1972 cited in Dean & Taylor-Gooby, 1992, pp.34-7). In the United States, The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) extended the 'welfare addiction' thesis, stating as if it were undisputed fact that daughters who grow up in families that take welfare are three times as likely to receive welfare themselves as adults, compared to women who grew up in families that did not take welfare (Blank, 1997).

⁶⁵ Dean & Taylor-Gooby (1992) point out that extensive research on the possible recurrence of poverty commissioned by the Department of Health and Social Security and the Social Science Research Council found nothing to support Joseph's thesis: 'The intergenerational cycle of Joseph's popular imagination, if it could be said to exist at all, was in reality frequently broken by individuals and families alike: the evidence suggested that there is no single, simple explanation of deprivation and that the transmission of deprivation is influenced, not by any one cultural or structural factor' (p.35).

Breaking the 'cycle of poverty' is now replaced by 'stopping the spread of welfare dependency' from one generation to the next. This language of 'disease', 'transmission', 'addiction' and 'dependency' are less significant for the mixture of popular stereotypes and quasi-scientific metaphors than the procedures of monitoring and controlling they invoke. In other words, there is a case for investigating the historical links between a 'language of social pathology' and a 'language of prevention'. If, in the name welfare dependency, regimes of prevention target the younger, risky population, then what kind of control technologies do they entail? One of the central arguments I want to pursue in this chapter is that welfare vocabularies and control strategies of reform are now produced through a highly medicalised idiom. The reform agenda is framed as if welfare dependency were a public health problem, that is, a medical reality that must be supervised and regulated in much the same way one might control epidemic phenomena. And while the term 'welfare dependency' may have slipped from public debate since Newman's alarmist swan song, the forms of surveillance and behavioural control it helped to install have not disappeared.

If indeed contemporary Australian welfare politics is understood as a preventive regime for the supervision and reconstruction of conduct, the historical work of this chapter is to retrace the conditions in which a medical perception of populations became an efficient technique of government. In the following sections, I explore Foucauldian themes of bio-power, medical police, noso-politics and, finally, the nineteenth century medicalisation of the poor, in order to better understand strategies of welfare reform in Australia. The first task is to carefully distinguish a history of 'social medicine' from existing analyses of medicalisation.

History of medicalisation?

The birth of social medicine traces the emergence of a 'socialised' medicine that later formed part of the great edifice of nineteenth century public health. In some respects this entails retracing a history of medical knowledge though what I mean by medicalisation requires some qualification. The term 'medicalisation' emerges from a tradition of

medical and historical sociology that had come to place the history of medical reason alongside a Weberian thesis of disenchantment. Enlightenment found within the idea of the medical model the utopian dream of an instrument that would eventually eradicate disease and liberate the social body, even to the point that medical truth would result in its own elimination. But the persistence of disease and poverty, and the gradual professionalisation and institutionalisation of the medical system, suggested a trajectory that progressed without regard for persons (Illich, 1977; Pelling, 1976). Medicalisation forms part of an ethos grounded within a critique of medicine that finds within the hospital, the biomedical model and the rise of medical expertise an underlying principle of despotism (Osborne, 1994). I think a discussion of medical power benefits from breaking with this negative connotation of power that governs repressively or despotically. Furthermore, a diagnosis of medical knowledge refrains from positing a totalising conception of medical power, and instead traces the emergent techniques and complex linkages between medical and political rationalities.

A discussion of social medicine is partly an attempt to break with this negative thesis of medical power, but also to refigure the relation between medical reason and what we have come to know as *the social*⁶⁶. Medicalisation was not a ‘movement’ driven by means of its own internal unity, nor was the social a kind of transcendental domain that was passively structured by the activities of medicine. Rather, one must show how the practice of medical truth is constitutive of the social (Rose, 1994b). An epistemological history of modern medicine proceeds, then, without totalising its social function or simplifying its conditions of existence. For instance, it is fallacy to suggest that by the late eighteenth century medicine had become more individualised, or that modern medicine extended from some generative principle or pivotal unity. Rather, modern medicine is, and has always been, a ‘social medicine’ inasmuch as the private, individual relation of doctor and patient is only one aspect of a *political technology* of power that

⁶⁶ There are in fact a number of epistemological traps that must be avoided. The critical historian must be careful not to imply an origin, as if to say social medicine spontaneously emerged as a socialised discipline. Nor should one set out to locate a single principle anterior to medical knowledge, as if to say the individual medical relation was gradually socialised by the demands of the collectivity (Foucault, 1980). Also, one must eschew the common tendency of placing medicine and the social within antinomial relations, as if both were opposing realms of activity whereby the former is thought to colonise the latter (Osborne, 1996).

bears on a social body⁶⁷. Thus, from the beginning of the eighteenth century, medical knowledge defined a new distribution of functions and problems regarding the well-being of European states.

At the intersection of ‘medicine’ and ‘the social’ we find a complex, reciprocal process: medical knowledge formed the basis of an increasingly dense field of relations from which ‘fewer things could escape’; the intervention of poverty, disease, epidemics and hygiene linked new domains of activity, transformed old spaces of interaction and grouped life on the basis of biological and geographical concerns (Foucault, 2000d, p.135). On the other hand, the social became a striated space upon which certain problems would appear – the family, the factory, the slum, the hospital – providing visibilities from which a technology of populations would regulate the health of its citizens, govern new relations between doctor and patient, health visitor and family, politician and community. The birth of modern medicine, then, is neither characterised by an individual, ‘liberal’ medicine, nor an apparatus of social control (Zola, 1975; Conrad, 1979), but a kind of political organisation of health and disease wherein specific questions are raised about the sickness of the poor in relation to the general problem of the health of populations (Foucault, 1980). The wise administration of the population and the socialised medical apparatus formed a unique diagram by the nineteenth century wherein the social body was constituted in the vocabulary of medicine (Rose, 1994b).

So, one cannot simply tease apart ‘medicine’ and ‘the social’ as if their opposing relations somehow provided an adequate understanding of social medicine. Rather, one must collapse these distinctions among the multiple functions and dispersed locations of eighteenth century *bio-power*. That is to say, the birth of social medicine lay not among transformations of medicine alone, after all, the sphere of health, the demands of production, welfare and security extended beyond the medical relation; nor can we identify these conditions as having emerged from the contours of the social, as if the

⁶⁷ Though it is often assumed that clinical medicine became centred upon the individual medical relation. Foucault’s analysis in *The Birth of the Clinic* shows its conditions of possibility were inseparable from those governing the appearance of social medicine. That is to say, the techniques that converged around the collective administration of bodies were also preconditions for an individual, clinical medicine.

social spontaneously generated its own forms of regulation. Rather, an historical analysis of social medicine must consider the epistemological transformation of political power inscribed within general concerns about the health of populations.

Bio-power

In *The History of Sexuality Vol. 1*, Foucault reminds us that only recently *life* had come into view as an historical value, one that presupposes a system of power whose task has been to ‘take charge of life’, though it does so by no longer invoking death as the naked symbol of sovereign power. This ancient right of seizing life, taking life away, was eventually replaced by a power that *fosters* life on the basis of enhancing its positive utility: ‘The old power of death that symbolised sovereign power was carefully supplanted by the administration of bodies and the calculated management of life. During the classical period, 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, p.140-1). Biopower⁶⁸ emerged not as the result of power having discovered the value of ‘discipline’ as its most efficient technique of governance, but the discovery of life as the basis for which techniques of discipline are capable of qualifying, measuring and increasing its value.

This ‘profound transformation’ of power had dislodged the old structures of medical practice and opened up the hospital to new functions and visibilities. Medicine would no longer find itself entrenched within structures of assistance; no longer would treatment constitute the practice of simply deferring death; nor would hospitals serve as repositories for the circulation of poverty and disease. As medical knowledge became increasingly conflated with political imperatives of health, the practical objectives of policy were less concerned with offering support to the destitute margins of the population than of raising the health of the whole population. The eighteenth century – aside from establishing the extensive programmes and urban policies that would later crystallise into the ‘public health movement’ of the nineteenth century – also marked a period in which the hospital

⁶⁸ Here Foucault employs the term biopower to ‘designate what brought life and its mechanisms into the realm of explicit calculations and made knowledge-power an agent of transformation of human life’ (1979, p.143).

became increasingly problematised as an obsolete structure⁶⁹. The hospital structure became the object of intense political scrutiny, whereby liberal reformers claimed a new vision of the doctor – the problem was not a matter of confining medicine to the task of curing disease, but of curing all the forms of bad administration that prevented the proper management of disease: ‘The first task of the doctor is therefore political; the struggle against disease must begin with a war against bad government. Man will be totally and definitively cured only if he is first liberated’ (Foucault, 1973, p.33).

The reorganisation of the medical apparatus and the new specification of the medical profession presupposed a vision of liberal reform in which the discovery of a *political consciousness* reinscribed the space of disease within a new field of liberties and equalities. That is to say, once liberated from its classical enclosure, medical knowledge was considered indispensable to realising the ‘destinies of the state’, of fixing a positive role with which to embrace a knowledge of *healthy man*⁷⁰. With the appearance of social medicine, we find an explosion of medical techniques which, like techniques of government, shared the institutional epistemology of investing power in life, the purpose of which was perhaps less concerned with optimising the capacities of the human body, or integrating its powers into systems of production⁷¹. The utility of social medicine remained within its capacity for providing supervision over life as a *species*, of enhancing biological processes ‘without at the same time making them more difficult to govern’ (Foucault, 1979, p.141).

⁶⁹ In France, for instance, the failure of poorhouses and hospitals were attributed to the ‘closed’ space of medical activity, which only succeeded in harbouring idleness and poverty, of ‘multiplying the ills in its interior without preventing their outward diffusion’ (Foucault, 1980, p.177).

⁷⁰ ‘The doctor becomes the great advisor and expert, if not in the art of governing, at least in that of observing, correcting and improving the social ‘body’ and maintaining it in a permanent state of health’ (1980, p.177).

⁷¹ Through ‘socialised’ medicine, bio-power would become an indispensable strategy for the development of capitalism; after all, Foucault argues ‘the latter would not have been possible without the controlled insertion of bodies into the machinery of production and the adjustment of the phenomena of population to economic processes’ (1979, pp.140-1). This point is reinforced in an earlier essay titled *The birth of social medicine*, where he suggests the development of capitalism proceeded by ‘socialising a first object, the body, as a factor of productive force, of labour power’. Medicine, as an ideological instrument of the state, or as a strategy of political power, operated by and through the body. ‘For capitalist society’, wrote Foucault, ‘it is the bio-political which was of first importance, the biological, the somatic, the bodily. The body is above all a bio-political reality; medicine is a bio-political strategy’ (Foucault, 2000d, 136-7).

This transformation between the political and biological was certainly a factor in the emergence of a nascent liberalism. For instance, Foucault describes the development of bio-power as increasingly relying upon the action of the norm as opposed to the juridical system of the sword. Thus, a characteristic of power ‘whose highest function was perhaps no longer to kill, but to invest life through and through’ was the need for ‘continuous regulatory and corrective mechanisms’:

It is no longer a matter of bringing death into play in the field of sovereignty, but of distributing the living in the domain of value and utility. Such a power has to qualify, measure, appraise, and hierarchize, rather than display itself in its murderous splendour; it does not have to draw the line that separates the enemies of the sovereign from this obedient subjects; it effects distributions around the norm (Foucault, 1979, p.144).

This ‘normalising society’ of the classical period provided the conditions for life to become a principle of self-governance, that is, for a domain to take shape not around the sovereignty of laws or codes, but around the potential of life itself. For freedom to become the principle of modern liberal government, first the ‘right’ to life had to be recognised as the political object upon which freedom was based. Having shifted away from the old values of sovereign power – right, death, justice – political rationalities no longer required repressive means of eliciting obedience, but productive techniques for cultivating useful forms of discipline. This shift from the repressive to the positive function of power marks the existence of *bio-politics*: the cluster of practices and knowledges which signify the interface of political reason with a knowledge of biological processes, and which opens an epistemological impasse for a kind of liberal rationality to emerge. That is to say, the possibility of liberalism emerged from the reversal of the utility of life and death, and the overturning of sovereign power. For the first time in history, biological existence was reflected in political existence⁷².

Only recently then has life become a precondition of political power. And yet, the historical insertion of biology into ‘the sphere of political techniques’ was not a liberal invention; liberalism was not the only political technology, nor was it the first, to practice

⁷² ‘...this was nothing less than the entry of life into history, that is, the entry of phenomena peculiar to life of the human species into the order of knowledge and power, into the sphere of political techniques... Western man was gradually learning what it meant to be a living species in a living world, to have a body, conditions of existence, probabilities of life, an individual and collective welfare, forces that could be modified, and a space in which they could be distributed in a optimal manner’ (Foucault, 1979, pp.141-2).

a kind of bio-politics. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, even before the question of liberalism was posed, there existed a governmental rationality which, by casting the question of population, marked a break with Christian and judiciary traditions (Divine Law and Natural laws), observing instead the nature of what is to be governed. The model of the city, the spectre of the mob, the surfacing domains of squalor, malady and disorder, emerged as newly formed objects for a *savoir* of government. It was not social medicine that discovered these diverse observations, but a 'science of police' that was called upon to respond to new, and predominantly urban, problematisations. This required an exact knowledge of life – its capacity, productivity, growth – through mechanisms and techniques designed to increasingly bring life into view. In the next section, I show how a technology of 'police' was integral to the birth of social medicine, enabling both medical and political rationalities to coincide with a knowledge of social space.

Medicine of epidemics

In *The Birth of the Clinic*, Foucault discusses the eighteenth century transition from a 'medicine of species' to a 'medicine of epidemics' at which point significant changes take place surrounding not only the control and documentation of epidemics, but the general circulation of medical power. Unlike the abstract and botanical epistemology of Sydenham's classificatory thought, a medicine of epidemics derives the constitution of disease from a 'nucleus of circumstances'. Historically, Foucault is unconcerned whether eighteenth century medicine had grasped the contagious nature of disease, for an 'epidemic is more than a particular form of a disease', but 'all those that attack, at the same time and with unalterable characteristics, a large number of persons'. Hence, there is no difference between the nature or species of an individual disease and an epidemic, it is simply defined by the frequency of the 'sporadic malady'. This is precisely a mathematical problem. The sufficient conditions for the perception of an epidemic are no longer essential and ordinal, like the medicine of species (denoting an order within a sequence), but 'quantitative and cardinal' (denoting *how many* within a given set of occurrences). For this reason, an epidemic is rarely named according to a species, form or essence, but more its occurrence or event: '...Marseilles in 1721, or Bicetre in 1780' (1973, pp.23-4).

Foucault claims that an epidemic has a kind of 'historical individuality'. meaning, it is spatially and temporally specific, requiring a complex method of observation. Since an epidemic is never singular, but multiple and unexpectedly heterogeneous, it requires a multiple gaze in which the 'regularity of symptoms' are described among the irregular circumstances of its appearance:

The event must be described in detail, but it must also be described in accordance with the coherence implied by multi-perception: being an imprecise form of knowledge, insecurely based while ever partial, incapable of acceding of itself to the essential or fundamental, it finds its own range only in the cross-checking of viewpoints, in repeated, corrected information, which finally circumscribes, where gazes meet, the individual, unique nucleus of these collective phenomena (Foucault, 1973, p.25).

By the end of the eighteenth century, this experience of circumscribing the qualities, forces, frequency and specificity of epidemics was institutionalised. According to each region, a physician and several surgeons were appointed to the task of studying epidemics, thereby conferring their knowledge to a chief physician in the event of an outbreak.

Foucault argues that documentation and analysis of epidemics could only succeed if 'supplemented by constant, constricting intervention'. That is to say, a medicine of epidemics could only achieve its function if supported by a *police* to supervise, advise and intervene upon the disposal of the dead; the purity of produce; the isolation of houses; the deployment of preventive measures; and the passing of health regulations. Only then would it be possible for a Corp of 'health inspectors' to be summoned for the purposes of advising departments, collecting information relevant to domains of 'medicine, physics, chemistry, natural history, topography and astronomy', and supervising the work of doctors. Nonetheless, this unity of the medical gaze could not be achieved by the old enclosures of medical knowledge. The conditions upon which modern medicine achieved this unified perception 'relate as much to a police as to the field of medicine proper' (1973, pp.25-6).

The technology of police formed the basis of a 'new style of totalisation', no longer enclosed within the stale, encyclopaedic accumulation of knowledge, but replaced by the

theme of ‘constant revision’ whereby information was derived, revised and calibrated upon the basis of ‘totalising events and their determination’. This required a gaze that not only established subtle interconnections, the infinite openness of events, but among the complexity of these connections recognised the ‘genius’ of observation⁷³. The complex and totalising function of police coincided with an epistemological transformation of medical consciousness. For instance, the Société Royale de Médecine no longer consisted solely of doctors and ‘experimenters’, but now operated at the level of a *political consciousness* in which the fundamental act of medical knowledge worked towards the construction of a kind of ‘map’. By the end of the eighteenth century, the new experience of medical truth was a question of ‘carving up’ the social field via multiple intersections, observations and interventions. In short, medical space came to coincide with social space by traversing and wholly penetrating it (Foucault, 1973, pp.29-31).

A medicine of epidemics seemed to provide a clearing for medical and political reason to converge around a rationality of police. During this period, we find the construction of ‘a politico-medical hold on a population hedged in by a whole series of prescriptions relating not only to disease but to general forms of existence and behaviour (food and drink, sexuality and fecundity, clothing and the layout of living space)’ (Foucault, 1980, p.176). The appearance of police rationality within medical activity was not the invention of eighteenth century medicine, but the outcome of a political consciousness that transformed medical knowledge into an instrument of government; policing became that primary technology by which political power assigned itself to the administration of life⁷⁴.

⁷³ As Foucault observes, this unity and coherence of the medical gaze became established among that ‘open, infinite, moving totality, ceaselessly displaced and enriched by time, whose course it began but never be able to stop – by this time a clinical recording of the infinite, variable series of events. But its support was not the perception of the patient in his singularity, but a collective consciousness, with all the information that intersects in it, growing in a complex, ever-proliferating way until it finally achieves the dimensions of a history, a geography, a state’ (Foucault, 1973, p.29).

⁷⁴ Again, we must appreciate an ‘epistemological contrast’ as the basis of somehow explaining this eighteenth century transformation of European medicine. For instance, in its classical form, medical practice was firmly entrenched within structures of assistance, and therefore consigned to the charitable care of individuals. The production of medical knowledge as an institutional practice became preoccupied with the development of classificatory and experimental thought, producing through its procedures of medical training and scholarship, a medical knowledge and experience that was relatively ‘closed’ to the possibilities of performing what would later be its wider tertiary and political functions. It was this

Though the eighteenth century marks a period in which institutions undertake the important role of organising power over life, it was more the procedures of power they deployed – the disciplines of an ‘*anatomo-politics* of the human body’, and the regulatory interventions of a ‘*bio-politics* of the population’ – that allowed power to circulate among diverse institutions, and appear at every level of the social body (Foucault, 1979, p.139). It was not the discovery of these techniques that gave modern medicine a political status, nor a unified medical consciousness. Rather, it was the art of government itself that gradually assumed a scientific knowledge of life, in which case medical practice was transformed for no greater purpose than to fabricate life as the inexorable target of political strategies. In concrete terms, the object of political power was no longer centred upon the sovereignty of a territory; it no longer figured within a ‘reason of state’, nor among the great institutions of state. Rather, power found its optimum expression among the forces of life itself, among the diverse conditions relating to the growth, health and longevity of a *population*. Population came to describe new phenomena that connected the strength, wealth and greatness of a nation with knowledge of biological existence, the political intervention of which became both the model and end of government. In the next section, I want to examine the notion of ‘medical police’ as an apparatus of eighteenth century ‘state medicine’. The purpose here is to verify not only the intricate links between medical and political reason in the government of the state, but also recover some sense of how bio-politics are presently engaged in the supervision and regulation of the poor.

Medical police

Bio-politics first appears among the paternalistic regimes of seventeenth and eighteenth century Germany, from the source of reflections known as the ‘science of the state’, *Staatswissenschaft*⁷⁵. By the eighteenth century, the political technology of police and a science of populations would together embrace a totalising vision of government, subjecting all facets of a domain to a system of continuous administration. For instance,

systematic enclosure of medical truths that allowed medicine to assume its institutional mantle as a natural and enlightened science of man.

⁷⁵ This form of ‘political science’ constituted a *savoir* of state; the state was the first object of supervision and analysis concerning itself with not only increasing the numbers of the population, or improving its living conditions, but identifying and systematising the growing functions of the state (Foucault, 2000d).

in Germany the development of the *polizeiwissenschaft* – a vast body of literature, ordinances and codes – was already dominated by the principle of the ‘reason of state’, engaging in what was considered to be the natural order of problems relating to the strength of the state, and the growth of its biological forces (Foucault, 2000d). According to the instrumental and interventionist programmes of police science, everything that lacked order or form was subject to administration: birth rate, health, morality, sanitation, urban design, economy, public safety, production, poverty, etc. (Pasquino, 1991; Osborne, 1996). Indeed, the concept of police (*policey*) was considered as far back as the sixteenth century as an important mechanism of good administration⁷⁶.

Long before the practice of social medicine in France and England, the emergence of what Foucault (2000d) calls ‘state medicine’ developed from a German science of state at the beginning of the eighteenth century⁷⁷. Bio-power first emerges via the systematisation of medical knowledge which, under the concept of *Medizinischepolizei*, ‘medical police’, set about disciplining and standardising medical practice. Quite unique to *cameralism*⁷⁸ – a German version of European mercantilism – we find the organisation of medical practice and knowledge through the registration of indicators and factors which not only outlined the growth of population, but the general improvement of public health⁷⁹. In

⁷⁶ Early proponents of the police concept from the sixteenth century up until the development of seventeenth and eighteenth century cameralism include: Melchior Von Osse (1506-1556); Georg Obrecht (1547-1612); and Veit Ludwig von Seckendorff (1626-1692) who was regarded by some as the Adam Smith of cameralism. Johann Joachim Becher (1668), the great German philosopher, scientist and politician, Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz (1646-1716), Christian Thomasius (1655-1728), and Christian Wolff (1679-1754) who pointed out the close relation between the general welfare of the state and the health of the people.

⁷⁷ The only real or practical interest expressed by England and France concerning the strength of populations were measured by an axes of administration and statistics which, from the seventeenth century, deployed the great census surveys of births and deaths. The only health interest shown by the state appeared in relation to the drawing up of tables detailing birthrate and mortality which, at the time, were considered the only real indicators of a population’s health and growth. Thus, before the late eighteenth century, both England and France, showed little or no interest in raising the health of populations (Foucault, 2000d).

⁷⁸ According to George Rosen (1953), German cameralism presents two connotations: ‘On the one hand, it designates the ideas that appeared to explain, justify, and guide the centralizing tendencies and practices in administration and economic policy of the absolute monarchy in the German states during the later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. On the other hand, it refers to the various attempts of the same period to work out in terms of emerging contemporary political and social science a systematic account of the functioning of the various administrative services as a basis for the training of public officials’ (p.24).

⁷⁹ Peculiar to cameralism was how the state as an object of thought developed more rapidly in Germany than in England or France. Whereas explanations for this have not received a great deal of attention, they

particular, it was the work of Frank, Rau and Daniel who were considered exemplary to this field between 1750 and 1770. In 1779, Johann Peter Frank published the first of six volumes of his *System einer vollständigen medicinischen Polizey* which is regarded as the highest expression of a comprehensive system of medical police. By 1782, Ernst Gottfried Baldinger, one of the best known physicians of his time, would describe medicine as a ‘political science’, requiring the training of physicians and the enlightenment of the people to support effective medical legislation (Rosen, 1953).

The term ‘medical police’ first appeared in Wolfgang Thomas Rau’s seminal text, *Gedanken von dem Nutzen und der Nothwendigkeit einer medicinischen Polizeyordnung in einem Staat* (1764)⁸⁰. Based largely on political theory, Rau argued that the health and care of the people was a responsibility of the state, in which case the obligation of a medical profession was not merely to treat the sick, but to ‘supervise the health’ of the population. However, the value with which a medical profession might be realised as an instrument of amelioration and supervision was problematised at the outset by acts of charlatanism and quackery. Hence, the first target of a medical police was the untrained physician whose prevalence was considered more harmful than the discovery of gunpowder. In order to establish the competence of medical personnel, Rau argued for a medical police ordinance to regulate ‘medical education, supervise apothecary shops and hospitals, prevent epidemics, combat quackery, and make possible the enlightenment of the public’ (Rosen, 1953, p.43). Together Rau and Frank’s conception of ‘medical police’ achieved rapid popularity, reaching its highest point of political prominence during the late eighteenth century wherein a technology of social medicine had ‘encouraged itself fully within the rationalities of government’ (Rose, 1994b, p.55).

Firstly, medical police comprised of a general system of observation that applied the somewhat negative analyses of health by collating information on the *sickness* of populations. Among local levels of surveillance, records of sickness were derived from census statistics, and medical records gathered from neighbouring hospitals and doctors.

are said to relate to the size and instability of Germany as a collection of smaller states, as opposed to larger European states, like England and France, which adhered to older, more stable structures (Foucault, 2000d).

⁸⁰ *Thoughts on the utility and necessity of a medical police ordinance for a state.*

The compilation of statistics measured rates of sickness across geographical regions, mapping the incidence of births and deaths, calculating rates and types of morbidity, and charting topographies of longevity and urban density. At the state level, observation consisted of recording epidemic and endemic phenomena, supervising food supplies, reviewing the sanitary conditions of urban spaces, and observing codes of public and moral hygiene (Rosen, 1977). More generally, the observation of the state required methods of grouping the inhabitants of geographical space, linking different domains of activity, and locating individuals within specific collective arrangements. Secondly, there was the matter of standardising medical practice and medical knowledge. Prior to the medical police, the authority of universities, and more particularly, the medical guild regulated medical education and the awarding of diplomas. With the emergence of a medical police ordinance, we find the gradual standardisation of medical instruction, the public supervision of training programmes, and the granting of medical degrees. Foucault claims that in Germany, unlike other European states, 'medicine and doctors became the first objects of standardisation'. In fact, the standardisation of doctors preceded that of its objects: 'the doctor was the first standardised individual in Germany' (2000d, p.140). Thirdly, in Prussia and in other German states, an administrative organisation for supervising the activity of doctors was established at the level of ministry⁸¹. An office was assigned to the collection of cases, diagnoses and medical activities of district doctors: observing the manner in which medical investigations were performed; verifying methods of treatment; describing the effects of epidemic disease; and issuing directives based on the centralisation of all its data. In addition to monitoring the horizontal activities of the medical profession, we also find a vertical segregation and polarisation of the medical profession, guaranteeing relations of subordination among district doctors, health inspectors, medical officers and public authorities. Finally, the medical police consisted of ordinances for regulating the government appointment of medical officers according to regional jurisdictions.

⁸¹ By the early nineteenth century, Prussia had arranged the medical profession in a pyramid formation: district doctors occupied the bulk of the profession who were responsible for 6,000 to 10,000 inhabitants each, while the responsibility of medical officers comprised of 35,000-50,000 inhabitants (Foucault, 2000d, p.141).

These four programmes of the medical police – the radiation of techniques for observing and collecting medical knowledge, the standardisation of the medical profession, the subordination/incorporation of ‘district’ doctors – led to the emergence of a state-controlled medicine which effectively assembled a diffuse and nebulous medical profession into a centralised instrument of the state. As a product of this reorganisation, German medicine produced a series of new phenomena. The appearance of ‘state medicine’, which preceded the anatomico-clinical localisation/normalisation of individual pathology, was not interested in the body of the worker or of forming a labour force that might be adjusted to the needs of industry: ‘It was not the worker’s bodies that interested this public health administration but the bodies of individuals insofar as they combined to constitute the state’. State medicine brought into increasing view not the problem of labour power, but the strength of the state as a matter of bureaucratic and collective organisation. Unlike any other European system of social medicine, the state-dominated models of German cameralism implied a certain ‘economico-political solidarity’⁸², in which case the medical regulation of public health was systematically treated as an index of political and economic strength. It was under these conditions that the doctor first appeared, on a large scale, as a health administrator, a hygienist, and an advisor of government (Foucault, 2000d, pp.141-2).

Despite its popularity and its strong emphasis upon ‘effective administration’, the concept of medical police was entirely exhausted by the mid-nineteenth century, the circumstances of which are consistent with the liberal critique of police. Despite its broad administrative imagination, medical police never acquired the status of an integral code of law but circulated among political, institutional and community relations – the teaching of medical legislation in universities, the reorganisation of the medical profession, the prevention and control of communicable disease, the maintenance of hygiene and public health. Outside official circuits of production, however, *Medizinischepolizei* was contained to the opinion of writers and educators who

⁸² For instance, in Germany in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, concerns over increasing the numbers of the population were commonly justified on political, economic and military grounds. See Phillip Wilhelm von Hörnigk Oesterreich über Alles, *Wann es nur will...* (1684), and Wilhelm Roscher, *Geschichte der National-Oekonomik in Deutschland* (1924).

contributed more to the edification of medical ordinances than the actual creation of social policies and laws. For this reason, it was primarily confined to a 'technical' revolution within German social medicine. The promise of any broader application, like governing aspects of health that apply to a whole territory, was never realised, and never established beyond a relatively narrow domain of practice⁸³ (Rosen, 1977).

Though falling short of its legislative mandate, it is perhaps a misnomer to suggest the practice of medical police disappeared entirely. Under the aegis of 'public health' – a term that later acquired its modern definition from the health revolution of nineteenth century Britain – medical police continued to function, albeit in different forms, at various levels of intervention, though by no means assuming the administrative scope envisaged by Frank and Mai. It is true, however, the practical effect of medical police was largely inhibited by its authoritarian and paternalistic character which 'did not keep pace with the example set by England and France' (Rosen, 1977, p.143). Outside of Germany, the concept of medical police enjoyed only limited application to health problems, and even then was adopted by communities where government was easily accepted in order to control communicable disease and provide sanitation of the environment. By the end of the eighteenth century, Western Europe had found a path leading away from the old edifice of absolutism and mercantilism. Britain, for example, already enjoyed a sense of individual freedom that was almost entirely absent in Germany. By the mid-nineteenth century, *Medizinischepolizei* was considered a sterile formula, relying on a conception of administrative government that was no longer capable of responding to the effects of industrialisation and rapid urbanisation⁸⁴.

⁸³ Various attempts were made to enact health legislation with limited success. The most notable of these, according to Rosen, are Christoph Ludwig Hoffman's proposal to reorganise the medical profession in two of the smaller German states: the Münster medical ordinance of May 14, 1777 in the Bishopric of Münster, and a similar ordinance implemented in the Bishopric of Hessen-Kassel on July 11, 1778. Various German states and cities enacted medical ordinances during the later eighteenth and nineteenth centuries which were mostly concerned with 'the qualifications and duties of medical personnel, control of epidemics, supervision of food supply, control of prostitution, and supervision of hospitals' (1977, p.147).

⁸⁴ Rosen observes that medical police was 'grounded on a primary calculation to augment the power of the state rather than to increase the welfare of the people' (1977, p.155). Despite emphasis upon public health, education, and larger populations, the first objective of medical police was the establishment of a comprehensive administrative framework; after all, the standardisation of the medical profession in Germany *preceded* the standardisation of its medical objects, characterising the tendency of absolute government towards servicing the *mechanisms*, not the objects, of social policy.

According to Rosen, who is perhaps the only English-speaking historian to dedicate a detailed assessment of this period, the decline of medical police is characteristically allied to the demise of the great administrative monarchies. With the dissolution of absolutism, *Medizinischepolizei* became increasingly dislocated from the administrative framework that gave it form and existence, and was therefore unable to respond to the political exigencies of the period. Ironically, its broad social application and unique ‘awareness of the social relations of health and disease’ provided little resources for political adaptation. Consequently, medical police lost much of its creative appeal in Europe, the idea was completely ‘drained’ prior to the health problems of the new industrial order. Though it remained in circulation in Britain, Germany and Italy, it was not until the final decades of the nineteenth century that more liberal expressions like ‘public health’ and ‘social hygiene’ eventually replaced the concept of medical police (1977, pp.144-53).

The phenomenon of medical police verifies the role that state medicine played in the optimisation of state processes, an innovation that becomes possible once political rationalities conceive its domain in terms of population. In the German example, the practice of social medicine signals a pre-liberal form of bio-politics in which the state begins to assume the biological characteristics of a *social body* – not only in terms of the sickness of its inhabitants, but more positively, the health and wealth of the nation. Though the concept of medical police would become a sterile formula, the administration of state power was now fully conceived in medical terms. In eighteenth and nineteenth century Britain, this relation between medical and political rationalities was to problematise the sickness of the poor as the means of inserting the body into the apparatus of production. In the next section, I argue that it was the global strategy of ‘noso-politics’ that provided the conditions for transforming poverty into a useful labour force.

Noso-politics

At this point we might ask: what is the relationship between the development of social medicine and the constitution of poverty? On this matter, Foucault’s discussion on

the global strategy of 'noso-politics' provides some useful insights on how the medicalisation of governmental rationalities played a part in the 'utilitarian decomposition of poverty'. By the eighteenth century systematic attempts were made to distil 'the sickness of the poor' from the conditions and traditional statutes of the poor. Medical rationalities were called upon to help transform the somewhat nebulous category of 'the poor' to make poverty more useful, that is, 'to set the 'able-bodied' poor to work and transform them into a useful labour force' (Foucault, 1980, p.169).

Foucault pinpoints the eighteenth century as the period in which a 'medico-administrative' knowledge begins to develop around a general politics of health. Here, administration acts as a point of support and sometimes a point of departure for an ensemble of medical inquiries into the health of populations. The technologies from which these governmental inquiries emerge correspond to a 'common global strategy' that begins to prescribe new rules and practices for problematising the health and sickness of populations. The new noso-politics begins to inscribe the sickness of the poor in terms of the general health of populations, marking a break from charitable aid for the 'sick poor' to the deployment of a general police of health. The basis for this transformation, despite arising from concerns for conserving an efficient labour force, also originates from a new political rationality where the problem of governing the population required more subtle and heterogenous interventions. State intervention in medical matters was not, as one might assume, a uniform activity, but attached to a multitude of problems and locations regarding the health and physical well-being of the social body (1980, pp.167-171).

One such problem converged around the age-old relation of poverty and disease. Foucault describes the general 'displacement of health problems relative to problems of assistance' as the most distinctive feature of eighteenth century noso-politics (1980, p.168). Prior to this period, the problem of poverty and health were largely the responsibility of charitable and benevolent associations, ranging from the parish *bureaux*

to the philanthropic societies, which served to distribute various forms of outdoor relief⁸⁵. Under the old programmes of assistance, medical treatment was merely a component of assistance. However, by the late eighteenth century, these arrangements were modified by the creation of parish workhouses where 'indoor relief' now converged around the figure of the 'deserving pauper'. In Britain, the local establishment of parochial and municipal authorities transformed the traditional figure of the poor into three distinct categories: the idle poor (vagabonds and beggars), the industrious poor (the destitute and unemployed), and the impotent poor (the old, infirm and disabled). In fact, this disentanglement of various forms of assistance from what was otherwise a new medicalisation of poverty, took place alongside a more detailed inspection of the 'sick-poor'. During the eighteenth century, the figure of the pauper was subject to a much finer scrutiny, discriminating whether the poor were good or bad, able or disabled, or whether they were voluntarily or involuntarily unemployed⁸⁶. An analysis of idleness begins to replace global, charitable conceptions of the poor, the practical objectives of which is 'to make poverty useful by fixing it to the apparatus of production', and to relieve as much as possible the burden of poverty from the rest of society. Not unlike the present climate in which a discourse of dependency functions to place the burden of responsibility upon the 'able-poor' and the wilfully idle, the ameliorative programmes of the eighteenth century aimed to transform the able-poor into a useful labour force, and further ensure that the poor themselves absorbed the burden of their own incapacity. Foucault describes these 'functional discriminations' of the poor as the moment in which the problem of the sickness of the poor emerges from the relationship of labour supply to the demands of production (1980, p.169).

⁸⁵ Plagues and epidemics were of course exceptions to assistance. In the event of 'collective crisis', authoritarian methods of medicalisation were more often implemented, like enforcement of quarantine measures around ports, and the notorious *cordon sanitaires* among plague-towns (Slack, 1991; Watts, 1997). Outside these cases, the emphasis on 'outdoor' relief referred to forms of assistance for the able-bodied poor, so they might continue living in their own homes. In another sense, charitable and benevolent institutions functioned as forms of surveillance of one class over another whereby the most vulnerable and desperate of classes were regarded as likely sources of collective danger (Foucault, 1980; Evans, 1992).

⁸⁶ 'An analysis of idleness – and its conditions and effects – tends to replace the somewhat global charitable sacralisation of 'the poor'. This analysis has its practical objective at best to make poverty useful by fixing it to the apparatus of production, at worst to lighten as much as possible the burden it imposes on the rest of society' (Foucault, 1980, p.169).

The basis for this medico-political transformation should not be reduced to economic explanations regarding the conservation and maintenance of a labour force, though certainly economic management was an important factor. Rather, these economic-political effects related more generally to concerns regarding ‘the accumulation of men’, in which case a technology of population would install more refined mechanisms for allowing population to emerge as an object of surveillance, analysis, adjustment and intervention. Eighteenth century noso-politics begins to mark out a new field in which medicine plays an increasingly important role in assembling a political knowledge of the ‘body’ for the calculated management of new variables – the sick and healthy, the rich and poor, the idle and industrious. More central to the present inquiry, however, is showing how the biological characteristics of a population became relevant factors for economic management under classical liberalism. To establish a national labour market and to set the conditions for the appearance of modern welfare required an apparatus that organised around the problem of the poor a means of constantly increasing their utility. In the next section, I examine the final development of social medicine; the nineteenth century medicalisation of the poor would form the last object of social medicine. Indeed, the ‘return of the medical police’ would assemble new mechanisms for transforming human labour into a commodity.

Medicalisation of the poor

So far, I have mainly redescribed Foucault’s position on the history of bio-power and medicalisation. There are two reasons for this move. Firstly, it is important to assemble different conceptual tools with which to treat the event of pauperism as a matter of government. Secondly, it is necessary to assemble a *perspective* for linking nineteenth century medicalisation of the poor to the preventive regime of contemporary welfare politics. In quite a unique way the reconstruction of the problem of the poor during the nineteenth century is linked to a politics of conduct. But in order to sharpen these debates on the moral habits of the poor, it is necessary to link these back to themes of urban squalor, epidemic disease and social danger. In this section, I want to examine more closely how social medicine was recruited as a liberal technology for not only subjecting the poor to medical control, but reinserting the poor into the apparatus of production. In

what follows, I examine both primary and secondary texts to show how English social medicine was systematically linked to debates on pauperism.

Return of medical police

The noso-politics of the first half of the nineteenth century is characteristic of a liberal mode of government that problematises its population in the language of prevention, theories of miasmatic contagion and correlations of ‘vital statistics’. Knowledge of the poor now formed an interplay between the character and conditions of the labouring population. ‘Pauper management’, as conceived by Benthamite administration, signals the practice of acting on the character of the poor by placing them in circumstances ‘congenial to the natural constitution of man, and the well-being of society’ (Owen, 1818. p.13). But before this field of knowledge became subject to social – and later sociological – investigation, a medical discourse would unite this field by linking the character of the poor to the squalid conditions and circumstances that were thought to produce pauperism. The social question only begins to emerge at which point a new form of medical vigilance and prevention reveals the environmental and personal conditions of the labouring population. Medical police, in its liberal form, would problematise populations in the name of ‘public health’, and reintegrate the poor into the project of ‘society’.

One of the important characteristics of nineteenth century English noso-politics is the double theme of moral and physical degeneration of the labouring population. James Phillip Kay (later Kay-Shuttleworth), who became an Assistant Poor Law Commissioner in 1835, is perhaps best known for his publication of *The Moral and Physical Conditions of the Working Classes Employed in Cotton Manufacture in Manchester* (1832). Kay argued that an investigation of his statistical findings concerning Manchester showed the ‘concomitance of pauperism with moral and physical degradation’, and that pauperism spreads most rapidly and perniciously among ignorant and demoralised populations (Kay, 1832, p.29). Pauperism is not simply the effect of dependence on relief but the culmination of the degenerative effects of the conditions of life among the labouring population. While Kay mentions the debilitating effects of industrial production, his problem was more specifically an urban one. For instance, the Manchester working

classes live in densely packed houses, have inadequate diet, display a 'barbarous disregard to forethought and economy' and spend their gains in debauchery in the tavern. Their houses are crowded upon 'narrow, unpaved, and almost pestilential streets; in an atmosphere loaded with the smoke and exhalation of a large manufacturing city'. Furthermore, the working-class districts are unsewered, and the houses are without proper ventilation or cleanliness. The effect of these conditions is twofold: not only do they depress the physical strength and mental constitution of its inhabitants, but also destroy their 'moral dignity' as they sink into 'sensual sloth' or revel in 'degrading licentiousness'. This kind of moral degeneration propagates the ill effects of physical agencies upon the population, leading to a predisposition of contagious disease (Kay, 1832, pp.6-13).

Indeed Kay's professional career stood at the intersection of 'statistical', 'educational' and 'sanitary' ideas, among which it was his conviction that the conditions of manufacturing populations were intimately associated with cholera and typhus epidemics: 'The state of the streets powerfully affects the health of their inhabitants. Sporadic cases of typhus chiefly appear in those streets which are narrow, ill-ventilated, unpaved, or which contain heaps of refuse, or stagnant pools. The confined air and noxious exhalations, which abound in such places depress the health of the people, and on this account contagious diseases are most rapidly propagated here' (Kay, 1832, pp.14-15). Public health reformers would draw on arguments linking the insanitary conditions of the labouring class and epidemic disease over the next two decades. For instance, the best-selling *1842 Report on the Sanitary Conditions of the Labouring Population* reiterated these concerns by illuminating the 'unknown country' of pauperism that remained largely hidden from the sensibilities of the middle-class public. Chadwick's report would argue that various forms of epidemic and endemic disease were caused by 'atmospheric impurities produced by decomposing animal and vegetable substances, by damp and filth, and close and overcrowded dwellings' (1842, p.422).

Hence, the aetiology of epidemics was linked to the pauperising conditions of the labouring classes. Contagion was thought to propagate through olfactory nerves, and

proponents of contagionism such as Southwood-Smith argued that putrefaction of animal and vegetable matter emanated a compound called 'miasma' which entered the human constitution through smells. It was possible to argue, then, as did Chadwick, that this miasmatic contagion was produced under those conditions in which 'atmospheric impurities', 'poisonous exhalations' and the 'constant emanation of effluvia' were created by 'dampness and lack of ventilation in dwellings', 'the decaying vegetable substances' and refuse which accumulated in the streets and houses, the open sewers, and the lack of proper drainage, as well as the lack of cleanliness, poor domestic economy and 'the filthy habits of the inhabitants' (Chadwick, 1842, pp.93-4).

Although the major epidemic outbreaks of 1832 and 1848 revived the familiar theory that cholera was the 'disease of the poor', the medical statistics did not always bear this out. As one of the medical inspectors of the Board of Health observed: 'The epidemic was no respecter of classes... Rich and poor suffered alike or escaped alike, according as they lived in the observance or violation of the laws of their physical well-being' (cited in Himmelfarb, 1984, p.360). Nonetheless, this theory of contagion, which stood in opposition to other medical explanations, would become an ally for political authorities. Chadwick himself reproached the medical controversy inspired by anti-contagionists, which he thought were 'prejudicial in diverting attention away from *the practical means of prevention*' (cited in Finer, 1952, p.218). In Chadwick's estimation it was not doctors as such, but civil engineers who he considered to be the most important agents of change in the health of town populations. Along these lines the sanitarian theory of contagion accorded well with broader concerns about the mode of life of the labouring population, particularly, the character and conditions of the poor. The aetiology of epidemics would establish a direct and deleterious link between poverty and disease; the conception was not held to demonstrate the necessity for overcoming poverty, but for corrective interventions of certain habits and conditions found among the poor. In quite a striking way, this theory of the aetiology of epidemics isolated precisely the conditions and behaviours that were constitutive of pauperism.

The sanitary idea, popularised by the 1842 Report, ‘burst on a startled middle-class public’ and formed part of a veritable wave of public health reforms (cited in Finer, 1952, p.209). The *Report of the Select Committee on the Health of the Town* (1840) similarly exposed the squalid conditions in many industrial areas and recommended the institution of district boards of health. No fewer than three associations were formed in 1844 to propagate the ‘sanitary gospel’: the Association for Promoting Cleanliness among the Poor, the Society for the Improvement of the Conditions of the Labouring Classes and Health of Towns Association. Amid the crisis of typhus and cholera and the increasing visibility of the poor as probable causes of epidemic phenomena, we find a great flurry of information mediated through meetings, sponsored lectures, and issued reports which were duly publicised in the press. The climax of this intellectual and administrative activity came with the passage of the Public Health Act of 1848, and a supplementary health bill for London, which formed, perhaps, a belated response to the enormous casualties of the cholera epidemic of the same year⁸⁷ (Himmelfarb, 1984, pp.359-60).

Among this field of noso-politics, we find that pauperism is no longer simply the source of moral contagion, but the cause and effect of physical disease. The relation between disease and poverty is now mutually constitutive. On the one hand, typhus and cholera epidemics were conceived to have their origins among the most pauperised sectors of the labouring populations. On the other, disease was recognised as a factor which led to pauperism through the premature death of some breadwinners and the diminished productivity of others through the creation of widows, orphans and by throwing families onto poor-relief and leading them to a life of vice and crime (Chadwick, 1965, pp.254-257). This relationship between poverty and disease would be further concretised by the elaboration of ‘vital statistics’, over which political intervention and debate increasingly took hold. It was William Farr who, from the

⁸⁷ The Public Health Act of 1848 introduced new powers to the sanitary minded official, the ‘medical officer’, and municipal inspectors. A new central department, the General Board of Health, under a nominated president, and provided for local boards of health was established; in municipal boroughs these were to be the town councils, elsewhere they were to be special boards elected by the rate payers on the same footing as the election of boards of guardians. Each board of health was empowered to appoint a surveyor, an inspector of nuisances, a treasurer, a clerk and an ‘officer of health’ who had to be a legally qualified medical practitioner. The act contained numerous sanitary clauses including the cleansing of sewers, sanitation of houses, supervision of lodging houses and slaughterhouses, and maintenance of pavements. This was the first act in which the term ‘public health’ appeared.

Registrar General's Department, pioneered a form of knowledge that classified causes of death in a 'statistical nosology' (Flinn, 1965, pp.26-28). Together, administrators and statisticians envisaged a government over the conditions of life through the documentation and calculation of vital statistics that would lead to numerous social investigations into the correlates of poverty among the labouring classes.

It was these investigations into the conditions of the labouring poor, instigated by the medical officer, the sanitary engineer and the moralistic chronicler, that gave rise to a new field of observations and rationalities that might be distinctively called 'social'. Henry Mayhew (1985), for instance, the vigorous 'social and political' commentator on the conditions of the labouring classes, would draw from the same style of statements and observations made by Chadwick's *Sanitary Conditions*. He would give light to the 'residuum', the 'great undiscovered country of the poor', by attending not to political and economic issues as such, but the 'immediate influences' affecting the life of the worker. It was only a matter of time before others would link observations of poverty to numerous contradictions of political economy. For instance, Angus Reach, a 'special correspondent' in Manchester, would link this new manner of social investigation to the evils of political economy, which he blamed for exacerbating the relations between rich and poor. But rather than invoke the romantic nostalgia which yearned for an idyllic solution for the abominations of the factory and city, Reach recognised the paradox of a man with a family 'who preferred to earn twelve shillings in noisy, smoky Manchester rather than six shillings in the dewy fields of Wiltshire. To purify the air of Manchester was to quench its furnaces and deprive its inhabitants of their dinners' (cited in Himmelfarb, 1984, pp.315-6).

The growth of political economy, with its rapid industrialisation, overcrowding and squalid conditions, formed an industry that was, after all, the source of prosperity and happiness. But political economy said very little about the hidden conditions of the poor, of husband and wife who died in obscurity, unnoticed for days, or even the class of 'bone-pickers', 'mud-rakers', people living on the produce of 'dung-heaps' (Chadwick, 1842, pp.164-5). On the basis of this absence of observation into the detailed character

and conditions of the poor, Reach concluded: 'Now it is for Social Economy to play its part – to investigate diligently into the condition, the comforts, the mode of work and of life, of our factory population, and to devise and to urge every possible means for the amelioration of their lot' (cited in Himmelfarb, 1984, p.317). But before turning its attention to the conditions of labour, social economy was primarily concerned with documenting only the most shocking and primitive conditions of the poor, the likes of which succeeded in intensifying public concerns of 'social danger'. Under the new mode of social investigation, social economy gave the previous formlessness of pauperism a subsequent *moral* form, the aberrant life-conduct of which was rendered intelligible in terms of its deviation from civil society.

By linking pauperism to disease, a politics of conduct would probe into the character and conditions of those who threatened the health and security of social life. The solution was not to level the inequality of these conditions, but to form a sanitary cordon between the dangerous and wealthy classes through medical legislation. The Poor Law of 1834 effectively sealed off poverty from pauperism, ensuring obligatory medical control of the latter, while subjecting the former to a preventive medical police of those moral habits and physical conditions in which poverty degenerated into pauperism. It is this matter to which I now turn.

Social medicine and Poor Law

One of the objectives of the Poor Law, then, was the obligatory medicalisation of the poor. The medical legislation contained within the Poor Law was consistent with liberal concerns for maintaining the security of the population by enforcing two kinds of control strategies: policies of protection-assistance and control-assistance. These were the first components of an English social medicine. Following the Poor Law, there was a plethora of inquiries into the medical and sanitary conditions of the populace, leading to a series of major Public Health Acts in 1848, 1866 and 1875. It was largely the efforts of John Snow who developed this medical legislation by organising not so much as medical assistance but medical control of the population. The Health Service was expressly intended for the poor, aiming to achieve at the collective level the same measures of control that were

guaranteed by the Poor Law itself – the control of vaccination, the documentation and analysis of epidemics and the localisation of unhealthy spaces – all of which were aimed at controlling the labouring classes.

During the first two thirds of the nineteenth century, the kind of problematisations addressed by this liberal mode of government are clearly visible from the medical legislation: How is one to guarantee political security? How does a rationality of government withdraw from poor-relief without giving free reign to the very conditions that create pauperism? How do we promote self-responsibility and familial duty? The solution proposed by social medicine is to establish various measures of prevention, a ‘police of the poor’, not only capable of detection and surveillance of crime, but medical diagnosis, statistical correlation and social investigation of the character and conditions that fixed a medicine of spaces to the physical conditions and moral habits of the poor. Pauperism is therefore eliminated by acting on the circumstances that produce poverty.

By the second half of the nineteenth century, social hygiene coupled with education programmes would make these preventive policies complete. The space of individual discipline, self-responsibility and familial duty would become the mechanism *par excellence* for the medicalisation of the population; the minimisation of state action, and the prevention of idleness and disease. Above all, social medicine, as an apparatus of liberal governance, effects an *ethical* transformation – the vital conditions of a population are no longer exclusively the responsibility of political authorities but the personal and familial responsibility of all. In other words, the principles of prevention are to be thoroughly collectivised and individualised. Finally, the argument is made that English social medicine exercised considerable influence over the events that led to the constitution of poverty as a set of conditions requiring continuous surveillance and control: the emergence of the public health movement in Britain, the establishment of the Health Service in 1875, and the development of a science of social pathology, epidemiology, would together assemble the language of prevention now found among contemporary welfare policies.

Medicine of conduct

In this section, I return to the politics of the present to show how the bio-political legacy of social medicine remains instrumental to the post welfare regime. The remainder of the chapter explores two key aspects of how medical knowledge continues to inform neo-liberal approaches to welfare administration: that is, the role of supervision in the reconstruction of conduct, and the use of risk assessment systems for the calculated management of welfare populations. The case is made that Australian reforms draw from a range of clinical and therapeutic technologies that target the moral and ethical capacities of the poor. This becomes all the more possible once the crisis of welfare is recast in terms of *conduct*.

By now it is clear the coalition Government's rhetoric of welfare dependency resurrects nineteenth century notions of *pauperism*; the difference being, however, that instead of acting on a set of conditions that were thought to transform poverty into indigence, contemporary control strategies act on the conditions of a behavioural syndrome located in biology, psychology, socialisation, culture, etc. What is nonetheless common between nineteenth century conceptions of pauperism and contemporary vocabularies of dependency is an attempt to remoralise the habits and capacities of individuals who remain excluded from labour and wealth. It is possible to trace this moral/psychological dimension of dependency as far back as the New Right governments of the 80's, and more recently, to Third Way politics which seek to reconstruct the autonomy of claimants.

In Australia, we find a curious admixture of Third Way policies seeking to reinvent community as a domain of human interdependency and solidarity, while also enforcing an array of behavioural controls which share clear links with Mead's new paternalism. Despite Giddens' insistence that the Third Way is an 'alternative political philosophy' – a new knowledge-based, globalised economy with the values of a humane society (Giddens, 2000, pp.32-3) – the argument made here is that Third Way politics are a form of neo-liberalism continued by other means. Third Way approaches are based on the peculiarly Anglo-American assessment of the failure of welfare and have, more recently,

become something of a 'Trojan horse' for the introduction of new control mechanisms (Basham, 1999; Rose, 1999a). Though these mechanisms and strategies of control are quite varied and rely on different technologies and agencies, the case I want to make is that recent welfare reform installs a medicalising regime for the control of conduct. In the first instance, I examine how Australian welfare politics draw from American solutions, namely, the importation of new paternalist techniques of supervision and advice-giving.

Supervising the poor

Despite aspects of mutual obligation that clearly seek to revitalise communitarian and solidaristic responsibilities, it also enables a close supervision of the poor. The new paternalism that informs obligation based policies in Australia explicitly assume that welfare recipients are passive and childlike, they lack self-discipline and basic self-competence, and are prone to idleness and selfish indulgence. This is not unlike the 'blight of indolence', the 'taint of slothfulness', or the lack of 'forethought and economy' observed by commentators of the poor during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The new culture of welfare administration signals a return to paternalistic authority in the sense that it is about explicitly 'telling welfare recipients what to do' (Mead, 1998, p.104). Lawrence Mead, the main proponent of new paternalism writes:

...many welfare recipients seem to need pressure from the outside to achieve their own goals. They seem to be looking for structure. The idea of case managers monitoring people easily strikes the better-off as severe. They compare that relationship with authority to the warmer, more affirmative relationships they have known. For the poor, however, supervision is often new and welcome... Thus most recipients respond favourably to oversight... Said one supervisor in Riverside: 'It reminds them that you *care*, and that you're *watching*' (Mead, 1997, p.65).

The innovation of new paternalism is the middle ground approach it assumes between the classic welfare state and neo-liberalism: 'It accepts the orthodoxies of neo-liberalism but hopes to patch society together again with a mix of exhortation and intervention into the lives of the poor and the deviant' (MacGregor, 1999, p.93). To counter welfare dependency, new paternalism advocates controlling patterns of behaviour rather than merely helping those in need (Mead, 1997, p.7). As such, new paternalism supports 'workfare' programmes, supervisory service providers, greater emphasis on programme administration and efficiency, privatization and the enforcement of social values. It proposes a form of surveillance that, in the name of *caring* for the disadvantaged, applies

continuous techniques of case management and 'checking' in order to 'coach' welfare recipients in the values of self-discipline and self-responsibility. For this reason, there is growing agreement with Mead's suggestion that the success of welfare reform is contingent on the progress of public administration. What has become an important 'trend' in social policy is the 'attempt to reduce poverty and other social problems by directive and supervisory means' (1997, p.2). To fulfil this end, welfare administration must no longer rely on administration for its success, but must itself become a *technique* that extends beyond the institutional space of discipline:

traditionally, administration was considered a tool to deliver policies conceived in economic terms. Such are the problems of bureaucracy in America that some economists have advocated that administration be minimised by delivering social benefits through voucher or market mechanisms. Paternalism gives up that strategy, for now not only the delivery of benefits but *policy itself* is administrative. The goal is to supervise behaviour, largely outside institutional walls, something that can only be done by routines where staff members check up on clients... The potential for paternalism rests on the progress of public administration (Mead, 1997, p.21).

Besides the implicit cynicism that recipients are unable or unwilling to act as 'responsible adults', the new regime of administration is structured around enforcing recipients to continually demonstrate that they are making progress toward taking and keeping paid employment instead of relying on welfare as their primary source of income. A recipient's contact with welfare from beginning to end is now funnelled through this concern. It begins with assessment, continues with financial and employment planning, self-help facilities, intensifies with job search, and culminates in leaving welfare for paid employment outside the home. Recipients are continually being evaluated through all these activities as to whether or not they are, in the new lexicon of welfare reform, 'job ready' for 'rapid attachment' to the labour market (Schram, 2000, pp.86-7).

We can see this shift toward a more medicalised form of monitoring in case management approaches. For years, when caseworkers were assigned to welfare families, they made home visits, consulted with families regarding their needs, and wielded greater discretion over the extent to which the family received assistance. In America, by 1972, partly in response to litigation requiring the standardisation of procedures to ensure fairness in the treatment of families, the Federal government required states to separate income benefits determination and service provision. Welfare families no longer had

caseworkers. From the early 70's until the late 80's, in most states welfare administration intake procedures did not involve assessment of applicant employability to any great extent. The Family Support Act of 1988 changed this, reintroducing the role of the caseworker in income maintenance administration.

So too, in Australia, the case manager emerges as a new agent for the supervision of the unemployed. In the initiatives outlined in the 1994 White Paper, *Working Nation*, Keating announces the Government's plans for the resourcing and training of personnel who would act as a relay between the unemployed, local employers and appropriate services and agencies. The case manager operates in much the same way as the *pastoral* role outlined by Foucault (1981, 1982, 1988b) which, again, signals the paternalistic direction taken by welfare reform. 'Intensive' case management focuses on working with recipients to plan their transition from welfare to paid employment. The 1997 legislation for mutual obligation increases the emphasis on intensive case management. Similarly, the 1996 legislation in the United States referred to caseworkers as 'employment counsellors' or 'job coaches' who no longer offered social service support for problems unrelated to finding and keeping employment, and who often were not even employees of the welfare agency but worked for private contractors. The assessment, diagnosis and treatment for physical and psychological conditions become an important component of welfare administration. Helping people change their personal habits and cope with personal problems is central to helping recipients become job-ready⁸⁸.

Historically, the 'case record' has been central to welfare administration as it is to medical administration. Common to both, the case record functions to continuously register individual differences and similarities in relation to a field of structured norms: it translates spatial and pathological 'events' into a history of symptoms and diagnoses with which to reduce the uncertainty of normalising intervention⁸⁹. Among welfare systems.

⁸⁸ 'Counselling now surpasses training as the route to self-sufficiency. Building self-esteem takes priority over getting an education. Leaving welfare for paid employment is considered more a problem of personal attributes than job skills. The development of soft skills in interpersonal relations is emphasised over the acquisition of hard skills in particular trades and professions' (Schram, 2000, p.89).

⁸⁹ According to Rose, the medical record 'meticulously inscribes the details of the individual history of the patient in a stable, transferable, comparable form, it renders the suffering of the sick person knowable in a

the case record traces a biography of individual activity – time spent in the labour market, time receiving income support – but as Schram (2000) notes, case records are notoriously difficult to systematise in ways that constitute adequate forms of electronic surveillance⁹⁰. The new paternalist emphasis upon ‘monitoring’ resolves this problem by conflating techniques of observation with a new kind of medicalised care of welfare recipients: observation induces a climate in which the watched recipient feels obligated to modify their behaviour and demonstrate how they are responding to the care provided. The watched recipient is a clinically treated object who can be monitored in terms of their contractual compliance and, eventually, their departure from public aid. New reporting systems therefore resort to a practice of ‘continuous monitoring’ whereby methods of case management, counselling and coaching elicit useful forms of self-reliance (Bardach, 1997).

But the induction of medical knowledge extends not only to the individual relation of case manager and claimant, but draws from a collective medical perception of welfare populations. The rise of calculative technologies like risk assessment, epidemiological screening and profiling tools, no longer treat poverty as collective phenomenon but a property of individuals. Risk management systems now turn to more differentiated forms of targeting to manage ‘the riskiness of the most risky’.

Risk government

In the new configuration of control we find a whole array of control agents – police, social workers, doctors, psychiatrists, case managers, mental health workers – who are connected with one another ‘in circuits of surveillance and communication designed to

new way, in relation to the population of patients which he or she forms an element ... one could now, for the first time, observe the similarities and differences between symptoms in different individuals at any one time and over time. This provided the conditions for a statisticalisation and normalisation of diseases: a new classificatory system, which would reduce the uncertainty inherent in medical diagnosis by the location of the individual facts of any particular case within a field structured by norms’ (Rose, 1994b, p.60).

⁹⁰ In the American context where the medicalisation of welfare administration is considerably more advanced, new methods of continuous surveillance and case management have called for new information systems to monitor the recipient’s transition from welfare to work. For instance, a 1998 report from the National Association of State Information Resource Executives (NASIRE) raises concerns regarding the ‘lack of functioning monitoring systems for tracking welfare recipients and stresses the importance of finding out what happens to recipients after they leave welfare as well as the critical role of monitoring recipient’s behaviour while on welfare’ (Schram, 2000, p.89).

minimise the riskiness of the most risky' (Rose, 1999a, p.260). These new technologies for the calculation of risk find their conditions of existence among eighteenth and nineteenth century statistical surveys of populations (Hacking, 1975, 1990), and later, among correlations between medical phenomena and social groups (Armstrong, 1983). Current technologies of welfare administration resemble epidemiological techniques of calculation, which superimpose the probability of 'future deviation' onto a grid of visibilities, thereby mapping and measuring the rate of transmission and spatial distribution of risky phenomena. Certainly Giddens' vision of welfare accords well with new regimes of risk government, where epidemiological screening, risk assessment tools and profiling techniques enable more complex and targeted forms of intervention.

In contemporary welfare regimes, risk management plays an important role in collection, assessment and distribution of information for rationalising resources for those most in need; modifying policies around different sectors and profiles of risk; and, governing more intensely those who are at greater risk of overpayment. As Rose points out, the logics of risk are 'driven by the technological imperative of taming uncertainty and mastering hazard' which has found its way in policy manuals for welfare agencies, among psychiatric and psychological practices, and the calculation of medical risks and dangers to the community (1999a, p.260). Though Rose argues the logic of prediction has replaced the logic of diagnosis, I think the turn to managing and predicting uncertainty has in fact accelerated the tendency to produce clinical diagnoses of abject populations.

The Australian social security system is distinct from other welfare regimes as it is not based on a social insurance scheme where risk is 'socialised', but consists of a range of means-tested benefits designed to alleviate the risk of poverty (benefits are funded from general revenue rather than hypothecated taxation or insurance contributions). This system underwent change in 1994 when social policy improved targeting of assistance by tightening income and assets tests so that payment of benefits were allocated to those identified 'as most at risk of poverty' (*Working Nation*, 1994, p.7). Although poverty is traditionally viewed in terms of societal risk, the more recent emphasis on self-reliance reinforces the message that poverty is now a property of individuals. These factors

suggest that, in complete contrast to ‘insurantal’ risk, Australia’s social security system operates at the level of *clinical* risk. In other words, risk is individualised in the detection and treatment of medical pathology, psychological disorder or criminality in individuals (Weir, 1996; O’Malley, 1996; Petersen, 1997).

Since the mid 80’s, Australian social security policy intensified principles of targeted support on the basis of expanding coverage to those ‘most in need’ among different types of households and clients. The poor are no longer equalised entities as scientific methodologies for the calculation of risk employ more highly individualised means of distinguishing between the deserving and undeserving poor. The McClure report recently proposed a ‘participation payment’ based on a completely individualised assessment with various supplementary add-on payments, representing a more elaborately targeted support system. And while political and economic rationalities are no doubt central to the government of risk, computer technology has played an important ‘technical’ role in managing the complexity of risk assessment. Computer modelling, for instance, has highlighted the need for policy changes through the calculation and prediction of ‘poverty traps’⁹¹, enabling policy makers to identify when and where income anomalies occur. The discovery of welfare dependency coincides with the differentiation of micro-populations defined in terms of their pathological characteristics, in which case clinical risk gives rise to more individualising strategies of assessment and intervention.

As far back as 1987, the introduction of ‘a risk-based approach’ was used in ‘compliance technologies’ to identify overpayments and welfare fraud. New forms of ‘profiling’⁹² ensured those with a greater risk of overpayment were more intensely governed than other clients (Australia, 1987, p.24). Targeted recipients were sent more

⁹¹ These occur are when combinations of income taxation, social security withdrawal rates, and tax rebates lead to situations where increased private income results in fewer benefits to recipients. The calculation of these anomalies has heightened awareness of the existence of long-term unemployment, thereby precipitating and reinforcing discourses of welfare dependency.

⁹² Profiled risk government is noted for its location of risk among sub-populations, and well established among policing practices for apprehending and questioning the ‘usual suspects’ (Novas & Rose, 2000). Risky sub-populations are defined by characteristics of individuals – sex, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation – thereby identifying those qualities, attributes or variables which have greater probability of danger than the average population. Profiles are not indications of danger or pathology but the increased chance of (future) pathology (Henman, 2004).

letters from social security departments to confirm their address, income, partnership status; they were more likely to have review teams examine their files internally, and be interviewed to check the accuracy of their circumstances. Data-matching exercises and cross-sectional analyses – correlating data from different government departments – identify ‘risky’ sub-populations or personalities: ‘detailed statistical analysis [constructs] profiles of ‘at risk’ client behaviours, which is then matched against total clients of the Department’ (Australia, 1987, p.24). Modern surveillance⁹³ is now more than ever electronically facilitated through the intensification of profiled risk in the government of risky sectors of the welfare population.

The turn towards profiled risk in Australia is evidenced from the increased up-take of ‘activation’ policies for recipients of work-force age (OECD, 2001a). Though construed in different ways, these programmes aim to reduce the risk of long-term disadvantage, poverty and/or dependence on social security by assisting the transition into paid work. In the mid 90’s under the Keating Government activation policies were expanded to include: significant investment in training programmes for the unemployed, Job Compacts between the unemployed and the then Department of Social Security, and in-job wage subsidies for long-term unemployed persons (Dean 1995). In many respects these programmes operated at the level of clinical risk in that they almost exclusively targeted the long-term unemployed. But further rationalisation of these services would eventually raise the question: why wait for long-term unemployability to emerge when preventive measures can be introduced?

In 1993, the ‘Better early identification and assessment of ‘at risk’ clients’ initiative introduced a number of measures designed to establish a risk-based criteria for identifying and re-directing clients with ‘labour-market disadvantages’ for intensive case management and individually prepared ‘action plans’. Assessment tools were developed from administrative data that correlated personal attributes with greater probabilities of long-term unemployment. The initiative involved the identification of ‘at risk’ individuals

⁹³ I would even question the ‘newness’ of this model of risk-surveillance. Profiled risk already bears a strong resemblance to Foucault’s ‘plague model’ of control and surveillance of social space (Foucault, 1977; Elden, 2003).

at the time they applied for unemployment benefits and provided them with access to more intensive, better funded labour market programmes than the rest of the welfare population. In terms of treating the risk of dependency, this initiative involved a more decisive shift from clinical to profiled risk government.

Henman (2004) argues that since taking office in 1997, the Coalition Government has tended to eschew risk discourses, opting instead for paternalistic remoralisation. Evidence of this is found in mutual obligation-based policies that continue to individualise and contractualise social security services. And yet in addition to moralising discourses, I would contend that risk government remains a focus of current welfare policy. Reasons for this are clearly stated among recommendations of the McClure report:

that more sophisticated assessment or profiling tools should be developed to assist in the assessment process, building on the current Job Seeker Classification Instrument (JSCI) and Work Ability Tables (WAT). Assessment tools need to take account of the risk factors associated with likely long-term reliance on income support payments in order to determine access to services (McClure, 2000, p.12).

The Reference Group makes numerous references to ‘risk factors’ as ways of managing the complexity of issues impacting on the assessment process. As rhetoric on individualised service delivery purports to provide the most cost effective and calibrated intervention for a diversity of needs, arguably we find the conflation of risk technologies with discourses of remoralisation⁹⁴. Therefore, I think there are two ways of understanding mutual obligation in relation to risk government. Firstly, the obligation of government as service providers is to minimise risk by safeguarding financial capital through targeted intervention of the most risky. On the other side of mutual obligation, governments are tempted to re-individualise risk and responsibility by invoking the implicit ‘social contract’ between citizen and government. In other words, the most risky are managed in terms of increasingly differentiated, intensive and electronic modes of profiled assessment, while moral and contractual aspects of service delivery ensure that recipients are increasingly responsible for managing their own risks.

⁹⁴ The integration of risk assessment tools with paternalistic control of client behaviour is clearly evidenced in the McClure Report: ‘A systematic assessment process will need to be developed to ensure that service delivery offers targeted assistance based on an individual’s needs, capacities and circumstances. The assessment model must include specification of the role of participation plans and incorporation of other aspects of the mutual obligations framework into service delivery system’ (McClure, 2000, p.12).

Conclusion

By retracing the theme of social medicine, I have tried to think of medicalisation not as a homogenous movement, but a heterogenous technology of the social body, an instrument that would find within the idea of population the basis of cultivating and maximising the forces of the state by first disciplining medical knowledge to the administration of life. To speak of the development of social medicine is no less than tracing the key transformations of alliances and complex linkages between medical and political rationalities. We can think of these intersections between medical and political reason in terms of *bio-politics*, in which case modern welfare emerges from the obligatory medical control of poor populations. Nineteenth century medicalisation ensured the perpetual visibility and management of poverty by acting on the character and conditions that created pauperism.

An investigation of pre-liberal forms of bio-politics, like eighteenth century ‘medical police’, provides new lines for thinking about the political functions of social medicine in nineteenth century Britain. Debates on pauperism were systematically grafted onto a moral topography of miasma and epidemics, thereby linking pauperism to a science of prevention. The events preceding the Poor Law of 1834 established, albeit in a different ‘liberal’ form, a mode of policing in which preventive medicine consisted of a number of functions out of which an entirely novel idea of poverty would crystallise. Poverty was inscribed among the pauperising conditions of squalor, and linked to the moral and physical habits of the poor. Free medical assistance for the destitute, a sanitary cordon established between rich and poor, and the development of medical instruments designed to reinsert the poor into the apparatus of production, would establish a new medical police of social spaces. Post-1834 policies ensured the security of liberal society came under increasing medical and ‘public’ control.

Current welfare politics invoke the language of prevention and social contract to act upon the conditions and circumstances of a very different domain. If the poor of the nineteenth century represented the threat of epidemic phenomena, contemporary welfare dependency embodies the moral/psychological threat of market passivity. Like the

pauper, the welfare dependent is the antithesis of labour market activity and the blight of economic prosperity. A diagnosis of the present begins by identifying at least three strategies for reforming the Australian social security system which find their antecedents among technologies of social medicine: the language of prevention targets 'at risk' populations for various strategies of detection and early intervention; a medical form of 'continuous monitoring' is installed within new circuits of assistance between service providers, case managers, and clients; and new profiling tools of assessment and electronic surveillance are employed to rationalise welfare services and implement more targeted forms of intervention. By conflating the characteristics of the welfare dependent with that of the pauper, the new politics of conduct mobilises a whole array of control technologies that have transformed social assistance into a highly differentiated and unequal distribution of services based on the potential risks of subjectivity.

But medicine is not only remoralisation of a moral/pathological problem, but a technology engaged in the ethical reconstruction of subjects who, for one reason or another, remain excluded from labour and wealth. The fact that medical knowledge figures prominently among this new configuration of control is by no means incidental. Since the eighteenth century, the doctor has emerged as expert in the arts of the living, and medical values have become suffused among contemporary liberal practices of self-formation. As 'medical experts come to take up their role as masters of lifestyle' (Rose, 1994b, p.69), so too, the case manager and the job counsellor have emerged as experts in the arts of participation. Under the formula of advanced liberalism, society is to be *active* as individuals are obliged to choose, to consume, to work and to find within themselves solutions to the contemporary problems of freedom.

4 Discourse of the poor

If contemporary welfare policies draw from moral, political and theoretical arguments to calculate the deservingness of the poor then the present task is to retrace the emergence of a practical rationality and a moral-political framework for the government of the poor. This involves investigating a terrain of poor administration which *precedes* the liberal constitution of poverty. Indeed, genealogy fails to grasp the significance of the event of pauperism if it cannot render intelligible the field that was displaced by it. In this chapter, I explore a relatively stable distribution of statements on poor-relief from the mid-seventeenth to the late eighteenth century which together forms the ‘discourse of the poor’. An examination of both primary and secondary material shows that the problem of the poor is neither reducible to moral nor (o)economic arguments, but the product of transformations among paternalistic and pre-liberal modes of government. Furthermore, this discourse was linked to a complex terrain in which it becomes neither clear nor self-evident that idleness was specific to vagrancy. Among eighteenth century arguments of poor-relief, idleness is diffused in terms of those who not only refuse to work, but the sloth ingrained in the customs and habits of the labouring poor. The problem of idleness emerges from a complex terrain of exploitation, social custom and consumption: the idleness of the poor is central to understanding mercantilist discussions of poor-relief. Lastly, the discourse of the poor allows us to reassess present welfare policies which, in the name of welfare dependency, seek to regulate ‘post-industrial’ idleness by reconstructing the psychological capacities of the poor.

As I have argued in previous chapters, present strategies of welfare reform signify the reactivation of moral and ethical arguments that effectively de-emphasise the ‘conditions of poverty’ by focussing on the moral and ethical capacities of the poor to increase their participation in a global knowledge-economy. What are played down by such arguments are precisely the conditions that might otherwise contribute to a more complex and specific understanding of poverty. The new anti-politics of welfare espoused by neo-liberals, Third Way enthusiasts, neo-conservatives, communitarians, new paternalists, and

the like, have the net effect of *deconstituting* poverty as a legitimate site for reform – welfare is no longer an important site for staging antipoverty struggles.

In Australian welfare politics, the resurrection of moral distinctions between the deserving and the undeserving poor calculate the worthiness of claimants according to subjective conditions. Nineteenth century virtues of independence, self-responsibility and self-discipline are given a new ethical gloss: independent labour is said to foster self-respect and self-esteem, to restore confidence and identity. For instance, in her press conference on the future direction of welfare reform in Australia, Senator Newman reiterates that employment itself is central to the ethical reconstruction of the dependent, while the moral conduct of the unemployed becomes the proper target of intervention:

The most important thing we can do for the unemployed people is get them into jobs as quickly as possible. Nothing is more soul destroying, more likely to lead to hardship, than not having a job... However, there are examples around Australia where job opportunities are available and our entrenched culture of welfare dependency has meant that certain members of our community are not only prepared, but feel entitled to exploit the social safety net instead. In doing so, they abuse the essential decency of the Australian community and undermine public confidence in the integrity of the social security system... where there are jobs available even though they may fall short of the initial expectations of the jobseeker, it is neither fair nor moral to expect the hard working men and women of this country to underwrite what can only be described as a destructive and self-indulgent welfare mentality (Newman, 1999b, p.5).

No doubt, problematising the worthiness of the poor is a politically expedient strategy: the image of wilful idleness and demoralisation still capture the imagination of public opinion. Welfare dependency invokes the commonsense appeal of weeding out welfare cheats, freeloaders, dole bludgers and teenage single mothers who abuse income support for their own selfish purposes. The image of the pauper is still a potent reminder of the degraded and reactive character who feeds off the labour of the industrious and virtuous. Because of their popular appeal such stereotypes of idleness tend to exaggerate public perceptions of fraud, and over-represent the number of idle and dishonest persons receiving income support. This strategy of stigmatisation has a twofold effect: it shifts responsibility for the breakdown of social welfare by placing the blame onto those who are commonly believed to be abusing the system (Ahmed, et al., 2001); but it also gives rise to divisions among citizens, and those within the stigmatised group of welfare receipt (Braithwaite, et al., 2002).

The problem of idleness and the kind of stigma it gives rise to is perhaps as old as poverty itself. Arguably, the construction of welfare dependency – a group of statements that reactivate distinctions between the deserving and undeserving poor – is invoked in the present context of reform to emphasise the idleness of the poor who, it is believed, have degenerated into a state of chronic indolence and passivity. Distinctions between the deserving and undeserving poor have a particular history that precedes the invention of poverty. This chapter endeavours to retrace such a history by examining how the poor were constituted as an object of government. Before undertaking this history, I want to highlight some of the differences between notions of ‘the Poor’ and that of poverty.

Transformation of the poor

In 1765, an English pamphlet, anonymously published under the title, *Observations on the number and misery of the poor; on the heavy rates levied for their maintenance, and on the general causes of poverty*, begins with an overview of the industrious activities of the nation among which areas of agriculture, manufactures and commerce are said to excel. But this is only a chimera of prosperity as the author reveals an alternative thumbnail of civil society:

What would a stranger say, to find a people exhibiting such a distinguished external appearance of prosperity, yet, at the very same time, their streets swarming with wretched objects exposed to all the horrors of want and misery; their roads infested with lawless miscreants to the terror of innocent travellers; their parishes groaning under a burden of poor creatures crammed together in places miscalled workhouses, where they linger out an indolent and nasty existence: their numbers increasing yearly to such a degree, that it has long engaged the attention of the legislature, and exercised the ingenuity of individuals, hitherto in vain, to find a remedy adequate to so decipherable a political disorder! (1765, p.1).

Four decades later, the magistrate and proponent of the Metropolitan Police, Patrick Colquhoun, gives the following description of poverty in *A Treatise on Indigence* (1806):

Poverty is that state and condition in society where the individual has no surplus labour in store, or, in other words, no property or means of subsistence but what is derived from the constant exercise of industry in the various occupations of life. Poverty is therefore a most necessary component of society without which nations and communities could not exist in a state of civilization. It is the lot of man. It is the source of wealth, since without poverty there could be no riches, no refinement, no comfort, and no benefit to those who may be possessed of wealth, in as much as without a large proportion of poverty surplus could never be rendered productive in procuring either the conveniences or luxuries of life (1806, p.7).

Between the shocking description of our anonymous pamphlet and Colquhoun, who gives a rational, even optimistic, account of poverty, the difference indicates a significant transformation of poor-relief. The first author writes from a critical, moral discourse who must convert the poor into a deplorable object, the 'wretched' sight of which is not only designed to move those who behold it, but symbolise a decisive critique of political authorities and existing methods of relief. As much as this is a repulsive vignette of the condition of the poor, it also portrays a vision of civil society in the grips of political disorder. So what blocks a fully constituted concept of poverty from emerging in this account? We might say the problem is how the poor are conceived as a category, a blank object that can only be referred to in terms of increasing *numbers*; poverty cannot be described as a particular condition arising from the general condition of population, capital and subsistence. For our eighteenth century writer, such statements were not yet formulated nor fixed to the problem of the poor.

Colquhoun's account of poverty is unique, though in the next three decades it will become a more typical definition. Poverty is now displaced from the moving language of charity, and from mercantilist preoccupation with 'the growing numbers of the poor'. All these concerns are suddenly effaced as our second author announces the peculiar *necessity* of poverty. Poverty is both natural and necessary for the source of wealth of the nation, and for the progress of society. This configuration of statements was perhaps incomprehensible to our eighteenth century author, and yet this definition of poverty is calmly poised in terms of a property of individuals, or more precisely, the *lack* of property and means of subsistence of individuals. Colquhoun's precocious account shows evidence of statements that draw simultaneously from a discourse of *political economy*, and a discourse that refers to the subsistence and inevitable scarcity of the conditions that apply to a *population*. In this new theoretical formulation, poverty is understood as a natural condition that is at once the source of misery *and* the source of wealth.

To understand this discursive transformation, we must return to the discourse that governs the appearance of statements of our first anonymous author. But rather than assume the inferiority of a discourse that lacked a theoretical conception of economy or a

coherent theory of 'society', it is necessary to investigate this discourse in terms of its own intrinsic rationality and coherence. The task is to grasp the style and systematicity of 'governing statements' that comprise the form of the 'discourse of the poor'. We find two useful examples of this in the first account. Firstly, the text makes reference to 'poor creatures crammed together in places miscalled workhouses', despite the moral overtones of this statement, what is revealed is a method of government which coincides with the practical problems of transforming the poor into a useful labour force. By the seventeenth century, such statements signal a significant transformation of poor-relief, exemplifying a patriarchal form of governance whereby the appearance of workhouses were linked to pre-existing statements regarding the strength, wealth and greatness of the nation. But perhaps the most prominent feature of the discourse of the poor is identified by the author's reference to 'numbers increasing yearly' which, in the form of statistical observation, specifies a problematic category. The *numbers* of the poor stressed a concern about notions of 'populaceness' which, according to oeconomic conceptions of wealth, formed an index of the prosperity of nations.

In this English context, the discourse of the poor would unite other discourses such as political oeconomy and political arithmetic, from William Petty to Adam Smith, where principles of augmenting the population formed the basis of 'wise administration'. The poor were constituted as objects of maintenance and repression in the sense that they posed obstacles to the development of capital, the circulation of wealth, and the expansion of a productive population. Concepts of 'oeconomy' and 'population' were therefore inseparable to those practices in which 'the Poor' emerged as a problematic object of government: it was a practical knowledge of the poor that formed the locus of concerns regarding the good government of the nation. From the sixteenth to late eighteenth century the 'problem of the poor' formed the inexorable target of various moral, oeconomic, statistical and medical programmes implemented by numerous political and local authorities, combining intellectual and institutional relations through a series of practical and prescriptive solutions. Our first task, then, is to show how the theme of 'numbers of the poor' was systematically linked to oeconomic conceptions of wealth.

Numbers of the poor

So far, it has been argued that a discourse of the poor is intelligible in terms of its emphasis upon *numbers of the poor* – a statement that draws on a particular conception of the relation between populousness and the wealth, strength and greatness of nations. We already know that the seventeenth century concept of ‘population’ had become the object of a German science of police (*Polizeiwissenschaft*), which formed the basis of mercantilist principles of enrichment: the management of populations became the essential component of the strength, happiness and prosperity of states. But a discourse of the poor problematises such concerns from the point of view that the numbers of the poor undermined a formula of state prosperity. It is upon the basis of their numbers, and their relation to disciplines of political oeconomy and political arithmetic, that gave rise to an array of classifications in which the object of ‘the Poor’ were linked to eighteenth century themes of ‘good administration’, and later, the ‘wealth of nations’⁹⁵.

Unlike twentieth century formulations of poverty, the discourse of the poor does not ask ‘What is poverty and what are its social and economic conditions?’ but rather ‘Who constitute the numbers of the poor?’ This formulation is quite specific to the seventeenth and eighteenth century. There are three categories from which possible answers are based: the ‘industrious Poor’, the ‘idle Poor’ and the ‘impotent Poor’ – those who are capable of labour, those who do not labour, and those who are unable to labour. This is the view put forward by the late seventeenth century author, Richard Dunning⁹⁶, who applied such categories when defining the duties of the parishes under the poor laws as:

work for those that *will* labour, *punishment* for those that *will not*, and *bread* for those that *cannot*; and if the two first parts of that law were duly observed, the Poor would not only be reduced to a small number, comparatively to what they now are, but there would be no such Poor as idle and wandering rogues and vagabonds, as the statute of the 29th of the same Queen shews there were before that time: and the punishment appointed for such loose persons being that they be whipt, and sent to the place of their birth, as an admonition to the

⁹⁵ There are numerous examples of this linkage between population and prosperity of the nation, the most exemplary of which are found in William Petty and Adam Smith. For instance, in his *Treatise of Taxes and Contributions* (1662) Petty argues that: ‘Fewness of people is real poverty; a Nation wherein are Eight Millions of people is more than twice as rich as the same scope of land where are but Four’ (1963. p.34). Similarly, in the *Wealth of Nations* Smith (1789) observes that: ‘Whatever encourages the progress of population and improvement, encourages that of real wealth and greatness’ (p.338).

⁹⁶ *Plain and easy Method showing how the office of Overseer of the Poor may be managed*, 1st edition, 1685.

inhabitants of that place to bring up their children (Dunning, 1685, cited in Eden, 1797, pp.225-6).

However, the numbers of the poor is also a theme that begins to specify a moral grouping of the nation than simply enumerating the poor by virtue of their common condition. This is the view put forward by Daniel Defoe in his influential text *Giving Alms No Charity* (1704) where he states: 'Tis the men that won't work, not the men that can get no work, which makes the numbers of our poor' (p.26). Thus, we might say the discourse of the poor is a relatively stable distribution of statements insofar as it discriminates a course of action that would lead to the suppression of idleness, the discouragement of beggary, and the legitimization of work by either moral or economic means. But what constitutes the numbers of the poor as a set of governing statements is the manner in which this discourse delineates part of the nation as a category of governmental concern and therefore a target of punishment and prescription.

This theme of enumeration and prescription of the poor is made clearer if we contrast it with that of poverty. While the term 'poverty' appears among statements of the seventeenth and eighteenth century, it fulfils only 'a very narrow discursive function' (Dean, 1991, p.28). Unlike twentieth century notions, poverty does not refer to a common set of attributes that define a category of the population, nor does it outline conditions that produce or, at least, contribute to the misery of the poor. The poor are not constituted as a category afflicted by poverty – this attribution of causal circumstances and conditions had not yet come into being – but exist as a *quantitative* category that either undermines or complements the prosperity and well-being of the nation. There are two historical examples of this debate, both of which are made by advocates of the workhouse – the entrepreneur Josiah Child and Chief Justice Matthew Hale – for employing the numbers of the poor to increase 'the riches of the nation'. For instance, in *A New Discourse of Trade* (1669) Child writes:

The riches of a City, as of a Nation, consists in the multitude of Inhabitants... and if a right course be taken for the Sustenance of the Poor, and setting them to Work, you need invent no stratagem to keep them out, but rather to bring them in. For the resort of the Poor to a City or Nation well managed, is in effect, the conflux of Riches to that City or Nation; and therefore the subtil Dutch receive, and relieve, or employ all that come to them, not enquiring what Nation, much less what Parish they are of (Child, 1669, p.64).

Rather than decrease the numbers of the poor, as one might expect, Child advocates the reverse condition of attracting the poor to a city so they might be usefully employed. 'Setting the Poor to work' emerges as a practical solution for which the numbers of the poor are linked to a theme that is predominant among British mercantilism: the augmentation of wealth and strength of the nation.

There are, however, definite limits and exceptions to this formula of increasing national wealth by setting the poor to work as we see in the case of Matthew Hale's *A Discourse Touching the Provision for the Poor* (1683). Here, the numbers of the poor does not automatically engender a real increase in the wealth and greatness of the nation. For where there is a lack of provision of employment, and where poor families resort to stealing and begging, the poor are neither capable of self-discipline nor suitable employment. On this matter Hale argues:

But in England, for want of a due regulation of things, the more populous we are the Poorer we are; so that, that wherein the Strength and Wealth of a Kingdom consists, render us the weaker and the poorer (Hale, 1683, Preface).

This mercantilist formula that asserts populaceness must coincide with wealth is presented with a number of obstacles by the end of the seventeenth century. The numbers of the poor are considered an index of prosperity only insofar as sustenance is rendered efficient by profitable employments as opposed to begging and stealing. Hence, a prescriptive solution must proceed rather cautiously, that is, by increasing the numbers of the 'industrious Poor' without increasing the numbers of the 'idle Poor'. As we shall see, the problem of the poor will reside in the paradox of a nation that is both industrious and slothful.

Problem of idleness

To understand the distribution of statements that make-up the discourse of the poor, it is necessary to grasp the conditions in which two themes become historically linked: the 'numbers of the poor' and the 'wealth of nations'. Both type of statements converge around the problem of poverty, not as a set of conditions common to the poor, but more in line with mercantilist principles of 'oeconomy', wealth and prosperity from which the theme of 'setting the poor to work' appears. The problem is precisely one of *transforming*

the idle poor into the industrious poor. But the manner in which the ‘workhouse’ appears as a solution to this problem is neither reducible to moral nor economic statements, but must be located within a paternalistic mode of government that is anxious to link the poor to national goals.

Firstly, this association between numbers and wealth was instigated by means of discriminating certain habits and customs of the poor. Distinctions between the idle and industrious poor were positively and negatively distributed in relation to ‘profitable employment’. It is true that work became a technique for transforming the idle into the numbers of ‘useful labour’, but rather than moral reform of the poor we should think of this transformation as a strategy of exploiting the nation’s most valuable resource, its population. Foucault makes a similar observation regarding the ‘Great Confinement’ of the classical period⁹⁷. ‘Condemnation of idleness’ was not primarily a moral concern, though the establishment of houses of *correction* assumed the ‘sloth of idleness’ may be transformed by way of ethical transcendence or moral atonement. Nevertheless: ‘It was in a certain experience of labour that the indissociable economic and moral demand for confinement was formulated’ (Foucault, 1965, p.57). It is no accident, for instance, that the first houses of confinement appear in the most industrialised parts of England, where the imperative of labour sequestered the numbers of the poor to provide cheap labour during periods of full employment, and facilitate the reabsorption of the idle for the protection of the city during periods of unemployment. Thus, confinement played a double function: the obligation of work ensured the prosperity of all.

Dean (1991) also warns of the probable misnomer of reducing this link between numbers of the poor and wealth of the nation to the provision of labour as some kind of economic mobilisation of a reserve labour force. Though the dual function of the workhouse may have embodied these effects, it is problematic to conceive the employment of the poor as ‘a source of profit on capital outlays on the means of

⁹⁷ ‘Before having the medical meaning we give it, or that at least we like to suppose it has, confinement was required by something quite different from any concern with curing the sick. What made it necessary was an imperative of labour. Our philanthropy prefers to recognise the signs of a benevolence towards sickness where there is only a condemnation of idleness’ (Foucault, 1965, p.46).

production' (1991, p.37). Rather, this linkage is understood in terms of the 'proper administration of the poor' which are vital to the welfare and security of the nation. This required a paternalistic system of governance capable of consigning the poor to relations of 'command and obedience'. In terms of 'the relief of the Poor', then, Matthew Hale argues:

Poverty in it self is apt to Emasculate the minds of men, or at least it makes men tumultuous and unquiet. Where there are many very Poor, the Rich cannot long or safely continue such; Necessity renders men of Phlegmatick and dull natures stupid and indisciplinable; And men of more fiery or active institutions rapacious and desperate (1683, Preface).

In a climate where the numbers of the poor were said to 'overrun the country'⁹⁸, work provided a cure for every form of indigence. For the 'sturdy beggar', the 'rogue and the vagabond', the 'lazy and thievish' the experience of labour would promise a kind of physical and moral transformation. For the labouring classes, work was the positive attainment of salvation, for the poor it was the only means of escaping perdition.

Thus, the ameliorative effects of work would come to justify 'the proper employment' of the poor, providing the relevant points of connection between the numbers and wealth of the nation. But if we think of these statements as not only a set of articulations, debates and propositions about the proper management of the poor, but also a set of governing practices, then the discourse of the poor is already a strategy by which the state takes charge of the 'problem of idleness'. This was achieved in two ways: the provision of employment with *or* without confinement. In the case of the former, we should consult William Petty's discussion regarding the notion of 'Publick Charge' over which the state assigns responsibility to the parish for the care and employment of the poor as well as raising funds for the establishment of a 'parish stock' (ie. flax, hemp, etc.)⁹⁹. Webb and

⁹⁸ Foucault (1965) cites a pamphlet attributed to Thomas Dekker, *Grievous Groan for the Poor* (1622), that captures this sense of growing alarm in which poverty was said to spread across the nation like a pestilence: 'Though the number of the poor do daily increase, all things yet worketh for the worst in their behalf ... many of these parishes turneth forth their poor, yea, and their lusty labourers that will not work ... to beg, filch and steal for their maintenance, so that the country is pitifully pestered with them' (pp.49-50).

⁹⁹ There are clear references to this in the Poor Law Act of 1601: 'Be it enacted by the authority of this present parliament, that the churchwardens of every parish, and four, three, or two substantial householders there as shall be thought meet... under the hand and seal of two or more justices of the peace in the same country... shall be called overseers of the poor... for setting to work all such persons married and unmarried having no means to maintain them, (or) use on ordinary or daily trade of life to get their living by; and also to raise weekly or otherwise, by taxation of every inhabitant, and... a convenient stock of flax.

Webb also refer to intermittent parochial reports between 1601 and 1640 of ‘setting the Poor to work’ either in their homes or among local parishes, but in the case of some parishes the poor were ‘set on work’ even in the absence of a common parish stock. Indeed, there are strong parallels between our present ‘work for the dole’ schemes and what Petty proposes as the maintenance of public employment which, apart from specifically targeting the able-bodied, and overcoming the problem of insufficient stock, would introduce new trades requiring ‘much labour and little art’ such as the cutting and scouring of rivers, the planting of trees, the making of bridges and causeways, working in mines, quarries, and collieries, and the manufacturing of iron (1963, pp.29-31).

These ‘innumerable experiments’, which surfaced in the first half of the seventeenth century, were not merely a revival of earlier ideas to recruit the able-bodied poor¹⁰⁰. Elizabethan legislation, whether for reasons attributed to the turmoil of civil war, or the inaction of central government, was characterised by the authors of the second half of the seventeenth century as having fallen into ‘remarkable neglect’ – a neglect largely attributed to the ineffective organisation of poor-relief by local parish authorities (Webb & Webb, 1963, pp.101-2). Petty’s discussion exemplifies a somewhat new direction whereby the duty of the state is to take charge of the poor by prescribing public employment, but not because such an end is ‘useful’ or ‘profitable’. Rather, public employment of any form should, above all, preoccupy and discipline the habits and morality of the poor: that the poor should do *something* restrains disobedience and inculcates a sense of routine that is amenable to work. It is for these reasons that Petty claims such works ‘would keep their minds to discipline and obedience, and their bodies to a patience of more profitable labour when the need shall requite it’ (Petty, 1963, p.31).

hemp, wool, thread, iron and other necessary ware and stuff to set the poor on work, and also competent sums of money for and towards the necessary relief of the lame, impotent, old, blind, and such other among them being poor and not able to work... And the said justices of peace or any of them to send to the house of correction or common goal such as shall not employ themselves to work, being appointed thereunto as aforesaid’ (*Statutes of the Realm*, vol. iv, pt ii, 962-5).

¹⁰⁰ Conventional history describes the old Poor Law Acts of 1598 and 1601 as the establishment, by Parliament, a compulsory system of poor-relief that was administered and financed at the local parish level. The Elizabethan Poor Law was adopted largely in response to the dissolution of the monasteries, religious guilds, almshouses, and hospitals under Henry VIII, institutions that had previously provided charitable assistance to the poor. During the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, the bulk of relief recipients were elderly, orphans, or widows with young children, the great majority of which were female (Webb & Webb, 1963).

No doubt, it was this complex terrain of new and recurrent arguments on moral and administrative failure, and the growing multiplication of ‘vagrancy and destitution’ that led to the appearance of the public workhouse in the mid-seventeenth century.

Despite attempts to establish a municipal system of poor-relief in London, the public workhouse did not make an appearance until after the civil war (1642-48). Matthew Hale describes the function of the workhouse as placing its inhabitants ‘into a Regular, Orderly, and Industrious course of life’, that is, within patriarchal relations of discipline, wherein the young are instructed, the sick provided for, and the idle corrected and prevented. As an advocate of the workhouse, Hale frames an optimistic account in which such a scheme presents a remedy for the recurrent failures of Elizabethan poor law. The ‘course of life’ set by the workhouse was a ‘preventive’ rather than punitive measure:

The prevention of poverty, idleness, and a loose and disorderly Education, even of poor children, would do more good to this Kingdom than all the Gibbets, and Cauterizations, and Whipping Posts, and Jayls in this Kingdom, and would render these kinds of Disciplines less necessary and less frequent (Hale, 1683, p.11).

For Hale, the most serious deficiency of the existing poor laws was the lack of a parish stock on which the poor can be set to work to raise ‘convenient support and provision’. As it stood, the law lacked compulsion in two respects: to compel those who were able to work but unwilling to do so; and to empower the Justice of the Peace to compel Church Wardens and Overseers to enforce the law who, it was said, were unwilling to charge poor rates lest they ‘displease their neighbours’. But more serious than this was the matter of applying the ‘force of law’ to unite neighbouring parishes to raise not only a common stock, but exercise more expedient measures to procure a common workhouse (1683, pp.6-11).

Hale outlines a number of propositions addressing each of the deficiencies he lays claim to: he does so not by refuting the basic precepts of the poor law, but by appealing to ‘furnish a compulsory Law to inforce Idle Persons to work’. This would not only prevent the persistence of beggary and idleness, but provide ‘convenient Employment and Wages’ wherein ‘the benefit of Working would exceed the benefit of Begging’ (1683, p.17). Such a plan can only be rendered into existence by first empowering the relevant authorities of

the parish. On this point, Hale elaborates a set of procedures for empowering the Justice of the Peace to unite several local parishes in order to erect a common workhouse. Furthermore, each workhouse is to employ a Master who is assigned the authoritative role of keeping accounts of a stock, and maintain regular supervision over their periodic delivery and dispatch. The most vigorous and consistent of Hale's concerns, again, relate to the weak and ineffectual nature of these laws. The successful transformation of idleness and beggary into 'Industrious Employments' must, according to Hale, rest upon some necessary basis of force, legal or otherwise: 'if any person that is able to work, and not able to maintain himself, shall refuse to do so he may be forced thereunto by Warrant of two Justices of the Peace by Imprisonment, and moderate correction in such Work-House' (p.10).

As Webb and Webb observe, the theme of 'profitable employment' of the poor became the 'common panacea of the economic writers of the last quarter of the seventeenth century, and it found a place in nearly every pamphlet on the commerce or industry of the nation' (1963, p.105). The first workhouse experiments appeared in the decades after the proposals of Child and Hale where, for instance, the 'philanthropist' Thomas Firmin established a workhouse for the manufacture of linen in 1665. This experiment continued from 1676 to 1697 wherein able-bodied trades-people were employed at low wages while children from the age of three, the aged and infirm could obtain subsistence. It was the conviction of Firmin's lifelong experience that indentured work should abound all parishes as a means of 'making actual profit out of the employment of the poor' (cited in Webb & Webb, 1963, p.107).

Similarly, Richard Dunning argued in *A Plain and East Method* (1686) for procuring an actual balance of profit out of the employment of the poor by assigning them to undertakers or contractors who would set them to work, while those who refused were committed to the house of correction. The legislation of 1696 established a new 'Corporation of the Poor' for the City of Bristol to build a workhouse. The Act was based upon the 'powerful and convincing' pamphlet of John Cary who drew-up proposals for addressing the problems of mendicancy and relief by contracting make-work schemes for

the poor. The Bristol Workhouse became widely regarded as a 'promising experiment', and over the next fifteen years influenced the application of similar Local Acts for the establishment of workhouses across thirteen towns: 'The idea underlying all these Acts was the desirability of organising labour of the unemployed, with the double object of maintaining them without disorder and of increasing the national wealth' (cited in Webb & Webb, 1963, p.120). In 1723 the passing of Knatchbull's Act (9 George I. c.7) enabled separate parishes to establish workhouses in a form that now recognised their 'deterrent function'. Within a decade over a hundred workhouses were established under this Act.

If the workhouse emerged as a solution to the growing numbers of idle poor it was not because 'setting the poor to work' was the source of cheap labour and profits for mercantilists. Rather, the workhouse emerges as an institutional space for rendering the greatest numbers of the poor self-sufficient, and thus no longer a drain on national resources. Despite linking the poor to the wealth of the nation through the institutional mechanism of the workhouse, by the mid-eighteenth century, these sanguine attitudes meet steady opposition. The 'indolent and nasty existence' of those 'poor creatures crammed together in places miscalled workhouses' will exemplify the kind of criticisms that demonstrate the recurrent problem of linking the poor to national goals. By the end of the eighteenth century, the paternalistic character of sovereign power and the national imperatives of mercantilist trade theory become increasingly problematised by moral and economic statements regarding the proper administration of the poor.

However, these solutions which sought to convert the 'idle poor' into the 'industrious poor' through the workhouse apparatus assumed that poverty was a unilateral phenomenon, comprising mainly of those whose conduct disqualified them from a 'regular and industrious course of life'. In the next section, I examine an important counter-argument which provided an alternative account of processes that converted industry into idleness, a phenomenon known as the 'taint of slothfulness'.

Taint of slothfulness

There is one more problem that confronted the discourse of the poor – a condition apparently reversing the transformative properties of the workhouse – conversion of the industrious into the idle by what was known as the ‘taint of slothfulness’. The year 1704 constitutes an event in which this problem intersects the theme of setting the poor to work where a Bill for the incorporation of a body of ‘Guardians of the Poor’ would establish ‘profitable employment’ of the poor by means of establishing in each parish various public workhouses, working schools, and for those who refused to work, houses of correction. In 1698 such a Bill was introduced into Parliament and made no progress, though the subject was vigorously debated in the House of Commons. By 1704, however, there were no fewer than four Bills in Parliament, one of which was introduced by the entrepreneur Sir Humphrey Mackworth and met with almost ‘universal acceptance’ (Webb & Webb, 1963, p.113). At the ‘eleventh hour’ this project was stopped dead in its tracks when Daniel Defoe addressed Parliament with his ‘cynical’ pamphlet entitled: *Giving Alms no Charity, and employing the poor a grievance to the Nation*. In 1705 the House of Commons consequently threw out Sir Humphrey Mackworth’s Bill ‘and no similar measure has afterwards got anything near so close to success’ (1963, p.114).

Defoe’s pamphlet sharply argues against the public employment of the poor, though not on moral grounds, but according to statements that were consistent with mercantilist domestic policy. For instance, he reproduces the principles of population and national policy, and its circulatory conception of wealth as dependent upon manufacturers and trade. Though the text is characteristic of the discourse of the poor, with its emphasis upon sovereign power, population and mercantilist trade theory, it opposes the conclusions drawn by the advocates of the workhouse without refuting the existing impulse of charity. It is precisely the notion of employment – that ‘every Family might live upon their own Labour’ – that remains the principle objective of policy, though the means by which this is argued provides the point of difference between Defoe and his contemporaries.

Firstly, Defoe's argument should not be considered a defence of private manufacturers, but draws more from mercantilist concerns of the *oeconomic* organisation of the nation as systems of circulation. For instance, Defoe provides a clear illustration of how setting the poor to work would damage the domestic production of private manufacturers:

The manufacture of making bays is now establish'd at Colchester in Essex, suppose it should be attempted to be erected in Middlesex, as a certain worthy and wealthy gentleman near Hackney once propos'd, it may be suppos'd if you will grant the skill in working the same, and the wages the same, that they must be made cheaper in Middlesex than in Essex, and cheapness certainly will make the merchant buy here rather than there, and so in time all the bay making at Colchester dyes, and the staple for that commodity is removed to London. What must the poor of Colchester do, there they buy a parochial settlement, those that have numerous families cannot follow the manufacture and come up to London, for our parochial laws empower the Church-wardens to refuse them a settlement, so that they are confin'd to their own country, and the bread taken out of their mouths, and all this to feed vagabonds, and to set them to work, who by their choice would be idle, and who merit the correction of the law (1704, p.15).

The establishment of public manufacturers as a remedy for setting the poor to work only succeeds in displacing the 'happily settled' manufacturers of one part of the kingdom by providing cheaper labour in another; in effect, placing a vagabond in an honest labourer's employment. This is not an argument for the free-market of labour; it is not a defence of wage-labour as the best means of administering the poor; nor does it favour private investment over public expenditure for the employment of the poor. Defoe's position serves as a warning against state interference among existing patterns of circulation and distribution of manufacturers throughout the nation.

Defoe applies the mercantilist metaphor of 'circulation' to present a context wherein the make-schemes of the workhouse appear as an artificial edifice of manufactures, succeeding only in dislocating the established system of manufacturers within the nation. Furthermore, disrupting the natural 'circulation of trade' would cause a state of disorder by ruining the manufacturers, displacing the settlement and employment of families, making towns and cities dependent on one another, and redistributing poverty among the nation:

I think therefore, with submission, to erect manufactures in every town to transpose the manufactures from the settled places into private parishes and corporations, to parcel out our trade to every door, it must be ruinous to the manufacturers themselves, will turn thousands of families out of their employments, and take the bread out of the mouths of diligent and

industrious families to feed vagrants, thieves and beggars, who ought much rather to be compell'd, by legal methods, to seek that work which it is plain is to be had; and thus this Act will instead of setting and relieving the poor, encrease their number, and starve the best of them (1704, p.23).

Defoe shifts his attack from the deleterious effects of workhouses on the established system of manufactures, to the apparent confusion of such schemes in targeting those who make up the numbers of the poor. Given the high price of wages, and 'the present difficulty of rising soldiers', he proposes that there is more 'labour than hands to employ it', and that English labourers currently enjoy an 'easie, steady employment'. An observation of 'all these particulars, and innumerable unhappy instances' presents the following deduction on which the discourse of the poor must now stand: 'the poverty of our people which is so burthensome, and increases upon us so much, does not arise from want of proper employments' (1704, p.22). If there is already sufficient employment then the provision of workhouses and parish stocks is not only harmful to the 'Arcanas of Trade', but also superfluous to the problem of idleness. But Defoe only hints at possible alternatives¹⁰¹ which, given the apparent availability of work, would therefore demand methods of subjecting the poor to regulation and compulsion: 'Tis a regulation of the poor that is wanted in England, not a setting them to work' (p.7).

By refuting lack of employment on which the category of 'the Poor' is said to exist, Defoe presents an alternative to the question of who makes up the numbers of the poor: 'Tis the Men that *won't work*, not the Men that *can't get no work*, which makes up the numbers of the Poor' (1704, p.25, original emphasis). But this statement is not designed to target the sturdy beggar and the vagabond as blameworthy figures of the debate, rather it distinguishes the 'Poverty and Exigence of the Poor' as derived by either two causes: 'Casualty' and 'Crime' (p.23). Casualty defines those unable to work through infirmity, age, or physical constraints, and who should remain the legitimate objects of parochial relief. Crime, on the other hand, refers to the manner in which householding virtues of 'good husbandry' are given over to luxury, sloth and pride; these are the 'visible and direct fountains' of poverty. Defoe observes that financial prudence and responsibility –

¹⁰¹ 'If... I am enquir'd of what this regulation should be, I am no more at a loss to lay it down than I am to affirm what is above; and shall always be ready, when call'd to it, to make such a proposal to this Honourable House, as with their concurrence shall for ever put a stop to poverty and beggery, parish charges, assessments and the like, in this nation' (Defoe, 1704, pp.7-8).

where a man commits his earnings to the management of his wife, or otherwise defers from spending it for the sake of subsistence – are peculiar to the English¹⁰². Hence, the crime that has become the most pervasive, indeed, ‘so general, so epidemick, and so deep-rooted in the nature and genius of the English’ are what Defoe terms the ‘general Taint of Slothfulness’: the burdensome nature of the poor is one of consigning their diligence to the pursuit of idleness:

there is a general taint of slothfulness upon our poor, there’s nothing more frequent, than for an Englishman to work till he has got his pocket full of money, and then go and be idle, or perhaps drunk, till, tis all gone, and perhaps himself in debt; and ask him in his cups what he intends, he’ll tell you honestly, he’ll drink as long as it lasts, and then go to work for more (Defoe, 1704, p.24).

Arguably, what is unique to this discourse of the poor is the way it introduces a new specificity to the problem of idleness by exposing and then reworking a contradiction between the numbers of the poor and the wealth of the nation. Defoe’s argument is a case in point: to set the sturdy beggar and vagabond to work by artificially creating useful employment does not guarantee, nor automatically confer, an increase of the nation’s wealth. Intervention must grasp not what it presumes to combine or ‘add’ to industry, but what it transposes and subtracts from a system of existing flows and dependencies. To combine the poor in one space is to redistribute the poor in another. And given the assurances of sufficient work, it makes no sense to create work for those without employment, especially when such schemes take work away from the happy settlements of those already employed. In this instance, the question of who makes up the numbers of the poor now becomes a matter of reformulation and precision. Where sixteenth and seventeenth century discourses proposed the theme of setting the poor to work, the sturdy beggar and vagabond became targets of intervention only insofar as their idle existence were merely ‘effects’ of poverty. As an effect, the poor possessed no identity other than different categories of destitution, in which case their conditions of existence formed only a surface of singular and indefinite circumstances. A sense of *how* they became figures of

¹⁰² It is the ‘sad truth’ of the poor that both single and family men drink their earnings away at the alehouse, to either find themselves a beggar when disaster or sickness falls, or worse, let their wives and children go begging in rags and wanting bread, who must then go seeking care from their parish: ‘This is the ruine of our poor, the wife mourns, the children starve, the husband has work before him, but lies at the ale-house, or otherwise idles away his time, and won’t work’ (p.25).

idleness was unknown or unspecified, as if to say questions pertaining to this condition did not form part of the solution.

In contrast, the poor of the early eighteenth century no longer resemble figures of exaggeration. The problem of idleness would demand something more specific than vivid imagery and juridical classification. Even the most pervasive symbols of vagrancy – the sturdy beggar and vagabond – would become subject to parliamentary debates, disputing whether classic definitions of ‘destitution’ indeed constitute proper objects of regulation. Effective intervention does not attach itself to the most obvious examples of idleness, nor should idleness simply constitute the absence of work. The problem of idleness is now linked to *processes* of destitution. For instance, eighteenth century problematisations of the labouring poor reveal a much wider and more specific domain of circumstances: the poor now exist in relation to work, or their unwillingness to work, in a context of high wages and increasing applications for poor-relief. But more significantly, the poor constitute a linkage with other processes: the management of the family, the mechanism of the alehouse, and the slothfulness of the nation. By the eighteenth century, we find a new knowledge of processes by which the industrious poor are transformed, through their apparent indulgence or laziness, into idleness and beggary. It is not the idle that are converted into beggars, but that the idleness of labourers are now linked to the beggary of families. The relationship between family and parish, between labourer and alehouse, provide a new diagram of moral diagnosis for treating the authority and responsibility of the breadwinner as a problem of virtue and discipline.

In the next section, I examine how eighteenth century problematisations of work and leisure begin to specify a more complex terrain in which practices of the ‘labouring poor’ are converted into idleness and destitution. With the opening up of a more differentiated field of observations, a new preventive technology of ‘police’ regulations begin to identify not so much the idleness of poor, but the very processes of that ‘great chain of misfortune’ that exploited the uncertainties of eighteenth century life.

Regulation of idleness

The problem of idleness confronting the discourse of the poor during the eighteenth century constitutes a ‘double paradox’: idleness not only refers to those who refuse to work, but the sloth ingrained in the customs and habits of the labouring poor. It was this latter concern that gave rise to various strategies for regulating the conversion of the industrious poor into the idle poor. There are several authors who give accounts of the anti-recreational campaigns of the eighteenth century that address the problem of work and leisure as one of irregularity, extravagance and luxury (E. P. Thompson, 1967; Appleby, 1978; George, 1965; Hatcher, 1998). For example, in ‘Time, Work-Discipline and Industrial Capitalism’ (1967) E. P. Thompson details the work patterns of the eighteenth century town and village labourer, marking out the ‘human rhythms’ of the working week which ‘was one of alternate bouts of intense labour and of idleness, wherever men were in control of their own working lives’ (p.73). In the seventeenth century, the irregularity of labour patterns appears as moralists and mercantilists increasingly demand an orderly course of employment. Citing John Houghton in 1681, we are given the resentful account:

When the framework knitters or makers of silk stockings had a great price for their work, they have been observed seldom to work on Mondays and Tuesdays but to spend most of their time at the ale-house or nine-pins... The weavers, 'tis common with them to be drunk on Monday, have their head-ache on Tuesday, and their tools out of order on Wednesday. As for the shoemakers, they'll rather be hanged than not remember St. Crispin on Monday... and it commonly holds as long as they have a penny of money or pennyworth of credit (cited in E. P. Thompson, 1967, p.72).

The frequency of wakes, calendar festivals, and holy days composed a veritable ‘table of idleness’ which formed the fabric of English life: ‘common custom has established so many Holy-days, that few of our manufacturing work-folks... are closely and regularly employed above two-third-parts of their time’ (Rev. J. Clayton, 1755, cited in Furniss, 1957, pp.44-45).

It is difficult to say whether the increasing problematisation of work and leisure was the effect of industrial labour closing around the older customs of the poor, or whether religious (Puritan) intolerance continually exposed the morality of the poor to further condemnation, or whether forms of recreation like drinking and gambling were indeed

peculiar excesses of the eighteenth century. George (1965) observes that 'luxury and extravagance' were common to all classes and not the exclusive vices of the poor, and that customs of drinking and gambling were so widespread that the rhythms of leisure and work passed as the uncertainties of life and trade, reflecting 'that sense of instability, of liability to sudden ruin, which runs through so much eighteenth century literature' (p.265).

Beyond drinking and gambling, systems of apprenticeship were also the means by which the young received a great part of their education in community life. By the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the custom of taking apprentices was observed by some writers as one of the causes of decay of discipline among young people. Apprenticeship was thought to encourage idleness in at least three ways: the growing custom of taking outdoor apprentices, those of whom were generally considered the most unruly, encouraged the relaxation of discipline, whereby outdoor labour afforded more opportunities to evade the master's disciplinary gaze; also, the custom of living under the master's roof, or suffering various forms of mistreatment, exposed especially the poor boy to the dangers of apprenticeship who might otherwise leave their masters to join the ranks of runaway apprentices, vagrants and delinquents; lastly, apprenticeship exposed the impressionable young man to the temptations of the town, acquiring, among other things, an education in luxury and extravagance.

Though the old system of apprenticeship revealed the limitations of unrestrained paternalism, often granting too much license to the unscrupulous master, the generally accepted remedy for unruly apprentices was 'wholesome' discipline. Common expectations of paternal authority held the view that the master was indeed responsible for the proper discipline of apprentices, but as Hanway writes in 1775, was not always willing to exercise this authority:

Do we not know that there is but a small number of masters in these days who can or will keep their apprentices within doors in the evening when their shops are shut. How they go abroad without money, and how they get money is the dark and mysterious part of the story (Hanway, 1755, cited in George, 1965, p.269).

Whether these customs of idleness were a new development, owing to an increasing failure of masters to control their apprentices, is speculative. George argues that the temptations of the alehouse were inherent in the very practices of eighteenth century apprenticeship. Especially in London, the young apprentice had 'an almost unlimited freedom to spend his hours of leisure as he pleased, and the custom was for the elder apprentices at least to spend them, like their masters, at the alehouse or the tavern' (1965, p.276). Though excessive drinking and gambling were shared and customary practices of the master-apprentice relation, at the other extreme, the demands of work induced conditions for producing leisure in the form of drinking.

It is interesting to note the complaints recorded by the Chamberlain's Office – the guardians of the London apprentice – where by the end of the eighteenth century the master seemed to exercise unlimited demands on the time and strength of the apprentice. The punishment for refusing to work beyond the usual time or declining to work the Sunday ranged from ordering the guilty apprentice home, to committing them to a house of correction for short durations. Apprentices sent to Bridewell or the County House of Correction were sure to be ruined said live in 1757, speaking from his own experience in Clerkenwell: 'It is of no other use than to swell the profit of the keeper and to benefit the tap' (p.33)¹⁰³. 'Tap', of course, referred to the sale of beer in prisons, a common practice by which the 'keeper' of the public-house turned over a legitimate and tidy profit.

The alehouse was so embedded among the everyday practices of English social life – upon which the transport system of the entire country depended – that a large number of trades treated the 'public-house' as an employment agency, particularly, in times of irregular work: 'there were houses of call in London for hatters, smiths, carpenters, weavers, boot- and shoe-makers, metal workers, bakers, tailors, plumbers, painters and glaziers, and book binders' (George, 1965, p.285). For instance, in 1732, William Glover, a hat-maker, claims to have kept a public house 'where journeymen often resort to him in order to get work in the hat-making trades, he being one that helps journeymen to work in that business' (cited in George, pp.284-5). Of working tailors we are told that:

¹⁰³ *Reasons offered for the reformation of the House of Correction at Clerkenwell, 1757.*

the house of call runs away with all their earnings and keeps them constantly in debt and want. The house of call is an alehouse where they generally use, the landlord knows where to find them, and masters go there to inquire when they want hands. Custom has established it into a kind of law that the house of call gives them credit for victuals and drink when they are unemployed; this obliges the journeymen on the other hand to spend all the money they earn at this house alone. The landlord when once he has got them into his debt is sure to keep them so, and by that means binds the poor wretch to his house, who slaves only to enrich the publican (R. Campbell, *The London Tradesman*, 1747, pp. 192-3).

By the second half of the eighteenth century, the nefarious effects of the alehouse, public-house and tavern had attracted greater concern from poor law reformers and magistrates. The growing tendency for publicans to act as middlemen *and* employers meant they could withhold payment, or induce their employees to take part of their payment in drink, without fear of impunity. For instance, Colquhoun (1800) cites the case of coal-heavers who, by about 1750, made frequent petitions to Parliament regarding the power of ‘coal undertakers’ to charge the employed with arbitrary fees and wage deductions. Numerous attempts were made to eliminate or frustrate this process: the Act of 1758 and the Act of 1807 both failed to curtail these charges, though the latter resorted to more drastic measures of registration and prohibition. It was not until the Act of 1843 that legislation finally resolved this problem by fixing the undertaker’s rate of deductions¹⁰⁴.

Central to the problem of preventing the labouring poor from ‘tippling in alehouses’ was the custom of paying wages on Saturday night in the alehouse. There were many disquieting accounts of ‘this disastrous system’ which often caught the attention of magistrates who described this method of payment as the reason why London labourers were more ‘idle, profligate, and debauched’ than other places. The early observations of John Fielding in 1761 are perhaps typical of the cause and effect language linking the practices of ‘pay-tables’ with the distress of the family:

tradesmen paying their workmen at public-houses commonly called pay-tables are very injurious, as the men are often kept out of their money till late on Saturday night, out of indulgence to the publican, by which means the mechanic goes home drunk and empty-handed to his family, where distress begets words then blows (Fielding, 1761, cited in George, 1965, p.287).

¹⁰⁴ We might also note the unusual persistence with which the Act of 1807 and 1838 attempted to regulate the trading habits of the coal undertakes by forbidding publicans to act as undertakers, restricting deductions of work implements, and restricting payment of wages through the alehouse. Though the Act of 1807 was largely ineffectual, it constituted a curious piece of legislation that was contrary to the *laissez-faire* principles of competition, indicating the explicit attempts by government to intervene in the apparent inequities of the market and distress of the family.

Various methods of intervention were largely judicial attempts to check the practice of pay-tables. At the Old Bailey, Mr Justice Buller advised in 1785 that he always recommended magistrates to confiscate licenses from those public-houses wherein wages were paid. Similarly, Thomas Gilbert in *Plan for the better Relief and Employment of the Poor* (1781) advocated the abolition of alehouses in the country districts, except for the use of travellers, and the stricter supervision of such establishments in towns. Wilberforce's Proclamation Society took the matter up in 1789 and suggested to the Middlesex Sessions that the justices should require at the next Brewster Sessions that no pay-tables be allowed. It was one of the licensing principles laid down by Colquhoun to grant no licence to any public-house where pay-tables were kept, and as he took a prominent part at Brewster sessions after 1792 in the Tower Hamlets, and after in Westminster, the practice gradually became less adopted.

Both Sir John Fielding and Colquhoun were prominent among those who pointed out the excesses of the public-houses, and both urged that the remedy was the refusal of licenses. Colquhoun in particular recommended a policy of refusing licences, not only to houses that were ill-conducted, but to those which were shown to be superfluous from the frequent failures or removals of their occupants. However, such policies were met with their own resistance, firstly, on economic grounds, which stated that it was unfair to hinder a man from trying to earn a living, and, secondly, on administrative grounds that justices could not be trusted to act impartially. For instance, Smollet voices his resistance to the refusal of licences for places of amusement which followed the Act of 1752:

The suburbs of the metropolis abounded with an incredible number of publick houses continually resounded with the noise of riot and intemperance; they were the haunts of idleness, fraud, and rapine, and the seminaries of drunkenness, debauchery, and extravagance, and every vice incident to human nature; yet the suppression of these receptacles of infamy was an inconvenience which in some cases arose even to a degree of oppression... Many of the justices... were men of profligate lives, needy, mean, ignorant, and rapacious, and often acted from the most scandalous principles of selfish avarice (Smollet, 1790, iii, pp.330-31).

Nevertheless, licensing policy had become stricter by the second half of the eighteenth century; the number of public-houses had decreased despite the growth of population and trade. The Disorderly Houses Act of 1752 (25 Geo. II. C. 36), probably the result of

Henry Fielding's treatise on crime¹⁰⁵ which specified that places of entertainment and music were required to have a justices' licence, reinforced the Act of 1751 against the gin-shop. In keeping with these judicial regulations of idleness, George (1965) observes that one of the most useful activities of Wilberforce's Proclamation Society was its propaganda for using the licensing powers of the justices to combat social evils, namely, the payment of wages in public-houses.

Thus, the increasingly problem of idleness during the eighteenth century revealed a diversity of convivial customs, the decadence of which were not entirely specific to the poorer classes, but common to all those classes in which the uncertainties of life were interwoven. Nonetheless, it is true that the irregularities of trade, the fluctuations of employment, and the temptations of the town generated the most visible distress among the labouring population. The most familiar of these vices – excessive drinking and passion for gambling – were commonly attributed to the effects of slothfulness, the decay of discipline, and the new found extravagance and luxury of the working poor. By the second half of the century, the increasing regulations of magistrates and justices of the peace identified the tavern, the club and the alehouse as links in a 'great chain of misfortune'. It was the ubiquity of the latter that now came to be seen as not only housing the evils of entertainment and prodigious consumption, but also exploiting the uncertainties of trade, employment and apprenticeship. Indeed, 'the consumption of strong drink was connected with every phase of life from apprenticeship to death and burial' (George, 1965, p.294). Anti-recreational campaigns therefore emerged as a strategy for checking the processes by which the excessive and competing number of alehouses, alongside the ingenious acts of inducement and coercion of publicans, transformed industry into destitution. These were not simply attempts to check consumption, as if luxury and extravagance were merely distractions of assiduous labour. Rather, legislation emerged from more complex observations regarding the capacity of

¹⁰⁵ In *An inquiry into the causes of the Late Increase of Robbers, etc.* (1751), Fielding maintains the inseparable link between the idleness and drunkenness of the poor and the late increase of crime: 'But the expense of money, and loss of time, with their certain consequences, are not the only evils which attend the luxury of the vulgar; drunkenness is almost inseparably annexed to the pleasures of such people. A vice by no means to be construed as a spiritual offence alone, since so many temporal mischiefs arise from it: amongst which are very frequently robbery, and murder itself' (p.4).

public-houses to produce both opportunity and ruin, and aggravate the uncertainties of life that brought disaster to so many families.

Perhaps the cruellest and most infamous method of combating idleness was the moral-oeconomic tactic of artificially lowering wages and raising the price of provisions. The war against idleness was waged by a mercantilist theory of labour that claimed poverty was a natural spur to industry. Arguably, current restrictions of welfare eligibility and the progressive devaluation of 'allowances' can be located among these seventeenth and eighteenth century statements on mercantilist labour reform. It is this matter to which I now turn.

Utility of poverty

Alongside these anti-recreational campaigns, there were numerous measures for inculcating and promoting work-discipline. For example, E. P. Thompson documents the proletarianisation of the labouring classes: the division and supervision of labour in workshops and factories, the reduction of activity to quantifiable labour time, the regularisation of work through clocks, fines, bells and timetables, and the general moral preaching directed at the poor, were among the many measures employed to exact discipline from the labouring poor (1967, pp.79-90). But there was another, more pervasive, if not simple, solution to the problem of idleness coined by Furniss (1957) as the 'utility of poverty' or the 'doctrine of low wages'.

The volume and coherence of writings on the benefit of low wages, and the broad uniformity of views which their authors expressed, has led to a belief that in the late seventeenth century a new kind of mercantilist theory of labour was formulated which stressed the 'utility of poverty' by holding that 'the wealth of the country [was] based on the poverty of the majority of its subjects' (Furniss, 1957, pp.117-156). Such doctrines proceeded by a series of seemingly logical steps endorsing the wealth and strength of the nation, whereby workmen would be compelled to be industrious, the costs of production would be suppressed and the resultant cheapness of English commodities would boost both the balance-of-trade and levels of employment. The ideal state, in the words of Sir

William Temple, consisted of a 'great multitude of people crowded into small compass of land, whereby all things necessary to life become dear, and all men who have possessions are induced to parsimony; but those who have none, are forced to industry and labour, or else to want' (1673, p.118). Such beliefs, of course, not only reflected the traditional values and priorities of political and economic elites, but were also derived from the behaviour of the labouring masses, namely, their preference for leisure over work and income (Gregory, 1921; Marshall, 1926; Coats, 1958; Wiles, 1968; Earl, 1976; Hatcher, 1998).

From the complaints of employers, the judgments of justices, petitions to the crown and parliament, and from the great mass of writings by political economists, partisan and polemical lobbyists, there was a broad consensus based upon the observation rather than theory that the higher the wages of the labouring people the less they worked, and that while low wages spurred industry and diligence, high wages bred indolence, disorderliness and indulgence (Furniss, 1957). The following is just a small sample of statements: in 1664 Thomas Mun wrote that: 'As plenty and power doe make a nation vicious and improvident, so penury and want doe make a people wise and industrious' (p.49); in 1669 Thomas Manley noted that English workmen 'work so much fewer days by how much more they exact in their wages' (cited in Furniss, p.120); Roger Coke also observed in 1670 'when Corn and Provisions are cheap, they will not work for less wages than when they were dearer, so as it often happens that one days indifferent labour, shall maintain these persons three or four days after in Idleness' (Part 1, Co. 3, An. 4); Sir Henry Pollexfen pronounced in 1697 that 'the advances of wages hath proved an inducement to idleness; for many are for being idle the oftener because they can get so much in a little time' (p.47); Bernard Mandeville was more frank in 1714: 'Every Body knows that there is a vast number of Journey-men... who, if by Four Days Labour in a Week they can maintain themselves, will hardly be persuaded to work the fifth; and that there are Thousands of labouring Men of all sorts, who will... put themselves to fifty Inconveniencies... to make Holiday' (1924, p.509); and, finally, Arthur Young observed with colourful clarity: 'Everyone but an idiot knows that the lower classes must be kept poor or they will never be industrious' (1771, iv, p.361). It was assumed that the natural

appeal of leisure was linked to a kind of ‘target consumption’ of the poor, which fixed their horizons close to subsistence levels, enough so that the amount of work they were prepared to undertake was capped at the amount of money required to satisfy a basket of basic provisions. Given the bulk of expenditure of the poor comprised of food, and since food prices were more volatile than money wages, the inverse relationship between the price of provisions and the desire for work was repeatedly stressed¹⁰⁶ (Hatcher, 1998).

This uniform field of observations on the universality of the relationship between increasing reward and decreasing effort does not of itself prove that such a relationship existed in practice. Indeed, this proposed continuity is susceptible to a number of disturbances. In his monumental study of mercantilism, Heckscher (1931) argued precisely the opposite view, that higher wages were bound to produce a greater willingness to work since ‘the wage level was not an effect, but a cause of the size of the labour supply’. He found it strange that mercantilism sought this ‘connection in precisely the contrary direction’. For Heckscher, the error of mercantilism¹⁰⁷ stemmed in part from striving to invent a justification for ‘keeping down the mass of the people by poverty in order to make them better beasts of burden for the few’, and in part from a failure to construct their system out of knowledge of the contemporary economic context (1931, pp.165-6). This contradicted the pioneering work of Furniss who drew an entirely

¹⁰⁶ There are further accounts which linked the idleness of the poor to the scarcity of labour during periods of high wages and low cost. For instance, Sir Josiah Child wrote in 1694: ‘In a cheap year they will not work above two days in a week; their humour being such that they will not provide for a hard time: but just work so much and no more, as may maintain them in that mean condition to which they have been accustomed (pp.15-16)’. It was self-evident to those who observed the labour market that ‘this habit of idleness and sloth [was] contracted by plenty’ (John Law, 1701, p.85). Indeed, so ubiquitous were the limited material horizons and love of leisure deemed to be that the proposition could be reversed to read: ‘the poor do not labour upon average above four days in a week unless provisions happen to be very dear’. The analysis was taken a stage further by Sir William Petty when in 1690 he claimed that ‘it is observed by [those] who employ great numbers of poor people, that when Corn is extremely plentiful, that the Labour of the poor is proportionately dear: And scarce to be had at all’ (cited in Hull, 1963, i, p.274).

¹⁰⁷ This opposing view was argued so vigorously that Heckscher (1931) cites what he ironically called the ‘the deep-rooted belief in the utility of luxury and the evil of thrift. Thrift, in fact, was regarded as the cause of unemployment for two reasons: firstly, real income was believed to diminish by the amount of money that did not enter into exchange, and secondly, saving was believed to withdraw money from circulation’ (p.208). Similarly, Petty observed the merits of ‘entertainments, magnificent shews, triumphal arches, etc.’, on the ground that their costs flowed back into the pockets of brewers, bakers, tailors, shoemakers and so forth (1662, cited in Hull, 1963); Barbon observed that ‘Prodigality is a vice that is prejudicial to the Man, but not to trade... Covetousness is a Vice, prejudicial both to Man and Trade’ (1690, pp.18-19); while John Cary also argued that if the nation increased its expenditure, all would obtain larger incomes ‘and might then live more plentifully’ (1695, cited in Heckscher, 1931, p.291).

different conclusion twenty-six years earlier. Given the irresistible continuity of evidence for the utility of poverty, it is not surprising that Furniss would pronounce with almost universal conviction that the fruits of consumption diminished the industry of labour¹⁰⁸.

According to mercantilist labour theory, then, the ‘vicious cycle’ of idleness revealed the scarcity, costliness and inefficiency of labour. Rising wages encouraged immoral and disruptive pastimes that, in addition to drunkenness and debauchery, generated unrestrained independence among the poor. Moreover, excessive wages were likely to be spent on imports which harmed the balance-of-trade, on the purchase of unsuitable luxuries which formed ‘a perpetual restless ambition in each of the inferior ranks to raise themselves to the level of those immediately above them’ (Nathaniel Forster, 1767, p.41). The invention of customs relating to dress and amusement, of injurious practices such as gambling and gratuitous customs of tea-drinking, were largely considered wasteful of time and destructive to industry. Idleness was detrimental to the ‘Industry of Trade’, but only as a feature of population upon which the wealth of the nation depended.

In quite a different sense, idleness seemed also rooted in human nature, and later became attached to the atomistic conceptions of the problem of autonomy and discipline, out of which early liberal conceptions of the state took form. Thomas Mun is exemplary of this former view of paternalistic authority which condemned idleness as vulgar obstacles to the Greatness of Trade: ‘the general leprosie of our Piping, Potting, Feasting, Fashions, and mis-spending of our time in Idleness and Pleasure (contrary to the Law of God, and the use of other Nations) hath made us effeminate in our bodies, weak in our knowledg, poor in our Treasure, declined in our Valour, unfortunate in our Enterprises, and contemned by our Enemies (1664, p.49). In the latter view, classical liberal arguments were formulated by Locke as the moral failure of the poor to restrain their impulses or exercise judgment beyond their immediate circumstances: ‘The growth of the poor must therefore have some other cause, and it can be nothing else but the relaxation

¹⁰⁸ Furniss (1957) therefore concluded that ‘so many and so positive are the statements of this effect of high wages that we are compelled to admit their truth and conclude that the labour supply of England at this time did not increase but decreased as wages rose’ (p.118).

of discipline and corruption of manners; virtue and industry being as constant companions on the one side as vice and idleness are on the other' (Locke, 1697, p.184).

Whether idleness was a taint upon the morality of the poor, or whether it constituted a defect of human nature, the problem of idleness was in any case misleading, since it may take the form of short and infrequent bursts of industry or, given the necessity of procuring provisions, it may assume the form of unremitting labour. The curious link between low wages/high costs therefore related to the problem of establishing these conditions of necessity by artificially raising the price of provisions of the labouring poor and lowering their wages. Thus, we find widespread support during the seventeenth century for mercantilist policies which placed excises upon foodstuffs, schemes for augmenting the numbers of the population and the supply of labour, by stimulating immigration, passing naturalisation laws, and granting allowances for large families (Furniss, 1957).

By the end of the eighteenth century, the mercantilist police of the poor failed to resolve the growing crisis of poor-relief. The war against idleness was largely ineffective while the object of paternalistic regulation relied on juridical categorisations of 'the Poor'. And while the workhouse and the doctrine of low wages emerged as moral-oeconomic solutions, under the discourse of the poor these repressive and disciplinary measures failed to inculcate a life of industry and frugality. Counter-statements of the period suggest that, if anything, these solutions simply multiplied and re-distributed the numbers of the poor. As I will argue in Chapter 6, the 'liberal' solution was not the repressive remoralisation of the poor, but the autonomisation of a domain of personal conduct that was fixed by the natural laws of *poverty*. For now, I want to briefly illustrate the contrast between the discourse of the poor and the kind of statements that were later embodied in the New Poor Law of 1834.

Event of pauperism

These mercantilist policies in which are inscribed the statements that make up the discourse of the poor bring us full circle to the period of reversal described earlier as the

‘event of pauperism’. Here, Dean (1991) cites the instance of Ricardo’s commentary on William Pitt’s ill-fated Poor Bill (1796-7) wherein it was argued by the latter that allowances for large poor families should be made to augment the numbers of the population and thereby increase the supply of labour¹⁰⁹. This Bill was vigorously attacked by Bentham in his polemical ‘Observations on the Poor Bill’ (1797/1838) on the basis that rewarding the poor for their fecundity would only increase the numbers of the poor and aggravate the conditions of their distress. Dean explains the disparity of these two views of poor policy as follows: ‘For Ricardo, a policy based on the assertion that poor-relief should reward the poor for their fecundity appears not only backward and naïve but as dangerous. The political economist of 1818 is separated from the statements of 1796 by a gulf which renders the latter’s ‘sentiments’ almost incomprehensible’ (p.18). But this departure of opinion from the position of the younger William Pitt, which Ricardo was to find so incomprehensible, cannot be viewed as naïve, or pre-scientific dogma, but as I have attempted to demonstrate in this chapter, was the means of assembling a coherent set of statements and arguments by which the multitude of a century-and-a-half of poor policy constructed its object, ‘the Poor’, to increase the wealth of the nation and procure the industry of the poor.

By the end of the eighteenth century we find something of an administrative crisis of poor-relief. The swelling numbers of the poor, the dramatic increase in local poor rates, coupled by numerous agrarian, rural and health crises, created not only a new urgency regarding the proper direction of reform, but now raised the question of ineffective legislation of the poor laws. Arguably, the discourse of poor was itself an obstacle to the kind of reforms that were later embodied by the 1834 Poor Law. It was both the fate and the legacy of the mercantilist police of the poor that made a fundamental contribution to constituting the poor as an object of knowledge; that is, by observing and assessing the mode of life of labourers and poor families in order to fix ‘a regular, industrious course of life’ to national goals (Dean, 1991, p.66). But this early, pre-liberal police rationality

¹⁰⁹ Ricardo cites William Pitt’s Poor bill as follows: ‘Let us’ said he, ‘make relief in cases where there are a number of children a matter of right and honour, instead of a ground of opprobrium and contempt. This will make a large family a blessing, and not a curse; and this will draw a proper line of distinction between those who are able to provide for themselves by their labour, and those who after having enriched their country with a number of children, have a claim upon the assistance for support’ (Ricardo, 1818, Ch. V).

never succeeded in fixing the poor to an independent domain of personal conduct and familial responsibility which was crucial to the formation of a national *labour market*. The invention of the latter would be the innovation of a new economic discourse that formed part of the liberal revolution of government. Furthermore, a mercantilist formula blocked the emergence of arguments that would establish fundamental *scarcity* as an imminent threat to the welfare of populations. By the early nineteenth century, it was no longer tenable to draw on mercantilist principles of augmenting population without also disturbing the precarious balance between population growth and subsistence.

In summary, the discourse of the poor specifies a terrain between the mid-seventeenth and late eighteenth century – spanning the advocacy of public works, the progenitors of the workhouse movement, the problem of profitability and labour, and the relief of large families – upon which statements of the administration and relief of the poor yield an unusual degree of systematicity. The coherence of this discourse is realised by the statement ‘who make up the numbers of the nation’s Poor?’ which were linked to recurrent themes of ‘setting the Poor to work’ and the ‘problem of idleness’, the possible responses to which make up the threefold system of classification of the poor: the ‘industrious’ poor, the ‘idle’ poor and the ‘impotent’ poor.

The problem of idleness remained a regular theme among seventeenth and eighteenth century problematisations of the poor, and later formed an important component of the new discourse of poverty. The regulation of idleness not only followed a moral imperative to labour, but also an economic tactic as we see among the various attempts to induce the rural poor to work through the doctrine of low wages. Among urban examples of idleness, particularly in London, we find a more complex field of observations and processes emerge. Idleness is not specific to the lot of the poor but endemic to all classes, and pertains to a diversity of circumstances that relate to the irregularities of trade, the fluctuations of employment and the temptations of consumption. The ‘epidemic of idleness’ is linked to the management of the family, the convivial customs and habits of the labouring poor, as well as the sloth endemic to a whole nation. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, we find the emergence of more

effective measures of regulation in countering the processes that converted industry, virtue and self-discipline into idleness, vice and destitution. The establishment of a 'preventive' police force – with its ordinances, licensing policies and deterrent measures – would eventually locate the poor within a complex field of circumstances and conditions that separated able-bodied males from wage-labour and familial responsibility.

In the next section, I want to trace the antecedents of more recent problematisations of the poor by tracing mutations among discourses of dependency from the early nineteenth century to the present. Here, I will argue that contemporary problematisations of idleness are now supported by psychological claims about the 'behaviour' and 'lifestyle' of the poor. The close links between new paternalism and psychology demonstrate the emergence of new technologies for the reconstruction and remoralisation of conduct.

Discourse of dependency

The 'problem of idleness' continues to play an important role among contemporary politics of welfare, though now it is refigured in the language of dependency to specify a new pathology of the labour market. If indeed we can refer to a 'discourse' of dependency, then the object is to trace the formation of statements that have come to transpose the problem of idleness as the antithesis of individual autonomy and labour-market activity. The origins of the term 'dependency' are difficult to locate, but during the sixteenth century it came to denote a natural state of servitude and subjection within a paternal and hierarchical order of social relations. Our interest here is to trace some of the processes by which this discourse mutated as a consequence of transformations within socio-legal, economic and political rationalities. For this task, I want to take a brief historical excursion by investigating more recent events in which dependency now specifies a condition of 'postindustrial society', that is, the current economic, political and socio-legal terrain whereby all forms of dependency are viewed as blameworthy and pathological.

A significant effect of the 1834 Poor Law was the juridical distinction between poverty as the state of having to labour to procure subsistence and pauperism or

indigence as ‘the state of him, who, being destitute of property... is at the same time, either unable to labour, or unable, even for labour, to procure the supply of which he happens thus to be in want’ (Bentham, 2001, p.3). With this pronouncement legislation directly adopted Bentham’s distinction between the independent and dependent poor, ‘according as they depend or not for their subsistence upon public contributions. When the *independent* Poor become *dependent*, it can only be on the score of *indigence*, real or supposed’ (Bentham, 2001, p.6). After the poor law report, relief excluded able-bodied males, wives and children since it was deemed natural for children and wives to be dependents of the male wage-labourer, in which case the proscription of relief defined the family as a *natural* sphere of private economic responsibility. Bentham’s principle of ‘less eligibility’ would consign the disreputable single mother and child to the workhouse, and discourage the able-bodied pauper from occupying it. Hence dependency became one of two positions: the natural state of dependants *within* the family, and the unnatural state of a dependant *outside* the family. Unlike contemporary social security that defines a sphere of state responsibility for all ‘single parents’, the poor law drew a line between those who could not be supported by a male breadwinner, and those who should be supported by an able-bodied male (Checkland & Checkland, 1974).

The historical transformation of dependency corresponds to the creation of a sphere of private economic responsibility and natural dependency. Through the juridical apparatus, the liberal state formulated a new field of governance, ‘the worker’ and its antithetical other ‘the pauper’, which reconfigured the age-old relation between independence and dependence: ‘As wage-labour became increasingly normative and increasingly definitive of independence – it was precisely those excluded from wage-labour who appeared to personify dependency’ (Fraser & Gordon, 1994, p.316). For early industrial capitalism, the figure of the pauper not only threatened to undermine the wealth of the nation, but also the ethos of which independence embodied natural, religious and economic virtue. The position of the pauper constituted more than a state of want and misery, but a defective and degraded character. Hence, the discourse of dependency that begins to emerge from the ‘event of pauperism’ is one that now specifies a chain of moral and behavioural characteristics.

Benthamite principles for maximising the greatest happiness of the greatest number would find, by the second half of the nineteenth century, alternative means of expression in the *self-help* movement. Drawing from the pre-psychological tenets of Bentham's utilitarian philosophy, it was Samuel Smiles who instigated a minor revolution in giving much publicity to the Victorian myth of upward social mobility and extolling the virtues of the self-made man. While some read into this project a method of 'seducing' the working class to middle class ideals (Hobsbawm, 1962) or the rejection of materialism and the fear for the loss of individuality (Fielden, 1968). Morris (1981) argues the self-help movement was linked in rather complex ways to the radicalism and utopianism of the petit bourgeoisie in 1840's. This pre-psychological discourse of self-improvement sought to acquire through education, habit and training the kind of moral conduct that engendered 'higher modes of learning' (Smiles, 1868). Self-improvement would also find within the possibilities of book-learning and the idea of 'self culture' a retreat from material difficulties and social pressures and the cultivation of a subject capable of rational political action. This was more than cultivation of good habits, self-respect and self-knowledge, but the expression of a utopianism that was unable to reconcile, whether by patronage or by revolution, the massive class inequality of industrial England¹¹⁰.

In the post-industrial era, psychological and moral attributes of dependency have proliferated to the extent that all forms of dependency are now construed as avoidable and blameworthy. Speaking from the American context, Fraser and Gordon suggest two broad influences on the increasing stigma of dependency. Firstly, a characteristic of post-industrial society is the increasing democratisation of all legal and political forms of dependency: 'Housewives, paupers, natives, and the descendents of slaves are no longer formally excluded from most civil and political rights; neither their subsumption nor their

¹¹⁰ While there is much to be gained from an analysis of the self-help movement in Britain such an analysis falls outside the current remit of the thesis. The genealogical work conducted here seeks to trace the liberal transformation of government known as the 'event of pauperism'. The specific task is to explore the conditions out of which a definite conception of poverty emerged as something distinguishable from pauperism. Admittedly, however, there are aspects of Australian welfare reform that build on the idea of self-help and self-reliance as strategies for the reconstruction of the working classes. I think future genealogical work would benefit from an analysis of how classical liberal discourses were linked to the utopianism of self-improvement.

subjection is viewed as legitimate'. Secondly, the deindustrialisation of advanced capitalist economies has made the ideal of the family wage economically untenable. The mass entry of women in low-wage service work and the loss of higher wages for manufacturing labour has decentred the ideal of the family wage, altering the gender composition of employment: 'the family wage ideal is no longer hegemonic but competes with alternative gender norms, family norms, and economic arrangements. It no longer goes without saying that a woman should rely on a man for economic support, nor that mothers should not also be workers'. Together, these cultural shifts in the political and economic register of post-industrial dependency have effectively erased all forms of 'good' adult-dependency. All dependency is now regarded with suspicion, and measured against the norm of wage-labour. Post-industrial society appears to have eliminated every social, legal and economic basis of dependency, and whatever dependency remains is individualised and feminised (1994, pp.322-3).

By the 1980's, American discourses of dependency encompassed a whole range of social pathologies – chemical, alcohol and drug dependency – all of which extended the discourses of addiction. The pathological implications of drug dependency were quickly transferred to welfare receipt thereby increasing stigmatisation. Rebecca Blank notes there is very little evidence 'that welfare is 'addictive', that is, that women who go on welfare lose all motivation to work' (1997, p.151); nonetheless, the 1996 welfare reform law in the US deployed the 'welfare addiction' thesis, stating as if it were undisputed fact that daughters growing up in families that take welfare are three times as likely to receive welfare themselves as adults. Furthermore, Schram argues that the threat of 'the spread of welfare dependency' across generations, from mother to child, effectively pathologise poverty, 'ignoring the possibility that the poverty suffered by families is very likely the primary reason why there is a correlation of welfare use' (2000, p.85).

Fraser and Gordon note that the rise of psychological dependency in America has particularly targeted the behaviour of women, often diagnosing dependence as a form of immaturity among single mothers who are construed as the archetypal welfare dependent (Bartle, 1998). In a 1954 manual on illegitimate pregnancy, the author describes

unmarried mothers as: 'dependent, irresponsible, and unstable, they respond like small children to the immediate moment' (Young, 1954, p.87). Psychological stereotypes of the American single mother were also racially inflected, white women were characterised as erring on the side of excessive dependence, while black women were usually charged with excessive independence. In the 60's and 70's the discourse of poverty placed black AFDC claimants in the double-bind of being pathologically independent of men while pathologically dependent on welfare. By the 80's, however, these positions shifted: 'The black welfare mother that haunted the white imagination ceased to be the powerful matriarch. Now the pre-eminent stereotype is the unmarried teenage mother caught in the 'welfare trap' and rendered dronelike and passive'. In the 90's, the discourse of dependency seems to absorb all these pathologised, racialised and feminised elements, an example of which we find in Vice President Dan Quayle's comment on the May 1992 Los Angeles riot: 'Our inner cities are filled with children having children... with people who are dependent on drugs and on the narcotic of welfare' (Fraser & Gordon, 1994, pp.325-7).

In the 1980's the increased fear and mass production of psychological dependency is testified in the psychiatric literature. In 1980 the American Psychiatric Association codified 'Dependent Personality Disorder' (DPD) as an official psychopathology. By the 1987 edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Disorders* (DSM-III-R) dependency specified a discrete pathology:

The essential feature of this disorder is a pervasive pattern of dependent and submissive behaviour beginning by early childhood... People with this disorder are unable to make everyday decisions without excessive amount of advice and reassurance from others, and will even allow others to make most of their important decisions... The disorder is apparently common and is diagnosed more frequently in females (*American Psychiatric Association*, 1987, p.353-54).

Since its elevation to the status of an official psychopathology, dependency has become a refined diagnostic technique for problematising subjectivity in terms of 'pathologies of will'. The 'moral hazard' economists speak of – the burden of welfare dependency on the taxpayer – is specifically linked to problematisations of individual subjectivity (Rose, 1999a). In this new configuration of control, psychological knowledge provides a range of highly transferable techniques for reconstructing the capacity of individuals to accept

responsibility for their own actions and choices. The sociolegal, political and economic relations of subordination that once defined dependency have legally vanished under a new regime of individualising and specifying practices of truth; all that remains of any legitimate space for dependency is now confined to a discrete pathological condition.

In the next section, I briefly examine how psychological knowledge is systematically linked to contemporary observations and assessment of the poor. Alongside medicine, psychological knowledge would emerge as a new participant in the politics of conduct.

Psychology of the poor

In the 60's when psychology was still subordinate to medical and psychiatric disciplines, psychological understandings of the poor derived mainly from epidemiological surveys of the population. Those clustered around the lowest socio-economic status (SES) were often attributed with 'psychotic reactions' while individuals of the highest SES were found to respond with 'neurotic reactions'. Under the rubric of 'mental health' a psychology of the poor was deployed as a means of differentiating mental illness from poverty, working on the assumption that poverty and illness were causally related and, to some extent, mutually reinforcing (Shore, 1997). After freeing itself from medicine and psychiatry, psychology would become a new participant in the politics of conduct. The new clinical assemblage of psychology would retain some of its links with behaviourism, but also shed its negative and repressive techniques of conditioning. Instead, psychology would become 'an emancipatory technology for re-establishing the self's control over itself' (Rose, 1999a, p.269). It is not for the psychologist to act indirectly on conduct, but that subjects are to act on themselves in the name of freedom.

In the 1970's, personality studies attempted to link poverty to a cluster of traits, some of which suggested the poor had a shorter time perspective, were anchored to the present, and possessed little desire for achievement (Allen, 1970). Concern for the latter led to numerous techniques such as learned helplessness, self-esteem and self-control, which sought to align the outer world with an 'internal locus of control' (Kane, 1987).

Personality theories would supply a repertoire of tests and diagnostics, ranging from active-passive orientation, alienation, anomie and powerlessness, for differentiating the conduct of the poor. However, the official codification of 'dependent personality' in the 80's marks the emergence of new technologies which seem to operate in terms of the opposition of dependence and passivity with autonomy and activity: 'Here, the social relations of dependency disappear entirely into the personality of the dependent. Overt moralism also disappears in the apparently neutral, scientific, medicalised formulation' (Fraser & Gordon, 1994, p.326).

In a major review of the psychological literature on poverty, Robert Bornstein notes the major focus on cognitive processes in 'the genesis of dependency', replacing psychoanalytic and social learning theories¹¹¹ (Bornstein, 1992). The innovation of more recent and popular strands of cognitive theory is to convince individuals that if they seek to resolve their problems they must be prepared to work on themselves, after all, dependency results from how people think about their experiences. According to Miles Shore, an advocate of Mead's paternalism, 'Seeing oneself as powerless to change or influence events is now believed to be crucial to the development of dependent relationships' (1997, p.316). Therapeutic methods such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) provided a range of techniques for managing irrational conduct, and producing affirmative self-control, all of which are thought to build self-esteem and self-motivation. In other words, the strategy behind these new technologies of activity is to align people's understandings of worldly events with personal power. On this point, Rose observes:

Autonomy is now represented in terms of personal power and the ability to accept responsibility – not to blame others but to recognise your own collusion in that which prevents you from being yourself and, in doing so, to overcome it and achieve responsible autonomy and personal power. High esteem was linked to the power to plan one's life as an orderly enterprise and take responsibility for its course and outcome (Rose, 1999a, p.269).

¹¹¹ Psychoanalytic theories postulated that dependency resulted from a failure of psychological development to progress beyond the stage of infantile dependency on the mother; the dependent's 'fixation' was attributed to experiences of excessive frustration or overgratification in the oral stage of development. Social learning theories argued that in providing biological and psychological gratification to the child, the mother becomes a 'secondary reinforcer' associated with pleasurable experiences. Dependency is therefore construed as a learned phenomenon whose intensity is determined by the nature of the learning context (Shore, 1997, pp.314-5).

Psychological studies explicitly focusing on welfare dependency now apply cognitive understandings of personhood to problematise the 'core motivation' of dependent people (Bornstein, 1992). Thomas Kane reviewed the literature on poverty and motivation to link dependency with themes of internal control and learned helplessness. The assumption is that people who fail to look for work reflect the expectation that the search will not be successful; to feel powerless to control external circumstances diminishes one's capacity to act autonomously. Kane noted that poverty is precipitated by loss of income and the restriction of options and described two phases of response to uncontrollable circumstances: reactance and learned helplessness. The former describes aggressive attempts to regain control and mastery of one's environment based on prior expectations of control, in the latter phase, a conviction of helplessness erodes further attempts to regain control – repeated experiences of loss of control lead to a state of learned helplessness that interferes with the ability to seek and make use of opportunities to exercise control (1987, pp.316-7). A psychology of the poor diagnoses a persistent motivational deficit associated with resignation, dysthymic disorder and depression. Poverty is no longer a general condition of deprivation, but a contemptible behavioural syndrome. Nonetheless, these themes of control and passivity of the poor are not unlike nineteenth century moral formulations that preached the need for discipline and self-responsibility among the lower classes. But psychology now introduces various ethical and tactical interventions for counteracting errant cognitive styles, improving options for the exercise of choice and control, and creating opportunities for successful outcomes of individual actions.

Arguably, contemporary politics of conduct now seek the ethical reconstruction of the poor, which illustrates the close links between paternalism and psychology. After all, Shore claims: 'With paternalism comes a new emphasis on the psychology of welfare recipients: the assumption is that they can respond to a set of expectations accompanied by consequences. This is in contrast to one of the traditional assumptions in social policy that welfare recipients are victims with few options' (1997, p.305). Conservatives like George Gilder (1984) and Lawrence Mead (1986) argue that welfare explicitly causes moral/psychological dependency, which can only be remedied by eliminating welfare as

an 'entitlement' regardless of the behaviour of clients. There were two significant events in the 70's which facilitated the rise of paternalism in the 80's and 90's. First was the discovery from census data and epidemiological surveys of a sector of non-working but non-elderly poor who became a larger part of the remaining poor population. Secondly, the discovery of psychological techniques which purported to have access to the subjective conditions of the 'lifestyle' of the poor. In the 70's, attempts were made to liberalise AFDC to cover working-aged poor more generously, but the lifestyle problems of this new sector raised questions of the deservingness of the poor, and were subsequently quashed by Congress. According to Mead, the originators of paternalism concluded that the lifestyle causes of poverty had to be addressed on their own terms: 'The implication was not necessarily that the poor were responsible for their own problems or that antipoverty programs had failed. It was rather that service and benefit programs alone could not defeat poverty when it was heavily linked to behaviour' (Mead, 1997, p.20).

Paternalism almost certainly rests on a psychological ontology of the poor. Mead, for instance, is critical of Charles Murray's *homo economicus* – the model of rational maximisers who act to advance their own self-interest – as it fails to account for the self-defeating aspects of the poverty lifestyle. Lifestyle, after all, involves a more complex psychology of individual capacities – the ability to exercise self-control, to make sound and rational choices, to demonstrate the kind of personality in which resilience and optimism creates enabling opportunities. Arguably, it is the imperative of activity and an ethic of choice that now underwrite the policies that seek the ethical reconstruction of the poor. The revived discourse of pauperism in the 80's, of which welfare dependency is a more recent cousin, is simply the reactivation of strategies which seek to calculate the deservingness of the poor, and distil the remaining poor population of work-force age and capacity. In the new politics of conduct, psychology offers numerous techniques for screening welfare populations in terms of those that might be selected for early intervention and surveillance, while offering a veritable package of therapeutic tactics and techniques for reintegrating the excluded. But it is now the lifestyle of the poor that marks a new domain for ethical intervention. The poor must be supervised and directed.

rewarded or punished, as a consequence of their actions, and induced in such ways that will elicit the ethical capacities to make the most of their freedom. But a psychology of the poor also creates its own double bind: while it absolves people for their lack of income, and gives insight into the subjective conditions of poverty, it also reinscribes the idea that they are marginal and deficient. These are certainly not new themes: medicalising poverty becomes just another way of suggesting there is a ‘culture of poverty’ at work in keeping ‘the underclass’ down. Rather than political-economic reform, medical surveillance and psychological diagnostics become the key to regulating the poverty of poor populations.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I mainly set out to describe and demonstrate the existence of a relatively stable set of statements that make up the ‘discourse of the poor’ – a terrain of poor administration preceding the revolution of liberal government and the discovery of poverty. This historical excursion is designed partly to remind us what the liberal constitution of poverty displaced, but it also serves to show how governing statements were systematically linked to national goals regarding the wealth and greatness of the nation. In this classical discourse, ‘the Poor’ emerge in relation to a set of practical problems and prescriptive solutions regarding the ‘wise administration’ of the nation, the economic utility of ‘setting the poor to work’, and the moral transformation of the idle. These debates are clearly embedded among mercantilist concerns for converting the idle poor into the industrious poor. The mechanism of the workhouse is emblematic of a whole field of tactical interventions for inducing, as much as compelling, a continuous and regular course of industry. The emergence of themes relating to ‘profitability’ and the ‘regulation of idleness’ were perhaps the first tentative steps in transforming human labour into a commodity. But this mercantilist ‘police of the poor’ was nonetheless exhausted by its own empty, juridical classification of the poor, and had not yet linked the general conditions of poor individuals to a complex field of processes and circumstances that converted the labouring poor into the idle and destitute.

In terms of present-day policies of reform, the discourse of the poor reminds us how, from the mid-seventeenth to the late eighteenth century, the problem of the poor was specifically linked to national prosperity and power. It was not so much that the problem of the poor had reached 'epidemic' proportions but that their growing numbers signified the real poverty of national wealth. And while compassionate and repressive solutions appeared in the form of moral, paternalistic and oeconomic responses, these pre-liberal rationalisations were increasingly linked to notions of wise administration and effective governance. Furthermore, the old edifice of poor administration, though exhausted by its own conceptual limitations, had already laid down the foundations for nineteenth century politics of conduct. The mode of life of the pauper, the labourer and poor families would be investigated at the intersection of morality and economy, eventually transforming the domain of responsibility and economic dependency.

In post-industrial society, this domain of responsibility and economic dependency is not only preserved by neo-liberal rationalities, but consigned to an increasing untenable position. Where wage-labour is opened up to the apparent elasticity of the market it is now difficult to think of any 'good' forms of dependency. Beyond the circuits of wage-labour and the virtues of autonomy, the only dependency that remains is policed by advanced liberal technologies of conduct. It is not surprising, for instance, that with increasing criticisms of state welfare we find the parallel rise of moral/psychological forms of dependency. By the 80's, psychology would provide an ensemble of techniques and diagnostic instruments for transforming dependency into a discrete behavioural syndrome. A 'psychology of the poor' ensures that recipients are no longer 'victims' of state welfare or products of a 'client mentality', but can be linked in various ways to the personal power of individuals. Arguably, welfare reform is underpinned by two control strategies: the imperative of activity and the ethic of choice (Rose, 1999a).

Under the new therapeutic regime of the post welfare state, practices of monitoring and contractual obligation ensure that welfare dependency is partly the burden and responsibility of the recipients themselves. 'Activation policies' seek to reintegrate and manage 'the excluded' through continuous medical surveillance and differentiated

techniques of psychological assessment. The present reactivation of nineteenth century pauperism coincides with new methods of screening and monitoring welfare populations, which tend to reinforce rather than diminish the increasing stigmatisation of receipt. And as the conditions of poverty disappear into the 'treatable' pathology of the dependent, it is the abject, marginal and excluded who are now the principle target of ethical and moral reconstruction.

Having traced out this field of pre-liberal governance, the task of the next chapter is to reconstitute the event of pauperism and examine the kind of moral, economic and theoretical arguments that led to the conceptual elaboration of poverty.

5 Constitution of poverty

The constitution of poverty traces the haphazard development of several themes as they form the point of intersection out of which a definite conception of poverty emerges. Here, the task is to reconstitute Dean's (1991) 'event of pauperism' if only for the purpose of understanding our position in the present more clearly; that is, by considering the present transformation of citizenship, the invention of welfare dependency and the politics of conduct in terms of these early liberal discourses. But this chapter also serves another purpose: to test Polanyi's thesis that debates on pauperism were central to the creation of the self-regulating market. The constitution of poverty is crucial to this event since the discovery of poverty prescribed the conditions of wage-labour as the cornerstone of civil society, and established the means of inculcating self-sufficiency among the habits of the labouring poor. Liberal administration had to first create the conditions of the market by distilling poverty from pauperism, and holding the latter as a figure of universal aberration.

This chapter is both continuous with, and a departure from, Dean's (1991) genealogy of the government of poverty. My purpose is to reconstitute the event of pauperism by seeking out slightly different conceptual routes and historical resources to draw different conclusions about the present politics of Australian welfare reform. Following Polanyi (1957), the emergence of national markets was not a domain that became emancipated from governmental control, but was brutally and efficiently enforced by governing practices that denied the 'right to life' outside the market. For this reason, it is essential to retrace the birth of political rationalities that gave rise to state welfare in order to better understand how present strategies of control are instrumental to creating 'flexible' national labour markets in Australia. The 'event of pauperism' serves as a point of departure for understanding how political rationalities and practices have been called upon to both 'sharpen and naturalise the divisions between the autonomous and the

dependent, the contented and the discontented, the have and have nots' (Rose, 1999a, p.254).

Analysis therefore traces key problematisations and transformations among debates on poor policy between the final decades of the eighteenth century and the Poor Law of 1834. There are four main themes which are discussed: population, economy, poverty and police. These themes are of particular historical interest because they mark a break with patriarchal relations of political governance, with a mercantilist tradition of political economy and, more importantly, with a discourse of the poor. By the final decade of the eighteenth century, we find problematisations of poverty no longer refer to 'the Poor' as a target of paternalistic and repressive regulation, but emerge with all the conceptual specificity that is necessary to a new liberal discourse on poverty. Before undertaking this analysis, I want to discuss a recent 'event' in Australian welfare politics that marks a transformation of welfare and citizenship through the re-deployment of these early liberal discourses. The sudden and increasing emphasis on 'active society' and 'active citizenship' serves as a point of departure for exploring the historical conditions in which welfare is now recast as a conditional contract based on moral improvement. What I call the 'event of conditionality' is a portentous marker for establishing new and forgotten connections between past and present modes of liberal government.

Event of conditionality

In the post-war period welfare states came to represent ideals of social citizenship wherein all members of society were to be assured a minimum standard of well-being and their recognition as equal worth and dignity. This, at least, was the vision held by T. H. Marshall who conceived social citizenship as 'the whole range from right to a modicum of economic welfare and security to the right to share to the full in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilised being according to the standards prevailing in the society' (1983, p.74). Modern entitlements of the welfare state represented a new form of 'social rights' equivalent to civil and political rights. More recently, however, the politics of conduct, which have become so infused in the contemporary logics of welfare rationalities and practices, have transformed conceptions of citizenship (Kerr and

Savelsberg, 1999). Welfare no longer resembles the universal entitlements that once underpinned the sovereign rights of Australian citizens. Instead, welfare is now a supervisory regime that renders citizenship conditional upon activity and participation. I will give just brief survey of the policies that maintained this shift from entitlements to conditionality.

New themes of activity and participation began to emerge in discussions of welfare and social policy in the 1980's. Following the lead of the OECD (1988), it was argued that the income security system should be overhauled to promote active participation rather than passive entitlements. In the mid-80's the Minister of Social Security assembled a major review of the social security system. Of the thirty-one Discussion Papers and six Issues Papers produced, it was Issues Paper No.4, *Income Support for the Unemployed in Australia: Towards a More Active System*, that proposed a radical reorganisation of administration to encourage a return to work, to minimise the erosion of self-esteem and reduce labour-market marginalisation (Cass, 1988). The Australian Social Security Review recommended restructuring unemployment assistance to make the system an active component of a labour market strategy. Income support would have a dual role: supporting active job search by facilitating flexibility of the labour force to changed economic circumstances; and redistributing income to people with reduced labour force capacities and opportunities. Key aspects of the Issues Paper found their way into social security legislation in 1991. The central idea of an 'active system' was carried into the language of reforms replacing the old 'work test' with an 'activity test'. Unemployment benefits were replaced with a differentiated structure of 'allowances' tailored to fit the particular requirements of the unemployed. The central problematisation of these reforms was those 'at risk' of long-term unemployment and welfare dependency and the legislation of 1991 attempted to resolve this by implementing two new programmes: Job Search and Newstart (Dean, 1995; Shaver, 2002).

Another instance of transformation is exemplified by the politics of the contract. In 1994 the Keating Labour Government released *Working Nation*, a White Paper introducing case-management approaches to unemployment, 'reciprocal obligations' and

coordinated access to job-search assistance, training, job-creation schemes and subsidised jobs. During this period, the language of the 'job-seeker' displaced the term 'unemployed', and an active system of income support was held to displace the passive system of benefits that encouraged welfare dependency. There was an expectation that in return for assistance there would be a 'strengthened obligation on unemployed people to accept a reasonable job offer' (Commonwealth of Australia, 1994, p.108). A new 'Job Compact' offered targeted support for the long-term unemployed, but also 'stronger penalties for job-seekers who do not meet their obligations under the Job Compact' (1994, p.117). The contractual obligations that underpinned the Job Compact would have a future. The appearance of case-managers, for instance, paralleled the transformation of the unemployed into 'clients' and 'consumers', and the language of enterprise culture would ensure that poverty was no longer a cornerstone of civil rights conferred by the state, but that the poor would become new components within a quasi-public economy of labour marketisation¹¹².

A year before the 1988 Cass Review, the deputy leader of the Liberal Party submitted a proposal to discuss 'Work for unemployment benefits' as a matter of public importance before the House of Representatives (House Hansard, 1 April 1987). In the following year, John Howard (then Leader of the Opposition) released a statement to the media titled *Working for Australia: An Active Approach to Unemployment*, promising to establish a 'Community Service Scheme' if they assumed government. In Howard's words, the scheme was to 'provide a real and genuine benefit to the unemployed through work experience and training; satisfy general community desire to see the unemployed have the benefits of active work; reduce abuses in the payment of unemployed benefits and encourage the voluntarily unemployed to secure genuine employment' (Media Release No.L109/88). This vision would have to wait nine years before implementation. After the Howard Coalition government won office in 1996, the Social Security

¹¹² The Howard Coalition government retained the language of the jobseeker, but in the name of 'enterprise', abolished the Commonwealth Employment Service (CES) and established a new statutory authority for those seeking access to public benefits and services (Commonwealth Service Deliver Agency, CSDA). Many of the functions of the old CES were managed by the 'public employment placement enterprise' (PEPE), a corporatised model that functioned according to the 'competitive neutrality' of a market in employment placement services. The plan announced the decrease of public expenditure, and the finding of 'employment placement enterprises' (Dean, 1998, pp.89-91).

Legislation Amendment (‘work-for-the-dole’) Bill was introduced into the House of Representatives in March, 1997. The bill proposed to establish ‘pilot’ projects where younger unemployed people were required to work on ‘community projects’ at award rates of pay up to the value of unemployment. In his address to parliament, Howard argued ‘it is not unfair in modern Australia to ask people, if they are able to do so, to undertake some work in return for the dole that they receive’ (Howard, 1997, p.466). By 1998, the Howard government pursued similar reform strategies, introducing ‘mutual obligation principles’ for the expansion of the existing work-for-the-dole scheme.

The new imperative of activity identifies citizenship less with membership of a social community than with participation in wage-labour. But participation also specifies a permanent mode of ethical conduct which is expected to contribute to community in the form of paid or unpaid work. Under this new formula of governance, citizenship is conceived as ‘work’ in the form of any socially useful participation, whether voluntary or vocational. Both Senator Newman and the deliberations of the Reference Group make it clear that dependence on benefits without some form of agreed participation is no longer an option for the majority of working age claimants. New measures, we are told, will ensure that ‘support does not go unconditionally for long periods to people with the capacity to contribute to their own support and to the community’ (Newman, 1999a, p.6). When the McClure Report was first released in July 2000 it received wide support by all major political parties, business communities, the media, and numerous welfare organisations. Reactions from peak community representative groups – ACOSS, Brotherhood of St Laurence, Socialist Alliance, and members of the academic community – raised numerous concerns about the punitive and coercive implications of the Report. However, an editorial in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on August 17th, 2000 encapsulated the dramatic shift that had taken place in Australian welfare policy: after praising the McClure Report as ‘sane and humane in principle’, the author commented that its great contribution was to shift the focus of the welfare ‘debate’ and centre the ‘discussion on responsibilities rather than rights’. Like nineteenth century social welfare, assistance was not a right but a conditional contract based on moral improvement.

So, given the shift from entitlement to participation, from the passive citizen with rights to the active citizen who must continually demonstrate capacity to qualify for rights, how are we to diagnose this event? We could turn to economic globalisation, the rise of neo-liberal governance, or the recent transformation of state welfarism. All these possibilities are no doubt useful if somewhat partial forms of diagnosis. The case I want to make here is that the invention of poverty was integral to ascribing civil status to the nineteenth century 'independent labourer'. In order to grasp current modes of liberal government it is necessary to revisit the birth of political rationalities and practices that gave shape to nineteenth century liberal administration. After all, it was the discovery of poverty as a natural condition for the production of wealth that transformed the propertyless, able-bodied poor into a national labour-market. But first it is necessary to contextualise the crisis from which a concept of poverty would emerge. In the next section, I trace three key problematisations which characterise the paralysis of eighteenth century poor policy.

Climate of problematisation

The 1790's marks a period of military conflict, agrarian scarcity, massive inflation of grain prices and almost universal criticism of the Elizabethan edifice of the poor law. But it was also a period of immense intellectual productivity, and numerous experiments combining relief with moral reform. This climate of problematisation which marks the birth of poverty is a curious and complex admixture of crisis and creativity¹¹³. But there were other events which sharpened the focus on poor-relief. The French Revolution dramatically illustrated the potential of the peasantry to rise against autocratic authority. This prompted Edmund Burke to denounce 'abstract rights', and remind the English peasantry that their lot was one of obedience and unremitting toil. Recurrent agrarian scarcity also placed further burdens on poor-relief; the final decade was one of repeated rural distress, famine and intermittent revolt among the peasantry. Lastly, the collapse of the mercantilist police of the poor meant that local and parochial authorities were unable to form an adequate response to these new challenges.

¹¹³ Following Poynter's observation on the 'years of scarcity', Dean claims 'the last decade of the eighteenth century was a peculiar combination of an outpouring of literature on poverty on the one hand, and legislative inaction and absence of reform on the other' (1991, p.138).

If we had to cut through the immense complexity of this period, there were, upon closer examination, three key problematisations characterising the administrative paralysis of the second half of the eighteenth century. Firstly, there were the increased popular and political reactions against the workhouse. Seventeenth century arguments that saw in the workhouse an institution of patriarchal discipline capable of instructing an industrious mode of life, and a system that incorporated the suppression of vagrancy with the sanguine goal of profitable employment, was, by the end of the eighteenth century, a symbol of disapprobation and degeneracy. Jonas Hanway (1776) criticised the workhouse as the source of physical and moral disease which, like the old hospital structures, were prone to high rates of mortality and epidemic visitation. Webb and Webb also account for the increasing financial and moral burden of workhouses; they were invariably unprofitable, and steadily became ‘places of horrible demoralisation and disorder’¹¹⁴ (Webb and Webb, 1963, p.142). By the 1780’s, the workhouse is effectively abandoned as an instrument for the able-bodied poor after the persistent attempts and somewhat partial success of the poor-law reformer, Thomas Gilbert. Gilbert’s objections seemed more driven by a humanitarian than an economic impulse. He vigorously argued that all institutional treatment should be restricted to the impotent (Poynter, 1969). The Gilbert’s Act of 1782 succeeded in augmenting ‘powers to parishes to combine for the provision of institutions for the maintenance of all classes of the destitute except the able-bodied [and] to find employment for the able-bodied at wages, or else to give them relief in their own homes’ (Webb and Webb, 1963, p.151)¹¹⁵.

¹¹⁴ Citing Webb and Webb further, one critic of 1813 observed: ‘In whatever light these institutions are viewed... there is scarcely anything to be perceived but degeneracy and ultimate disappointment. Persons of judgment and deliberate reflection, who once thought favourably of them, now produce reasons for apostasy... both in point of expense, and the morals or the poor youth brought up there; as well as the unnatural state the old and infirm are confined to, among strangers who cannot be supposed capable of much sympathy. Experience also teaches us that the children brought up in such places, when grown up are fit only for a manufactory... not for outdoor employments, except, indeed, the men become soldiers (such as they be) and the females... often have recourse to prostitution’ (1963, pp.142-3).

¹¹⁵ Even Webb and Webb convey a sense of panic out of which the Gilbert Act emerged: ‘Such a policy of virtually obligatory Outdoor Relief to the able-bodied labourers and their families, in addition to that customary for the sick and aged, developed, in the “double panic of famine and rebellion” that marked the closing years of the eighteenth century, into a regular system of relief in aid of wages’ (1963, p.151).

Secondly, Poynter observes the emergence of various 'contributory alternatives' in the form of insurance and annuity schemes, contributions to friendly societies, and the provision of safe places of deposit for savings, which begin to operate as alternatives to the poor law (1969, pp.35-44). While annuity schemes seem to derive from the common perception of the 'idleness and extravagance' of the poor, the establishment of friendly societies emerge as a genuinely popular form of self-help. Despite attempts to produce plans for poor law reform based on the principles of friendly societies, ensuing debates like those proposed by Howlett disputed the assumption that 'the present earnings of the Poor, if properly managed are perfectly adequate for their comfortable management' (cited in Poynter, p.38). The outcome of these debates was not a reform of the poor laws as such, but a somewhat cautious Friendly Societies Act of 1793 which merely encouraged clubs to offer privileges to its members in return for registration. There was a sharp increase in registrations among friendly societies which numbered 5,400 by 1801. even the great commentator of the poor, F. M. Eden believed 'one great and fundamental truth, that, with few exceptions, the people, under all circumstances, are, with good management, perfectly competent to provide for their own maintenance' (cited in Poynter, 1969, pp.38). Champions of the contributory schemes also formed the beginnings of the abolitionist movement which carried the attack against existing methods of poor-relief. The most vocal of these were Rev. Thomas Alcock in 1752, and Rev. Joseph Townsend in 1786: their principle argument was the Poor Law caused the very indigence it was intended to relieve. Nonetheless, the principle of the 'contributory alternatives' put the legitimacy of relief to the sick and aged on the agenda for the first time.

Lastly, and most importantly, the emergence of philanthropy in the eighteenth century had steadily amassed its own independent organisation – charity schools, hospitals, almshouses, and benevolent societies – which come to represent an alternative system of *moral* relations to that of the poor law. Between the arguments posed by Alcock and Eden, we discover a foundational morality as the basis for arguments concerning the

‘rights of the poor’. Citing the Bishop of Cloyne, Dr. Woodward, Eden exemplifies the kind of claims that insist the right to relief is a corollary to the rights of property¹¹⁶:

If the poor man’s rich neighbours are not bound, in justice, to provide for him a competent maintenance, he demands, “by what right did they take upon them to enact certain laws... which compelled that man to become a member for their society; which precluded him from any share in the land where he was born, any use of it’s spontaneous fruits, or any dominion over the beasts of the field, on pain of stripes, imprisonment, or death? How can they justify their exclusive property in the *common heritage* of mankind, unless they consent, in return, to provide for the subsistence of the Poor, who were excluded from those common rights by the laws of the Rich, to which they were never parties? (Eden, 1797, p.414).

A system of relief which attracts the idle prodigal man, but acts ‘with stoical indifference’ to suppress our ‘instinct of compassion’ for no other purpose than to discourage idleness is a ‘political evil’ (cited in Eden, p.415). Eden, however, is more circumspect in his own position: although a foundational moral justice must exercise relief for the poor to correct the inherent inequities of civil society, legal provision for the poor is nonetheless based on the ‘mistaken principle’ that relief should be exercised as an unconditional right. For Eden, the maladministration of legal provision undermines the natural ties of civil society:

But a legal provision for the Poor, on the contrary, (it seems to me,) checks that emulative spirit of exertion, which the want of necessaries, or the no less powerful demand for the superfluities, of life, gives birth to: for it assures a man, that, whether he may have been indolent, improvident, prodigal, or vicious, he shall never suffer want: it weakens the strongest tie of civil society; the desire of acquiring property; for it declares, that, whether a man is industrious or idle, his most pressing difficulties, the necessity of food, lodging, and cloathing, shall be provided for (Eden, 1797, p.448).

Here, we glean the kind of argument that will become more familiar in the nineteenth century: the legal provision of poor-relief simply encouraged idleness and debauchery. But this is not to suggest that a moral philosophy underpinned the poor laws, rather, the essential moral relation between rich and poor, the right of subsistence, was invoked as a critique of the poor laws (Dean, 1991). After all, a compulsory poor rate would, as Alcock believed, degrade the natural moral bond of ‘social affection’ and ‘harden the hearts’ of the rich, and the poor, who believe they have a right to relief, ‘will labour less and spend more: the very law that provides for the Poor, makes Poor’ (cited in Poynter,

¹¹⁶ The kind of arguments that hold a justification of the poor laws in terms of a moral philosophy are exemplified by such authors as Bishop Woodward in 1767, William Paley in 1786, T. Ruggles in 1793 and Sherer in 1797 who maintain the right of relief is both a Christian duty and a corollary of the right of property (Poynter, 1969, pp.33-44; Dean, 1991, pp.117-9).

separated from the whole stories, in order to group a range of symptoms together and clarify them for the reader. Most of these descriptions were not embedded in narratives, but developed from questioning. Several symptoms were described more eloquently in the questionnaire ("hot marshmallow") than in interviews and are therefore included below (Table 9.1).

Table 9.1 Symptom descriptions

Weakness and falling

Wendy: The turning point with the can't do things as when I couldn't get up off the floor, indoors the resolution to that is I have one of those alarm buttons. That's about 1990, probably. But that also means if I fall outdoors I'm completely dependent on someone picking me up. And that took some thinking through, because I can't put myself in a position where there are no people around.

Muscle fatigue

Helen: You know, so I was finding I was getting more tired, I was finding gradients more difficult, you know if I was walking uphill, that was more difficult.

Sarah (questionnaire): It feels like being in slow motion -- I collide with walls as direction is lost. After a couple of days mild gardening, fatigue can last for days, as ankles and wrists feel like hot marshmallow, fasciculations increase. Brain fog more disturbing, cannot even think *how* to move at times. Once fell in supermarket, could not think how to get up again.

Michael (diary): Chronic fatigue develops in both legs after walking a few yards on my own and I am finding it increasingly difficult to maintain my balance unless the surface is completely level.

Michael: If I was tired and if I had got to a stage where fatigue was really creeping in, you do not need much of an uneven or an imbalance to your putting the weight down on that leg for you to completely give way altogether. You had to really concentrate on how you were going to apply that foot to the ground and how you were going to coordinate the next move with the body or the gait of the leg.

Interconnections of general, mental and muscle fatigue

Jennie (questionnaire): Any physical or mental activity starts it (fatigue) off... My brain 'turns off'. It's as if something is not connecting.

Sarah (questionnaire): I find it difficult to differentiate between general and muscle fatigue.

Alex (questionnaire): Fatigue is like hitting the wall mentally and physically.

liberal poor policy' (1991, p.68). The innovative role played out among the policy implications of Malthus' *Essay* was that of prescribing a moral sphere of conduct and responsibility which neatly coincided with liberal principles of limited government. The problem of the poor was now located within the behaviours and moral education of the poorer classes; only 'moral restraint' ensured a level of subsistence through the edification and independence of the male breadwinner and his family.

In the *Essay*, Malthus signals a definite break with earlier conceptions of population. The concept of population had long been the invention of a police science found among German speaking countries in the seventeenth century. But an idea of population does not emerge in relation to arguments of 'subsistence' until a century later where it was taken up by utopian writers such as Condorcet, Montesquieu, Godwin and Wallace who believed that population size was the principle factor determining the wealth and greatness of a nation. These optimistic accounts were mainly the product of mercantilist views about human progress and perfectibility, wherein the relation between population and subsistence was conceived as an unstable, but self-adjusting, equilibrium. If there were any limits on population growth they would be established automatically by the normal functioning of the perfected human society.

The first writer to offer an extensive critique of the poor laws using the concept of population was not Malthus, but Joseph Townsend (1787), who gives a pessimistic account of the relation between population and subsistence. In fact, it was Townsend who popularised the notion of population in his criticism of the poor laws by invoking a mercantilist account of the utility of poverty, though not so much in terms of lowering wages but abolishing a poor rate that removed the spur of industry and increased the numbers of idle poor. Townsend's innovation was introducing into political discourse the idea of a natural, biological model for the regulation of population. This is the point made by Polanyi who claims that: 'By approaching human existence from the animal side, Townsend by-passed the supposedly unavoidable question as to the foundation of government and in doing so introduced a new concept of law into human affairs, that of the laws of Nature' (1957, p.114). The discovery of biological laws meant that 'the

biological nature of man appeared as the given foundation of a society that was not of a political order' (Polanyi, 1957, p.115). In terms of poor policy, poverty and indigence was effectively removed from the responsibilities of the state; poverty was a natural, ungovernable phenomenon created by hunger and want. For Townsend, it is the ratio between population and food supply that regulates the level of subsistence, and it is the necessary balance of such a ratio that is disturbed by the artificial subsistence of the poor: 'poverty and wretchedness have increased in exact proportion to the efforts which have been made for the comfortable subsistence of the poor; and that wherever most is expanded for their support, there objects of distress are most abundant' (Townsend, 1971, p.20).

In line with mercantilist beliefs that hunger and want increased industry, Townsend argues that it is the lot of the poor that hunger should compel them to labour. Hunger, after all, is not only 'a peaceable, silent, unremitted pressure, but, as the most natural motive to industry and labour, it calls forth the most powerful exertions' (p.24). The error of the poor laws is to remove this natural spur for hunger and destroy the natural motive to 'labour and industry'. And yet the mechanism of hunger is more absolute and more efficient than that of 'legal constraints' which is accompanied by 'too much trouble, violence and noise'. The imperative to relieve the poor contradicts the objective of setting them to work if it means circumventing the natural law of want. Townsend summarises the problem of provision for the poor as thus:

Now a fixed, a certain, and a constant provision for the poor weakens this spring: it increases their improvidence, but does not promote their cheerful compliance with those demands, which the community is obliged to make on the most indigent of its members: it tends to destroy the harmony and beauty, the symmetry and order of that system, which God and nature have established in the world. The improvident among the poor have been advancing in their claims: they now begin to understand that they have a legal right to all (1971, p.36).

That the provision of the poor is an artificial disruption of the harmony and symmetry of natural order is a major advance on arguments derived from a foundational morality, a humanitarian impulse or a mercantilist doctrine of low wages. The policy implications of Townsend's argument are both decisive and damning. The poor laws artificially increase the numbers of the poor without regard for a proportionate increase in the supply of food. Nature has a tendency to strike a balance between food and numbers, but unnatural

intervention only exacerbates the distress of the poor: 'by establishing a permanent community of goods, and neither increasing the quantity of food, nor limiting the number of those who are to share it, they divert the occasional surplus of national wealth from the industrious to the lazy, they increase the number of unprofitable citizens, and sow the seeds of misery for the whole community; increasing the general distress, and causing more to die for want, than if poverty had been left to find its proper channel' (1971, p.40).

Where Townsend introduces the possibility of bringing statements about population and subsistence together in the form of a critique of poor-relief, Malthus would radicalise this schema by inaugurating a fundamental *disequilibrium* at the heart of the natural order. To put it simply, the Malthusian thesis claimed that the natural rate of increase of population was much greater than the highest conceivable rate of increase in subsistence. His arithmetic and geometric ratios of subsistence and population introduced a principle of scarcity that would not only overturn the utopian dreams of Condorcet, Godwin and the philosophies of perfectibility, but also uphold the abolition of the poor law. There are three parts of the Malthusian thesis. Firstly, population is considered to have the *capacity* to increase in geometrical ratio while subsistence is said to *actually* increase in no more than arithmetical ratio (Malthus, 1798, p.14). The effect of the difference between the two rates of increase establishes a *tendency* for population to outstrip the means of subsistence which is necessary for its support. Secondly, given that such a tendency is constrained by practical circumstances, Malthus argues that some manner of *checks* exist which limit the increase in population approximately to the level of subsistence. Thirdly, having established this tendency and the existence of such checks, the final part of his thesis is an inquiry into the nature of the checks that ought to be practiced by mankind to avoid a situation of scarcity and misery.

Now, Malthus proposes two kind of checks, preventive and positive, which I discussed briefly in Chapter 2. Positive checks are common to all ranks of society; however, it is the preventive kind that is said to operate mainly among the poor. In the later editions of the *Essay*, Malthus would add a third check which he describes as 'moral restraint'. This is not a new check but an elaboration of the preventive kind, in which case

misery and scarcity is remedied by the deferral of marriage. Though Malthus never clearly specifies which sex this applies to, Dean (1991) argues that the practice of moral restraint seems to implicitly focus on the actions of men¹¹⁷. Though men of all ranks are included within this schema – men of liberal education, the sons of tradesmen and farmers, the labourer earning eighteen pence a day, and the servants living in gentlemen's families – as we might expect the calculative restraint to marriage assumes much greater urgency among the lower classes (1872, p.63-69). For instance, at the very lowest rank:

The labourer who earns eighteen pence a day, and lives with some degree of comfort as a single man, will hesitate a little before he divides that pittance among four or five, which seems to be but just sufficient for one. Harder fare and harder labour he would submit to for the sake of living with the woman that he loves but he must feel conscious, if he thinks at all, should he have a large family, and any ill luck whatever, no degree of frugality, no possible exertion of his manual strength, could preserve him from the heart-rending sensation of seeing his children starve, or of forfeiting his independence, and being obliged to the parish for their support (Malthus, 1798, p.67).

Malthus persistently underscores marriage as the institutional embodiment of an obligation of the man to support his family. Moral restraint becomes the only acceptable alternative for the male who suspects he is unable to fulfil this obligation. For women, the prospect of rearing a child outside of wedlock receives the fullest condemnation of the society she has needlessly burdened.

The policy implications of Malthus' thesis form a direct attack on the habits of the poor. In the first edition of the *Essay*, he asserted that existing measures of relief remove the 'spirit of independence', but according to his own thesis on the relation between population and subsistence, 'no human ingenuity' could remove the distress of the lower classes, only positive checks and moral restraints could reverse the present crisis of the poor laws. Poynter observed three 'palliative' measures within Malthusian reform: firstly, the total abolition of all the present parish laws¹¹⁸; secondly, agriculture should be

¹¹⁷ The fact that moral restraint is mainly the prerogative of men is clearly illustrated in the following passage: 'If he cannot support his children, they must starve; and if he marry in the face of a fair probability that he shall not be able to support his children he is guilty of all the evils which he brings upon himself, his wife and offspring. It is clearly his interest, and will tend greatly to promote his happiness, to defer marriage, til by industry and economy he is in a capacity to support the children he may reasonably expect from his marriage' (Malthus, 1872, p.404).

¹¹⁸ As an adjunct to parish law, Malthus argued that the repeal of the settlement laws would also be of particular benefit to the poor, allowing them to obtain higher wages in a free labour market (Poynter, 1969, p.156).

encouraged 'above manufactures' to increase the means of subsistence; and finally, the establishment of county workhouses 'for cases of extreme distress', supported by a national rate (1969, pp.155-6). Poynter makes the valid claim that despite his attack on the poor laws, 'Malthus did not in 1798 urge the abolition of the Poor law altogether, but the establishment of a new national workhouse scheme' (Poynter, 1969, p.156). By the second edition, he takes a more direct and draconian position in relation to the poor laws. In 1803, after reading Defoe's lucid criticism of the workhouse scheme in Eden's history of the poor, Malthus discovers 'the absurdity of supposing that it is in the power of a government to find employment for all its subjects, however fast they may increase' (1803, pp.417-8). Upon abandoning the workhouse scheme, Malthus puts forward his famous plan for the gradual abolition of the Poor Law. However, there emerges a new object in his renewed attack: now pauperism constituted the 'rapidly progressive canker' of society. In short, the poor laws seem to deprive the poor of the moral responsibility to improve their own conditions.

The mode of government prescribed by Malthusianism is one that overturns the indulgence of a paternalistic state that is unwilling to dispense with legal provision of the poor. At the heart of this thesis is not an economic or demographic imperative, but the removal of institutional barriers that interfere with the laws of nature. If the state is to have a role at all it is to ensure that patriarchy continues to preserve relations of subordination within the family as a self-contained unit of virtue and self-reliance. State intervention would play a pedagogic role of moral and rational instruction, something approximating a national system of education. In keeping with the laws of nature, then, the state would emulate the lessons of nature wherein prudence, foresight and industry established their own reward through the happiness and subsistence it provided, and the mechanisms of hunger, misery and vice would form an external limit that regulated the conduct of the poor. The innovation of Malthusian intervention is the replication of nature through the embodiment of a rationality that prescribes a specific form of conduct for the propertyless male, and his dependent wife and children¹¹⁹.

¹¹⁹ Dean is succinct in stating the effect the principle of population would have on the old Tudor system of police: 'The government of poverty is no longer about creating a good police through strengthening patriarchal relations of authority and subordination within the nation's household. It is about removing the

So, what were the effects of the Malthusian discourse? We know the Malthusian doctrine took the form of prescription that sought to abolish the poor law on the basis that it robbed the poor of their 'spirit of independence', encouraged improvident conduct, possessed no educative means of promoting self-restraint and self-reliance, and increased the numbers of the poor to the point of threatening the balance between subsistence and population. But if we were to imagine a poor law which, falling short of its own elimination, and yet preserving the Malthusian thesis of possibilities, what would this edifice of reform look like? Arguably, the *1834 Report from the Commissions for the Inquiry into the Poor Laws* and its juridical realisation, the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834, were consistent with Malthusian principles in that they eliminated forms of relief that encouraged dependence upon the state, and by forcing a life of independence on poor, able-bodied males.

In *From Pauperism to Poverty* (1981), Karel Williams documents the transformation of nineteenth century relief practice. His analysis of official statistics suggests post-1834 relief policy is rendered intelligible in terms of a Malthusian strategy of abolitionism and forced independence. The abolition of relief of both the able-bodied male and his dependents removed the barriers to the natural domain of a man's economic responsibility for his wife and children. The official strategy of post-1834 relief embodied the twin objectives of excluding able-bodied men from relief, while maintaining those who were otherwise their natural dependents, mother and children, within the deterrent functions of the workhouse. These objectives are supported by Williams's analysis of the scant statistics on relief before and after the 1834 reform which shows that 'in the last thirty years of the old poor law before 1834, able-bodied men were consistently included among the classed obtaining relief... under the new poor law after 1834, a line of exclusion was drawn so that from the 1840's onwards able-bodied men did not receive relief in significant numbers' (Williams, 1981, p.51).

institutional barriers to the natural laws which teach propertyless men the obligations attendant upon their own private exercise of patriarchal authority... The Malthusian prescription for the poor is about allowing those laws of nature to operate which bind the poor man to the yoke of wage-labour and the poor woman to the yoke of conjugal dependence' (1991, p.85).

Even parliamentary debates were structured by Malthusian statements about the artificial dependency produced by the poor laws. By absolving people of the responsibility for providing for themselves, the poor laws reduced people's incentives for self-reliance and weakened the spur to 'sobriety and industry'. This was the view of Lord Henry Brougham who proclaimed in Parliament that as a result of the poor laws 'all independent feelings, were at an end: and consequences most pernicious speedily followed to the community as well as the poor themselves' (Hansard 1834, 25, p.216). He upheld the conviction that 'able-bodied men prefer a small sum in idleness to a large sum in wages, attended with the condition of earning those wages by labour'; recipients of parish relief 'were generally better off, and in many instances, much better off, than the independent labourer' (Hansard 1834, 25, p.226). But apart from diminishing the 'spirit of independence' that was so essential to the self-regulating market, we also find the Malthusian concern for the preservation and autonomy of the family. The classical economist Nassau Senior would overturn the logic of relief that seemed so prudent to William Pitt some forty years earlier by stating that the poor laws resulted in 'an encouragement to bastardy by dispensing relief to the mothers of illegitimate children' (Bowley, 1949, p.298). Joseph Hume offered the following assessment of the connection between the poor laws and unwed motherhood:

under the present system of Poor-laws, some women drove a regular trade in illegitimacy. If a woman got one bastard, it was well; she got an allowance for the support of the child, and she went on to increase her family and her means; and by the time she had furnished the parish with a half-a-dozen children, she had made quite a little fortune for herself (Hansard, 1834, 22, p.893).

Malthusian ideas were linked to the general breakdown of family relations among the poor. The poor laws, argued Brougham, had violated 'the first and most sacred law of nature', the principal of self-reliance (Hansard 1834, 25, p.229). The autonomisation of the family unit which centred on the wage-labour of the able-bodied male was almost certainly the strategy of a Malthusian logic – the creation of a natural sphere of economic responsibility that was independent of state responsibility.

In sum, the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 marks a transformation of relief by imposing a new line of exclusion: the able-bodied male is systematically excluded from outdoor relief along with his dependent wife and children. This had the effect of transforming the relations between patriarchy and the marriage contract. Malthusianism sought to construct the adult male as breadwinners within a new economy of moral restraint, economic responsibility and familial autonomy. The central presupposition was an ethical ideal in which a national labour market would come to emulate the laws of nature, leaving only the most wretched and dissolute, and those without the economic support of an able-bodied male, as the sole objects of assistance. The 'New Poor Law' of 1834 made independent labour a means of salvation and moral self-improvement. This also established the conditions for the creation of a national labour market based on principles of self-regulation. As Polanyi demonstrated over a century later, the creation of this economic sphere of conduct found within the Malthusian idea of 'moral restraint' both the solution and the conditions for denying the 'right to life' outside the market, since it was through the threat of starvation that labour could be induced to offer its services in the market (Polanyi, 1957, p.164).

Economy

In this section, the task is to establish the conceptual links between Malthus' principle of population and the emergence of a new economic discourse. These two events will become inevitably related but prior to the event of pauperism they are held apart by the discourse of the poor. Under the mercantilist formula of wise administration, political oeconomy constitutes the problem of the poor by linking statements on the wealth, greatness and populousness of the nation with the practical problems of governing the numbers of the poor. The eighteenth century problem of 'the Poor' is still tied to a system of juridical classification, a category differentiated according to moral capacity, deservingness, persistent idleness and degrees of abjection. But as an exaggerated category, poverty can only perform a limited discursive function insofar as it is capable of only speaking about the poverty of a nation, a city, or even the common attributes of the poor themselves. Within the discourse of political oeconomy it is not yet possible to make

poverty a concept or theorise it in such a way that might assemble strategies for overcoming or eradicating the conditions that produce poverty.

Though Smith's *Wealth of Nations* is, in some respects, continuous with eighteenth century discourses of the poor, he offers a distinctive perspective on the *labouring* poor. Nowhere do we encounter within political oeconomy the possibility of autonomising the domain of exchange, where master and workingman meet as rough equals, than in the market of self-interested individuals. Political oeconomy differed from this perspective inasmuch as it pertained to an *art* or a technique practiced by the head of the state or the head of the family¹²⁰. But essentially it was not a discourse about the autonomous reality of 'the economy' but the art of wise administration of the things and subjects within a state (Tribe, 1978). Political oeconomy is the discourse of the statesman and the patriarch who confer knowledge upon the minutiae of elements that compose the proper functioning and management of the household, and the augmentation of the wealth of the nation.

In Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, we do not find an economic discourse in the modern sense, but a kind of 'moral economy' between labourers and employers. The sphere of exchange coordinates the self-interested activities of sympathetic individuals; the wealth of nations presupposes a state of calculated happiness, elementary liberty and natural justice among individuals. The self-interested calculations of individuals made in the 'higgling and bargaining' of exchange establish an implicit and approximate principle of fairness or equity¹²¹. Smith's 'system of natural liberty' posits a sphere of ethical conduct

¹²⁰ In his text *An Inquiry into the Principles of Political Oeconomy* (1767), which predates Smith's by nine years, Steuart defines oeconomy as the 'art of providing for all the wants of a family, with prudence and frugality' (1966, pp.15-16). The essential difference between the statesman of the nation and the master of the household is that former must respect the workings of a political oeconomy in terms of its existing mechanisms. Steuart employs the famous metaphor of a watch to convey the delicate precision with which statesman intervenes in the circumstances and conditions of oeconomy (Hirschman, 1977, pp.86-7); but intervention is limited in the sense that some actions might actually frustrate or undermine their own ends.

¹²¹ In Smith's chapter on value and labour we are given some insight on the process of exchange which is based on the calculation of self-interest, and the allowance and adjustment made between the two parties: 'In exchanging indeed the different productions of different sorts of labour for one another, some allowance is commonly made for both. It is adjusted, however, not by any accurate measure, but by the higgling and bargaining of the market, according to that rough sort of equality which, though not exact, is sufficient for carrying on the business of common life' (Smith, 1776, I.5.4).

whereby exchange is said to operate without restriction, and in terms of a morality in which the nature of men are free to pursue one's self-interest. This ethical framework of exchange would for the first time grant the poor labourer a 'civil individuality' by virtue of their capacity to enter into the circuits of exchange with the only commodity they legitimately possess, their labour.

In Smith's chapter on wages we find the basic moral, political and legal conditions under which labourers and masters enter into the wage-contract, and the sanguine attempt to establish a 'liberal reward for labour' as the cornerstone of national prosperity. Unlike the discourse of classical political economy of the nineteenth century, the value of wages is not set by a specific mechanism of distribution, but again rests upon the moral economy – the natural equivalence of efforts and rewards, the harmonisation of individual interests in exchange – that constitutes the wage-contract between masters and workers:

What are the common wages of labour, depends everywhere upon the contract usually made between those two parties, whose interests are by no means the same. The workmen desire to get as much, the masters to give as little as possible. The former are disposed to combine in order to raise, the latter in order to lower the wages of labour (Smith, 1785, 1.8.11).

Smith raises the problem of 'combination' as the means by which the actual rate of wages are set – it is not the combination of workingmen who set the level of wages, but the combination of masters who 'are always and every where in a sort of tacit, but constant and uniform combination, not to raise wages above their actual rate' (Smith, 1776, 1.8.13). In this 'rough equality' of exchange, it is the combination of masters who command the advantage of the wage-contract. But there are also circumstances where labourers might command such an advantage: when there is 'scarcity of hands' and competition between masters we find a breakdown of this tacit combination. Smith argues that it is only in the 'progressive state', then, that we find the conditions in which competition is plentiful and the labourer is privy to the fruits of his own labour¹²². Of

¹²² 'It deserves to be remarked, perhaps, that it is in the progressive state, while the society is advancing to the further acquisition, rather than when it has acquired its full complement of riches, that the condition of the labouring poor, of the great body of the people, seems to be the happiest and the most comfortable. It is hard in the stationary, and miserable in the declining state. The progressive state is in reality the cheerful and the hearty state to all the different orders of society. The stationary is dull; the declining melancholy' (Smith, 1785, 1.8.41-2).

course this vignette of prosperity omits the relations of domination between employer and employee as Marx would later theorise, though this moral sphere of exchange held the possibility for the poor to share in the ‘progress of opulence’ by engaging in roughly equal exchange. The level of wages and happiness of the labouring class are not solely dependent on their own toil, diligence and dexterity, but, as we see above, the growth of the riches of the nation itself. It is true, however, that Smith initiates a modern critique of the wage-contract by examining the inequalities inherent within the relations of contractual exchange, but also resurrects the sanguine possibilities for the wage-contract to become both the trajectory and destiny of ‘civil status’ accorded to the male, propertyless labourer (Dean, 1991, pp.132-3).

In this moral economy the labouring poor are held to be the rational owners of their labour as they face other individuals as equals in the market. Smith’s ‘liberal reward for labour’ marks an important departure from the mercantilist doctrine of low wages. Labourers should be free to exchange their labour for the highest possible reward, to maximise their happiness and increase the wealth of their families. There is no utility of poverty which, rather than being a spur to industry, is simply the catalyst of sickness and torpor. Again, it is the progressive, liberal state which is the most just and most equitable, and the key to prosperity. Smith thus concludes by emphasising the possibilities of industry as the emergent factor of this liberal sphere of exchange:

The liberal reward for of labour, as it encourages the propagation, so it increases the industry of the common people. The wages of labour are the encouragement of industry, which, like every other human quality, improves in proportion to the encouragement it receives. A plentiful subsistence increases bodily strength of the labourer, and the comfortable hope of bettering his condition and of ending his days perhaps in ease and plenty, animates him to exert that strength to the utmost. Where wages are high, accordingly, we shall always find the workmen most active, diligent and expeditious, than where they are low (Smith, 1776, 1.8.43).

This marks an important shift in the conception of the poor. They are no longer regarded as merely an aberration, or signifying the numbers of the population. Rather, the ‘problem of the poor’ has been transformed into labourers who, in this liberal sphere of moral and ethical conduct, should be treated as rational subjects of exchange. They are no longer the subjects of wise administration, but the objects of an atomistic civil society who, like others, are bearers of property, and pursue their self interest. The *Wealth of*

Nations is thus a landmark in the creation of civil society, where, free from the restrictions of settlement laws or mercantilist concerns about ‘the free circulation of labour’, the poor are given access to a field of exchange in which they are relatively free to enjoy the fruits of their own industry.

Classical political economy

By the early nineteenth century we witness something of a transformation of economic discourse; this was partly the failure of Smith’s ‘moral economy’ in establishing the ethical ideals for the new mode of government, and partly the discovery of specific mechanisms of production and distribution. A connection between the ethical ideals of economic activity and a mode of governance was made possible by integrating Ricardian economy with Malthus’ principles of population. If Smith annexed the sphere of exchange from the political framework of political oeconomy only to turn it into a morally founded order, classical political economy connects this sphere to the mechanisms of production and distribution. It is within this new, albeit abstract, conception of economy that we find the rational, even sombre, conditions for the conceptual elaboration of poverty. Under this new economic discourse, poverty is no longer a lamentable condition but a natural consequence of the mechanism of scarcity.

Ricardo introduces a number of interventions upon the Adamite economy; the first had to overcome the sphere of moral economy through a reanalysis of the value of labour. According to Smith, the liberal reward for labour was always proportionate to what he produced, that is, the quantity of labour expended in acquiring a commodity was equal to the quantity of labour that object could purchase or command in the way of exchanges¹²³. But at very outset of *On the Principles of Political Economy and Taxation* (1817), Ricardo disputes this proposition by invoking an additional mechanism that regulates the value of labour:

if the reward of the labourer were always in proportion to what he produced, the quantity of labour bestowed on a commodity, and the quantity of labour which that commodity would

¹²³ ‘The real price of every thing... what every thing really costs to the man who wants to acquire it, is the toil and trouble of acquiring it. What every thing is really worth to it, or the man who has acquired it, and who wants to dispose of it, or exchange it for something else, is the toil and trouble which it can save to himself, and which it can impose upon other people’ (Smith, 1776, I.5.2).

purchase, would be equal, and either might accurately measure the variations of other things: but they are not equal; the first is under many circumstances an invariable standard, indicating correctly the variations of other things; the latter is subject to as many fluctuations as the commodities compared with it... Is not the value of labour equally variable; being not only affected, as all other things are, by the proportion between the supply and demand, which uniformly varies with every change in the condition of the community, but also by the varying price of food and other necessaries, on which the wages of labour are expended? (Ricardo, 1821, p.4).

In Smith's analysis, labour was deployed as a concept capable of establishing a 'constant measure between the value of things' (Foucault, 1970, p.253), but Ricardo inverts this formulation by introducing the possibility that labour is 'subject to as many fluctuations as the commodities compared with it'. As Foucault observes, Ricardo disrupts the unity of labour by introducing an external economic domain of processes which also regulate the value of labour. On the one hand, the quantity of labour expended for the production of a commodity regulates the value of that commodity relative to the value of other commodities. On the other hand, labour itself has become a commodity, subject to the same regulation by the value of commodities which are essential to its production, and to the same fluctuations of supply and demand. In other words, the price of labour – the wage – is subject to the same mechanisms which determine the price of all other commodities (Foucault, 1970, pp.253-4).

The closest we come to an economic conception of poverty is in theory of wages. Given that classical political economy now effects a bifurcation of labour, it therefore has a 'natural price' and a 'market price' (1821, p.38). The natural price of labour 'is that which is necessary to enable the labourer... to subsist and to perpetuate their race without, either increase or diminution' which depends not on the quantity of money he may receive in wages, but the quantity of 'food, necessaries and conveniences' that his money is capable of purchasing. Under this schema, poverty is the *condition* in which the market price of labour falls below its natural price: 'poverty deprives them of those comforts which custom renders absolute necessaries' (p.38). Variations in the price of labour are said to be subject to two causes: the supply and demand of labourers, and the price of the commodities on which the wages of the labour are expended. In Ricardo's *Principles*, we find a thoroughly 'demoralised' sphere of economic activity which is no longer conditioned by the sphere of exchange, the higgling and bargaining of workmen

and masters, but a scientifically rendered domain governed by a distributional mechanism. The major modification here is that poverty ceases to be a moral, humanitarian or sentimental crisis of relations between the rich and poor, but a logical and collective phenomenon; after all, the variations of the natural price of labour depends on 'the habits and customs of the people' (p.40).

In Ricardo's theory of wages, we find a convergence between a new economic rationality of labour and Malthusian statements which hold that wage levels are dependent on the ratio of population to capital, capital being the means of employing labour. Ricardo invokes Malthus' geometric maxim to show that as population increases capital has a tendency of increasing more rapidly, in which case 'wages during the whole period would have a tendency to rise, because the demand for labour would increase still faster than the supply' (1821, p.40). However, as population increases and land of worse quality is cultivated the tendency of capital diminishes since the productive powers of labour also decrease. Hence, there is a tendency for the rate of growth of capital to decrease while the rate of growth of population remains constant: 'under the most favourable circumstances, the power of production is still greater than that of population. it will not long continue so; for the land being limited in quantity, and differing in quality. with every increased portion of capital employed on it, there will be a decreased rate of production, whilst the power of population continues always the same' (Ricardo, 1821, p.41).

Consistent with Malthusian themes, Ricardo introduces a natural tendency for the diminution of production where the ratio of population to capital is checked by the availability of fertile land for cultivation. In countries where population 'presses against the means of subsistence', and where there is already an abundance of fertile land for cultivation, overcrowding is the result of 'bad government'. In rich countries with a large population already pressing against the means of subsistence and the fertile land already fully cultivated, the only remedy is to lower population to the level of subsistence. Thus, in the Ricardian system where wage levels are dependent on the ratio of population to capital, we find, as we do with Malthus, a fundamental situation of scarcity. Scarcity

would posit natural, biological and economic laws where life is perpetually faced with risk of death, and must find within the moral principles of restraint and labour the only means of salvation¹²⁴.

Like Malthus, Ricardo argues that the poor laws are in direct opposition to the principles of political economy. Poor-relief diverts expenditure that might otherwise be used for capital investment; it reduces the growth of manufacturing production; it increases the numbers of the poor, and disturbs the fragile balance between population and subsistence. Lands of inferior quality are increasingly brought into cultivation to meet this growth of population, causing the rate of profits to fall and the exhaustion of the essential dynamism of the economy. While the fund that maintains the poor is subject to interminable expenditure:

it is not, as the legislature benevolently intended, to amend the condition of the poor, but to deteriorate the condition of both poor and rich; instead of making the poor rich, they are calculated to make the rich poor; and whilst the present laws are in force, it is quite in the natural order of things that the fund for the maintenance of the poor should progressively increase, till it has absorbed all the net revenue of the country, or at least so much of it as the state shall leave to us, after satisfying its own never failing demands for the public expenditure' (Ricardo, 1821, pp.44-5).

But unlike Malthus, Ricardo advises a more cautious approach to poor management. Rather than outright abolition of expenditure, he prescribes gradual abolition, whereby poor-relief is replaced with an emulative and educative spirit that installs virtues of self-reliance among the poor: 'By gradually contracting the sphere of the poor laws; by impressing on the poor the value of independence, by teaching them that they must look not to systematic or casual charity, but to their own exertions for support, that prudence and forethought are neither unnecessary nor unprofitable virtues, we shall by degrees approach a sounder and more healthful state' (Ricardo, 1821, p.45).

Under Smith's moral economy, we do not find a concept of poverty only the possibility for the poor to enter the liberal sphere of exchange. Poverty is not a condition but simply a category that applies to the degree of happiness and wealth of the nation. But

¹²⁴ In the final analysis, the biological properties of human species are confronted with 'the risk of not finding in their natural environment enough to ensure their existence... it designates in labour, and in the very hardship of that labour, the only means of triumphing for an instant over death' (Foucault, 1970, p.257).

by annexing this autonomous sphere of exchange, Smith constitutes the civil status of liberty and justice that now applies to the *labouring* poor – labour is an ethical activity wherein the poor benefit from the fruits of their labour. Under classical political economy, however, labour is the imperative of the ‘iron laws’ of nature. The independence of the labourer is not derived from a moral philosophy which asserts liberty and equity as part of the natural condition of humankind. By the nineteenth century, political economy will restrict this moral dimension to the character and conduct of the poor. The new economic discourse with its rational conception of ‘economy’ – a realm of independent mechanisms – will ensure that poverty, not labour, is the natural condition of humankind. For Ricardo, poverty is a biological and economic necessity for the adjustment of population to the quantity of capital available since the illimitable needs of humanity are always in excess of the limited powers of production. In short, *poverty* is now a general condition that drives the economic mechanisms.

Poverty

Dean makes the curious remark that the origins of poverty resemble ‘an invention without an inventor’ (1992, p.235). In the decade preceding the nineteenth century, the conceptual elaboration of poverty was anything but a smooth and gradual development of opinion, argumentation and prescription. In fact, the reverse is more apparent: it was the haphazard effect of debate, legislative crisis and the intermingling of statements generated from both political and intellectual proponents. The task here is to briefly trace the major statements of the period that seem, at least, partially constitutive of a concept that came to specify a condition arising from the natural, biological and economic forces of population and subsistence. Before taking up the main lines that found their way in the *1834 Poor Law Report*, it is better to begin with the counter-effects and false starts out of which a definite concept of poverty emerged.

The labouring poor

Though Adam Smith never asserted any clear policy in relation to the poor law, it would be remiss to suggest the *Wealth of Nations* did nothing to transform the status of the poor. From his break with mercantilism we begin to appreciate Smith’s optimistic account of the condition of the poor who were not, after all, vicious, ignorant and idle.

but differed in nature according to custom, habit and education¹²⁵. To improve the condition of the poor should not be at the ‘inconveniency’ of society; not only do they make up the largest numbers but determine the condition of the whole of society. On this point Himmelfarb argues Smith’s critique of mercantilism illustrated that labourers were at the greatest disadvantage under mercantilism¹²⁶. Based on the equality of the value of labour, Smith was able to assert that the lower classes were not innately ‘lower’, but through the division of labour should receive the full complement of riches in the form of wages. The labouring poor were a legitimate partner in the economic enterprise since their labour was also a source of value. The ‘patrimony’ of labour entitled the propertyless labourer to be considered equal beneficiaries in the ownership of property¹²⁷.

Nevertheless, the legacy of Smith’s ideas gave rise to some curious and dispersed effects, especially among those regarded as his ‘disciples’. Of this odd collection, Edmund Burke provides some interesting diversions from poverty. In his *Thoughts and Details on Scarcity* (1795), Burke seemed in much agreement with laissez faire principles, especially in times of scarcity where he argued the proper role of government was non-involvement. In the case of labour, however, he argued that if in times of scarcity and calamity the labourer could not be governed by the ‘rules of commerce’, then he came within the jurisdiction and mercy of charity; after all, private charity was the duty and obligation of all Christians which seemed not to interfere with economic laws. But a more interesting departure comes in the form of Burke’s insistence for a distinction between the ‘labourer’ and the ‘poor’. In no uncertain terms, he states:

¹²⁵ On this point Smith argues: ‘The difference of natural talents in different men is, in reality, much less than we are aware of; and the very different genius which appears to distinguish men of different professions, when grown up to maturity, is not many occasions so much the cause, as the effect of the division of labour. The difference between the most dissimilar characters, seems to arise not so much from nature, as from habit, custom, and education... By nature a philosopher is not in genius and disposition half so different from a street porter, as a mastiff is from a greyhound’ (Smith, 1776, I.2.4).

¹²⁶ ‘As consumers, they were ill served by a system that promoted high prices and discouraged imports; and as producers, by a system that permitted their employers, by fair means or foul, to keep wages low and prices high. The poor, in short, were the chief victims of the existing system – and would be the chief beneficiaries of the ‘natural’ system proposed by Smith’ (Himmelfarb, 1984, p.51).

¹²⁷ ‘The property which every man has in his own labour, as it the original foundation of all other property, so it is the most sacred and inviolable. The patrimony of a poor man lies in the strength and dexterity of his hands; and to hinder him from employing this strength and dexterity in what manner he thinks proper without injury to his neighbour is a plain violation of this most sacred property’ (Smith, 1776, I.10.67).

Nothing can be so base and so wicked as the political canting language, 'The *Labouring poor*.' Let compassion be shown in action... but let there be no lamentation of their condition. It is no relief to their miserable circumstances; it is only an insult to their miserable understandings... Patience, labour, sobriety, frugality, and religion should be recommended to them: all the rest is downright *fraud* (Burke, cited in Poynter, 1969, p.53).

By imposing this distinction between the labourer and the poor and denouncing this 'puling jargon' of the labouring poor, Burke insisted that the poor were those who *cannot* labour. They might indeed be miserable, but misery was inevitable to the condition of humanity and should not be mistaken by pity. Two years later he would add: 'It is the common doom of man that he must eat his bread by the sweat of his brow, that is, by the sweat of his body, or the sweat of his mind... I do not call a healthy young man, cheerful in his mind, and vigorous in his arms, I cannot call such a man, *poor*' (Burke, cited in Himmelfarb, 1984, p.69).

Both Himmelfarb and Poynter suggest this refusal to define the labouring population poor was an attempt to discredit the 'doomed paternalism' of the Speenhamland allowance system of 1795 – the system of regulating wages above the 'natural' market price – which seem to recognise that poverty was an institutional phenomenon. The argument against wage regulation maintained that an artificial rise in real wages would raise the price of provisions or reduce the demand for labour. To compel the farmer to pay higher wages was effectively a tax on agriculture that would ruin the already fragile fortunes of farmers and traders. Burke was at pains to illustrate that the fortunes of both labourer and farmer were tied to the same fate rather than opposed to each other, and any attempt to interfere with the income of labourers would almost certainly ruin agriculture. Thus, 'the poor' should only refer to those unable to labour, for it was the lot of the 'able-bodied' to see out scarcity through their own 'industry, and frugality, and sobriety' (Poynter, 1969, pp.53-4; Himmelfarb, 1984, p.54).

Another of Smith's 'disciples' was F. M. Eden who also held economic liberty in high esteem though he differed with Smith's criticism of the settlement laws which he thought were exaggerated. But Eden was much closer to Smith than many who spoke in his name. Even Marx conceded that Eden was 'the only disciple of Adam Smith during the eighteenth century that produced any work of importance' (cited in Poynter, p.112).

and ranks among the few to have dedicated a major and meticulous treatise on the history of the labouring poor. Like Smith, Eden believed that individuals should be free to pursue their own interests, and it was undesirable for government to interfere in economic affairs. He criticised Whitbread's wage regulation bill and Pitt's relief Bill on the same grounds, which he claimed would undermine individual exertion, encourage idleness and usurp the proper role of charity (Eden, 1797, p.448, 478-90).

In *The State of the Poor*, Eden argued that the poor were not possible under 'a state of servitude' since they would always have recourse to their masters for support. But with 'the introduction of manufactures and the consequent emancipation of those who were dismissed by their masters' there appeared a 'new class of men henceforth described by the Legislature under the denomination of the *Poor*'¹²⁸ (1797, p.57). Despite his extensive history, Eden could only advise minor administrative changes, certainly none that would have the effect of Malthus. Without the connection between population and subsistence, Eden could only go so far as to prescribe partial abolition on the grounds of self-improvement; his major thesis was the insistence that only self-help could alleviate the misery of the poor. Nonetheless, Eden's massive treatise would give historical substance to 'the Poor', and signal the emergence of a general domain of 'masterless men' whose only property was their labour. On the eve of Malthus' *Essay*, Eden's history of poverty would strangely pre-figure Marx's genealogy of capitalism, marking out an historical process by which the producer was effectively divorced from the means of production.

The pauper

Under the labouring poor we find the opening up of a new space of theorisation and debate in which 'the Poor' have given way to a set of conditions relating to the division of labour, the real and market price of labour, and the customs of the labouring classes. What is missing from a fully constituted version of poverty, which is glimpsed among statements of the labouring class, are specific links to subsistence, and a new specification of an individual who is deprived of the means of subsistence, the *pauper* or

¹²⁸ With the emergence of this 'labouring class of men', Eden conceives, the poor 'to signify freemen, who, being either incapacitated by sickness, or old age, or prevented by other causes from getting work, were obliged, to have recourse to the assistance of the charitable for subsistence' (Eden, 1797, p.57).

indigent. The new concept of poverty can be instanced among the style of statements that begin to integrate and systematise the links between nature, subsistence and labour. There are two examples of this which come not from the Tories, but the Radicals whose reforms took a new footing: establishing a preventive science of police, on the one hand, and a domain of administration for the practical inspection and rehabilitation of the pauper, on the other.

Patrick Colquhoun's *Treatise on Indigence* (1806) is a clear example of the new concept of poverty put to work on matters of reform. Poverty was the necessity of working for a living, and indigence the inability to make a living even by working; it was therefore indigence and not poverty that became the specific object of administration and moral admonition:

Poverty is that state and condition in society where the individual has no surplus labour in store, and, consequently, no property but what is derived from constant exercise of industry in the various occupations of life; or in other words, it is the state of every one who must labour for subsistence...

Indigence therefore, and not *poverty*, is the evil. It is that condition in society which implies *want*, *misery*, and *distress*. It is the state of any one who is destitute of the means of subsistence, and is unable to labour or procure it to the extent nature requires. The natural source of subsistence is the labour of the individual; while that remains with him he is denominated *poor*; when it fails in whole or in part he becomes *indigent* (Colquhoun, 1806, pp.7-8).

Colquhoun's innovation was to incorporate a 'poverty theory of labour' with a 'labour theory of value' (Dean, 1992, p.237), thereby linking the new economic discourse to the administrative conditions for the operation of a national labour market. Colquhoun's argument went beyond the 'doctrine of low wages', characteristic of eighteenth century mercantilist thought, by establishing poverty as a natural, general condition of humanity, both necessary to the production of wealth and development of civilisation. It was not the level of wages but the discovery of an original state or condition of natural poverty from which all of humankind and civilisation was derived. 'Civilisation', with its teleological sense of progress, is the result of a dialectical struggle between poverty and labour which arises from the natural scarcity of the physical environment, the essential 'poverty of nature'.

But if the pauper was formulated to naturalise poverty and specify a new figure of aberration, it would also elaborate a new technology for the regulation of the labour market and the development of programmes for the prevention of indigence. Colquhoun, for instance, was less concerned with relieving indigence, despite thinking the Poor Law was necessary for the relief of ‘innocent indigence’, it was their detection and prevention that was his main concern. The Glasgow magistrate made his name not through intervention in poor law or economic policy, but the development of an effective force for the prevention of crime. Thus, Colquhoun’s proposal for the establishment of a ‘Board of General and Internal Police’ was designed to make indigence the object of a new system of intelligence and custodial agents for the regulation of crime¹²⁹. If this new conception of poverty created the possibility of freeing poverty from the fixed category of the Poor, it also created a new object of knowledge: pauperism.

Bentham’s elaborate definition of poverty and indigence bears more than a strong resemblance to Colquhoun’s as we see in the following statement: ‘Poverty is the state of everyone who, in order to obtain *subsistence*, is forced to have recourse to *labour*. Indigence is the state of him who, being destitute of property... Is at the same time, either *unable to labour*, or unable even *for labour*, to procure the supply of which he happens thus to be in want’ (Bentham, 2001, p.3). This exact distinction would be used in the *1834 Poor Law Report* to define indigence as the legitimate area of relief, and featured in the writings of its principal architect, Edwin Chadwick. But it was also Colquhoun’s invention of a Metropolitan police of the poor that would incite other Radical and Whig-liberals to elaborate new techniques for the liberal governance of poverty. Together, Colquhoun and Bentham developed links between the new economic logic and administrative rationality, thereby establishing two broad administrative strategies for the reform of the Poor Law: ‘The former presupposes a necessity binding poverty to labour; the latter targets an entity, pauperism, that is both cause and effect of the transgression of the laws of that necessity’ (Dean, 1992, p.237). Pauperism was a constant transgression

¹²⁹ For Colquhoun, indigence and crime were two sides of the same coin, ‘since it is a state of indigence, fostered by idleness, which produces a disposition to moral and criminal offence, and they are so linked together that it will be found impracticable to ameliorate the condition of the poor without taking more effectual measures at the same time for the prevention of criminal offences’ (Colquhoun, 1806, p.48-9).

of the laws under which humanity is essentially placed. But we should note that pauperism is not opposed to labour as such, but the self-provision of subsistence afforded by labour. For Bentham, labour does not possess an intrinsic moral worth but is a form of economic activity that permits self-sufficiency; therefore, pauperism is not the opposite of labour but the opposite of the *independent labourer*.

As a natural condition of environmental scarcity, poverty would recede from the terrain of administrative concern leaving only two kinds of person, the sturdy independent labourer and the nefarious pauper. Under this new gaze, the pauper is now the principal target of reform, and becomes the object for producing an entire datum of that which lies outside of the life-conduct of productive labour. The pauper is subject to a new kind of moral classification using all the available techniques of the day; a new taxonomy of abjection would cover a wide range of cases from notions of 'dependence', 'pathology', 'criminality', 'dangerousness', and 'mendacity'. By the first two decades of the nineteenth century, pauperism presents itself to a whole array of administrators, magistrates, philanthropists and medical practitioners as a corruption of the natural functioning of the political and moral order. Bentham and Colquhoun, for instance, both produced 'Tables of Pauperism' specifying all the different cases and causes of pauper or indigent. The Table formed part of a technique for bringing order and recognition to a domain of the population concealed by obscurity and opacity. Colquhoun went so far as to produce some doubtful statistics regarding the estimated number of indigents which he thought were increasing more rapidly than rates of population¹³⁰. Bentham, on the other hand, compiled a 'Map of *Pauper-Land*', an exhaustive taxonomy which comprehends each specific case by virtue of the '*efficient cause of Indigence*', locating each case in respect of 'work-capacity', and deducing the correct '*mode and degree of Relief or Prevention*' (Bentham, 2001, lvii). But if Bentham's Table of Pauperism served to bring to light the various forms of pauperism, his extraordinary administrative imagination

¹³⁰ Poynter observes that Colquhoun's alarming statistics on pauperism were based on the uncritical acceptance of relief figures which estimated one-seventh of the population were paupers as well as guessing the estimates of 50,000 mendicants, 20,000 vagrants, 100,000 'lewd and immoral women', 10,000 rogues and vagabonds, 80,000 'highway robbers, foot-pad robbers, burglars, house breakers, pick pockets, horse stealers, sheep stealers, stealers of hogs and cattle, deer stealers, common thieves, petty thieves, occasional thieves who cannot resist the temptation', making up a grand total of 1,320,716 (cited in Poynter, 1969, p.203).

would also transpose this Table into a practical technology of economical inspection and regulation. Ironically, the cruel and invasive illiberality of Bentham's pauper Utopia is a project of total illumination, seeking to render into existence all the shadowy figures devoid of the one rational action that defined 'civil individuality', the exchange of labour.

Pauper administration

Bentham's vision of pauper administration maintains a direct correspondence to his Table of Pauperism. Where the Table sought to render the manifold and opaque field of pauperism intelligible, pauper management was the embodiment of such knowledge. For instance, Bentham's 'industry houses' were not merely sites of incarceration, but formed a 'net-work' of visibilities extending across the kingdom, a series of 'pauper Panopticons', which retained the image of the Table as it dissected the administrative domain via modes of *segregation* and *aggregation*. Paupers would be separated according to each specific case, and grouped together according to their common characteristics. The internal organisation of the industry houses encompassed the totality of cases spread out across the image of the Table. Placed at the centre of this panoply of abjection was the 'censorial eye' of the governor, the rational, omnipresent subject of knowledge.

Much has been said about Bentham's Panopticon, particularly its application of power and efficient use of surveillance. Foucault's discussion of 'Panopticism' in *Discipline and Punish* is exemplary to this kind of analysis, and well rehearsed in the secondary material. I will only give a cursory outline of the main points. Firstly, the architectural features of Bentham's workhouse incorporate the principle of 'central inspection' with 'total illumination', that is, by arranging paupers in separate cells around the periphery of a central tower. The central tower itself occupies a position of 'axial visibility', a vantage point accessing multiple visibilities, while the position of the cells imply a 'lateral invisibility', the inmate is separated from other inmates and continuously supervised by the anonymous gaze of the governor. Foucault (1977) argues the innovative function of the panopticon is the ability to individualise its inmates; chaos and contingency are transformed into an intelligible grid of pauper cases and cells, and

reassembled into ‘a multiplicity that can be numbered and supervised’. But the Panopticon is also a ‘marvellous machine’ for producing homogeneous effects of power, whereby ‘a real subjection is born mechanically from a fictitious relation’ (pp.201-2). That is to say, the implication of being observed is enough for the inmate to observe oneself, in which case subjection is simultaneously an act of self-formation¹³¹.

So, Bentham’s ‘industry houses’ were not simply houses of correction, but an ambitious assemblage of modern and pre-modern discourses. They were organised around the same ‘rituals of exclusion’ and methods of ‘tactical partitioning’ characteristic of the quarantine regulations during plagues and epidemics¹³² (Foucault, 1977, pp.195-9). The plague was at once a real and imaginary state of disorder, and the pauper, a symbol of ‘pestilence’ and ‘contagion’. A politico-medical organisation is put to work in the spatial management of paupers; the separation and aggregation of individual cases are procedures of disciplinary partitioning. By treating paupers as ‘plague victims’, the Panopticon operates as a normalising institution, concerned with individualising the excluded and universalising the mechanisms of disciplinary control. If the plague-stricken town – a space in the grips of disciplinary power – is the utopia of ‘the perfectly governed city’, then pauper management is the ‘preventive utopia’ of removing all forms of social danger from civil society.

Bentham took the Classical workhouse and transformed it into a utopian programme of self-improvement. The eighteenth century theme of ‘setting the Poor on work’ would be expanded so every pauper establishment was a self-subsisting institution¹³³. The

¹³¹ ‘He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power: he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection’ (Foucault, 1977, pp.202-3).

¹³² On this point, Foucault argues that the origins of normalisation are found among plague regulations: ‘The constant division between the normal and the abnormal, to which every individual is subjected, brings us back to our own time, by applying the binary branding and exile of the leper to quite different objects... All the mechanisms of power which, even today, are disposed around the abnormal individual, to brand him to alter him, are composed of those two forms from which they distantly derive’ (Foucault, 1977, pp.199-200).

¹³³ Within the industry house ‘incapacity’ was a relative phenomenon; if a pauper was impotent or useless then a useful occupation would be found for them. All paupers would have to work off the value of their

principles of economy were designed into the functions of the industry house, ensuring every pauper, every procedure and regulation, operated with maximum efficiency. The conduct of the pauper is fixed to the value of labour as subsistence becomes conditioned upon self-provision ('the Self Supply Principle'). The illiberal aspects of the industry house are reconciled with its utopian programme of constructing the perfect disciplinary machine which can be implemented in hospitals, workshops, schools, prisons, etc. More than a place of incarceration, the industry house was a 'laboratory' for conducting experiments on human conduct¹³⁴ (Foucault, 1977). Repeating Malthus' concern of improvident marriages, Bentham also included a study of the effects of sexual relations upon the health and development of apprentices to discover at which age the 'comforts of matrimony' were most compatible with physical and intellectual maturation (Bahmueller, 1981, pp.171-4).

The industry house incorporated objectives that embodied Bentham's plans of restoring the pauper to independence through practices of behaviour modification. Under the Classical eighteenth schema it was thought the natural rhythms of industry would restore the habits of work and remoralise the soul. But under Bentham's scheme, the autonomisation of the pauper is finely calibrated and monitored by new theory and practice of punishment. Punishment is now linked to *prevention*, the elimination of conduct that engenders a state of indigence. Foucault traces this new technology of punishment to the eighteenth century writings on government and law, which begin to incorporate the principles of *economy* with the *proportion* of punishment applied: 'One must punish exactly enough to prevent repetition' (1977, p.93). Foucault calls this technology 'semio-technique'¹³⁵ where the penalty functions as a sign (1977, pp.93-103).

relief before leaving the house; children would be apprenticed off as earliest as possible; the blind given knitting and sewing; and duties would be found for the bed-ridden and insane.

¹³⁴ In his analysis of Bentham's Panopticon, Foucault draws the analogy between the industry house and the laboratory: 'it could be used as a machine to carry out experiments, to alter behaviour, to train or correct individuals. To experiment with medicine and monitor their effects. To try out different punishments on prisoners, according to their crimes and character, and seek the most efficient ones' (Foucault, 1977, p.203).

¹³⁵ In his analysis of the transformation of modes of punishment, he shows that eighteenth century punishment no longer exemplifies the crime by a ritual of sovereign power that must be seen to master it, like the spectacle of the gallows, but rather we find in the case of Bentham that ritual is replaced by the *sign* that serves as an obstacle to crime and aberrant conduct.

In the Benthamite pauper establishment, the penalty signifies the infraction in such a way as to direct each individual as a rational subject. This is done by associating the infraction with pain and the desired behaviour with happiness, or the avoidance of pain. The primary objective of the semio-technical system is the prevention or *deterrence* of pauperism¹³⁶. The conditions of relief must *appear* 'less eligible' than the conditions procured by independent labour.

Bentham's scheme of pauper management exemplifies the broad scope of early liberal administrative imagination. The multi-functional applications of the industry house, for instance, were designed to create the conditions of wage-labour by two means: inserting the pauper into the disciplinary apparatus and inculcate at every point the virtues of independent labour, and distributing penalties by way of the sign; the abolition of outdoor relief would mean that the able-bodied poor would have to choose between a life of labour-for-subsistence, or the dreadful conditions of the industry house – relief acted as a deterrent to potential paupers. And while this may seem at odds with its liberal aspects, pauper management was a utopian programme for rendering pauperism visible and knowable. Bentham's Utopia offered a fantasy of complete transparency and inspectability by bringing to light the 'Abyss' that lay outside the life-conduct of independent labour.

It is true, however, Bentham's elaborate schemes were never fully realised. His 'network' of 'Pauper Panopticons' did not so much as remotely effect the existing structure of workhouses which survived for another century. But he did succeed in making his system of pauper management consistent with the principles of liberal political economy, which would have a lasting effect after the *1834 Poor Law Report*. To understand Bentham's intervention in the debate, we must return to Smith's rational, self-interested agent, who, without property but for want of wealth, happiness, and security, will happily exchange his labour as his only property. But Bentham recognised one set of

¹³⁶ This principle is both internal and external to the industry house. Internally, every mundane activity operates on the condition that the pauper is constantly reminded that a quantum of labour is exchanged for a quantum of subsistence: paupers must work off their relief before leaving the house (the 'Self Liberation Principle'), and compelled to work before eating (the 'Earn First Principle'). Externally, the workhouse stood as a sign of prevention.

circumstances in which it is possible for the propertyless to rationally choose *not* to exchange their labour. This exceptional set of circumstances is outlined in the following statement:

If the condition of individuals, maintained without property of their own, by the labour of others, were rendered more eligible than that of persons maintained by their own labour, then, in proportion as the existence of this state of things were ascertained, individuals destitute of property would be continually withdrawing themselves from the class of persons maintained by their own labour, to the class of persons maintained by the labour of others: and the sort of idleness which at present is more or less confined to persons of independent fortunes, would thus extend itself, sooner or later, to every individual of the number of those on whose labour the perpetual reproduction of the perpetually consuming stock of subsistence depends: till at last there would be nobody left to labour at all, for any body (Bentham, 2001, p.39).

This statement would have an enormous impact on eligibility of relief. For Smith, the labourer emerges as a rational subject of exchange who is thought to be autonomous in the capacity of improving his own circumstances. But Bentham raises the possibility for thinking that, as far as poor-relief is concerned, there is a relative difference of eligibility of conditions between the labourer and the pauper. This was the problem that would guide the conditions under which relief was later granted. If relief appeared too accessible, too comfortable, or too liberal, then the poor as rational subjects would naturally choose relief over labour. But if one assumes labour as necessary to the creation of subsistence, let alone wealth and civilisation, then it follows that relief should only be granted on condition that it preserves the rational preference for labour. The solution, then, as Bentham would see it, was to grant relief to the poor in such a way that 'provision at the public expence should... appear less eligible to him than the provision resulting from the fruits of his own labour' (Bentham, 2001, p.194). This became the cardinal principle of the reformed administration after 1834¹³⁷, a return to the workhouse as a system of relief was invigorated by the principle of deterrence that fixed the limits of relief upon this new distinction between poverty and indigence.

Between Benthamism and Malthusianism we find two modes of administration which are both complementary and antithetical: on the one side, we find an administrative

¹³⁷ The 1834 Poor Law Report would express this new principle in the following terms: 'The first and most essential of all conditions, a principle which we find universally admitted, even by those who practice is at variance with it, is that his [the pauper's] situation on the whole shall not be made really or apparently so eligible as the situation of the independent labourer of the lowest class' (Checkland & Checkland, 1974, p.335).

ensemble of practical techniques for the delimitation and governance of the pauper; on the other, we find the antecedence of a governmental rationality which seeks to abolish the sphere of state assistance altogether by prescribing the ethical ideals of independent conduct. The antithetical themes of total government and anti-government would together form the epistemological conditions of a new economic liberalism. Common to both is an emergent technology of prevention underpinned by the natural conditions of scarcity, and the unnatural aberration of pauperism. Preserved within this new economic liberalism is the anti-administration and hyper-administration of poverty. However, it is the practical sphere of governance prescribed by Benthamism that reconciled these two poles, that is, by making 'illiberality consistent with a liberal mode of government' (Dean, 1992, p.240).

Police

Here we follow the last strand from which a definite conception of poverty emerges. So far, the constitution of poverty has been linked to the problem of establishing the efficacy of an administrative discourse on poor law reform. But in the early years of the nineteenth century, the concept of poverty also puts a 'science of police' on a new footing, certainly one that would give rise to a preventive technology for the reduction of pauperism. We owe the establishment of this new mode of prevention to Patrick Colquhoun who opened a new space of investigation that was quickly filled by the likes of Edwin Chadwick, James Kay and Southwood Smith. In Colquhoun's blue print for a police, we find the same field of intervention could be employed to argue for the necessity of administrative structures not directly connected to matters of relief. The problem of pauperism is linked to a set of conditions, 'a chain of effects', through which the labouring poor are rendered indigent. In Chapter 3, I discussed how police was linked to the public health movement, which viewed the conditions of the labouring classes as having deleterious, demoralising and pauperising effects. In this section, I examine how the new distinction between poverty and indigence formed part of an ensemble of preventive techniques for the liberal government of poverty. If the concept of poverty was responsible for exposing the conditions of pauperism, then police technology embodied the field of political techniques for detecting and averting these conditions.

Science of police

Although Bentham already elaborated the idea of prevention as a principle of pauper management, Colquhoun gave prevention a definite form: not in terms of a hyper-vigilant or transformative enclosure, but a diffuse and systematic set of *techniques* that were coextensive with the domain of administration. It is here that we instance the transformation in the discourse of police which is no longer fixed to the old theme of 'wise administration' or promoting the 'wealth and happiness' of the people, but linked to the precepts of political economy. The beginnings of this transformation are illustrated in Colquhoun's *A treatise on Indigence* (1806) and *A Treatise on the Police of the Metropolis* (1805) wherein the principles of this new science of police are developed.

Firstly, Colquhoun's model of police is contrasted with the arbitrary despotism of sovereign punishment by specifying the juridical rights of the individual who begins to emerge as an agent of morally responsible conduct. Secondly, a technology of police is no longer tied to the positive conception of 'good administration', and the interminable regulations of public tranquillity, but developed as a permanent administrative apparatus of detection and prevention. Thirdly, police begins to specify a particular domain of life-conduct, a sector of the population, whereby pauperism is linked to manifestations of vice and crime. Perhaps the most innovative invention of this police rationality is the alignment between punishment and principles of limited government¹³⁸. An effective form of promoting social order is one that begins to realise the futility of 'too many regulations', and must discern between light and serious offences, for now punishment must *be in proportion to crime*. Though this new science of police would preserve the older principles of promoting 'general happiness', it does so with the conception of the juridical rights of individuality in mind. Hence, a technology of police must preserve the liberties and rights of individuals by implementing the utilitarian principle of 'conducting men to the *maximum* of happiness and the *minimum* of misery' (1805, p.72).

¹³⁸ For instance, it was Beccaria who noted the futility and narrow-minded pursuit of the French system of police that sought to eliminate all forms of turbulence, irregularity and confusion among men (Radzinowicz, 1956, p.427). Colquhoun improved on this argument by admitting 'It will not be altogether possible, amid the various attractions of pleasure and pain, to reduce the tumultuous activity of mankind to absolute regularity: we can only hope for a considerable reduction of the evils that exist' (1805, p.73).

For police to become a permanent field of administration and a restricted strategy of prevention it must first install an operable programme that is independent of the judicial powers of the magistrate. In this respect, Colquhoun improved on Bentham's 'prevention of offences' by giving police a more narrow definition of functions:

Police in this country may be considered as a *new science*: the properties of which consist not in the Judicial Powers which lead to *Punishment*, and which belong to the Magistrates alone; but in the PREVENTION and DETECTION OF CRIMES, and in those other Functions which relate to INTERNAL REGULATION for the well-ordering and comfort of Civil Society (Colquhoun, 1805. preface, original emphasis).

This new science would form the basis of a liberal apparatus of security by linking its functions to the causes of crime, the protection of private and public property and, more importantly, the implementation of measures to avert 'dangers and crimes'. This formulation presupposes a realm of intervention that begins to assume the qualities and contours of a quasi-autonomous reality to which political action is limited and conditioned to a permanent and vigilant technique of security. But there is one final delimitation that is required in order to render this science effective, that is, by directing its measures and functions to a specific field of problematisation, indigence.

Given that indigence now formed the field of mendacity, vice, crime and moral pestilence, it is no surprise then that the problem of pauperism should formulate the final delimitation of police powers in the service of averting danger and preserving the order and comfort of civil society. Colquhoun's key rationale, no doubt a popular measure in the alleviation of poor-relief, was the establishment of a police force capable of averting the effects of the descent of poverty into pauperism. After all, the new formulation of poverty, which Colquhoun himself had help to popularise, would entail a new kind of division in the life-conduct of the poor by distinguishing the 'useful Poor', who were the 'actual pillars of the State', from the 'Gangrene', the seat of 'Moral Corruption', that specified the realm of dangerous degeneracy. It is the latter who 'merit the utmost attention of all governments, with a direct and immediate view of preventing their poverty descending unnecessarily into *indigence*' (1805, p.366). Though Colquhoun's argument for an independent apparatus of security was a significant advance on Bentham's pauper management, it was principally this progressive descent of poverty

into indigence that ultimately defined the target and domain of police intervention. Between Malthusianism that would naturalise the domain of poverty as fundamental scarcity, and the Benthamite partitioning of poverty and pauperism, we find Colquhoun's formulation of police as the basis for sealing off poverty from the temptation of crime. Police would effectively circumscribe a much narrower domain of administration, a field of perpetual intelligence, supervision and tactical penetration, where it would intervene in the chain of causes and effects that transformed poverty into the aberrant forms of life that threatened the security and tranquillity of civil society.

The 'preventive idea' that begins to take shape around the writings of Bentham and Colquhoun, and which is systematically linked to the problem of pauperism and indigence, would find another influential admirer. It was Erwin Chadwick, the principle architect of the *1834 Report*, who reproduced the conceptual distinction between poverty and pauperism, and installed the notion of preventive police in the new administrative logic of poor-relief.

Chadwick and reform

It was precisely the transformation of police that elevated Chadwick's career in his influential and unsigned article on 'Preventive Police' in the *London Review* in 1829 (Radzinowicz, 1956). In fact it was the writing of this article that brought Chadwick in contact with Bentham, who was also an admirer of Colquhoun. What is significant in the new approach to matters of police is the development of measures designed for a systematic, effective and economical strategy for the prevention of crime. Furthermore, the reform of police and the reform of poor-relief were not only linked by their common strategy of prevention, but through the application of this strategy to the common domain of pauperism.

Though Chadwick is often associated with Benthamism, his own definition of poverty was remarkably close to that of Colquhoun. For instance, he specifies poverty as not only the natural constant of human hardship, but also, remarkably, the source of wealth – an insurmountable mechanism that drives human industry:

The commissioners might have added that poverty... is the natural, the primitive, the general and the unchangeable state of man; that as labour is the source of wealth, so is poverty of labour. Banish poverty, you banish wealth. Indigence, therefore, and not poverty is the evil, the removal of which is the proper object of the Poor Laws. Indigence may be provided for... but all attempts to extirpate poverty can have no effects but bad ones (Chadwick, 1837, p.18).

This statement encapsulates the principal means by which the liberal government of poverty sought to frame the role of the state in matters of poverty. In the same article, Chadwick defined more precisely this role: 'Poverty was not the object of attack, but rather those circumstances in their environment that turn the poor into the indigent' (1837, p.42). This distinction between poverty and indigence closely resembles that of Bentham's formulation some forty years earlier¹³⁹. Nonetheless, the administration of poverty during this period was founded upon the strategy of acting on those circumstances, conditions and behaviours of the poor which constitute the origins of pauperism.

Chadwick, who was the principal architect of the *1834 Report*, would preserve Bentham's distinction between poverty and indigence whereby indigence (or pauperism) fell within the province of state administration, while poverty remained the 'natural, the primitive, the general and unchangeable lot of man' (Bentham, cited in Poynter, 1969, p.119). More importantly, this was the precise distinction and conclusion reached in the *1834 Report* with regard to the peculiar position of the English poor law, a position exemplified by the following statement:

In no part of Europe except England has it been thought fit that the provision, whether compulsory or voluntary, should be applied to more than the relief of *indigence*, the state of a person unable to labour, or unable to obtain, in return for labour, the means of subsistence. It has never been deemed expedient that the provision should extend to the relief of poverty; that is the state of one, who in order to obtain a mere subsistence, is forced to have recourse to labour (Checkland & Checkland, 1974, p.334).

Preserved in the above is both the language of Chadwick and Bentham, whose governing statements were used to frame the most comprehensive reform of the English system of poor laws since its Tudor inception. The new administrative logic of poor-relief was no

¹³⁹ This resemblance is hardly surprising given the close association between the two men towards the end of Bentham's life. Chadwick served as Bentham's secretary while editing his *Constitutional Code*, and appeared to be familiar with his writings on the subject of poverty and indigence. Furthermore, Chadwick's somewhat strained but long running relationship with Southwood Smith further consolidates these links with Bentham (Flinn, 1964).

doubt derived from a critique of the relief of poverty first enunciated by Malthus, and systematised under the scientific rationale of political economy, only to assemble a rationality that bears the unmistakable imprint of Bentham's pauper management. Under Chadwick we find, in connection with a medical discourse and a science of police, the elaboration of a new preventive regime that would put Bentham's distinction between poverty and indigence to work by locating those conditions and behaviours that were thought to transform the natural state of poverty into one of indigence.

The liberal government of poverty is therefore conceived as a series of preventive measures for creating a new sphere of 'civil individuality' – it would fabricate a space of individual autonomy by incorporating self-responsibility and familial duty among the lives of the propertyless population, and embody the minimisation of state action according to principles of police and political economy. But the new domain of state action is not one of complete withdraw from matters of relief. Liberal administration redefines the field of state action according to the natural necessity of wage-labour, and the centralisation and bureaucratisation of relief. These two axes of liberal administration – the centralisation of relief and the politics of conduct – were, by the early nineteenth century, implemented with brutal efficiency, giving birth to a legacy that is still evident among the reform strategies of 'advanced' liberal government: regulating the conduct of the poor to meet the exigencies of globally competitive labour markets.

Conclusion

To summarise the terrain covered so far: I began the chapter with a recent event in Australian welfare politics which marks a redefinition of modern citizenship. The 'event of conditionality' signals a transformation from universal entitlements to a form of citizenship that is now conditional on participation. The relationship between this event and the one I have investigated in this chapter – Dean's event of pauperism – is not one of resemblance but signals the tactical reactivation of early liberal discourses which seek labour market reform by transforming the moral and ethical capacities of poor citizens. The two events are linked to offer fresh perspectives on how advanced liberal rationalities address the crisis of the welfare state: that is, by deploying a politics of conduct that

confers to the poor a demoralised and pathological identity; by assembling a preventive regime of human technologies that seek to act on the character and conditions that produce idleness and dependency; and subsequently remoralise the poor by reinserting them into circuits of flexible wage-labour. The conditions of possibility for these contemporary strategies of welfare reform are located in the transformation of nineteenth century liberal government of poverty.

The *invention* of poverty is located at the intersection of several emerging themes: the principles of population prefigure the natural disequilibrium between population growth and subsistence; the transformation of economic discourse effects a new link between wealth and the ‘iron laws’ of nature and labour; the transformation of ‘the Poor’ is now associated with a natural, general condition of population, capital and subsistence; and lastly the collapse of the mercantilist ‘police of the poor’ leads to the emergence of a preventive regime for the liberal government of poverty. An administrative discourse of poor law reform found within the idea of poverty the practical and prescriptive means of relieving the crisis of poor-relief by combining two complementary and antithetical rationalities: the Malthusian rationality of anti-government and the total government of Benthamite administration. Together, these intellectual themes provided the epistemological conditions for the emergence of economic liberalism.

The event of pauperism confirms Polanyi’s observation that economic liberalism was not a gradual and spontaneous emancipation of the economic sphere from governmental control, but the active partitioning between poverty as a natural domain of scarcity and pauperism as a field of dangerous and degenerate behaviours. The Poor law of 1834 was pivotal in operationalising this distinction. Bentham’s principle of less eligibility and Malthus’ thesis of natural scarcity would reinvent the dual function of the workhouse: on one hand, it became a technique of relief for the impotent and destitute; on the other, it embodied a deterrent function for driving the able-bodied poor back into the sphere of independent labour. It was this conceptual separation between poverty and pauperism that successfully imposed the minimum conditions for wage-labour. After 1834, liberal government implemented new mechanisms with which to encourage an ethic of personal

and familial responsibility. On one side, the workhouse was as a symbol of punishment for those unable or unwilling to labour for their own subsistence; on the other, a new preventive police would seek to detect and avert the conditions in which poverty descended into pauperism. Under these new techniques of security, the partition of pauperism and poverty is understood in more relative terms, in which case everything that amounts to an opposition to independent wage-labour is located among the complex conditions of pauperism: the lives of the labouring populations, their working and living conditions, their habits and domestic economy.

Here we face something of a paradox of liberalism. The principle of minimum government and self-rule would seem to be at odds with the establishment of a central apparatus of state administration, and the assembling of a preventive police technology for the reduction of pauperism. Following Polanyi's thesis, however, this apparent contradiction was reconciled by the installation of various mechanisms of security and control, and the invention of certain limits of state assistance, that worked towards creating an administrable domain that was capable of self-regulation: the old structures and mechanisms of paternalistic authority had to be removed or transformed before a domain of self-regulation, autonomy and freedom could be installed.

The point of this historical excursion is to revisit the terrain by which civil rights of the propertyless, independent labourer first emerged, if only to view the events of today from a different vantage point, to illustrate its peculiarity rather than its necessity. In the next chapter, I conclude my historical analysis of Part I, and finalise a diagnosis of the politics of the present by revisiting some of the implications of this transformation of citizenship. This inevitably addresses an ethical question, one that asks: 'What kind of subjects are we required to become?'

6 Politics of the present

In preceding chapters I traced some of the linkages between recent Australian welfare politics and nineteenth century transformation of liberal government. The ‘event of pauperism’ does not signal an entirely discontinuous moment in the history of poor-relief, but a reconfiguration of older systems of knowledge concerning the police of the poor, political oeconomy, social medicine, population and paternalistic authority. What is assembled out of this period of legislative crisis and intellectual productivity is a new field of action by the state. Poverty is constituted alongside the discovery of society and the simultaneous withdraw of state responsibility at which point a new figure of social responsibility emerges from the self-regulating market – the life-conduct of the propertyless, independent labourer.

Genealogy illustrates not only the constitutive links between the event of pauperism and the current politics of welfare reform, but shows how a politics of conduct reactivates and reconfigures early liberal arguments about the moral and social responsibility of citizens. Arguably, what the past offers as a tactic for governing the present is the development of techniques for acting on the conduct of citizens from a distance, that is, by constituting subjects as responsible, autonomous and free. The new conditionality of citizenship and the moral sectors of community are linked to a new ethical dimension of government where subjects are to work on themselves by actualising their capacities for self-management, self-fulfilment and self-maximisation. In this chapter, the task is to finalise some of the links raised by a history of the present. But first I should review the historical terrain covered so far.

Historical overview

In Chapter 2, it was argued that ‘the crisis of the welfare state’ is understood in terms of recent transformations of liberal governance. Following the lead of other advanced liberal democracies, Australian themes of *social participation* and *mutual obligation* mark a shift from governing society to governing in terms of ‘community’. The task of

genealogy is to trace the relationship between the liberal discovery of society and the invention of poverty as the proper objects of state responsibility. Following the theme of the art of government, early liberalism discovers within the very idea of society an independent realm possessing its own naturalness and autonomy. Once confronted by this domain, and realising the futility of policing every aspect of it, liberalism emerges from a set of questions establishing the limits of government. The concept of 'population' is crucial to transforming political rationalities in terms of a biopolitical reality consigned to the administration of life. Government emerges not from an idea of how best to govern, but from the very field of problematisations that demand intervention. Here pauperism becomes one of the significant discoveries of liberal society in that it represented everything that society was opposed to: anti-social, unnatural and chaotic conduct. Furthermore, pauperism begins to raise the 'social question', a question that would eventually be turned against political economy, while at the same time preserving the natural, economic necessity of poverty. It is not poverty that is the evil of society, but the aberration of life that derives its subsistence from the labour of others. From the social analyses that begin to probe into the life of the poor, distinguishing between poverty and artificial indigence, morality becomes linked to economic thought. Thus, it was the discovery of a *politics of poverty* that elaborated the project of socialisation, and developed instruments for the constitution of society.

In more recent debates the idea of the 'social bond' is a new theme regarding the governability of liberal democracies. Neo-liberalism claims to resolve the problem of social fragmentation and welfare dependency caused by modern welfare systems, while its alternative, market individualism, is blamed for creating isolation and passivity in the West. The social bond re-emerges in the form of 'community', this time as a solution to both these crises by seeking to restore civic participation while fostering a new ethic of self-governance. The call to community governs by acting on existing local patterns and networks of self-governance, but does so through the moral and nostalgic language of civic regeneration. In Australian welfare debates, principles of moral obligation and ethical solidarity are combined in the concept of 'mutual obligation'. To reduce the vagaries of this term, and assess its functions more clearly, the concept of *risk* is

introduced to show how communitarian, associationalist and paternalist arguments work together to resolve the problem of enhancing security and liberty without at the same time increasing the powers of the state. We might understand the call to community, then, as a strategy for re-distributing and re-individualising risk, and new paternalism as a strategy for managing the most risky through punitive and moralistic behavioural controls. The politics of risk constitutes a new game of political power operating on the field of *ethico-politics*. In other words, the language of community, participation and obligation are technical means of acting on the self-techniques for responsible government, and the relations of obligation between oneself and others.

In Chapter 3, I show how welfare dependency is linked a whole array of pathologies ranging from chronic passivity to the transmittable qualities of inter-generational dependency. The epidemiological distribution of the latter is a calculated response for detecting and preventing the ‘spread of welfare dependency’. The task is one of historically locating the conditions in which a form of ‘social medicine’ became an instrument of the state for the calculation, maintenance and protection of the living. A discussion of biopolitics demonstrates how political power sought a biological knowledge of existence not to subjugate life but to increase its value and utility. We can trace the links between medical knowledge of populations and the new administration of life to a ‘medicine of epidemics’ in which a new gaze is linked to the medical control of populations. This required a ‘police’ apparatus capable of mediating and disciplining medical knowledge of the social body. Tracing the theme of ‘medical police’ identifies the inextricable links between medicine and government among the paternalistic regimes of eighteenth century German states. By the nineteenth century, this theme is completely exhausted as it no longer provides an adequate response to poverty and rapid urbanisation.

The practice of eighteenth century ‘noso-politics’ allows us to identify a specific form of medico-political activity which begins to problematise the sickness of the poor, marking a break from charitable aid for the ‘sick poor’ to the deployment of a general police of health. This police of health would specify the final goal of social medicine, the

medicalisation of the poor, a development that begins to coalesce in nineteenth century England. It was the development of 'labour-force' medicine that identified the sickness of the poor in the relationship of the imperatives of labour to the needs of production. The Poor Law of 1834 essentially converted English medicine into a social medicine insofar as this law implied a medical control of the destitute. The medicalisation of the poor served two purposes: to augment the wealth of the nation by optimising the health of the labour force, but in another sense it guaranteed the poor would no longer constitute a medical danger to the rest of the population. This was the objective of the 'New Poor Law': medicalisation of the poor would enforce a system of obligatory medical controls in exchange for state assistance. The discovery of pauperism is linked to 'preventive medicine' which now seeks to act on the very conditions and circumstances that convert poverty into indigence. These are the major objectives of the public health movement in mid-nineteenth century Britain: the elaboration of an apparatus of security for augmenting the health and welfare of the population, and subjecting the pauper to medical control and assistance.

The historical constitution of medical knowledge bears important implications for a diagnosis of the present. Firstly, it illustrates the diverse and technical links between medicine and government: medicine is not only an instrument for the calculation and optimisation of the social body, but constitutive of the very idea of society. Secondly, the discovery of pauperism is inseparable from the medical activity that begins to inquire into the social, physical and moral conditions that give rise to pauperism. Today medical knowledge is employed as a preventive regime for the calculation, prevention and observation of those who pose the greatest risk of dependence. Just as nineteenth century noso-politics inscribed 'the sickness of the poor' in the imperative of labour to the needs of production, so too, a medical knowledge of dependency specifies the conditions under which the 'active citizen' is transformed into the 'welfare dependent'. But the picture today is diffuse and complex: medical discourses now circulate among supervisory regimes and psychological techniques for transforming dependency into active participation. New paternalist reforms explicitly draw from a psychological knowledge of the poor. The emergence of case management in the mid-90's in Australia confirms this

move with the installation of pastoral techniques of observation, confession and advising: a therapeutic model of supervision acts on the behavioural and cognitive determinates of dependency. Helping people change their personal habits and cope with personal problems is central to helping recipients become 'job-ready'. As medical experts take up their role as masters of lifestyle, the case-manager emerges as an expert in the arts of participation.

That post-welfare regimes turn to medicalising techniques of observation and regulation is even more apparent in the contemporary management of risk. New technologies for the calculation of risk employ *clinical* and *profiled* forms of assessment to isolate and target high-risk recipients among sub-populations. Accordingly, the poor are no longer equal entities, but subject to more elaborate and technical procedures for distinguishing the deserving from the undeserving. The rise of computer modelling, for instance, seeks to identify 'moral hazards' and 'poverty traps' as welfare regimes employ more differentiated and rationalised forms of targeted intervention. This cross-fertilisation between medical discourse and risk management allows us to re-examine the concept 'mutual obligation' in a new light. On one side, the obligation of government as service providers is to minimise risk by safeguarding financial capital through targeted intervention of the most risky; on the other side, governments are now tempted to re-individualise risk and responsibility by invoking the implicit social contract between citizen and government. In other words, the most risky are managed in terms of increasingly differentiated, intensive and electronic modes of assessment (profiling), while the moral and contractual aspects of service delivery ensure that recipients are increasingly responsible for managing their own risks (obligation).

In Chapter 4, I begin with the present problem of dependency as the calculation of the deservingness of the poor. Arguably, present strategies of welfare reform in Australia de-emphasise poverty as a legitimate site of contestation and debate by focusing on the conduct of recipients. For instance, the reactivation of pauperism in the form of welfare dependency conjures powerful stereotypes of an abject sector of the population comprised of blameworthy citizens who deliberately and selfishly abuse the social

security system. The historical move here is to revisit the 'discourse of the poor' as a systematic distribution of statements which sought to classify and link the poor to a set of practical solutions for the proper administration of the nation. The administrative crisis of the late eighteenth century was exacerbated by this discourse of the poor, with its empty juridical taxonomy, and its mercantilist solutions for setting the poor to work. An important theme among these statements is the 'problem of idleness'.

A more detailed examination of idleness presents a number of paradoxes. For instance, it is neither clear nor self-evident that it was exclusively the problem of the poor; in fact various forms of idleness are identified among the customs of the wealthier classes, the inducements of the alehouse, practices of consumption and entertainment, as well as sharp fluctuations of eighteenth century employment. Nonetheless, mercantilist problematisations of the poor instigated various measures for fixing the poor to the apparatus of production. Historical examination suggests that idleness was a diffuse and complex phenomenon, and not simply a matter of converting idleness into industry, but, as Defoe observed, a matter of regulating those processes that converted industry into idleness. The war against idleness is never resolved by a mercantilist police of the poor. It is not until the emergence of nineteenth century 'preventive police', embodied in the regulations of magistrates, justices of the peace and licensing laws, that modes of liberal government begin to act on the character and conditions that produce sloth and urban decay.

As analysis turns to the present, we find the problem of idleness continues to play an important role among contemporary welfare debates. The recent appearance of dependency signals the entry of moral/psychological technologies in the reconstruction of conduct. In America, dependency encompasses a whole range of pathologies linked to addiction. By the 1980's it is enshrined as an official psychopathology, specifying a refined diagnostic tool for problematising subjectivity in terms of pathologies of will. The result is that all legal-political and economic relations of dependency now vanish in the conduct of individuals. This new discourse of dependency enters welfare debates in the 80's and 90's, where it is argued on psychological grounds that increased reliance on

benefits and entitlements erodes motivation and self-esteem. The recent shift in debates confirms poverty is no longer a defensible, general condition of deprivation, but overshadowed by a contemptible behavioural syndrome.

In Chapter 5, it was argued that a conception of poverty had to first displace the mercantilist 'discourse of the poor'. The task is to reconstruct the transformation of liberal government out of which a definite concept of poverty emerges. The 'event of pauperism' traces the intersecting themes of population, economy, pauperism and police during a climate of problematisation characterised by paralysis and creativity. The new conception of poverty not only specifies a general condition of populations but fixes the conduct of the propertyless, able-bodied male to the twin ideals of wage-labour and familial responsibility. This was the central objective of the New Poor Law, abolishing out-door relief to able-bodied men signalled the state's responsibility for assisting those legitimately excluded from wage-labour, namely, women and children. In support of Polanyi's thesis, then, economic liberalism establishes a national labour market by sealing off poverty (as the natural state of labouring for subsistence) from pauperism (as the unnatural state of relying on the labour of others for subsistence), to inscribe the ethical ideals by which a new form of labourer would appear the nominal agent, the independent labourer. The possibility of modern social welfare is located among those conditions in which pauperism plays a technical role in the re-formation of wage-labour.

We are now in a position to recover an alternative reading of contemporary welfare politics: the discovery of welfare dependency draws from the respectability of psychological knowledge for re-circulating early liberal discourses of pauperism. The political tactic is to visibilise this binary alignment between pathology and wage-labour and reactivate the collective memories and popular fears of pauperism. The unique linkage made possible in the early nineteenth century is that pauperism is no longer simply a medical or moral threat to the collective, but a parasite that feeds off the collective fate of a population: pauperism is the anti-thesis of wage-labour, moral decency and social responsibility. In short, pauperism is an aberration to *society*. Before the innovations of Smith, Ricardo, Malthus and Bentham only futile efforts had been

made to fix the poor to the apparatus of production, but the event of pauperism *reminds* us, and shows us *how*, morality was systematically grafted onto a new economic domain. In Australia at present, we find a strengthening of this alignment between pathology and work to execute two broad strategies: to create an 'active society' by removing the systemic passivity of income support, and inscribe the ethical ideals of self-government by reconstructing the psychological capacities of recipients to engage in flexible wage-labour.

But a diagnosis of the politics of the present would be somewhat incomplete without asking ourselves what are the costs of our contemporary freedom? What is the price, and who pays the price, for failing to act as free, autonomous subjects? And what is the fate of those who fail to comply with their contractual obligations? These questions have important implications for current debates between poverty and what has earlier been described as the politics of life, ethico-politics. Only very recently have these debates re-emerged in Australia to show how neo-liberal rationalities attempt to out-manoeuvre and out-flank traditional discourses of relative and structural deprivation. As such, it has become more difficult to mobilise 'the social' as a critique of political economy without also inferring an autonomous psychological agent who has been programmed into the very features of this territory. Arguably, a neo-classical sociology and an individual social psychology are appropriated by advanced liberal rationalities in that they preserve a logical separation between 'individual' and 'society'. This dualism not only underpins the logic of contemporary citizenship, but acts as an obstacle for enhancing the contestability of powers and judgements over the conducts and forms of life. In the next section, I briefly examine *how* contemporary politics of conduct give rise to novel strategies of control which seek to instrumentalise a new kind of freedom.

Societies of control

In a short piece titled, *Postscript on the Societies of Control*, Deleuze outlines a series of hypotheses for the transformation of power which no longer inhere within the 'environments of enclosure' analysed by Foucault – family, factory, school, prison, hospital – the spaces and forces composing the 'disciplinary society' of the eighteenth

and nineteenth centuries. But since the twentieth century, and accelerating after the Second World War, we find a generalised crisis of these institutional spaces:

The administrations in charge never cease announcing supposedly necessary reforms: to reform schools, to reform industries, hospitals, the armed forces, prisons. But everyone knows that these institutions are finished, whatever the length of their expiration periods. It's only a matter of administering their last rites and keeping people employed until the installation of the new forces knocking at the door. These are the *societies of control*, which are in the process of replacing disciplinary societies (Deleuze, 1995, p.178).

It would seem that new mechanisms of control are required to address the breakdown of these institutions, the fragmentation of families, the failure of schools and hospitals, and to keep pace with, and in check of, societies which are ever increasingly described in terms of change and changeability. The problem of the disciplinary societies is one of assembling forces and installing effective mechanisms of control capable of fixing itself to, or intervening in, an open environment of continuous variation.

If disciplinary societies confined the subjects of institutions it was because power operated in such a way as to individualise and collectivise; the individual was constituted in terms of his or her position within a mass – the ‘worker’, the ‘mother’, the ‘doctor’, the ‘patient’. But in societies of control one’s position within an enclosure or mass is not the only means of constituting an individual, ‘what is important is no longer the signature or a number, but a code: the code is a *password*, while on the other hand disciplinary societies are regulated by *watchwords*... the numerical language of control is made of codes that mark access to information, or reject it’ (Deleuze, 1995, p.179). The ‘man of control’ is treated as a dynamic element passing through the free flowing nodes and circuits of a continuous network. Within this new informational terrain of forces, it no longer makes sense to simply ‘regulate’ conduct, as if conduct inhered in the spaces of a fixed *mould* or enclosure, but rather control is now *immanent* to all places through which conduct passes. Hence, control society is one of constant *modulation* that inheres in the very practices and activities that shape human conduct. Modulation is like ‘a self-deforming cast that will continuously change from one moment to the other’ (Deleuze, p.178), meaning, control is a metastable state coexisting within continuous practices of transformation. One is now expected to undergo perpetual training, lifelong learning,

continuous self-assessment, constant incitement to self-improvement, and interminable risk management. In societies of control the subject is always an unfinished project.

In the disciplinary society it was the individual/mass couplet that formed the discrete targets of power as it assembled an administrable domain around the family and the factory, and for those less fortunate, the workhouse. But Deleuze suggests that in societies of control we are no longer even dealing with individuals with a fixed personality, or a definitive moral character, rather individuals have given way to 'dividuals' defined in terms of their *capacity to change or mutate into potential states of being*. The subject is no longer centralised or interiorised, but dispersed and coextensive with networks of information – banking and credit records, loan histories, educational attainments, lifestyle preferences, future aspirations – the subject is coded in terms of their access to information, and assessed in terms of their ability to transform into future states of marketability and creditability. As Deleuze observes, 'control is short-term and of rapid states of turnover, but also continuous and without limit, while discipline was of long duration, infinite and discontinuous'. Among these unlimited circuits of dispersion and transformation, the subject is 'designed into' new networks of continuous control, monitoring and reciprocal obligation: 'Man is no longer man enclosed, but a man in debt' (p.181).

But rather than take Deleuze's hypotheses as marking a distinct shift between old and new, we could think of these modifications of power as marking out possibilities for new kinds of analysis. Recent discussions in cultural and social theory suggest the role of 'affective modulation'¹⁴⁰ (Massumi, 1996, 1998, 2000) and continuous flows of consumption and interaction are symptoms of new strategies of control (Hardt, 1998; Rose, 1999a). We are encouraged to look beyond the institutional space to understand how conduct is shaped via more affective networks of control. The politics of the present

¹⁴⁰ In Massumi's work cultural theory is engaged in rethinking the political in terms of the relational and affective dimension of collective belonging and becoming. 'Affect' describes the way knowledge-practices become both materialized and effective *through the body* – i.e. through intensity, emotionality, via an ethics of vitality. Massumi (2000) combines the Deleuzian concepts of modulation and affect to engage in a political analysis that recognizes subjectivity as the *empirical field* by which to gauge the effects of political power. 'Affective modulation' specifies the constitutive role of knowledge-practices via modification of intensities of feelings, lending itself to an *ecological* conception of power relations.

is not a new regime of power, but the reconfiguration of old and new formations of control. The task is to apply such hypotheses to a diagnosis of post-welfare regimes. But inasmuch as this would entail a diagnosis of the installation of new technologies and programmes for the 'conduct of conduct', our task is also to examine what kind of effects they produce. This is a matter of subjectification: what new subjectivities, life-conducts and ethical practices of self-formation do these technologies give rise to? I will return to these issues later, but for the moment I want to examine the emergence of both old and new 'control strategies' as they converge around recent problematisations of social welfare.

Strategies of exclusion

We can crudely distinguish between two kinds of control strategies: those of inclusion and exclusion. It is particularly strategies of the latter kind that apply to the governance of welfare systems as they attempt to manage the security of excluded individuals and sectors. But following Rose's (1999a) advice we can differentiate the control of exclusion further: on the one hand there are strategies which seek to reintegrate the excluded through the ethical principle of 'activity', and, on the other, there are strategies which accept the inevitability of exclusion for certain individuals and groups, and manage problematic sectors and 'anti-citizens' through measures which seek to neutralise the danger or cost they pose to others.

In understanding contemporary politics of exclusion we are reminded of Bentham's principles of pauper management which attempted to illuminate a domain of 'moral abyss', to give form to the those 'whose condition shuns the light'. But the Table of Pauperism was not only an attempt to bring into view those degraded forms of life that made up the possible 'Cases Calling for Relief', but was, in representational form, an act of force, a means of bringing-into-being the despicable, self-abasing forms of subjectivity. The Table was an act of *abjection*¹⁴¹. By naming each pauper case, specifying their causes, their possible modes of relief, Bentham effectively constituted an

¹⁴¹ Here I draw from Rose's use of the term 'abjection', who in turn adopts it from Judith Butler, to emphasise the performative function of language that designates and creates 'those "unlivable" and "uninhabitable" zones of social life' (Rose, 1999a, p.253; Butler, 1993, p.3).

extra-political zone of all the ‘unlivable’ forms existing outside the life-conduct of independent labour. This ‘tableau of abjection’ was not uncommon to the political rationalities of early liberal government which negatively defined civil society by virtue of creating a sphere of life-conduct that was the anti-thesis of its values. And it would seem that among all those attempts to invent ‘society’, and define the values and rights of universal citizenship, it was necessary to eliminate those who fail to qualify: the vagrant, the pauper, the woman, the Jew, the African, the Aboriginal, the unemployable, etc. One could say that since the nineteenth century there has always been an implicit moral contract granting privileges in return for the fulfilment of obligations of conduct. Those who failed to live up to these obligations through defects of character or will were denied the rights of citizenship. So, how might we understand the present in terms of these practices of abjection?

In Chapters 3 and 4, I reviewed the debates over universal versus selective welfare benefits. The post-war welfare state established universal provisions, though an implicit expectation was that the disadvantaged would, by their own industry, make the best of this assistance by re-entering the world of paid work. In Australia, this legacy of universal provision has been coined by Frank Castles (1985) as the ‘wage earners’ welfare state’ to emphasise how welfare provision serves as a government reward offered in return for citizen’s participation in the labour market. But towards the close of the twentieth century we find the rights and entitlements of welfare are increasingly criticised in terms of the systemic dependency they created. These arguments first emerged in the United States. In *Losing Ground* Charles Murray (1984) argued that provision for the poor created the poor. The welfare dependent was, after all, a rational calculating subject who estimated that he or she was better off not working, an argument that is retained in Bentham’s utilitarian justification for ‘less eligibility’. Lawrence Mead, on the other hand, argued that it was not benefits in themselves that created dependency, but the fact that they were framed as ‘entitlements’, meaning, assistance was unconditional despite the behaviour of the client. Where the former presupposes a rational, calculating subject, the latter posits a psychological mentality of the poor. The systemic dependency of American welfare effectively stripped the poor of their self-esteem, self-respect and self-

reliance, creating a degraded underclass. Reminiscent of Colquhoun's arguments linking pauperism to manifestations of crime and vice, the picture that begins to emerge from America in the late seventies and early eighties is one of moral decay – the wastelands, the ghetto, the underground economy, made up of delinquents, local hoods, alcoholics, de-institutionalised psych patients and black single mothers.

Notions of exclusion begin to consolidate among British and European rationalities in the mid-80's. In France, both Right and Communist opposition to the Socialist Government blamed rising unemployment and inequality on 'the new poverty'. In response to this opposition, the Government began to use the term 'exclusion' to describe the growing instability of social bonds – family instability, single-member households, social isolation and the decline of class solidarity based on unions, working-class neighbourhoods and social networks – equated with the breakdown of social cohesion through market individualism, and the 'social polyphony of post-modern society' (Silver, 1994, pp.532-35). In Britain the welfare state was subject to moral problematisation, specifying the failure of individual capacities to engage in responsible self-management (Rose, 1999a). Exclusion is the product of both European and American problematisations relating to the breakdown of traditional structures of solidarity and sociality¹⁴². A solution would emerge somewhat spontaneously in the form of 'active' citizenship. The emerging rationalities of European, American, Australian and New Zealand parties and institutions of the centre-left since the 80's now promote the ethical language of activity as a means of autonomising the domain of government. On the one side we have activity, and on the other, exclusion.

¹⁴² Levitas (1998) argues that 'social exclusion' is poised between two main discourses. The first emphasises the importance of moral integration and social cohesion, and regards the economy and the labour market as the means by which this is achieved. The second draws from American arguments that lay claim to the existence of an 'underclass', specifying the putative moral, cultural and behavioural deficiencies of the excluded, the likes of which strongly resemble Murray's culture of dependency.

Despite both its expansive and contradictory applications¹⁴³, exclusion emerges as a surprisingly consistent object across the spectrum of political rationalities: abject sectors, groups or persons are now dispersed, fragmented and disconnected; they lack the means of representing themselves, and comprise a marginalised body of people who are unable or unwilling to manage themselves. Either way, welfare rationalities mark a shift from the analytics of abjection to the language of exclusion (Rose, 1999a). Poverty is merely a single determinate among the multifarious dimensions of social exclusion as new ways are sought to conceptualise the social ills of market individualism and relative deprivation. Social problems are now recast as the problems of 'the excluded'. The dominant solution is one of counteracting exclusion with strategies of 'inclusion'. These initiatives are particularly evident among Australian welfare politics. The McClure Report, for instance, cites 'social and economic exclusion' as the central goal of reform, whereby strategies of 'social and economic participation' emerge as the central strategy by which recipients are re-inserted into circuits of activity and community (2000b, pp.4-5, 32, 66).

Arguably, concepts of mutual obligation and participation ensure the excluded are, firstly, captured within the implicit demands of the social contract which impose a moral obligation to self-improvement; and, secondly, the excluded are reassembled in terms of their ethical capacities to engage in autonomous and enterprising conduct¹⁴⁴. Outside these circuits of inclusion lie alternative sectors of abjection, territorialized in terms of their deviance from the values, norms and imperatives of responsible, moral conduct. As Rose observes, the new imagination of these excluded spaces constitute 'an array of

¹⁴³ Given its relatively diffuse definitional framework, the language of exclusion is amenable to different political uses. The lack of conceptual specificity has generated some concern among recent commentators (Levitas, 1996, 1998; Bowring, 2000) who believe the expansive, dynamic and multi-dimensional framework of 'social exclusion' is easily appropriated by opposing political interests. An interpretation of 'multiple hardships', for example, might take unemployment, low levels of literacy and skill, poor health and poverty as indicators of moral failure; on the other hand, the focus on community disintegration, economic deprivation and labour-market fluctuations suggest more structural concerns.

¹⁴⁴ These new ethical and moral themes of re-integration suggest the excluded are 're-unified ethically and spatially' (Rose, 1999a, p.259). That is to say, they are re-unified ethically in that they are accorded an active status in relation to themselves, and programmed with capacities necessary for achieving 'inclusion' through continuous self-management. But they are also re-unified spatially by virtue of occupying a new marginalised territory of conduct, the sectors of moral and urban decay, of fragmented communities occupied by government housing, single-parent families and ethnic minorities.

micro-sectors, micro-cultures of non-citizens, failed citizens, anti-citizens, consisting of those who are unable or unwilling to enterprise their lives or manage their own risk, incapable of exercising responsible self-government, attached either to no moral community or to a community of anti-morality' (1999a, p.259). In the next section, I want to examine technologies that seek to re-integrate the excluded into circuits of activity and community.

Control technologies

Among contemporary welfare politics, diverse micro-sectors of abjection have appeared in terms of their exclusion from the moral and emotional networks of 'community', and from the very kind of ethical conduct required for 'economic and social participation'. The reframing of these sectors of moral decay, worklessness, dependency and social fragmentation has given rise to a new territory of control that seeks to manage these micro-sectors through strategies of inclusion. New technologies and agents are charged with the task of returning these anti-citizens to the world of activity and community, and restoring full citizenship rights. What I call the 'medicalisation of welfare' is a nominalistic perspective for describing a new configuration of control which has emerged in the wake of the post-war welfare state, constituting a diverse field of technologies for governing the conduct of the excluded. There are two technologies I wish to briefly diagnose: 'risk' and 'psychology'.

Risk

After the Poor Law of 1834, the administration of poor-relief assembled a new terrain of governance which became increasingly bureaucratised and accountable to central government. This new field of governance required technologies for acting upon the relations by which poverty was transformed into indigence, and required the appointment of a national board of commissioners, poor law officials, sanitary agents and new methods of record keeping, for the detailed assessment of the conditions of the poor. Though the concept of risk had not yet emerged as a technique of governance, the link between a central apparatus of the state and the pauperising conditions and habits of the poor was a necessary condition for the 'prevention and detection' of pauperism. It is

among these diverse conditions that we can place the birth of contemporary rationalities and practices of social welfare.

Just as nineteenth technologies of governance elicited a form of life compatible with independent labour, contemporary forms of governance also seek to induce active forms of participation by managing the risk of those who fail to engage in autonomous conduct. What is common to both nineteenth century and present regimes of governance is the development of strategies for the calculation and intervention of various abject sub-populations. Post-welfare regimes are diagnosed in terms of a new configuration of control where a whole array of agencies and technologies – case managers, psychologists, social workers, policy-makers, administrators and computer technicians – become connected through circuits of surveillance and communication to minimise the riskiness of the excluded. Common to these strategies of control are methods of monitoring and screening to remove or minimise the pathologies of these abject sectors. Risk management opens up multiple points of visibility for the mobilisation of more refined strategies of intervention; it ensures that resources are rationalised for those most ‘in need’, and that policies are modified and designed around different sectors and profiles of risk. As Rose argues, the logics of risk are driven by the ‘technological imperative to tame uncertainty and master hazard’ (Rose, 1999a, p.260). In Australia, techniques of risk management have found their way into policy manuals for welfare agencies, among psychiatric and psychological practices, as well as the calculation of epidemiological risk of future deviance and pathologies (Dean, 1995; McDonald et. al., 2003; Henman & Adler, 2003).

Surveillance plays an important role among the new techniques for managing micro sectors of risk. The collection, re-grouping, prioritisation and re-distribution of information relevant to risk-based assessment have become a key rationality of neo-liberal welfare reform. In Chapter 3, I discussed how welfare programmes since the 80’s operated through modes of ‘clinical’ risk government in targeting long-term unemployment. During the mid 80’s and late 90’s the dominant political discourse shaping social security policy was targeting those most in need, representing an

intensification of a clinical mode of risk government. However, the introduction of advanced information and computer technologies has accelerated the tendency to calculate the complexity of changes occurring throughout the life-course of recipients. Furthermore, the emergence of the 'flexible labour market' rendered manual administration prohibitive, resulting in the electronic management of case records and client histories of activity. Governmental rationalities and ICTs are said to be mutually constitutive in shaping the government of welfare recipients which, in turn, have reinforced risk discourses (Henman & Adler, 2001).

These technological changes have led to the intensification of 'profiled' risk through the implementation of complex statistical modelling and 'accurate profiling tools' for the continuous management of risky sub-populations. Computer technology facilitates a move away from rationalities which treat each individual of the population equally, to more differentiated forms of governance. Among profiled forms of risk government, we find the inclusion of more personal, psychological attributes of long and short term unemployment to identify attributes involving greater probabilities of dependency; 'at risk' individuals are those with characteristics that have higher correlations with the behaviours of long-term unemployment. Profiling techniques enable the identification of citizens who require more intensive management and support. Arguably, computer technology has facilitated the management of increasingly complex forms of data, and the incorporation of psychometric variables of conduct, to calculate the riskiness of individuals across thresholds of age, ethnicity, personality and activity.

More recently, governmental rationalities have sought to reorganise the field of welfare administration to make it more amenable to risk management. This is exemplified by the establishment of the Job Network in 1998 which, in the language of government, was devised in order to provide better 'labour market assistance' (OECD, 2001b). The Job Network consists of an integrated information technology system linking Centrelink, the DEWR (Department of Employment and Workplace Relations) and Job Network members. The complex administrative structure of the Job Network provides three types of services to the unemployed with increasing levels of intensity: job matching, job

search training and intensive assistance. New applicants are assessed in terms of the JSCI (Job Seeker Classification Instrument) by Centrelink officers and a set of 'best practice' protocols (standardised set of questions) by which the claimant's level of entitlement is calculated¹⁴⁵. Successful applicants are then added to the Job Network caseload list which can be accessed by Job Network providers who can electronically request the Centrelink system to generate a letter to the unemployed person advising them of their assessment and of several Job Network agencies in their local area.

Curiously, where risk-based assessment has led to more targeted forms of assistance there has also been a disproportionate rise in more punitive measures of control. One clear example is how current practices of electronic surveillance have led to the massive increase in 'breaching' practices whereby recipients are penalised for failing to comply with their contractual obligations – from failing to make a scheduled appointment with relevant authorities ('activity test failure') to committing acts of 'welfare fraud'. A joint research paper by the National Welfare Rights Network and ACOSS showed a dramatic increase in penalties by 250% (302,000) between 1997-2000, and an increase of Activity Test breaches by 291% for the same period. 'Many penalties', they claim, 'are being imposed improperly or indiscriminately' as evidenced by the fact that an *additional* 172,000 penalties were issued by Centrelink and then later revoked (ACOSS, 2000, pp.1-2). The following year the situation had worsened: a 33% increase in breaches for the 8 month period between July 2000 and February 2001 showed a further 232,400 penalties were imposed, representing a 189% increase over the past three years from June 1998 (ACOSS, 2001, p.1).

¹⁴⁵ The JSCI incorporates risk-based rationalities by calculating a score in relation to 18 criteria of risk factors. Those assessed as Low risk are provided with job matching services, while those evaluated as Medium to High risk are provided with 'intensive assistance'. In addition, the JSCI is supplemented by a secondary classification, a 'special needs assessment', which is usually undertaken by an occupational psychologist. In terms of the transformation of administrative practices, McDonald et al. (2003) argue that case-handling is increasingly managed at the level of information rather than subjective forms of face-to-face assessment: 'The JSCI application process, by being heavily proceduralized and automated, theoretically minimised the discretionary capacity on the part of Centrelink employees. Decisions are made on the basis of entering data into computer programmes. In this way, the traditional human service practice of 'street-level bureaucracy' is partly transformed into 'screen-level bureaucracy', as infocratic means prevent bureaucrats from manipulating information streams between the organisation and client. The 'knowledge' created by and represented in the JSCI, embedded in the software, is considered superior because it is based on 'objective' calculations rather than subjective assessments; indeed, minimising what is known as the 'dead weight costs' (2003, pp.507-8).

Risk-based assessment would seem to be a more effective tool in distinguishing the deserving from the undeserving poor, an exercise that is not only morally praiseworthy but economically beneficial¹⁴⁶. Those who represent the greatest risk and who receive the greatest number of breaches are also the most vulnerable. According to the National Welfare Rights Network (2002), young people under the age of 25 represented 57% of all Activity Test breaches, while homeless people were 'particularly affected' due to inconsistencies in receiving or delays in returning Centrelink or Job Network letters (ACOSS, 2000, p.1). Kinnear (2002) argues the young are particularly vulnerable since they are perceived by the public as less deserving than mature-aged jobseekers who are 'victims' of hard times. At any rate, excessive breaching of older unemployed people would undermine public support for mutual obligation principles. On the surface, managing the most risky is an effective way of removing incentives for those of whom receipt is a 'lifestyle choice' or a form of 'learned dependency'. What belies these commonsense strategies of 'tough love', however, is an authoritarian dimension that punishes the most vulnerable sectors of the population¹⁴⁷. Claimants who fall under the ambit of 'intensive assistance' are supervised more intensely, are discharged more letters electronically, required to attend more meetings and incur a higher risk of breaching than claimants of low to moderate risk.

In one sense, the reorganisation of control strategies around rationalities of risk seek to monitor, differentiate and prioritise sub-populations in order to rationalise service

¹⁴⁶ ACOSS (2001) estimated that \$258.8 million worth of penalties were inflicted during the 2000-2001 financial year, delivering a windfall to the government at the expense of the unemployed and their dependants. Ferguson (2002) and Mendes (2001) argue that the 1.7 billion in gross funding allocated over four years would only equate to approx. \$770 million after the Commonwealth recovered savings from the imposition of breaches.

¹⁴⁷ ACOSS provide further details of people losing their cars, homes, families and even public transport concessions. In criminal cases, prosecutors must prove 'beyond a reasonable doubt' that offences have been committed, yet the onus of proof falls upon the unemployed to convince agency officials that they have a 'reasonable excuse' for not complying with a rule. By far the biggest increase in penalties came from recommendations made by Network agencies, charities and private companies with government contracts to administer the dole system, which now consists of closely monitoring the unemployed and pushing them into jobs, no matter how poorly-paid, insecure, part-time or temporary. Under such contracts, it is further claimed that there are in fact incentives to breach clients who are difficult to place, removing them from the agency to make way for potentially more profitable referrals from Centrelink (NWRN, 2002; Kerr, et al., 2002; Kerr & Savelsberg, 2003)

delivery – instruments like the JCSI exemplify strategies of risk-assessment which determine the kind of eligibility of services for those who are, after all, incapable of managing their own risk. The creation of the Job Network not only presumably facilitates ‘better’ case management through profiling tools and individualised service delivery, but allows more effective and immediate forms of electronic surveillance of client databases and caseloads. Surveillance, despite its invasive and totalitarian implications, is not itself an evil; the concern is how information is *morally* coded and then acted upon by central bureaucratic authorities. Implicit to these strategies of exclusion is the moral assumption that the excluded are abject citizens who are potentially at risk of defaulting on their contractual obligations. The category of ‘high risk’ carries with it strong implications that subjects are unwilling or unable to manage their own risk, and capable of pathological deviation from the norms of civility and activity.

This brings us to the darker side of risk. Under this new regime of poor management, the risky subject is one who must continually demonstrate obedience to authority, who *must not* deviate or transgress the norms of active conduct. The concept of risk already implies that assistance is more intensely governed according to calculations of potential abjection. Risk-as-pathology also invites new procedures of discipline. ‘Breaching’ is certainly one example of punishment that seeks to elicit desired forms of cooperation. But modern welfare is also a system of *modulation* in the sense that advanced information systems are designed into the very networks of activity – the identification of the potentially risky, the increasing emphasis upon contractual case management, electronically tracking behaviour, scheduling meetings and setting targets – constitute a form of surveillance that continually signifies that assistance is conditional upon conduct. The curious effectivity of risk is that it renders a kind of behaviourism automatic; it continually flags the conditional access to support, emphasising the precarious links between behaviour and assistance. By acting on these flows of information, the claimant must demonstrate the capacity to be rational, compliant, reflexive, prudential and enterprising. Behaviour must perpetually demonstrate the absence of risk, or, at least, the capacity to manage one’s risk responsibly. Arguably, the logics of risk are based on a new form of objective measurement for the continuous management of the excluded.

Psychology

In Bentham's vision of the Panopticon we are reminded of the automatic functioning of power which, through the principle of central inspection, enabled the watched inmate to become the principle of their own subjection. But how could power function automatically without relying on the architecture of the disciplinary enclosure? How might a principle of 'self-regulation' exist independently of these institutional spaces? A solution emerges in the form of a new discipline of knowledge that would link a theory of the psyche to various patterns and disturbances of conduct. Psychology was the discovery of late nineteenth century technologies of normalisation, but in the twentieth century, under the ambit of behaviourism, we find the elaboration of new techniques for linking authority to the imperatives of normative conduct. By the end of the twentieth century, we find a reworking of these techniques of normalisation. After having freed itself from medicine and psychiatry, psychology would be linked to new behavioural and cognitive techniques for the personal reformation of conduct. In Chapter 4, I reviewed how a 'psychology of the poor' was responsible for elaborating techniques for accessing the autonomy of individuals in terms of self-esteem, self-control and personal power alongside problematisations of those whose dependency exemplified a deficit of personal control and responsibility. This new behavioural and cognitive psychology would be freed from specific institutional spaces, becoming a set of highly transferable skills and techniques for acting on the conduct of others.

Among Australian welfare rationalities we find a new problematic of conduct which serves as the basis for ethically and morally reconstructing the capacities of the excluded. The deficiencies of the welfare dependent are a reformulation of the imperative of activity. This imperative of independent conduct is not entirely different from nineteenth century utilitarian liberalism which opted for state assistance, though it is clear that such assistance was not reserved for the able-bodied male. The new paternalism that currently informs welfare policies of mutual obligation similarly reject conservative, pro-market recommendations for the abolition of welfare but on rather different grounds of security. New paternalists reject the assumption that those who are dependent on welfare actually know how to be self-reliant, and argue on psychological grounds that individuals are not

always capable of exercising free choice in self-regarding and socially responsible ways. Society is expected to play some part in reconstructing the capacities of the excluded on the grounds that fragmentation, disadvantage and poor education have diminished autonomous conduct. What is required is a kind of 'moral education' and psychological re-training so that individuals might acquire the capacities, skills and competencies to practice autonomy. Anna Yeatman argues that such arguments represent 'a rediscovery of the social in the face of the specific kind of market failure that occurs when, for whatever reason, individuals cannot choose in self-regarding and socially responsible ways' (2000, p.160).

But what kind of social is mobilised under the concept of mutual obligation? Arguably, this reformulation of the social is one that corresponds to a form of paternalism inspired by a neo-Durkheimian version of Rousseau's paradox: the necessity of 'forcing individuals to be free'. Social life is conceived as the multiplicity of individual behaviours, motivations, competencies and skills, in which case individual choice is conceived as an unproblematic feature of individuality. It is not the case of problematising whether individuals are capable of exercising a preference or choice, but whether individuals are morally educated in ways that allow the exercise of choice to sustain oneself and society. The social is reformed as that of *community*, but this reformulation carries with it a neo-Durkheimian component that is invoked under the conception of mutual obligation. Durkheim argued that the voluntary dimension of the social contract functions in relation to, and behalf of, the social order, but only to the extent that it is composed of a normative compliance to the behaviours on which the social depends. Under the guise of community, this reterritorialisation of the social is viewed as immanent in individuals; if 'society' is reduced to an individual psychology it is because individual psychology itself has become imbued with the social. In other words, the good order and functioning of society is reducible to, and dependent on, the functioning of individuals. It is for this reason that social intervention now targets individuals' conduct¹⁴⁸.

¹⁴⁸ With the increasing salience of individual psychology, we find a corresponding retreat of the social which, as Yeatman argues, becomes increasingly more blurred and indistinct: 'The institutional and corporate features of society are no longer assumed to have an existence independent of how individuals

But Yeatman (2000) warns that the subject of mutual obligation and community remains shadowy. Arguably, the state is now ‘hollowed out’ because the social is radically individualised. The social becomes immanent in individual psychology but also the presence of the state becomes relatively indistinct as welfare moves from a standardised, universal, bureaucratic approach to a client-centred approach where the excluded are treated as consumers. Welfare is mediated by agents who adopt a flexible and customised approach where clients will become more aware of the case manager’s presence in the governance of their participation than of the larger role of the state in framing the security of life. It is for these reasons, then, that this nostalgic reinvention of community is mobilised to represent a somewhat nebulous sociality that makes individuality both necessary and possible. It is by appealing to individuals as discrete psychological entities – subjects capable of agency and choice – that makes the obligation of what individuals owe to each other possible in the form of community.

So how do psychological discourses operate in the management of the excluded? We already know since the mid-90’s mutual obligation programmes installed circuits of pastoral power which, in the name of governing ‘what is best’ for the excluded, individuals are required to enter a therapeutic relationship with a new kind of expert, the case manager. This is a reconfiguration of nineteenth century utilitarian themes of governance where paternalism denoted a relationship of dependency for those who were, for reasons of sex, race or social station, deemed incapable of exercising their contractual freedom. John Stuart Mill best exemplifies these kind of statements: ‘The lot of the poor, in all things which affect them collectively, should be regulated for them, not by them. They should not be required or encouraged to think for themselves, or give to their own reflection or forecast an influential voice in their own destiny. It is the duty of the higher classes to think for them... The relation between rich and poor should be... affectionate tutelage on the one side, respectful and grateful deference on the other’ (cited in

think and behave. It is this radical individualisation of social life that explains the salience of the contract metaphor in contemporary rhetoric. Because how individuals think and behave are the driving forces of how their relationships, connections, interdependencies and institutional life operate, it becomes supremely important that individuals ‘contract into’ their social engagements and commitments’ (Yeatman, 2000, pp.163-4).

Yeatman, 2000, pp.170-1). Among recent paternalistic statements, like those elaborated by Mead, we find the governance of the excluded is conflated with a psychological perception of those obstacles, interpersonal, pathological or otherwise, which interfere with the recipient's capacity for exercising autonomy. But beyond the political rhetoric that insists on conflating 'close and constant monitoring' with 'care' it is possible to identify a different practice emerging, one which constructs the individual's riskiness as an inherent deficiency.

An example I wish to draw on relates to the supplementary use of the JSCI instrument to classify and force modes of self-disclosure upon those who are assessed as 'high risk'. Among current protocols of assessment those who rate as Low risk are considered 'job ready' and streamed into job search training, while those considered High risk are streamed into 'intensive assistance'. The JSCI instrument is a 'front line' assessment process given to all unemployed persons applying for assistance at Centrelink. For some unemployed people, the JSCI is supplemented by a secondary classification process known as a 'special needs assessment', usually undertaken by an occupational psychologist. A notable feature of secondary classification is the use of subjective evaluation triggered by the observations of Centrelink customer service staff, and guided by an inventory of possible observable behaviours¹⁴⁹. The kind of characteristics identified for secondary assessment include 'motivation, self-confidence, self-esteem, presentation and psychological problems' (McDonald et. al., 2003, p.515). Motivational deficits are given priority across a dimension of 'personal characteristics', and considered to be causally related to a range of factors such as age, duration of unemployment and intergenerational dependency. The purpose of this scale seeks to distinguish personal characteristics and motivational flaws from what might be considered non-psychological barriers to employment. The efficacy of psychological techniques is that they offer a set of highly transferable psychometric tests and diagnostics employed by 'non-specialists', and, at the very least, by trained personnel, to identify certain pathologies of will, the likes of which are thought to be real barriers to employment.

¹⁴⁹ These include inappropriate eye contact, appearance not in keeping with their peers, inability to communicate effectively, obsessive behaviour, dependence on others, unusual dress, poor hygiene, inappropriate make-up application, etc. (McDonald et. al., 2003).

According to *The Job Seeker Classification Instrument Report* (DEWRSB, 1998) other factors which are thought to adversely affect social and economic participation are the client's presentation or appearance. Characteristics such as 'poor hygiene, obesity, unusual physical aberrations, dental disfigurement, tattoos and non-conformist dress' are seen as prejudicial to securing employment (DEWRSB, 1998, p.1003). Abjection is not simply an intrinsic pathology, but a series of signs emitted or conveyed by the body's failure to engage in the demonstrations of normality and civility which are the cornerstone of enterprising participation. It is certainly possible to read these discriminations of character as class-based, gendered and eurocentric valuations of conduct (Demello, 2000; McDonald et. al., 2003), but the most difficult aberration. those which are 'exceptionally difficult to place', are discussed in the JSCI in terms of the client's 'lack of insight'. These techniques do more than simply classify and discriminate moral and ethical deficiencies of the client, they also deploy a reflexive, objectifying gaze which invite the client to act upon themselves in ways that are congruent with 'skilled performance' (Rose, 1999b). In other words, psychological discourses possess a therapeutic dimension whereby case manager's are expected to work alongside clients by inviting them to overcome these 'barriers' or deficiencies of conduct.

So, what kind of subjects are the excluded to become? A simple reversal of the observable deficiencies and pathologies of the JSCI instrument give a clear indication of the ideal job seeker – subjects of active participation are those who are 'congruent, focused, moderately spoken, stable, active, conservatively though stylishly dressed and with excellent personal hygiene' (McDonald et. el., 2003, p.519). In striving to fashion oneself in the image of normality and civility, the unemployed are encouraged to self-identify factors that 'affect their ability to find and keep work' (DEWRSB, 1998, p.45). Clients are encouraged to disclose information pertaining to socially delimiting characteristics such as drug or gambling addiction or prostitution, though it is not surprising that subjects would resist such forms of self-disclosure. Non-disclosure is anticipated as a problem by welfare authorities which leads to 'classification error'. Nonetheless, these confessional techniques are part and parcel of therapeutic strategies

which seek to govern the excluded in terms of the information they are prepared to disclose as well as opening more intimate regions of personal and interpersonal life to the surveillance of expert and normative judgements (Rose, 1999b, p.244).

Medicalisation of welfare

The task now is to ask ourselves what kind of configuration of control is assembled here in the name of producing active citizenship through the recent development of risk technologies, through the uptake of psychological programmes and techniques, which seek to integrate the excluded into circuits of activity and self-management. We have seen for instance how risk technologies open up a new grid of perception and evaluation that seek to divide welfare populations into those who are capable of managing their own risk and those whose riskiness requires 'intensive' management. This new kind of management installs a pastoral relationship between experts and clients, employing psychological techniques for the further assessment and therapeutic reconstruction of the excluded. In this therapeutic relation between case-manager and job seeker, under the constant vigilance of the former, the latter is to work on themselves, to identify the personal, subjective and performative deficiencies that justify their exclusion from the labour market. But this new paternalism is not precisely a coercive relation, though aspects of it are certainly interpreted as a relationship between unequals (Yeatman, 2000). Rather, we should focus on how the excluded are 'invited' into a contract where recipients are to establish a new kind of relation to self, one that does not necessarily bend to authority, but discovers under its watchful gaze the means of becoming free.

Our present strategies of control – the regimes of therapeutic reconstruction, continuous risk assessment, electronic surveillance – emerge from political rationalities which contain a critique of the welfare state. The imperative of producing the 'active society' emerges from a particular formula of advanced or neo-liberal rationalities which, rather than interfere in the economic circuits of wealth production and growth, seek to assemble and manage a new terrain that is reconfigured in terms of an individual psychology. The utility of this kind of 'social' intervention is a matter of transforming subjectivity into rational, prudential and enterprising subjects capable of activity and

choice. Strategies for the eradication of dependency and the integration of the excluded are a matter of governing subjectivity in terms of freedom. Subjects are compelled to govern themselves by virtue of managing their own risks, and engaging in an intensive work on the self. A diagnosis of the politics of the present has shown the birth of those political rationalities, and the establishment of social technologies, which enable this work on the self to be carried out and performed. In the nineteenth century it was the principle of 'less eligibility' and the production of a natural, moral sphere of poverty that drove the poor into circuits of independent labour. In the present, it is the form of continuous surveillance and reformatory technologies that seek to ethically reconstruct the poor into free subjects, free to act rationally, responsibly and to exercise their choice-making capacities.

So what becomes of those who fail to engage in these circuits of activity, who fail to manage themselves rationally? It is precisely in terms of this failure that singles out the proper object of problematisation. If I refer to the 'medicalisation of welfare' it is not to invoke a unitary or totalising apparatus of social control. Medicine is not the only kind of technology that governs in terms of increasing one's freedom. A common element of this present configuration of control is the desire to act upon a certain threat of pathology that inheres in the conduct of those who are unwilling or unable to manage themselves autonomously. Whether this recurrent form of abjection, deviance or recalcitrance is an unnatural or unfortunate condition of life is certainly a matter decided and contested by our contemporary regimes of truth. But a diagnosis would at the same time suggest that in the form of pathology, life continues to disrupt this political project of freedom. In fact we can diagnose two poles of experience which form objects of intense regulation and concern: the activity of *freedom* and the abjection of *pathology*. We might think of modern systems of security and social protection as an attempt to increase the former while decreasing or containing the threat of the latter. This is certainly one way of interpreting contemporary technologies of risk which aim to identify, calculate and eliminate the potential or virtual threat of pathology, while the rise of therapeutic and psychological techniques seek to transform pathology into normal and socially responsible forms of life-conduct.

But if there is a tendency to medicalise welfare, and by this I mean a tendency to individualise and internalise the reasons why recipients seek income support, then perhaps there is some merit in the argument that the medicalisation of poverty reinforces the isolation, abjection and passivity of low-income persons and communities. In other words, the medicalisation of poverty is a constitutive and self-legitimizing phenomenon, ironically re-producing the very object that welfare authorities seek to eradicate. Potentially, this might be more dangerous than medicalising dependency as it creates the prospect of subordinating all low-income people to the terms and practices of expert discourses which treat joblessness as discrete pathologies. As such, the broader political-economic forces that produce these micro-sectors of exclusion and abjection are left to continue to work at will while low-income residents are called upon to change their behaviour, raise their self-esteem, acquire a more positive outlook, become more motivated, etc. In this event, the role of welfare authorities and experts becomes a self-defeating and impossible project of reform; welfare becomes a matter of reintegrating and reconstructing interminable sectors of excluded individuals. Perhaps a contemporary engagement of social policy must find new ways of confining, disrupting and contesting medicalisation than developing new ways of containing the social pathologies of welfare dependency.

Poverty versus ethico-politics

The question still remains: what happens to those who fail to meet their contractual obligations, who fail to comply with the norms of civility, participation and personal responsibility? Is it possible that welfare reform creates new zones of exclusion, driving the poor into new circuits of insecurity (Wacquant, 1999, 2001), into permanently abject sectors of marginality (Rose, 1999a)? Whether these are the 'unintended effects' of neo-liberal policy, or simply the unfortunate consequences of those unable or unwilling to reconstruct themselves as active participants is irrelevant to our inquiry. More importantly we should ask: what *are* the effects of welfare reform? Perhaps they produce a new territory of abyss, one that no longer inspires the administrative imagination of the nineteenth century, but are simply cast out and forgotten. These are the dangerous circuits

that lay beyond ‘community’, beyond the reach of control experts and networks of surveillance. These are the zones that the virtuous and civilised want to keep out, a territory made-up of failed citizens, pathological individuals, those too risky to form part of our ethical and moral regimes of freedom. Before concluding this section, I want to briefly test this hypothesis by examining more recent debates that bring the effectiveness of these reforms into question, and which certainly challenge the kind of social engineering these policies are attributed to.

In March 2004, the Senate Committee released a report bearing the curious title, *A hand up not a hand out: Renewing the fight against poverty*. Despite recycling a title that has become the slogan of the ‘intelligent welfare state’, the similarity ends there. The argument developed in this report marks a decisive break from the kind of ethico-politics that now seek to re-integrate the excluded by accessing and utilising the self-regulating capacities of the poor. Alternatively, we find the mobilisation of more traditional statements that locate poverty not in the behaviours of the unemployed, the idle and pathological, but in a broader context of structural inequality and economic change. The Report invokes the language of ‘relative deprivation’ to explain the contradiction between two decades of strong economic growth on one hand, and the alarming increase of poverty throughout the last decade on the other. The new statistics on poverty carry the challenge to the Federal government that recent initiatives have undermined the ‘Australian way of life’ once modelled on welfare and prosperity for all. The conditionality of welfare support, for instance, has left many sectors of the community wanting. Drawing from different poverty measurements and ‘authoritative data’, the Report claims that between 3.7 and 4.1 million Australians live in poverty (20.5-22.6% of the population); at least 1 million Australians live in poverty despite living in households with one or more employed adults; at least 700,000 children live in households where neither parent is employed; but perhaps the most striking indicator of endemic poverty is the finding that 21% of households, or 3.6 million Australians, live on less than \$400 a week – less than minimum wage (2004, xv-xvii)¹⁵⁰.

¹⁵⁰ Welfare reform seems to offer little in the way of supporting sectors of the population existing outside of family and work. For instance, the Report shows that unemployment benefits for single adults amount to just

The redeployment of the language of ‘relative deprivation’ diagnoses a new kind of poverty by resurrecting neo-classical analyses that combine statements of ‘social exclusion’ with ‘social economy’. For the same reasons why community is posed as a vague solution to the problems of participation, and why alternative statements must examine conditions that exceed the deficiencies of individual autonomy, the Senate Report forecasts a ‘poverty of participation’. Because incomes have failed to keep pace with the increased cost of services, deprivation is conceived as a ‘growing inequality’ emerging from the lack of access to basic services and utilities. The general picture emerging from the Report is that the last decade has witnessed a rapid change in income inequality and wealth distribution creating widespread ‘financial stress’ upon poor households, particularly in a climate where the cost of housing has disproportionately increased to the point where many families are spending over 30% of their incomes on either rent or mortgage repayments. The Report forecasts a new sector of insecurity and inequality emerging – ‘the rise of the working poor’ – constituting ‘the new face of poverty in post-industrial Australia’ (2004, *xviii*). This argument questions the traditional assumption that joblessness is sufficient in explaining the presence of poverty, and attributes the rise of the working poor to the prevalence of low-wage employment. According to the Senate Committee, the processes driving this new kind of poverty are the rapid and widespread ‘casualisation of the workforce’ in the last two decades, and a more recent ‘weakening of the industrial relations systems’: ‘Between August 1988 and 2002 total employment of casual workers in Australia increased by 87.4% (141.6% for men and 56.8% for women). By August 2002, casual workers comprised 27.3% of all employees, an increase of 7 percentage points since August 1991’ (2004, *xviii*).

To understand the tactics of this political debate between ‘the rise of the working poor’ on one hand, and ‘the problem of welfare dependency’ on the other, we should locate the historical antecedents of the former. In Chapter 5, I outlined the conditions of possibility for the constitution of poverty as a natural state of scarcity between population

78% of the poverty line, while government payments for single adult students amount to 63% of the poverty line (2004, *xx*).

and subsistence. Among these conditions it was Adam Smith's 'moral economy' that provided the conditions for the poor to enter the market of exchange as free, responsible agents in possession of their only property, their labour. It was the 'disciples' of Smith, namely F. M. Eden and Burke, who would reconfigure the statements of political economy in quite contradictory and unexpected ways. For instance, it was Burke who denounced the 'puling jargon' of the labouring poor to dissociate the 'poor' from the 'labouring class' in order to show that the poor are those who *cannot* labour; after all, the poor might be miserable, but as Malthus showed, misery was an inevitable condition of humanity. Eden would take a different approach. His meticulous history attempted to give the juridical category of 'the poor' historical content, and thereby illustrate the emergence of the labouring poor as a new economic class of subjects whose labour became a condition of life after the breakdown of feudal bondage. Indeed the notion of the labouring poor seem to recognise that poverty was an institutional phenomenon, but these observations were swept aside by the emergence of pauperism, and with it the idea of 'moral responsibility' that would deny a right to relief under a liberal mode of governance. The idea of the labouring poor would have to wait over half a century before a discourse of social economy developed by Marx, Rowntree, and Booth, would locate poverty among the inequality and alienation of wealth production, and among the circuits and conditions of relative deprivation.

The idea of the working poor is no doubt an early liberal invention, a reconfiguration of nineteenth century arguments that would circumvent the naturalness of poverty, and assemble a different social terrain, a terrain that eschews solitary emphasis on the moral aberration of individual conduct, but an artificial domain organised in terms of institutional and economic forces. We should not, however, confuse the working poor with the politics of class which no longer holds a purchase over contemporary debates on poverty. Rather, it refers to the emergence of a new sector of exclusion which is the artificial creation of political economy. Tactically, the 'working poor' refuses to make a distinction between 'the poor' who cannot work, and the natural condition of labouring classes, but redefines poverty by conflating joblessness and the labour market with a new set of economic circumstances that render even the ethic of wage-labour an untenable

formula for responsible participation. Indeed, more recent criticisms supporting the recommendations of the Senate Report suggest that social and economic participation is not even a guarantee of self-reliance. Research from the Australian National University's Social Policy Evaluation Analysis and Research Centre recently showed that 'simply engaging in social activity has no impact on work outcomes', and men who work casually while receiving unemployment benefits have a higher chance of returning to welfare (*The Australian*, 14 April, 2004).

These arguments suggest a reorganisation of welfare politics which might be described as the 'return of social economy' – a discourse that remains critical of the effects of political economy. Given this recent opposition to ethico-politics, I think an important counterpoint among these debates is the renewed position of social economy in disrupting the certainties of a politics of conduct, that is, by displacing the hegemony of medicalising approaches to welfare administration, and, at the very least, enhancing the contestability with which the government of conduct is cast as the only economic solution to poverty. I think the recent emergence of these counter-arguments is capable of developing fruitful lines for disrupting the certainty of neo-liberal solutions to the 'crisis of the welfare state'. And it remains the conviction of my own diagnosis that the policy directions of the last twenty years are effectively producing a sector of the labouring population that is casualised, underprotected against risk, insecure and desocialised. It is not the task of diagnosis to specify the superiority of one set of statements over the inferiority of another, diagnosis is not a referee of truth. But by opening up the politics of the present to an epistemological history, and to the kind of critical analysis sensitive to the procedures of political power, genealogy endeavours to ask what price do our contemporary regimes of truth exact from those who lack the resources to practice freedom. We should ask ourselves who and what are we required to become, under what authority and by what means are we to accept or contest it. There is no single answer to these questions but the current analysis dares to show the possibility of asking them, and in doing so creating a space with which to generate new solutions to our contemporary problems of freedom.

PART TWO

SUBJECTIFICATION

Introduction: diagnosis and subjectification

In preceding chapters the work of diagnosis has sketched out a field of governmentality as a terrain of political rationalities and technologies of rule. This kind of diagnosis engages the *general* interest of power as a matter of policies, techniques and programmes which, according to a formula of liberal government, act at a distance. But this is only a partial diagnosis of the ethical substance that power seeks to reform and autonomise. Diagnosis must also risk the move from the general to the *particular* interests of another domain. We might call this domain the ‘field of subjectification’, the circuits of practice by which the self forms a relation with itself, makes an object of itself, and works on the self according to certain ethical and moral ideals and objectives. Furthermore, this field occupies a spatio-temporal dimension, one that can be mapped onto, or aligned with, the very circuits of control which govern the field of possibilities of life-conduct. In other words, subjectification as a *condition of being a subject* is investigated in terms of an experience that might be located within, or projected onto, a general field of power. This move completes the circuit between welfare administration (political power) and individual experience (subjectification). The task is to investigate the conditions *immanent* to experience, and show how the particularity of self-formation is shaped by the politics of the present.

Part II of the thesis therefore marks a break with genealogy to extend diagnosis to an investigation of narratives and statements generated by 12 interview participants who, according to official categories, are ‘at risk’ of welfare dependency. With such a small sample it is neither possible nor desirable to form a representative analysis of the Australian welfare population. Rather, the task is to explore the variability of statements linking welfare administration with individual experience. There are three broad themes of analysis and discussion: ‘Activity’, ‘Regulation’, and ‘Freedom’. Each theme specifies a particular grouping of statements, and each grouping is discussed in terms of the work it performs in constructing a biographical or ‘personal trajectory’ of experience. Interviews

invite subjects to make an object of themselves as stories about how they came to occupy their present position. The argument offered here is that these stories are culturally and historically located and encoded, and may be placed alongside the transformations of liberal government discussed in Part I.

But how do we link practices of government to ethical self-formation? We might think of principles of mutual obligation and the ethics of participation and community, as acting along dimensions of 'ethical government'. That is to say, governing practices actively seek to reform the capacities of individuals in order to engage in flexible wage-labour. Among these domains of government, we find relays and linkages in which the locus of agency or conduct remains indeterminate and ambiguous. Indeed Dean (1995) suggests a set of 'elastic boundaries' in which processes of self-formation occur, and suggests an analytics of 'governmental-ethical practices' to understand the interface between welfare and self-formation (p.562). Drawing from Foucault's (1997e) genealogy of ethics, we can construct a programmatic outline of how ethical life *ought* to be governed by virtue of acting on the self-forming capacities of recipients. An ethical dimension of government would encompass the key features of reform by asking the following questions:

Ontology: 'What is it that we seek to govern in ourselves and others' (ie. what is the ethical substance?) The answer being 'long-term unemployment', 'joblessness' or 'welfare dependency'.

Ascetics: 'How are we to govern this substance', or 'What is this self-forming activity?' The answer being therapeutic counselling, self-examination, an intensive work on the self, psychological and medical assessment.

Deontology: 'What is the mode of subjectification', or 'Why do we govern ourselves and others in this way?' The answer being to produce the active and moral subject of society and community.

Teleology: 'What is the aim, end or goal of these practices', or 'What is the mode of being we hope to become?' The answer being the enterprising self, members of community, and subjects capable of managing their freedom.

Although these four ethical dimensions form a concise programmatic blue print for reform they are neither determinative nor totalising, but prone to their own unintended effects and to a whole array of resistances. Arguably, what an analytics of government

fails to adequately diagnose is the field of counter-normative practices and techniques, the sectors of marginality and dislocation in which these ethical imperatives are both incorporated and resisted. Government is never a sure business: programmes designed to unite the bonds of community produce anti-communities; programmes designed to contractualise and autonomise recipients produce anti-citizens who are unable or unwilling to meet their contractual obligations; policies which seek to enhance social security produce systems of insecurity; policies designed to strengthen and consolidate the circuits of normality and civility produce marginality and abjection. This is not to say neo-liberal reforms of the Australian welfare system are a wholesale failure, but rather an analytics of the effectivity of reform must show the points at which this ethical project of government breaks down. Moreover, at the level of subjectification we might glimpse different, hybrid practices of self-formation in which individuals undertake their own projects of freedom. Among these circuits of 'self on self' it is possible to recover different, more nuanced, accounts of the success or failure of the post welfare regime.

In terms of the object of analysis, we depart from the conditions of possibility in Part I to examine the production of statements as stories we say about ourselves. Though these are different kinds of statements – everyday speech acts, descriptions and biographical accounts – I propose to treat these in much the same way as one would analyse institutional statements. For instance, we should not think of statements as expressions or manifestations of people's thoughts and interiority, but as conditions of exteriority that modulate the production of statements. After all, we are bound by an imperative to engage in sense-making practices: '*Why...?*', '*How...?*', '*What do you mean...?*' And where statements are formed by our positions within discourse, the minimum conditions for making statements are immanent to experience – the worker, the welfare recipient, the wife or husband, the member of family and community. All these positions are valid conditions from which participants construct stories about themselves. Unlike institutional discourses, participant statements are multiple and contradictory, hybridised and diffuse; they present a kind of engagement in this field of power – the making of selves by the self and by others – to which diagnosis now turns.

7 'Activity'

The term 'activity' is drawn from governmental discourses that currently frame principles of welfare reform. The promotion of 'Active society' in the mid eighties constitutes the kind of policy direction that enjoins individuals to manage their freedom to ameliorate the institutional dependency created by welfare systems. In this context, activity refers to the kind of autonomous conduct and rational decision-making that lead to employment, education, independence, parenthood, social participation and full citizenship. Notions of autonomy, capacity, flexibility and resilience are raised to the order of individual virtues by which modern citizens engage in legitimate forms of labour-market participation.

To be clear, 'activity' is a historical category that groups participant statement in terms of the question 'how does the subject come to occupy a welfare position'? It seeks to understand a personal history of trajectory in terms of labour-market experiences, education, social and economic participation in such ways that resist readings of welfare dependency. By extending the argument developed at the end of Chapter 6, I want to test the hypothesis that welfare reform produces a sector of the labouring population that is casualised, low paid, under-protected from risk, insecure and desocialised. This hypothesis is investigated at the level of subjectification under two broad themes: 'circuits of insecurity' and 'desocialisation'. The argument developed in this chapter tests the plausibility that neo-liberal reforms of the labour market produce new forms of marginality.

Circuits of insecurity

In the wake of neo-liberal welfare reforms emerging from the mid to late 80's, I want to make the case that what has been effectively created is a 'system of social insecurity' (Wacquant, 1999, 2001). By examining narratives of 'personal trajectory' and experience, I want to show at the level of subjectification the kind of practices where individuals are enjoined to manage themselves within various circuits of insecurity. These circuits refer to the changing character of the Australian labour market from a

regulated, predominantly full-time structure to an increasingly casualised and fragmented one (Jones, 1990; Rees et al., 1993; Healey, 1994; ACOSS, 1996; Gregory and Hunter, 1996; Kerr and Savelsberg, 1999). An argument I want develop here is that neo-liberal reforms of welfare and the production of 'flexible' labour markets are linked to new forms of marginality.

Worlds of work – 70's

In this section, I examine the accounts of four older participants, 'Sam', 'Jay', 'Peter' and 'Richard', whose first engagement in the labour market during the 70's assembles a different 'world of work' to current practices of flexible wage-labour. The first strategy is to identify different relations of subjectification, and show the presence and absence of insecurity as a set of circumstances and conditions that impact on labour market trajectories. The second strategy is to demonstrate a transformation within the labour market by illustrating a different sense of engagement in wage-labour during the 80's and 90's. I will show how it is possible to recover a relatively consistent set of statements that illustrate a qualitatively different set of relations of subjectification between activity and security before and during neo-liberal reforms of the labour market. Among the statements of a younger sample of participants, namely, 'Con', 'Jabe' and 'Amber', and the accounts of the older sample, it is possible to show that work, though apparently flexible, is increasingly risky and insecure, devalued and discontinuous and, in some cases, interrupted by events exceeding the rational decision-making capacities or presumed deficiencies of individuals.

Perhaps the clearest indication of work prior to the 80's is found among participant statements that refer to the industrialisation of wage-labour. Sam, a 45 year old single mother and disability pensioner, describes activity during the 70's as part-time factory work during school holidays. In the account below, wage-labour is conveyed as an unproblematic option for girls who leave school at an early age. By today's standards we might consider the fourteen year old school-leaver an anathema to the modern career trajectory which now requires, at the very least, a Higher School Certificate to maintain a competitive edge in the labour market:

I left school at fourteen and some months, um and I went to work in factories first of all [...] I actually started working in factories during school holidays, over a period of a couple of years, use to do a bit of work for my dad as well, he was in the clothing industry I used to do a lot of sort of part-time holiday work [...] Um, I worked in a whole string of factories, food factories clothing factories plastic factories, furniture factories huh,... no actually my first job was not in a factory it was in a clothing place across the lane from where my dad worked, and it was a really up-market clothing place and I became the personal assistant to the head of the, the design company the head designer woman [...] and I just did that for a month and they really didn't have anything for me to do and then they fired me, I was jus wandering around looking for things to do, I just talked them into giving me a job, but because I've always been around someone, working in the clothing industry after that job, and after the factory jobs I went back to working in the clothing industry, and I was Sales girl for a few years, in trendy shops in Melbourne, selling jeans and stuff like that

There are number of narrative and grammatical features of the above account which encode a sense of plenitude, an absence of insecurity, and a rapid interchange between factory work and the typically gendered spheres of activity, like sales and personal assistant work. Sam's father, an Italian immigrant, is invoked as a point of entry into the labour market, and appears at different points of the narrative to indicate familial proximity and support around which circuits of activity are constructed. An interesting grammatical feature of the above account is the use of the conjunction '*and*' to encode a chain of activity that suppresses the possibility of thinking these transitions were prolonged or problematic. Furthermore, the rapid up-take of work is conveyed by the rhetorical device, '*a whole string of factories*', which again implies the availability of work, that one could literally leave one's job and find another within a short period of time. But an absence of insecurity is also encoded by the way this account constructs a young, confident agent, capable of 'talking her way into positions'. In reading this account, I am reminded of the clichés of an older generation of workers who conveyed a world replete with options, the 'good ole days', where work was easily recycled.

We might compare Sam's account to Peter's, a 45 year old disability pensioner, whose biography is interrupted at the outset by a discourse of juvenile delinquency. I will give only a brief sketch of the events that led to his engagement in full-time, manual employment. At the age of fifteen, Peter's narrative encodes the familiar suffocation of living in a small country town, leaving both home and school to escape an authoritarian father, and to assert one's independence. He moves to a larger country town in New South Wales to live with his eldest brother, and takes up an auto mechanic apprenticeship

as a probable solution to his feelings of restlessness and defiance. The apprenticeship lasts all of three months and he applies for unemployment benefits the year Social Security was first introduced under a Whitlam government in 1973. As part of the contractual obligation of the 'Work Test', Peter is compelled to accept a position as a farmhand which he emphatically describes as unsuitable. He lasts all of two days, and fabricates a story of family crisis. The farmer contacts the Commonwealth Employment Services, who in turn contact his brother. Unable to explain his whereabouts, his brother contacts the police. He is taken into custody and charged with 'vagrancy', and consigned to the jurisdiction of welfare authorities. The matter attracts the attention of the Sydney City Mission, a charitable authority, who successfully defends his case and place him in a refuge in North Sydney. After a three month probationary period, he soon finds work manufacturing seatbelts.

The point of this sketch is to show how a biography of activity is only stabilised by the legal interventions of a charitable institution. A space of paternalistic supervision provides the first transition to factory work in the city. But this progressive narrative of 'work-as-security' is short-lived as the 'political' interrupts a stable trajectory of activity. While giving an account of '*my first job in Sydney*' the following event unexpectedly emerges:

I sort of got into a political thing there with a few of the other workers because we didn't have a union there they were a little bit disgruntled with the way they were being treated and the amount of money they were being paid and what not, and I thought 'Well okay I will get into this union thing with them' and what not, and what a stupid mistake, well I thought I had better stand by them because they are my co-workers, I can't sort of stand out alone and not support their cause or whatever, and they said 'Well because you have come into it, we were offering you an extra wage supplement anyway, but you chose to stand beside your workers sorry, you lose your job. No come back', and I looked at it and I thought 'Yeah well I don't need that sort of shit', so that's the way it worked out, and then I went and got a job in another factory building sewing machines.

Despite Peter's extraordinarily diffuse work history, this is the only time unionism emerges as problem for activity, which is telling, though it is not the only time work is problematised by events which could well have transpired as a union issue. No doubt its absence within the flexible labour regime is a symptom of the erosion of trade unionism under neo-liberalism. But Peter's involvement in worker solidarity and protests over working conditions are explained away as a rational miscalculation, '*a mistake*'. The

issue of proper working conditions and adequate remuneration is reduced to a diminutive concern over some vague matter that the workers *'were a little bit disgruntled with'*, while personal economic security is privileged over the fate of *'my co-workers'*. Arguably, this account can be interpreted in a number of ways, but the line I want to take up here is that it constitutes an *implicit presupposition* about the political context of the interview rather than the event it refers to. By this I mean the speaker encodes this *'political thing'* in a pejorative way, as a mistaken course of action, because unionism no longer holds any appeal when *'work-as-security'* has become a fragile condition of the present. Unlike the fragility of the present, the innocuous conjunction *'and'* reappears at the end of this account to add yet another chain in the possibility of manufacturing work.

Richard, a 43 year old AIDS patient and disability pensioner, also presents a case in which activity must first traverse the country/city division. But this transition is deferred for reasons of *'immaturity'*, a sense of insecurity inscribed in terms of psychological deficiency. Psychological lack is curiously linked to an educational history which is described as *'accelerated'*. Having advanced beyond the norms of educational development, Richard attained his Higher School Certificate at the age of fifteen. From the outset, a narrative of activity presents a psychological schism between cognitive achievement and emotional development, a contradiction which is left to do some of the work in explaining why an academically gifted person never entered higher education. Instead, we are left to imagine a fifteen year old who is ill-prepared for the emotional demands of university and city life. This tension between being *'too clever'* and *'too young'* is a recurring theme throughout the narrative. We are told of instances of reaching the top of his profession as a salesperson in plumbing supplies at an age where rapid success seemed emptied of any future challenge. As a result, professional achievement always seem to occur *'too quickly'* or came *'too easy'*, stifling a sense of freedom that lie outside circuits of work.

During the 70's, Richard's source of insecurity is not linked to wage-labour but vague references of *'bad relationships'*. At a rather unexpected point of the interview he invokes a history of working as a male prostitute between the age of 15 and 18 while

living in Melbourne. And though this activity would seem to be driven by an economic purpose, the following statement suggests that prostitution was also a way of overcoming the loneliness and isolation of homosexuality:

Oh, just I moved to Melbourne, loneliness, like kids in Sydney drift to Kings Cross ... in Melbourne they drift to St Kilda, meet some people, started working, got introduced to some people, they, I was prepared to do what they were prepared to pay for, which was nothing except to get undressed, I made sure they were all old men who couldn't get it up [...] I was getting paid to keep people company and the good thing about it was that I needed company too.

Among these circuits of urban marginality, marginality itself is the only place that can accommodate those whose sexuality shuns the light. Before the legitimation of the 'homosexual identity' in the 80's, an economy of desire is consigned to the liminal zones of urban life. From the point of view of those offering their services, Richard's statement warns against reducing this kind of exchange to a form of economic exploitation, or a gratuitous sexual act, but a kind of *social* exchange – a market-place for the gathering of lost and lonely souls.

Aside from the various narratives of wage-labour set amongst the background of industrialisation and manufacturing, the 70's also presents legitimate alternatives for women entering higher education. Jay, a 41 year old disability pensioner, entered university in New Zealand immediately after high school, but this transition was hampered by perceptions that university was exclusively a male domain. Jay's family refused to support her on the grounds that higher education for women was a wasteful luxury. This refusal is not simply one of economic redundancy, but the contradiction of abandoning a path of traditional femininity:

I went away to go to uni, um... I had to because um 'If you go to university we are not supporting you' ... no need for girls to have an education you see, so why waste money (chuckles) [So you had to support yourself?] Yup which was okay in those days cause um. I think I got thirty two dollars a week, for, what they call bursary, um. but rent was four dollars a week (chuckles) this is a large town in New Zealand.

Despite receiving a government bursary, Jay's trajectory of educational activity is abruptly halted by a discourse of psychopathology. She employs a clinical language to diagnose the event of her breakdown as '*classic Anxiety Disorder*'. This diagnostic and psychological relation to the self is often linked to fantasies of finishing a degree in

psychology, not for the sake of some well defined career trajectory, but simply because '*I never wanted to do anything except learn*'. Between these statements of familial disapprobation, unfulfilled desires of completing higher education, and the psychological disorder that disrupted her plans, we are presented with a history of insecurity and dislocation which marks a painful departure from self-knowledge and personal growth '*and I always thought I'd go back to it but I never did*'. Forced to leave university, Jay's narrative is dominated by a position of dependency: she moves back home to live with her mother, and receives treatment for a year as an outpatient in a psychiatric unit. The remainder of the 70's are blurred by indistinct references to '*various jobs*' as if barely worth remembering, only to recover a more coherent trajectory of activity during the 80's. Jay's story is one that is dominated by her present welfare position, a narrative peppered with physical, emotional and psychological distress and continuous moral management of the painful stigma she feels as a disability pensioner. It is precisely the management of an interminable position of dependency that I will return to later in this chapter.

Worlds of work – 80's & 90's

The stories of urban marginality among the younger sample, which are sharply instanced during the 80's and 90's, are difficult narratives to present since they are easily recuperated by, and vulnerable to, the present moralising discourses of dependency, idleness and deviance. The strategy is to show that marginality might be investigated according to alternative frameworks of intelligibility which entail practices and conditions immanent to subjectification. Rather than consign these stories to the abject sectors of failed anti-citizens, the strategy is to show how marginality is in fact propagated by the insecurity of flexible wage-labour.

Consider the case of Con, a 30 year old cleaner for the State Railway Authority, and the son of Greek immigrants living in Sydney. After finishing his Higher School Certificate in 1986, his first engagement in the labour market was working as a clerical assistant for a large Sydney hospital. Despite the thrill of earning a full-time wage, he describes work as low paid and monotonous, and decides to leave after falling out with a

senior co-worker. He finds similar work for another large hospital, but leaves after a year in search of more interesting work. After a series of short-term employments – carpet-cutting, storeman in an art supplies warehouse – he finds lucrative work through a friend on a building site:

So that was the first turning point where I actually got a job and got big money [How old were you?] Ah almost nineteen and um, do that for a year and it was back in ... yeah 89 it was, and everyone went broke y'know so, and then I tried to get a job on the building- because I was use to the big money, couldn't get it because like, there was no work going y'know and um, and everyone was getting retrenched left right and centre and um, then I got a job in the factory because my olds got a place and um, and I had to help them pay it off, so I got a job in the factory ... they had a second house, 'If you help us with this we'll sign it over into your name when you're older', and I said 'Yeah', so I did it, worked- cause I started giving them money from the building site and then (coughs) the factory I worked for a year and half and it was just totally depressing.

Before *'the first turning point'*, Con invokes many of the benefits of the flexible labour market: work was found easily enough through the paper, and served its purpose in the form of short to medium durations of employment. Whether for reasons of boredom, workplace disputes, or upgrading one's prospects, the flexibility of the market allowed him to move through different sectors of employment. The turning point he speaks of constitutes a transition to the world of 'high paid' manual labour. But flexibility seems to work both ways: not only does it provide opportunities for Con to 'tack' his way through the labour market in search of better conditions, it is also a source of insecurity. 1989 marks the beginning of the recession years under the Hawke government, and despite trying to find similar work in the building industry, no one is hiring during a recession. Prior to these events, Con is now committed to paying a mortgage, a joint venture made possible through his parents, which perhaps heightens the insecurity of retrenchment. His movement into factory work, then, is conveyed as 'a necessary evil', the monotony of which he endures for the sake of realising his fantasies of home ownership.

The task is to understand the next 'turning point' in Con's trajectory. Not long after working in the factory he discovers he has contracted Hepatitis C from a tattoo parlour. After recovering from fatigue and sickness while continuing to work, he describes the feeling of being trapped in the job. But this contradiction between an imperative of work, of financial commitment and the loss of freedom, is only resolved when he is finally retrenched from the factory. Rather than a setback he describes this event as *'a blessing'*:

The turning point came was when I left the factory and I got back on the dole and I thought 'Right, I'm gonna take this dole money and do something with it', and um, yeah and then, I got on the dole and by that stage, my best friend who I sort of been hanging out with, for three years, and he got on the dole, and... we never looked back really for a long time y'know and then, me and him sort of teamed up and we started getting um, because he had a car we started going to garage sales and getting things and doing the markets.

This turning point marks the beginning of an eleven year position on unemployment benefits, a period that Con describes as '*one of the best periods of my life*'. Now we might be tempted to assume that what was auspicious about this existence was the freedom to revel in idleness at the expense of the taxpayer. However, what is conveyed here is not a position of dependency, but a position of 'counter-activity': work is reinscribed among the liminal circuits of freelance trading, scoping garage sales, scouring garbage tips and selling collectable goods at local markets. In other words, what Con covets as an '*alternative lifestyle*', one that is partly financed by the state, is not a condition of idleness and passivity, but a discourse of resistance.

Very early in the interview Con recounts a memory as a young child watching his father routinely go to work and stating to his mother one day that '*I never want to do that*'. This story works to encode a basic, fundamental rejection of a world of work that is mundane, conventional and constraining. But this is not to say that Con rejects work altogether. A period of 'superficial dependency' provides a space that would protect him from the insecurity of work, and allows him to invent a marginal existence that brings work and freedom as close together as possible. For Con, the world of work exemplified by the activities of the father, a hard working Greek immigrant, was never an adequate solution to the problem of freedom. That freedom is attained through modes of industry is acknowledged throughout the narrative, but masquerading as the welfare dependent is perhaps a way of managing the riskiness of a world of work that is, after all, fickle and insecure. The task becomes one of inventing another world that directly engages in the project of freedom.

Where activity traces circuits of marginality, it is difficult to engage in practices of risk management, or extricate oneself from sectors of risk. In some cases even welfare is no longer a suitable insurance policy. Consider the case of Jabe, 28 years old, recently

unemployed, and unable to resolve the ambivalence of her current welfare position. Jabe narrates a story that begins from the margins of civility and normality. Counter-familial statements describe a fragmented family life when she was removed from her mother's care by welfare authorities at the age of 7. Early family life is comprised of *'lots of different temporary care situations until I was ten ... I was passed around a lot'*. She invokes the language of delinquency to do some of the work of explaining the difficulties of placing a *'problem child'* within the normal, moral circuits of family life. Later in the interview, she returns to counter-familial statements to convey her aloof detachment as a child *'I didn't seem to want to be involved in family life ... I just wanted to be by myself'*. This statement marks a transition from the good/bad families of foster care to a narrative of independence and work.

A sense of dislocation is embedded in Jabe's first account of labour market activity when, at 17, she finds work as a receptionist in a medical practice. Work is roundly dismissed as boring and menial, but further problematised by the regime of the 'split shift' which left her stranded for two hours each day *'in the middle of nowhere'*. The disposability of the 'flexible' employee is rendered indisposed by the isolation of work *'so that was really difficult, nothing, just sat in the park and read'*. At 19, a narrative of independence is more closely aligned with freedom when she moves to the city with friends, finds regular casual work as an art model, and additional employment as a café waitress among the 'alternative' circuits of Sydney's service industry. But rather than attribute this transition to personal agency or autonomy she describes a contingent state of freedom *'I was really lucky just to be myself and you know, I was really happy to have a job and by that stage I had moved to the city and I was independent, I had my own money and had everything sorted out'*. When asked why she thought she was 'lucky', she continues *'Yeah, I don't know, I'm not one of those people who gets employed really easily'*. The constraint implicitly referred to is her physical appearance which is linked to a chronic condition known as Marfans Disease, the classic symptoms of which are abnormal height, elongated limbs and degenerative muscle disorder. And though pathology emerges as an implicit obstacle to employment *'people say, 'Oh you're really*

freaky looking”, it is relegated to a minor position. In Jabe’s case, the subject of pathology is an anathema to the subject of freedom.

For the flexible labourer of these marginal circuits of activity, freedom is both an identity project and a problem. For instance, at 23, Jabe discovered sex work, initially in the form of full body erotic massage, and then later as a quasi-professional dominatrix. She started as an apprentice learning techniques of restraint and discipline, and how to manage herself as a resilient and flexible practitioner. This was an identity project inasmuch as it granted Jabe the freedom to explore a profession that *‘interested’* her as well as constitute a particular stylisation of femininity:

Something I really loved about it was that I met a lot of amazing women ... most of the women that were working there were using it to earn money for studying, it is good money on a part-time basis and if it is something that you are interested in, I mean everyone looks for a job that they are interested in, you know ... A lot of really strong women, I learnt a lot about sexuality ... I felt more empowered doing it, I did have control, I did get to do stuff that was interesting, I didn’t have to have, you know, sex was a very rare occurrence.

But freedom is also problematic when it is finally disrupted by industry ‘burn out’. After working for five years without a holiday, Jabe describes a state of eventual decline and weariness *‘I just found myself going through the motions and not really being interested or into it, you know it was kind of like auto pilot, stagnating in your style ... and ah compromising myself ... being told by someone what to do to them and at that time I didn’t have enough flexibility to deal with it properly’*. And after switching to receptionist work in the same house, the loss of status, power and income proved to be only a temporary and precarious solution *‘I needed a normal job, I needed structure, to do something else to feel that I was capable of doing something else ... I just got sick of being treated like shit by the girls that I used to call my peers, and I let them know and they didn’t like it and they complained enough to management and you get sacked, and I did’*. One of the temptations of the marginal, cash economy is continuing to claim unemployment benefits, which she did for the entire five year period, only to find that when she became genuinely unemployed she was penalised by Centrelink after submitting a tax file number a year earlier. She is currently receiving a reduction of benefits, paying back the government with their own money, leaving her \$50 a week to live on.

Jabe's current position is one marked by a dreadful sense of insecurity and isolation where she finds herself caught between two irreconcilable positions: she blames herself for failing to manage her own risk, and faces an uncertain future as someone who is not easily employed. Though she wants to make a break from the sex industry she feels excluded from the normative sphere of labour '*I've had a lot of interviews, um, same work. I mean I've gone for other jobs in the straight world which I find very difficult because when someone says what was your last job ... what was the company and what were you doing? It is hard to kind of fluff*'. But even after numerous failed attempts to find receptionist work in the sex industry she feels incapable of reinventing herself and unsure of her next move. Alongside these feelings of self-blame and uncertainty, Jabe engages in an awkward kind of moral management that comes as a reaction to a world of work she no longer feels apart of '*I don't want to work in the sex industry, but once again everyone wants to find a job that they like and enjoy and are comfortable with and can do, like I am prepared to, not have everything, I know, but I'm not going to stack shelves, can't lift, I'm not going to be a checkout chick, too old, no, so it is difficult and I'm a very capable person and what I did makes me no less employable*'. Desiring work that one 'likes' or 'enjoys' is no longer a sustainable fantasy. Even the flexibility of the black labour market provides even less guarantees of freedom and security, and, if anything, further marginalises Jabe from secure wage-labour.

To sharpen the distinction between a world of work before and during a period of neo-liberal government, I want to briefly return to the narratives of Sam and Peter to illustrate a contrast in work. For instance, after leaving school and working in factories as a young teenager, Sam describes the seduction of the counter-cultural movement in the 70's. An alternative for those who rejected the normative circuits of work, education and city life was to embrace the idealism and resistance of the hippie movement. The country/city binary is frequently invoked by Sam to specify the spaces of ethical activity with which a project of freedom was aligned '*I left the city when I was eighteen and I went to live in the country ... I ran away to become a hippie (laughs) ... that was about 73*'. After numerous transitions between different communes, a sojourn overseas and

returning to the city, the country remained a romantic opposition to city life. Sam describes the difficulty of being a hippie mother during the seventies, having to conceal her identity as a single mother, but she also conveys the gradual erosion of the hippie lifestyle towards the end of the 70's. The period I want to focus on is precisely this transition between the late seventies and early eighties where Sam re-enters the workforce for the first time since the birth of her daughter.

The first bit of work I remember getting after having the child, was, being a busker dressed as a clown in the main street of Mawoolumbah, but then I got fired by the council because people were complaining that I was disrupting the traffic, because people would drive by and see me and go 'What the hell is that' because this is y'know we're talking redneck territory, there weren't a lot of hippies there then, so we're still like the outcasts we weren't the locals [...] I was pretty flamboyant (laughs), I was fairly brave, and I guess, pretty restless and determined and I was stronger and healthier and, desperate enough to try just about anything

Even though the Australian bush was an exemplary sphere of counter-self-formation, it was also a contested space, occupied by the agrarian communities of the decent 'country folk', the hard working Australians around which much myth has been invented. In the above account we find an attempt to breach these differences in the form of community work that transforms the guitar playing hippie into the public entertainer, the 'clown'. The only position in which a project of freedom and work can coincide is to present oneself as a spectacle of both worlds – the worker/entertainer/hippie assemblage. And while she conveys this as a 'brave' attempt to bring these worlds together, it also exposes oneself as an aberration to those who constituted the moral majority. But the notion of bravery as the ability to bring these worlds together only tells part of the story of subject-formation. moments later a different account emerges '*I was pretty much all alone, a lot of it was really tough, y'know and I wasn't a really happy person either I was a bit depressed and even though I felt strong I wasn't confident, I was just, um... probably off the wall enough to be expressing my depression in some way (chuckle) that might have seemed like confidence, but it wasn't it was jus me sort of going 'I have to do something'*'. Psychological statements of the self present a contradictory position of someone who presents oneself as confident, healthy and brave, only to belie another sense of self as one who is depressed, isolated and desperate.

During the 80's we find another assemblage emerging, the busker/waitress, a possibility which is symptomatic of the service industry reclaiming much of the field of low paid, casual work. During this phase of self-formation, we sense that practices of freedom are now stretched between two worlds: the hippie/busker is forced to engage in a project of self-invention now inscribed by the possibilities of casualised labour:

I was waitress, a lot, huh... (chuckles) I was a waitress a lot, I'd go busking a bit y'know just like by myself if I could get someone to mind my daughter ... um, so I'd supplement my income that way and sort of meet a few people as well and, waitressing was just really hard slog and then I... fell into secretarial work, I went up to the local, what was called the Community Youth Support Scheme, which later became CES, um in the old days they were really little centres and they were like in houses they weren't even in offices they were like in converted houses there was one in Chatswood, I lived on the North Shore for, about, three years when I first came to Sydney

In this account it is easy to see that casual labour was a main source of activity during the 80's, but what abruptly emerges is a transition that would constitute a new form of activity in the 90's. The invention of the secretary and clerical assistant, the '*office robot*', coincides with government retraining schemes that would seem to offer Sam new possibilities for financial security. By the end of the 80's the hippie politics of the country had transformed, now centred around the politics of landownership as opposed to the kind of propertyless idealism of the 70's. No longer would the country represent a domain of freedom, instead, by the 90's, we find a complete reversal of the project of freedom where the city now becomes a space of possibilities for the transformation of self. I will return to Sam's narrative later in the chapter.

Peter, who is similar in age to Sam, presents a trajectory comprised of motorbikes and road trips, another preoccupation of the 70's. During the 80's, he recounts travelling to Darwin with friends, and immediately finds work in the service industry. He works his way up to '*bar manager*' within a year, while his travelling companions returned to Sydney after failing to find work in their specific trade. In some ways this comparison reiterates a common theme throughout Peter's narrative: the resourceful '*jack of all trades and qualified in none*' who can turn his hand to anything but never commit to any given career. Alongside the pride with which he conveys his ability to adapt to market conditions, he would also often berate himself for not building the security he now covets '*I couldn't be tied down ... stupid me like I don't know*'. After managing the bar, he

worked in the spare parts industry, a field that seemed more closely aligned to a project of freedom *'anything to do with cars, parts, bikes, whatever, I loved it, it's a shame I didn't carry on and do an apprenticeship there then, I would be right now, but footloose and fancy free'*. After two years in Darwin, Peter returns to Sydney and works as a barman in a local hotel, but bar work is associated with its own set of risks. For instance, he often describes falling into the *'wrong crowd'*, and the restlessness he sometimes attributes to his movements in the labour market are also associated with attempts to escape drug-use, a theme that often disrupts a narrative of security. In his descriptions of *'the pub game'* we gain a sense of how the buying and selling of drugs are embedded in the very activities of bar work *'People were selling it across the bar'*. To escape these risks, he resorts to selling his bike – a marker of a previous mode of freedom – and buying a courier van, which marks a new kind of investment in the labour market. Despite attempts to escape drug-use he would fall into new patterns of use that were endemic to the driving industry. After a close call one night, sleeping behind the wheel, he sells the van and returns to bar work before finding more driving work for a record company. Eventually risk would catch up with Peter. In 1989, he describes a loading accident that shattered two disks in his back, leaving him out of work for three years on Sickness Benefits. After a series of operations and without any recourse to worker's compensation he returns to work in 93.

From 1993 to 2000 Peter cites an astonishing array of activity: handyman, bus driver, builder, contract driver, tow truck driver. Never staying any longer than two years in a single job, he conveys not only the extraordinary flexibility of the market but also the endless risk, insecurity and constant self-invention required to maintain a continuity of work. Irrespective of whether we can attribute such a history of *'hyper-activity'* to a faulty agent – the failure to make rational choices or properly manage one's risk – the contemporary labour market, with its diffuse, low paid and temporary positions, suggests that increased flexibility *increases* risk, marginalisation and personal distress:

I've gone into tow truck driving, I've done ah, the tourism, the raw industry, that was a bit of a political thing, I helped build the bloody place, I helped run the place, I got paid shit money, all these other youngsters coming in who got paid the same bloody money I was, and I thought that was an insult, that's a bloody insult for the work I've done, and the standing that I was in the company, even the guy that owned the company, he had no say in what was paid, it

was his daughter's part of it, um, I've got a golf hat up there, its worth 30 something odd dollars from one of Greg Norman's little ... He gave it to me as a present to say thanks for helping the work I'd done ... Um, and since I left there, they've since sold the bloody company to another mob.

Accounts like this suggest that something more than individual failure is required to explain the hyper-activity of the 80's and 90's. What I think is conveyed here is the lack of security in exchange for someone who is willing to looking for it; it might be forgivable that building a business and watching it grow is tantamount to the expectation of a 'liberal reward', but a \$30 hat buys little security in the age of risk. And even if he stayed with the company there is little to suggest any guarantee of security. Since stopping work due to his spinal condition and receiving a Disability Pension, Peter is currently sitting on security courses and retraining for a career as a private investigator. In the age of insecurity the project of self is never complete.

Among this selection of narratives it is possible to diagnose a period before the 80's where insecurity did not centre on the conditions of work itself, especially when education was not mandatory for a secure position within the labour market. Before the 80's, manufacturing work was a relatively secure vocation, the plenitude of which formed a seemingly taken for granted backdrop of activity while other instabilities are played out in the foreground. In Peter's account the possibility of unionism emerges only briefly, never to appear again despite the hyper-activity of the 80's and 90's. But the 70's was by no means a utopia. Despite the plenitude of manufacturing work, we found the possibilities of higher education for women were constrained by the moral expectations of family. But what is revealing is also what is absent among these narratives, the insecurity of work itself, problematisations of low paid, casualised employment. By the 80's and 90's the language of unionism is effaced by the seemingly endless possibilities of the market, only to find that the pursuit of security is itself an endless enterprise. Among both the older and younger members of the sample we find the 80's and 90's are a period of increasing flexibility that works both ways, while it grants the possibility for some to reinvent themselves in terms of the market, the project of freedom for others is rendered unstable, stressful and risky. For some, the solution is no longer the security of the labour market itself, but imitating a position of dependency to invent alternative

worlds of work and construct more enabling possibilities for freedom. And for those who are caught between risk and regulation, even a position of dependency is no longer a suitable insurance policy against the uncertainties of the market. In these cases, the project of freedom goes underground, to circulate among liminal sectors of the black market economy only to find that such spaces are subject to the same uncertainties as the normal, moral circuits of activity. Psychological statements of the self, the locus of self-blame, and techniques of moral management, are just some of the strategies by which the self must engage in some project of addressing the ambivalences propagated by the insecurities of flexible wage-labour.

Desocialisation

One of the recent objectives of welfare reform is to create new spaces of governance called 'community'. These refer to the moral and ethical circuits of solidarity, spaces defined in terms of their social responsibility and useful forms of association, capable of generating their own solutions to the problems of fragmentation and market individualism. In this section, I want to explore the kind of accounts in which participants invoke a space of activity, whether it be among the oppositions of community/city, urban/periphery, isolation/integration, to investigate spaces of subjectification. Through an examination of participant statements, it is possible to show how participation in the flexible labour market and the strategies of distancing we find among practices of moral management, produce new forms of marginality that in some ways contradict solutions of community.

Counter-community

Amber and Kate are the youngest members of the sample, 19 and 24 years respectively; both are sisters who live in what might be considered an idyllic country community which, since the early 90's, has become a popular tourist destination. Both speak of community in terms of solidarity, close familial relations, and a unique sense of security and freedom. This story of freedom is linked to a wave of counter-cultural migrations during the 70's and 80's. Families moved to Bellingen in search of an 'alternative lifestyle', the politics of which formed not only a rejection of urban life, but also an affirmative project of inventing new forms of community. Counter-culture would

find among the circuits of country life, and among a state of 'nature', a new kind of solution to the problems of urban freedom. An important difference between the stories of Amber and Kate is the relationship between freedom and community. For Kate, community-as-freedom emerges in opposition to that of the city, but more affirmatively. it is a space of solidarity, identity and tolerance:

[Describe what it's like to live in Bellinghen?] Well to me, I love it, I love living in Bellinghen. I don't like the big cities because it is just too hectic for me, and there is not enough friendliness and you are nobody there really, where here, everyone knows you, well not so much every one knows you, but you've got your friends and a lot of them move away and a lot of them whinge about living in Bellinghen, because it is a small town and all the crap that goes on with it, the gossiping and everything, but I think you just have to be happy with who you are and why you want to be here.

Community is not merely a relation between self and other, but a psychological relation with oneself. To be tolerant of the smallness and otherness of community derives from psychological security, an acceptance of both the limiting and enabling conditions of solidarity. And where Amber is inclined to produce similar statements of solidarity, identity and freedom, there is a tendency for the problematic to disrupt these descriptions. For Amber, it would seem community is not coextensive with the project of freedom, but in various ways an obstacle to this project. Unlike the psychological security described by her sister, Amber invokes the language of limited '*opportunities*' and disadvantage to describe contradictions between community life, education and personal autonomy.

To understand these contradictions, we have to set out a context of generational mobility among Higher School graduates who, each year, leave the community to attend university. Both Kate and Amber describe the gender differences of this migration as follows: girls would finish their Higher School Certificates and continue their education in the larger cities, while boys would either follow a similar educational trajectory or stay in Bellinghen and find a trade. For the minority of girls who did not pursue higher education, there were fewer options to find secure paid work within the community. Both Kate and Amber's narratives mark a departure from these patterns of migration, having both left school at 16. And while, for Kate, this remained a relatively unproblematic transition, Amber invests considerably more work in justifying this departure. She

describes the lack of educational resources and the limited opportunities of the community to convey this problem:

I left school when I was 16, I had done a term of Year 11 and I left because the school I went to- by the time I got to be a senior most of the kids in my year had left ... and so they cut back all the classes and you only got to choose certain subjects and the subjects they had I wouldn't even be able to get into uni or get anything because I couldn't do anything else, and I just didn't feel like I had that many opportunities and I felt like I was wasting my time so I left and moved to Sydney and worked instead ... I just wasn't happy at school and wasn't trying very hard and didn't feel like that I was going to get anything out of it, so I finished ... And I thought that it was just a better decision to work and have the experience of going out and working and having my own independence than sitting in Bellingen and wasting the time at school.

The language of independence and '*experience*' convey a new relation between the city and autonomy, a project that is more closely aligned with personal freedom. Amber moves to Sydney with friends, the four of them living in a two bedroom apartment '*I slept on the lounge room floor on a mattress for five months ... in a dingy tiniest cockroach infested flat in Marrickville, in our whole apartment, no one spoke English except for us*'. The dilapidated and alienating conditions form a comical vignette of the '*thrill*' and adventure of surviving the transition from small country town to the city. Within a week, Amber finds casual work in a call centre for a market research company, and despite disliking the work, describes the experience of earning an income as a kind of personal growth. Freedom is equated with not only an independent spirit of adventure, but the integration of adult responsibilities in a world of seemingly endless possibilities. But this narrative of work and freedom is short-lived:

It was fun, it was a real thrill, kind of like you felt really independent and you were all grown up, and living in this big city and earning money and like ... \$600 in my bank account after I had been paid and wow if I had have had that at home it would have been so much money, but after paying rent and bills and transport it just goes and it doesn't seem like very much at all, yeah I did that for ages and eventually went back home [Why?] Well I moved in with a girl that I didn't really like very much and we didn't get along and I had had enough and I felt very lonely because the girls that I had lived with and my friends that were down there had moved back home, and so I was really lonely I wasn't real happy and I just decided to pack up and go home

It is not the insecurity of work that is the source of fragmentation and isolation, but the urban circuits of living itself, the new, unpredictable forms of sociality that surround one's position in the labour market. For the 16 year old, whose transition to the city encodes an experience of freedom and adventure, we also find a narrative unhinged by the departure of friends, the absence of family, and the precarious circuits of shared

accommodation. For the remainder of Amber's story we sense the deferral of freedom – returning home to Bellinghen, finding herself dependent upon family, and readjusting to the small and highly competitive labour market of the tourist-driven service industry. Here, Amber would engage in numerous forms of casual, low paid, cash employment – nannying, cleaning, kitchen-handing, waitressing – but aside from the constant management of flexible work we also find the on-going management of ambivalence, a desire that is torn between family and freedom, security and insecurity, integration and isolation.

Counter-dependency

For Kate, the relationship between community and freedom is problematised in a different way. Community is a space of freedom but not without having to perform an on-going moral management of her welfare position as a single mother. And even though her labour market experiences in Bellinghen are not entirely different from her sister's, her official position of dependency is more permanent. Furthermore, this position is not a unique one. Alongside benign statements of solidarity, identity and freedom, we also find moral/psychological statements of delinquency, dereliction, welfare dependency and drug-use. This existence of 'counter-community' is comprised of aberrant dispositions and pathologies. In the following, Kate exemplifies how psychological techniques might be used to distinguish the deserving from the undeserving poor:

I think they should start doing psychiatric evaluations on people and realise where they're at, a lot of people are on the dole, but are coping out and they're the people that they have got to work on because people are very lazy around here, and they like to sit on the dole and, you know 'Wait for my pay day every fortnight', so I don't mind the work for the dole thing in a way. I know that if I was single and didn't have a job I wouldn't like it but that is the way it goes, you know you can't, I don't know, I didn't like being single, by myself, young and on the dole but I always been since the age of 18 on the dole.

The existence of an abject class of anti-citizens not only supports governmental policies such as 'work for the dole' and 'mutual obligation', but provides Kate with the discursive resources to morally differentiate her own position from others. These examples of 'counter-dependency' are not only practices of moral management which serve to distinguish between 'good' and 'bad' forms of dependency, but also constitute 'distancing strategies' which exacerbate divisions within the community. That is to say, far from rebuilding or uniting communities, discourses of dependency further exacerbate

sectors of marginality. Constituting idleness and dereliction as a psychological disorder allows welfare populations, like those found among small, country populations, to engage in practices of moral discrimination. Ironically, governmental discourses of welfare dependency fragment and divide the very spaces of community they seek to integrate and revitalise.

Similar kinds of statements appear in Peter's narrative where the theme of 'ethical conduct' gives rise to an unexpected account of welfare dependency. After receiving a Disability Pension in 2000, he and his family were relocated from the North Shore (a traditionally affluent part of Sydney) to the Western suburbs of Sydney (heavily stereotyped as working class, disaffected and poor) to live in Housing Commission. In the following account he gives a vivid description of his neighbours, who exemplify a classic vignette of aboriginal dependency:

I have got some real arsehole neighbours next door here, half-caste Aboriginals, I am not racist in any way but I am quickly becoming that way, given what's living next door here. I have an aboriginal as a brother-in-law and he is an absolute gentleman, he works for the government, employment agency over in Perth, I respect him very much, and I respect a lot of the people I grew up with out in the bush [So what do you think these people exemplify?] Get out and work, there is nothing wrong with them, why can't they get out and work, there is nothing wrong with them, you can't tell me that just because they are broke they can't go out and get a job [Why aren't they working?] They're alcoholics, guaranteed, I am not nit picking, all she is, is a factory for pumping out kids, this is her ninth kid she is pregnant with right now and living in a three bedroom house, okay admittedly she has, what's she got. four of them aren't there, four of them have already been taken from her and put in welfare, and this is what sort of crap goes on and the government keeps giving them bloody money, and this is wrong, this thing with Amanda Vanstone at the moment that she wants to have this one off dole payment to wipe the whole system, it is a bloody good idea, okay for those that can't support themselves, physically, mentally, or whatever the case may be, they need something there to support them, but those that can get off their arse and do something yes, mate I'm. I have got physical things wrong with me, I have got medical things wrong with me. at least I am still out having a go.

This very managed but nonetheless racial account of dependency bears the curious trademarks of the 'black welfare mother', a popular American stereotype of the 70's. This is worked up by numerous references to pathological conduct – addiction and chronic idleness, excessive reproduction, moral impropriety and parental misconduct. But pathology is linked to a much wider problem. Welfare dependency is an institutional phenomenon, again, drawing from Anglo-American criticisms of the welfare state: welfare provision simply produces dependency '*They* [The government] *should have*

bloody knocked something like this on the head back in the 70s when they first set up the dole. They have made it too easy for people to get on these benefits'. He proceeds to describe the Western Suburbs in terms of the erosion of moral decency, invoking the language of 'slum' and 'ghetto' to convey a socially engineered landscape of dependency 'So around this area there is suburbs, suburbs on suburbs where there is nothing but welfare'.

Characteristic of these statements of counter-dependency is the kind of moral work that differentiates between the deserving and undeserving poor. It serves to make a comment about Peter's own integrity as someone who, despite his chronic incapacity, is still active in some moral capacity. This moral management of the self is a position of distancing oneself from others, a position which is seemingly exacerbated by having to live in close proximity to abjection and poverty. Towards the end of the narrative, Peter describes the fantasy of becoming a respected member of community *'I just want to be recognised for achieving something and have good standing in the community'*. But given his material location within these urban sectors of marginality, Peter must engage in the kind of work that presents oneself as a member of a 'transcendent' moral community, someone 'who does not really belong here'. Arguably, these statements of counter-dependency serve to drive further divisions among the poor, creating feelings of isolation and insecurity rather than the kind of solidarity and allegiance that one would expect to find among ideal community settings.

Jay invokes a position of counter-dependency to articulate the problem of subjectification in a slightly different way, one which is certainly implicit among previous statements. As a New Zealander, she orients an account of being a foreign observer of the Australian welfare system, employing a kind of anthropological gaze to specify the feelings of otherness produced by her permanent welfare position:

I think... in Australia because I'm not Australian I found it quite shocking the amount of people that are on welfare, and, the families that... they're on it, then their kids are on it and it's a way of life for them, and I... that was new to me, and I think because of that, and because there are people who their career is welfare, and then, there is so much publicity about, people who are roting the system, I feel like it's the biggest stigma to be on welfare, and it just... and it's one reason I'm I'm not, I don't really want to meet people, because I

don't want to tell them... I'm not much of a liar, but I don't want to say, I'm not working, I'm on a pension, cause I feel a huge stigma, against it.

The prevalence of welfare dependency is persuasively managed as a '*shocking*' discovery, the extent of which is conveyed by statements of 'intergenerational dependency'. That is to say, the phenomenon is endemic to a culture, a condition transmitted and reproduced by the family mechanism. But rather than an explicit pathology, dependency is worked up as a rational alternative to work, a statement that draws from utilitarian arguments of *homo economicus*. To make a '*career*' of welfare is to specify the rational, choice-making capacities of individuals who calculate a better life outside the circuits of wage-labour. It is not the presumed or actual existence of the 'welfare cheat' that is problematic, but the '*publicity*' generated by the media that intensifies the public and moral salience of welfare dependency. Subjectification for the Disability Pensioner is one that must engage in the continuous management of private shame and public stigma, to conceal or deflect one's permanent welfare position. And whether we think of stigma as 'internalisation' or 'self-management' of an increasingly blameworthy position is perhaps less significant than gauging the social and individual consequences of isolation. Statements of dependency divide communities and pit the poor against themselves, the effects of which not only produce a painful intensification of subjectivity, but enhance rather than reduce marginalisation.

Marginalisation

For those who abandoned the city to search for their own solutions to the problem of freedom, the collapse of hippie politics in the 80's, the transformation of communal living, and the restricted labour market of the country, would prove too much for some. In the case of Sam, the country was no longer a viable space to realise a project of freedom. By the 90's, it was the promise of financial stability and the reconstruction of self through government retraining programmes that would replace the old idealism with a new sense of labour market opportunity. She describes returning to the city in 94/95 and, in the following vignette, offers a unique insight of broader social change:

I had a really hard time when I came back to Sydney because even though I was gone for two years, it seemed like everybody had forgotten me, or that everybody's life had become so stressful and, nobody had any room and, sort of the old days when you could camp in someone's sunroom until you got your own place just weren't happening anymore. I was

stranded, it was me and my bloody Kingswood with all twenty years of writing packed in the boot, the guitar and a couple of plants and some clothes, wandering around going 'I'm so sorry for taking two inches of your lounge-room' because nobody can afford spare rooms anymore because Sydney rents are really high, y'know everyone's a stress nut because they're all working their butts off just to pay the friggen rent, y'know so that was really hard. I ended up in a refuge for like three weeks, and I was so depressed, I had a massive breakdown while I was doing some temp work, and I ended up wandering around the city one night, completely anxiety off my head like just, didn't know who I was just couldn't handle anything jus froze on the street corner ... I was working at the Commonwealth Bank up on the eleventh floor, I was doing the finance ... and that was killing me that was physically really really difficult it was so painful. that's when I knew that, RSI was becoming really serious, because what I could do before, keyboard robot, I couldn't do anymore right, I was just seizing up, and I was having so much pain and then going home to this fuckin refuge, and I'm like I'm I'm I'm for god's sake. I'm like 38 or something and I'm like homeless and I've got all these skills.

In this highly lucid account, Sam conveys the feeling of alienation and dislocation of being shut out of an urban condition that is neither recognisable nor accommodating. The travelling ex-hippie with her life packed in a car returns to find herself at odds with a new space of subjectification, one that has become literally *constricted*, as if space itself had now become a precious commodity by the mid 90's. The generality of Sam's observations convey something of a new ethos of urban life that has become increasingly compressed and desocialised. Her only recourse is to seek emergency accommodation in a refuge from which ensues a heightened sense of marginalisation – exhaustion, anxiety, isolation – the project of freedom is unexpectedly derailed as the bio-mechanical assemblage of self 'seizes' up under the new conditions of subjectification. But despite this painful, almost bewildering transition, activity persists in the form of low paid, casual employment. The tired services of the '*keyboard robot*' living out of car and refuge are the only remaining foothold with which to extricate oneself from the material and psychological conditions of personal distress. In a rhetorical display of incredulity, Sam is left to ponder what went wrong. Despite reconstruction of the self – the endless retraining, the belief in a new project of freedom, the personal transformation from busker/waitress to personal assistant – she wonders how, by the age of 38, she became homeless and exhausted.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I tried to gain sense of how participants have managed the changed conditions of work since the 70's up to the present. For those who first entered the labour market in the 70's we find it is not work itself that is the source of insecurity but the

management of personal distress and freedom. Work is constructed as a taken-for-granted possibility – easily recyclable and interchangeable – while other personal and familial instabilities are played out in the foreground of the narratives. The contrast I want to show, however, is how the nature of work itself becomes the source of insecurity as personal distress and continuous self-management become embedded among new problems of finding and keeping secure and meaningful work.

By the 80's, flexibility of work, particularly for younger participants, is constructed as both a source of freedom – a means of exploring better working conditions within the labour market, finding casual work that does not require specific educational attainments – and a source of insecurity – work is susceptible to retrenchment, is increasingly temporary and casualised and, for some, requires living in alienating and isolated conditions. For the participants who have had longer experiences in the labour market, insecurity is also associated with the mismanagement of risk, the failure of governing oneself rationally and responsibly. Among the more distressing examples, an acute sense of ambivalence, self-blame and personal regret is associated with the failure to conduct oneself as rational, resilient and self-directing subjects, despite the narration of personal trajectories that indicate high levels of psycho-social distress, disadvantage and systemic marginality.

There is also evidence among participants in their late 20's and early 30's of experiences that seem to reject the normal, moral circuits of flexible wage-labour in order to engage in a kind of identity work that is linked with risky and liminal forms of work within the black economy. These statements of 'counter-activity' – forms of activity that masquerade as dependency and claim benefits as a way of managing the risk of these liminal sectors of work – might be better understood as practices of resistance rather than forms of immoral and aberrant conduct. In the case of Jabe and Con, we might think of these marginal practices as examples in which practices of freedom go 'underground' to invent alternative solutions to the problems of identity and autonomy. Rather than discourses of dependency, I would suggest that contemporary forms of marginality are also linked to the endless ethical work required to become flexible wage-labourers.

Lastly, there is evidence of statements cited by both older and younger participants that spaces of community are not necessarily a solution for integrating the marginalised and 'the excluded'. Indeed, discourses of dependency, idleness and pathology would seem to have the opposite effect of revitalising and regenerating bonds of community. Discourses of 'counter-dependency' – statements that distinguish the deserving from the undeserving poor – and discourses of 'counter-community' – statements that constitute an aberrant class of anti-citizens – drive further divisions between the poor, and increase stigma and desocialisation. For those, like Pete, who place themselves within their own transcendent moral communities, constant moral management, the narration of virtue and strategies of distancing are also methods of managing ambivalence, uncertainty and self-blame.

With the exception of Sam who employs a critical discourse of work and welfare, a dominant tendency among participants is the use of moral/psychological discourses to locate dependency within the misconduct of individual behaviours. And what is generally missing is a political or structural context of deprivation which might otherwise locate marginalisation and worklessness among conditions of inequality, insecurity, under-employment, and various obstacles of finding secure work in the labour market.

8 'Regulation'

The theme 'regulation' explores how contemporary apparatuses of government seek to fabricate an 'active society' by installing various technologies of control designed to reform subjectivity. The argument is made that while contemporary welfare administration adheres to disciplinary techniques of acting on the conduct of welfare recipients there is also evidence of new techniques of control which are immanent to practices of activity. That is to say, modern procedures of power not only act directly on the conduct of recipients, but on the networks and relations, the forces and capacities, in which they are enjoined to participate. The task is to diagnose a form of power that no longer simply adheres to the disciplinary space of enclosures – the dole office, the job centre – but employs techniques of *modulation* – continuous monitoring, perpetual training, psychological mentoring – to reconfigure the capacities of recipients within frameworks of behavioural obligation. The transformation of the latter is largely a *technical* revolution in the sense that information technology and electronic databases are increasingly used to monitor and track the claimant's position. The creation of job networks and the contractual management of recipients are designed to calibrate and transform conduct in such ways as to maximise individual autonomy, and restore the kind of self-regarding behaviour that has become synonymous with labour market activity.

To be clear, the principle of regulation is understood as a *productive* phenomenon. The conditions according to which subjects are formulated refer to the kind of power that not only unilaterally acts on a given subject as a form of domination or repression, but also *activates* or forms the subject. Subjectification is a productive phenomenon inasmuch as it designates a *restriction* in the power of production. To understand this phenomenon it is necessary to show how political power specifically targets the ethical sphere of individual conduct. Rather than simple domination, power is understood as inserted within the very practices through which the self acts on the self, by which self comes to *know* the self as a self. There are two broad themes in which I investigate this

phenomenon: ‘from regulation to modulation’ traces the subtle operations of power by examining the effects of regulation/modulation upon subjectivity; and ‘self-management in the age of activity’ examines technologies of the self in relation to medical and psychological surveillance, and continuous forms of obligation and training. Through the mediation of medical, psychological, moral and other hybrid discourses, it becomes possible to show how modern technologies of government operate through the constriction and intensification of ethical practices of freedom.

From regulation to modulation

In the age of activity, neo-liberal rationalities of welfare reform seek to induce useful forms of social and economic participation by targeting the ethical sphere of self-formation. In this case, subjects are enjoined to think of themselves as certain kinds of subjects, and manage themselves according to principles of freedom and obligation. Among the following participant statements I want to recover a number of experiences which illustrate the difference between regulation and modulation and how both kinds of practices work to produce the very objects they seek to control. Across a range of different welfare positions, it is possible to show how control strategies are embedded among narratives of self-formation.

Surveillance

Mary is a 37yr old single mother receiving a pension and an education supplement while studying part-time at university; she works sporadically on community conservation projects, and for ten years has worked casually as a life model. In the following account, Mary describes the experience of applying for the pension in 1992, an awkward event in which she must manage the position of ‘single mother’ while also concealing the identity of the father who requested he remain anonymous:

The first time I came back to Penrith, I caught a train for the first time, baby in a sling. I remember sitting in the guard’s carriage by myself kind of you know, and caught a taxi up, and I had this terrible, terrible encounter, oh it was the first time I went to social security to do all the paper work ... My God, well, I guess I looked the part, I had this huge old fashion pram, you know with a veil over it, I was on my own and I went down to go and do my paperwork and the questions, because Mark had clearly stated to me that he didn’t want to be identified and I had to answer the questions right, and there was this bloke on the other side of the counter, saying ‘What, father unknown? What do you mean father unknown? Like what does that mean?’, you know, ‘Does that mean you were shagging more than one guy at once?’ ... and I’m like- wounded my God, and my hackles were up, I was furious, but I was crushed.

you know, mortified and yeah that was horrible, and I couldn't do the paperwork. I fell apart at the seams, took my big pram back to my little house ... I had to go back to sanctuary, you know, safe haven.

It is noteworthy how an abject relation to the self is produced within the institutional space of the dole office, a space in which the moral gaze of the male public servant intensifies a position of sexual misconduct, and the embarrassment of claiming support. The statement '*I fell apart at the seams*' suggests the dissolution of self and the painful loss of composure. Collapsed and demoralised, Mary returns to the private space of security only to later return with the support of a male friend. Strident and prepared, she returns to the dole office to complete her application '*And we got it sorted and it was okay, but I needed that moral support, to actually to be there on my own, because I was out on a limb having this baby in the first place because you know, I got the thumbs down from Caesar. Caesar said 'No', but I was lucky ... I strongly felt that it was the right thing to do*'.

I want to contrast this event with another that occurred just a week before the interview, some 11 years later, to illustrate how welfare authorities induce a very different, albeit subtle, relation to the self. In the following account, Mary presents a narrative of progress marked by seasonal change and nostalgic affection for her daughter. The tone and direction of the narration conveys a secluded and intimate bond between mother and daughter set amongst the background of natural processes and physical growth. But the contiguous themes of '*progress*' and '*single parent pension*' form a tenuous relation, the former is disrupted by a recent '*hiccup*' wherein Mary is forced to engage in the management of her welfare position:

And we are just coming into spring, the peach blossom flowers for the first time since being here, and when this tree comes out it is total complete immersion in this deep pink and it happens the month of my birthday and all the symbols were strong, like all spring, I've got a photo of her in this old wheelbarrow ... and she is throwing leaves everywhere and she's this tiny little thing, and you know, she is covered in jasmine and I'm just piling the jasmine on top of her and you know, we had a really amazing time and we played, and Mark was on the other side of the world and I would sit at night and diligently write, 'Oh she's so beautiful, she's so amazing', you know, 'She is so like you and she's' you know, and I processed a lot just by writing it down that way, and yeah, and things have just progressed, I have been on the single parent pension the whole time, had a little hiccup last week actually, that made me feel like 'Oh I am so over being dependent'.

The anomaly she refers to occurred when her male flatmate applied for unemployment benefits some weeks earlier. She describes receiving '*this big heavy letter*' and invokes the administrative language '*our cross referencing has indicated...*' to convey the sudden interrogation of her welfare position. Cross referencing suggests that because a male of the same address was applying for benefits, Mary's conditions of eligibility had possibly changed; the implication being that single mother and male lodger were partners and fraudulently claiming benefits. This instance of control is markedly different to Mary's first encounter in the dole office. Electronic management of client databases effectively operate at a distance, casting an omnipresent form of surveillance. What is striking is the efficacy of surveillance in reactivating a position of dependency rendering 'progress' provisional and insecure: '*and I suddenly got all uppity and precious about my benefit you know. and I'm thinking this is no good to be like this, um but all he'd done was lodged forms because his work was erratic*'. Modulation is not simply monitoring the poor, but inserts monitoring within the very practices by which the self forms a relation with itself. Mary is thus reminded that a position of dependency is contractual, provisional, and even inferior to the state of freedom and security derived by one's own labour.

Perpetual training

Sam cites the institutional space of the '*dole office*' at a time when social security was expanded under a Whitlam Government in 1973. She narrates an account of intense resistance after being denied benefits on the grounds of moving from an area of high employment (city) to one of low employment (country). It is interesting to note how a psychological subject of 'hysteria' emerges within the institutional space. But rather than the production of the psychological subject some thirty years ago, I think this story conveys a more recent production, in which case the language of '*fatigue*' and '*depression*' has become a recent condition of assistance, and an interminable position from which past relations of the self are reassembled:

In those days you didn't have a security guard like, like I, realised a few years ago when did they appear in dole offices and we didn't notice them appearing and suddenly now they're always there. like I can remember the days when we got our dole in a cheque (laughs) um, anyway, sooo yeah the dole office was in Bega, I chucked a wobbly and started becoming hysterical and abusing them and yelling at them, and crying all at the same time, and saying

'If you guys had an apple between you you wouldn't know how to divide it, you don't have any idea what your talking about' blah blah blah I was jus completely ranting and raving and hysterical, and then it was like 'Calm down madam and come and sit down and I'll give you a cup of tea', right, and that's how I got the dole... cause I chucked a wobbly in the dole office in front of everybody who was standing in the queue, and no one had done this before. it wasn't usual, now it's usual you could go down to Redfern and see an argument in the dole office every other day.

In the institutional space where rational discourses discriminate the deservingness of the poor, Sam must present herself as an irrational subject, the pathological woman of hysteria, to subvert rational criteria of eligibility. But I think the appearance of the irrational, psychological subject signifies her present welfare position as someone who must actively assemble oneself as psychologically or medically flawed in order to align herself with current regimes of eligibility. This is not to say subjects intentionally fabricate a position of pathology as a tactic of resistance. Rather, it illustrates a correspondence between neo-liberal discourses that produce pathological subjects, and welfare recipients who must assume, for one reason or another, a position of pathology in order to obtain benefits. The recent appearance of the '*security guard*' is also a timely reminder that irrational conduct is no longer a viable tactic for obtaining benefits; the '*cup of tea*' has been supplanted by physical removal from the institutional space.

Again, I want to contrast the institutional regulation of the dole office with another event some 19 years later. 1992 marks a context of underemployment and economic scarcity – the recession years under a Keating Labour Government – where the new language of 'unemployability' begins to signal the shift of responsibility from the state to the individual. Under the new implicit social contract of the early 90's, welfare recipients are expected to take on as much of the responsibility to transform themselves into active participants of the labour market. This tactical reformation of the poor corresponds to an explosion of government retraining schemes during this period:

I spent most of 1992 ... looking for a job, and that was that terrible recession we weren't having according to Paul Keating, and I was going for job interviews where 200 people were applying for the same job... and there was just no way you were going to get to the short list of the interviews, and if you did you still didn't get the job, and it was unbelievable ... by then y'know, we've got things like JET Schemes coming into the y'know we don't have the JET centres anymore which were like small and friendly and taught you how to make jewellery (sarcasm), we've got ... to do these computer courses and we y'know 'We're going to give you this benefit only if you do six weeks worth of training in that period of time', so we've got to get all the single mothers back out into the workforce scheme, hit that market, and so I

was getting calls and letters and stuff by then from CES people sort of y'know Mary so and so who was in charge of this programme and that programme, it's all designed to sort of rehabilitate me back into the workforce, y'know and that was OK and ... now managing the pension was much harder because they were really pushing me... like the funny thing was they were trying to get me trained but I was overqualified for their courses, and I'd go to their friggen stupid courses, and we'd have, 12 women in a class and one guy learning 'How to move the cursor around the screen', and I could ... format a 60 page document in an hour. y'know that's like someone's thesis or something.

In the above account, control operates via more 'active' welfare policies designed to elicit an enterprising relation to self. For instance, we notice a shift from the institutional space of 'office counter' regulation to the active reconstruction and reskilling of single mothers to return to wage-labour. The skills privileged by the new labour market of the 90's no longer require the quaint 'arts and craft' activities of the 80's, but are specifically geared to a new industry whereby single mothers are '*pushed*' into low paid, white collar clerical work. But the old vestiges of paternalistic authority are also encoded in the pedagogical context of retraining '*and we'd have 12 women in a class and one guy learning...*' There is something both patronising and redundant in the way these programmes are designed to '*rehabilitate*' women whose integration in the workforce is tantamount to a recovery from some long-term illness. In Sam's case, strategies of modulation would seek to reconstruct relations of self on self by aligning computer literacy with the promise of autonomy. But the clear signs of resistance encoded in this account suggest the imperative of perpetual training was, if anything, a precursor to physical breakdown and exhaustion '*[Do you feel the system let you down?] Abso-friggen-lutely. Totally I- look they were the one's that pushed me into secretarial work, and they pushed, and I wasn't one of those people who said 'I'll just do your course to keep you happy'. I was one of those people who rocked up earlier and said 'Show me, give me the knowledge, I'm hungry for it', and then went back six months later and said 'I want to teach the course', y'know I wasn't one of those people who just sat in on the computer course, I just think all my energy went on working for people*'.

Rehabilitation

Another characteristic of modulation is not simply that subjectification is intensified or enjoined to obligations of activity, but that continuous monitoring has become a condition of welfare receipt. This is painfully conveyed in Jay's narrative who explains

the ordeal of applying for Sickness Benefits in 1995. Her 'official' diagnosis of Chronic Fatigue Syndrome specifies a somewhat nebulous medical category for a cluster of chronic pathologies ranging from physical exhaustion, depression, hormonal imbalance, hyper sensitivity and mental fog. But what is well-established among the literature and among the experiences of those suffering from CFS is the difficulty of convincing the medical profession of its legitimacy. Jay's narrative was at times very painful for her to tell, especially at one point when she describes being '*abused*' by one Sydney Doctor who accused her of '*malingering*' before ejecting her from the surgery. In the following account she describes having to deal with '*Social Security Doctors*' every six months to reinstate her benefits:

...but then you have to deal with social security doctors, huh the first one hadn't even heard of it (incredulous) [Social Security have their own doctors?] Yeah... um and I still have to deal with them occasionally... and they don't know, they have no idea, they just assess you, but I think, they look at you and they try and work out if you're genuine or not, y'know but (sniff) ... um, you do have to go, I think when you're on sickness benefits, you have to see. get a new certificate every six months I think it is, I'm not sure, but that's about that... so you have to go through it again every six months... um, which I think is fair enough, in most cases but when you've got something that people don't know what it is, and there's no test for it... that's what they hate... there's no... they can't do a blood test, and say 'You-have-got-this', um. it makes it, awful, y'know it's your- it's your word against, theirs' sort of thing.

The difficulty is not merely that one must continually present oneself as the subject of pathology – the flawed psychological subject, the subject of physical exhaustion – but that one's welfare position is continuously provisional. The medical gaze must remain objectively naive of one's medical history in order to iterate a consistent diagnosis. There is something about the repetition of this procedure which reinforces and reproduces the medical/psychological subject. But in addition to medical regulation and endless reassessment, the medical encounter intensifies the experience of *being* a pathological object, it enhances the uncertainty with which it forces one to engage in a relation to self as an anomaly: after all, it is Jay's word against the word of the medical profession, and it is the objectivity of the 'medical test' upon which one's welfare position is either conferred or revoked.

In the year the Howard Government assumed office, 1997, Jay reiterates the difficult transition from Sickness Benefits to Disability Pension at a time when control strategies sought to rehabilitate the unemployable by inserting them into circuits of work and

activity. In the following account we find not only evidence of the '*huge pressure*' with which the incapacitated are redirected into '*work programmes*', but we notice a relation to self that actively seeks and desires the possibilities of reformation. For the subject of pathology, rehabilitation presents '*real hopes*' of reformation, that is, to transform one's remaining capacities into useful forms of activity and autonomy:

[How did you get the pension?] That's that's quite a thing it's um... you can't stay on Sickness Benefit for more than two years ... so at that point Social Security tried to get everybody back to work, there was huge pressure on you to get you back to work ... I did see, Commonwealth Rehabilitation people, um which is ... they try to get you off sickness, or pension, and onto, some sort of work programme, that was unbelievable huh (incredulous) [Why?] I had real hopes for that because I thought 'Well, surely I can do something, they can retrain me to do, something, I've still got a bit of a brain left and I can still walk around', but they- they're set up to do the sheltered workshop thing for people who are um... developmentally delayed, that's one end of it, and then there's the other end of it for people, who might have had an accident or, or in a wheel chair or something, they had nothing, for people with long-term illness, it's not just what I've got there's lots of things um... so they don't deal with that, that's not their department, so that was a waste of time, and that's all there is ... I was supposed to miraculously get better, I think, or go away or something, so I had to go through the Social Security doctors ... and that's when I got the one who'd never heard of it, and... I think they had to report it so, he jus, put the OK stamp on it because he didn't know, suspected that I might be genuine, and he didn't know ... and then I was on the pension [How did you feel about that?] Written off basically.

In this account modulation constitutes a form of training that is expected to reform the incapacitated. Here, I am reminded of the administrative vision of Bentham's Pauper establishment, where even the most impotent or 'useless' pauper is rendered expedient. According to Bentham's principle of 'Self Provision' every pauper was thought to possess some utility, some capacity to labour, up to the level of their subsistence. I think a similar principle is preserved under contemporary programmes of '*rehabilitation*', though we are no longer dealing with the space of internment, nor the kind of self-provision connected to institutional subsistence. Via the therapeutic circuits of rehabilitation, the subject is to work on themselves under the paternalistic guidance of the health professional, to recover as much capacity as possible to thereby minimise or dissolve their dependency upon the state. But Jay encodes a critical account of someone who neither falls within a position of psychological deficiency, the '*developmentally delayed*', nor a position of physical incapacity, '*people who might have had an accident*'. The chronically ill subject is relegated to a hopeless position, left to ponder whether there is anything left of the self that is capable of work '*I've still got a bit of a brain left and I can still walk around*'. The transition to the '*pension*' is not a victory, but an abject position

of endless regulation; it confirms a relation to self as one that is permanently outcast from the world of autonomy and activity.

Breaching practices

Under the present regime of control strategies, even a temporary welfare position is no longer a secure space for the management of freedom. Consider the case of Pete, a 33 year old PhD student, who worked as a full-time Youth Worker for ten years before reinventing himself as a promising researcher and academic. Before working for the Department of Community Services, Pete cites numerous occasions of claiming unemployment benefits over short durations. Among these instances of assistance, welfare is conveyed as a kind of ‘stop-gap’, a hiatus, between transitions in the labour-market. By 1999, and with only two subjects needed to complete his degree, he describes having to apply for unemployment benefits after the Government Education Allowance. Austudy, ceased payments on the grounds that his workload had dropped below full-time study. In the following account, Pete conveys the on-going difficulties of managing a welfare position while completing the final year of his degree:

I experienced lots of problems with them, you know, they wanted me to fill diaries out and ... I can remember ringing up and making an arrangement with someone at Centrelink and then getting a letter to say that I'd been docked because I hadn't done something that I was meant to do, but I had actually already arranged with somebody else that it was okay to do that, and there was another time where they said that I had to bring in my diary, I didn't have a diary, I didn't bother filling one out, but I just- but they told me I could do it on a piece of paper, so I did it on a piece of paper, brought it in and showed it to them and they said 'No worries', um, rubber stamped it, and then I got sent another letter to say they'd docked my pay because I hadn't brought in the diary, when I actually had, and that took quite a bit of talking around to get them to believe me that I'd actually done that, I had to bring it in again, then I got another letter to say that the first semester while I'd been on Austudy, um, that I hadn't been entitled to that Austudy because I wasn't a full-time student at the time because they'd done cross referenced database check on the student records, and I duly informed them that I definitely had been a full-time student, that I'd done three subjects that put me into that category, I'd brought in the paper work to verify that which I had gotten from administration at university, and that wasn't good enough, they needed a particular type of paper that had a particular number on it to satisfy their criteria, so eventually I got that after lots and lots of arguing with them and lots and lots of drama after them then telling me I owed them \$3,000 or \$4,000 and they were taking the money out of my bloody dole.

Here we find numerous statements that exemplify the kind of control strategies which are now characteristic of the post welfare regime. For instance, the administrative requirements of the ‘job diary’ attempt to access the ethical life of the ‘jobseeker’ by manufacturing an *ascetic* relation to self. By ‘asceticism’, I mean the fashioning of a

subject who is no longer merely a passive beneficiary of the state, but more an enterprising consumer capable of exercising the best possible choices for effective participation. In terms of this new administrative logic, the job diary serves two purposes: on the one hand, it induces a relation to self as a reflexive, autonomous subject, a 'client' who is expected to master the capacities and competencies that lead to enterprising conduct; on the other, the diary renders this mode of self-reflection transparent to welfare authorities; it serves as proof of ethical engagement, as well as a test of one's active obligations. But what is striking about Pete's account is the continuous management required to maintain this position as the apparent jobseeker, a position that is incongruous with his own expectations of activity. '*They docked my pay*' exemplifies the disciplinary technique of breaching practices for eliciting compliance, and '*cross referenced database check on the student records*' illustrates the use of electronic surveillance to monitor the honesty or progress of claimants. In either case, the claimant must continually demonstrate their contractual obligations as a rational, enterprising agent.

According to Pete, however, intensity of regulation corresponds to certain distributions of risk, in which case areas of high unemployment or poverty are inclined to attract more severe penalties and increased demonstrations of compliance:

[Why do you think you were getting such a hard time?] Oh there's a few reasons, one is because um, it is in the outer Western suburbs of Sydney ... being employed in a place like that would be very very difficult and I think it would be very easy to come to think of the customer as the enemy, um, I did notice a huge difference in the attitude between St Mary's Centrelink and Katoomba Centrelink, Katoomba Centrelink was very nice, they were very helpful, they're not there to try and um, prove you wrong basically, they are there to help [Why do you think there is such a contrast between St Mary's and Katoomba?] Well I guess because it's got something to do with socio-economic differences, the high levels of poverty and stuff down there, it is just concentrated poverty in St Mary's and Penrith ... There seemed to be a lot of resentment towards the customer and as soon as you got in there they were looking down their nose and they were automatically on the defensive ... I mean to be fair they were probably getting a lot of angry, disgruntled customers in their office, huge long lines of them, day in day out and they just became defensive, and um may even be attacking, the opposite, they were attacking their customers, they automatically assumed you to be in the wrong and you were guilty until proven innocent, that happened to me a number of times, I had to prove my innocence.

The language of '*customer*' confirms that welfare is no longer an unconditional right of the citizen, but an economic and contractual obligation of the consumer. But what seems to defy the mutuality between service provider and consumer is that some customers,

depending on which sector of risk they occupy, are required to demonstrate *more* obligation than those residing among less riskier sectors. The relational binary of ‘*attacking*’ and ‘*defensive*’ conveys an antagonistic and combative relationship between consumer and service provider. Statements such as these suggest that while policy itself might be neutral and objective, the personnel who inhabit and implement it are perhaps susceptible to the same kind of biases implied by the logic of welfare dependency. In other words, it has become commonplace to associate poverty with a culture of ‘dole bludgers’. Pete touches on the same point when saying ‘*They are trying to make an example of people who are over claiming benefits but it is also a vote winner. I mean, nobody likes a dole bludger*’. Thus, the continuous management of the jobseeker is also sustained by the presumption of guilt, that is, certain areas of risk are conflated with increased expectations of idleness and fraud.

Among this small selection of narratives and statements it is possible to demonstrate a shift between strategies of regulation and more contemporary techniques of modulation. Each kind of control strategy, whether by including or excluding the poor, seek to elicit a particular relation to self. Among the accounts given, we might think of disciplinary techniques as practices which function within the institutional space of the dole office, a site of intensification in which claimants are to engage in a moral and rational relation to the self. Regulation adheres to a simple binary logic: eligible v ineligible, deserving v undeserving, healthy v unhealthy. Among more recent events, however, it is possible to recover a number of experiences in which welfare authorities seek to insert within experience itself a relation to self that renders control efficient and automatic. The omnipresence of continuous surveillance, perpetual training, rehabilitation programmes and breaching practices seek to ethically reform subjectivity, which characterise just some of the practices by which subjectification has become an instrument of governance. In each of these cases, acting upon the relations by which the self maintains a relation to itself has become a novel technique for seducing or compelling subjects to engage in their freedom as active, rational, enterprising beings who must continually demonstrate their capacity for freedom. But given the many kinds of resistance encoded in each of these accounts, this normative project is subject to so many local failures and challenges.

Self-management in the age of activity

In the age of activity the management of self – whether in the name of freedom, health or prosperity – is a project we are all enjoined to. To manage one’s finances, one’s health, one’s career, or lifestyle, are symptoms of a regime in which individual conduct is increasingly called upon to manage the project of self as a responsible and autonomous enterprise. That is to say, the language of ‘the self’ has become central to contemporary rationalities and discourses that seek to align the capacities of individuals with the possibilities of flexible wage-labour. In the previous section, I demonstrated how this call to ‘manage ourselves’ responsibly and autonomously is inserted within ethical practices to activate capacities that dissolve a relation of dependency. In the following series of vignettes, I want to show how various technologies of self-management are immanent to practices of subjectification. Among local, specific and hybrid regimes of everyday truth, people live and transform their lives according to specific demands, ideals and objectives.

Managing confidence

I want to begin with the youngest member of the sample, Amber, to show how self-management is not only tied to activity, but must overcome the psychological and local conditions that constrain it. Again, she invokes the theme of relative deprivation and disadvantage to describe a small community that is unable to deliver its younger members adequate opportunities for economic participation. Despite these constraints, Amber draws on a psychological solution: young people should be encouraged to participate in ‘courses’ which develop a ‘work ethic’, as if to say ethical restoration will motivate the self to transcend the material obstacles of community. In fact, there is a striking homology between Amber’s account, and current neo-liberal solutions that seek to promote a psychological relation to self by raising motivation, self-esteem, confidence and self-control to overcome problems of youth dependency:

[What difficulties do people your age have to face] Um, there is not much in the way of people. young kids I think that they should encourage, like do courses through school or something that encourages kids to work for or having that sense of work ethic, it is really like... most of my friends have all moved away ... but there are still the few that are hanging around town and doing the same thing and just not much, there is just not much opportunity, and it is quite hard to get that confidence up to move away.

But even this account fails to resolve the ambivalence between programmes designed to restore confidence and build self-esteem, and wider structural problems of deprivation. Furthermore, it is interesting that programmes designed to ‘*encourage*’ confidence are not presented as a solution to problems of community itself, but psychological issues that inhibit young people from *leaving* community. And while Amber would seem to be referring to her peers, I think this account reflects her own problems of forming a psychological relation with oneself to ‘*get that confidence up to move away*’. For Amber, the solution to the problem of freedom lies beyond the spaces of community.

When asked to describe her ‘lifestyle’ Amber was ashamed of her current position ‘*Well at the moment it’s not much, and I am not real happy ... I don’t really do much*’. She described the embarrassing contrast between her boyfriend, a carpenter, who wakes up at 6.30am to go to work, and herself who wakes at 10.00am. She hinted at the relational tension between activity and inactivity, and proceeded to describe a domestic space in which the self struggles for clarity:

[Does he put a little bit of pressure on you to be independent or something?] Yeah, not really independent, pressure on me because he doesn’t like seeing me not doing anything and I am not happy doing it and that is why he pushes me a lot more ... and I have got mum doing it as well, ringing up and saying ‘Have you applied for that job yet Amber? Make sure you ring them’, so yeah, it helps me keep up ... push me along [Why do you need to be pushed?] Because it is so easy to sit back and just let everything flow by and you know day to day life ... and potter around the house and do the washing and stuff, it is so easy to forget ... and you lose that kind of confidence in going and asking people for a job and after while you think ‘I don’t even know if I can do it and not good enough, and haven’t worked for ages’ and yeah it does, you need somebody to give you a bit of a kick.

The self engaged in mundane activity is projected into a vague and listless space, as if it were an object at risk of disappearing in the ‘*flow*’ of ‘*day to day life*’. But it is interesting how a form of paternalism – the ‘*push*’ of her boyfriend and the phone calls from her mother – seems to prevent this slide into dissolution. Paternalism figures as an external force that acts at a distance by encouraging and inducing the psychological restoration of one’s powers to engage in enterprising activities that lead to employment. In this account, we are reminded of how paternalism reinstates a psychological relation to oneself as the proper locus of control.

Managing unemployment

Jabe narrates a difficult transition to welfare, an experience that is conflicted by feelings of depression and constant incitement by welfare authorities to find work. Her official position of *'intensive support'* is one besieged by paternalistic monitoring and coercion: *'now you get a letter every week, go and do that, go and do this, go and do that, and go and do this, go and see these people, you must do this, you have a meeting with this, you have these forms to fill in, you know, you cannot avoid it'*. For Jabe it is not a question of whether a psychological relation to self emerges – given her extreme position it would seem unavoidable – it is more a matter of what kind of psychological subject is capable of managing both depression and coercion:

When I got sacked, I got really really depressed and I've only just started to come out of it because I am the kind of person, I can't be depressed for too long, if you let yourself spiral, you'll let yourself spiral and I don't see that as healthy and it is, yeah it is hard to maintain a positive attitude, but it is something that you've got to do, you know, a like a lot of options available to you, so at the moment, I buy newspapers, I go to Centrelink and look for jobs. I do all my Centrelink stuff, I bitch and whinge about being poor and not having a job and how it sucks, but no one will employ me when I'm capable.

In the above account we are told the *'depressed'* self is not the *'kind of person'* capable of finding work. The solution is to reassemble oneself in terms of a conception of personhood that eschews depression as a negative and unhealthy reaction to unemployment. Though depression might be an understandable or even typical reaction to job-loss, the psychological language of *'attitudes'* re-establishes a locus of personal power: one must establish a positive *'frame of mind'* and reconstruct oneself as an autonomous, rational jobseeker. Whatever regime of self she invokes, Jabe is forced to maintain an alignment between personal control and imperatives of activity. But even the fabrication of self as *'resilient'* is strained under the compulsion of seeking work over and above the material constraints of poverty and unemployability. This project is rendered all the more precarious if we consider the lingering symptoms of pathology which threaten to constrain her ability to engage in competitive freedom *'I knew I could do them [those jobs], but I just didn't get them, and I don't know why, I think, sometimes, is it because I'm too tall, particularly with a straight job, or do I just come across as being not the right kind of person?'*

Managing exclusion

An obvious condition of poverty is the risk of social isolation and marginalisation. This is certainly well established among ‘exclusion’ and ‘participation’ discourses whereby economic activity is presented as a solution to poverty. But for someone like Jay, a permanent welfare position is a double bind: Chronic Fatigue is a disease of activity, and welfare is a position of institutionalised poverty. Marginalisation is multiplied by a condition of physical incapacity and a position of economic scarcity. The logic of self-management, then, is to overcome marginalisation by engaging in social and economic participation, but this is almost the reverse of the neo-liberal project of freedom. Rather than participation being the practice of managing freedom, in Jay’s case participation is also the practice of escaping the imminent threat of social exclusion:

[Describe your lifestyle at the present] ... um, almost a recluse... I don’t have enough money to go out very often, ummm... I have a part-time job cleaning which I do on my own, that’s just two two or three hours a week ... and I’m actually thinking I just have to get a job where there’s people... because I’m getting, too, I got too used to being on my own and... I’m getting to the point where I’m going to be, an eccentric old um... hermit, if I don’t, have something to drag me out, more often, um... [Do you see work as offering you opportunities to get out?] Yeah just um, being sociable on a everyday level rather than go out... to, a party or something which... is probably not very good for me it costs too much but... still try and get dressed up and, take myself out for one of the big parties every year [What sort of parties do you go to?] Umm, just the big leather party, what’s it called Inquisition ... [Are you into fetish?] Yeah well I was, you can’t be when you’re poor I gave it up, you can’t be a poor fetishist. but yeah I use to love all the, the clothes and things ... it’s putting on another persona... um, but I think I’m past it (questioningly).

Beyond work and disability, self-formation is also the exploration of other possible identities. For instance, the big fetish parties allows Jay to explore different circuits of being and becoming which perhaps transcend the closed identity of the disability pensioner. but even this project is constrained by the material limits of poverty. In any case, sociality is both an affirmation of producing other selves and a negation of the permanent welfare position which she feels closing around her. Together, scarcity and identity requires constant management, and by the end of her narrative we are left uncertain as to whether the physical constraints of her condition are capable of managing the threat of permanent marginalisation.

Managing masculinity

For some, the self becomes the focal activity to reconstruct autonomy and regain a sense of self-control. It is not benefits of wage-labour that is tied to the possibility of freedom, but a constant work on the self as the locus of personal power. In other words, freedom is tied to a project of self-improvement. This is the kind of story narrated by Con, who, after contracting Hepatitis C, rejected biomedical treatment to engage in his own project of self-management. He describes ‘*discovering Tao*’, ‘*meditating*’ and ‘*reading books*’ as examples of more active solutions than accepting the passive and uncertain trajectory of chronic illness. Drawing from a broad range of different technologies – Eastern mysticism, popular psychology, self-help literature and dietetic regimens – Con describes the ability to regulate and minimise the symptoms of illness which, in his case, entail the management of fatigue and severe digestive problems (bowel pain and diarrhoea). A relation to self emerges in the form of a body that demands continuous ‘*responsible*’ management, and to which a project of self mastery is practiced. But this theme of self-mastery takes on a new significance as Con describes the end of his eleven year welfare position. By 1998, the statement ‘*they really started hassling people*’ confirms how, under a Howard Government, welfare is no longer a tenable position for the management of freedom: ‘*they cracked down on a lot things ... being on the dole wasn’t as much fun ... the cost of living got higher*’. In 2001, Con reluctantly accepts a position as a cleaner for the State Rail Authority and is forced to rework a masculinity which seems at odds with a brave new world of menial, unskilled labour.

In the following account, Con is describing the sexual advantages of Tao and the sense of resilience and male pride it gives him to know that he has a skill of which other men are ignorant. What is interesting about this account is the way notions of self-improvement and self-mastery compensate for a world of work that seems to undermine masculinity:

[But it’s about being a man isn’t it?] Not only that it’s like y’know people look down on you status wise, even where I work now I’m a cleaner, people look down on that y’know ... I’m not proud of being a cleaner I’m jus, it doesn’t matter because ... I know that I’m definitely experiencing stuff that people aren’t ... even though people are making a hundred grand a year it doesn’t matter because like we’re all the same ... but I’m proud of the fact that like I got off me arse and, I don’t know if it was whether y’know some people go ‘Oh, it was God’

whatever but ... the information they should have taught us at school they didn't, and now I'm learning stuff like y'know that Tao book alone is better than all my years at school [I'm getting a very strong sense that Tao made a very significant impact on your life. it's improved the quality of your life ... and it's helped you to manage pain] And confidence and of course being a man and confidence and, y'know like it- some people get depressed- like I know a lot of people who at the moment drugs and depression but ... it's very hard for me to get depressed because I know that um, I get shit money but I can turn that money into more money, and umm, y'know I got a girl that I really like and, I can make her happy I can make meself happy, and um I'm working out and ... because um, before I use to meditate I use to feel good, but with the gym y'know for me, doing all this shit it's ... not shit but I mean like, I use to look down on that stuff y'know it's a wank but for me it's a new meditation, at the same time I'm getting stronger and healthier, and um, y'know jus, being able to have energy levels that I didn't have as a teenager even y'know, and I'm thirty three now.

Outside the world of menial labour, the project of self becomes a means of reclaiming self-pride, psychological security, and physical health and strength. A loss of status and income – the price paid by Con's transition from welfare to work – is compensated by a relation to self that has become the locus of personal power and self-control. The ability to work on the self, to make oneself happy, to enhance one's powers, is conveyed as the great leveller of class and status. In the absence of financial control, or esteemed employment, morality and power are collapsed into the self as the only space or activity that *can be* controlled through technologies of self-improvement. The locus of freedom is not tied to the domain of wage-labour, but reworked in terms of enhancing the physical and psychological capacities of the self.

Managing rationality

One of the effects of welfare reform, especially the more punitive measures of control, is to produce a relation to self as an agent capable of making rational choices. This is exemplified by Pete who narrates the events of 2001-2 at a time when Centrelink had launched an aggressive campaign against recipients who were over-claiming benefits '*I had been informed that Centrelink were prosecuting people ... they were scoring political brownie points by prosecuting people for claiming money*'. Sometime later Pete received a letter from Centrelink stating that cross-checking database records confirmed he had received unemployment benefits while working part-time, and had accrued a \$5000 debt. After consulting with a solicitor, Pete was advised to immediately pay back the money, which he borrowed from his brother, hoping the matter would end there. The solicitor gave some assurance that Centrelink were more interested in targeting serious cases of fraud where recipients had been claiming benefits '*under multiple identities*'

over many years, in which case *'they are probably not going to be wasting their time with somebody like you'*. Two days later Pete received another letter from Centrelink stating they may prosecute. Pete responded by writing a letter of apology *'I have made a stupid though unintentional mistake'*, he thanked them for their support over the years, and hinted that he was currently working for *'a government institution ... which was implicitly saying that if they went ahead and prosecuted me and I received a criminal record that I would be back on unemployment benefits, anyway they decided to charge me, so I received a summons and had to go to court'*.

Pete describes a *'very turbulent and traumatic'* period of facing the prospect of a conviction that *'would have put a big dampener on all the work I have done at university because it would have made it so difficult to get a position'*. Out of this intense position of subjectification, the rational subject must assess the legal possibilities, manage fear and uncertainty, and *'choose'* the best possible course of action to evade conviction:

What I was concerned about at that time was trying to build a case, I wasn't sure whether to plead guilty or not guilty, when you look at the wording of the Act it actually says the charge was that three counts of knowingly receiving money that I was entitled to all of um and then if you look at the fine print of the Act it says that full liability applied which means that whether you knew or not it is still considered to be knowingly, even if you didn't know you can still be charged for knowingly doing it, so you are expected to know, you must know that, the onus is on you to make yourself aware of the Act and of the laws pertaining to that Act even if you don't know that is not an excuse ... you must avail yourself, you must know the law.

After speaking to numerous solicitors and a barrister, Pete faced the awkward decision of paying a large sum of money for good legal representation, even when there was little guarantee he would escape without conviction: *'I'd found out that people were appearing in Penrith Court for similar sorts of incidents and some of them were actually being jailed on the first offence ... all the solicitors I spoke to except for the guy that was going to charge me five grand, said that [no conviction] would be very very very difficult to achieve, if not impossible and that it would cost money to do that'*. But a solution would emerge not through formal consultation with the legal profession, but an informal connection through his wife, a solicitor who advised that it might be advantageous to represent himself: *'he was the first one to suggest to me that there might be a certain advantage in representing myself as I am reasonably articulate, I have got my story straight and I could represent myself fairly well'*. The prospect of self-representation.

though the cheaper option, entails the management of an acute sense of risk and uncertainty *‘I felt I was taking a risk, the night before the court case I had two lots of solicitors ring me up to make sure that I didn’t want their help and one of them more or less told me that I was a big show of going to jail if I didn’t get myself proper legal representation, my interpretation of it was he was trying to scare me into ... he wanted the business, and it scared me a bit but I knew what I was doing and at the end of the day I pleaded guilty’*.

After weighing the risks and assessing his legal options, Pete pleaded ‘knowingly’ guilty *‘I offered the argument that I was under the impression that you were allowed to earn up to \$5000 and all the rest of it and the magistrate accepted my story and released me with no conviction on a 12 month bond’*. Legally defending oneself and successfully evading conviction requires a particular kind of rational subject, a subject capable of presenting oneself as rational under stressful circumstances. But despite one’s educational background and knowledge of institutional processes, Pete still invokes chance as a factor of success:

I think that um having some sort of a background, institutional knowledge, working in institutions, working for the government, going to university, being reasonably articulate, educated. I was able to negotiate the system in such a way to get a favourable outcome which even for me was a very, very difficult thing to do, there was a lot of uncertainty and fear and still at the end of the day it could have gone either way. I could have got a bad magistrate, whatever, he asked me questions, he wanted to see if my story was consistent, if I would trip myself up, the prosecutor, when I said I was under the impression that I could earn up to \$5,000, the prosecutor actually stood up and said ‘Well in his favour your Worship, that was the case when I was at university’, so I even had the prosecution on my side, I could have had a bad prosecutor, I could have had a really hard core magistrate which they have in most court houses, it is usually like Russian roulette the magistrate that you get, so I think it was a combination of skill and luck.

Given the complexity of these circumstances, it seems unlikely that many welfare recipients would have the same access to education, knowledge and good fortune, unless of course they are prepared to minimise their risks by hiring expensive legal representation. At any rate, Pete’s story conveys the extraordinary lengths one must go to, both emotionally and rationally, to evade the punitive measures of welfare authorities who now prosecute the more vulnerable sectors of the population. In the following statement, Pete gives a concise overview of the current direction of welfare reform, a

regime of continuous monitoring and coercion designed to induce a rational relation to self:

They are trying to make an example of people who are um over claiming benefits but it is also a vote winner, I mean, nobody likes a dole bludger, no, you see if you have statistical proof that all the people who have been prosecuted, that makes the government that is implementing that programme look good ... and I guess the other thing is to keep people in line ... and I think another really big thing is with Centrelink their strategies at the moment are trying to get people off benefits by making their life as difficult as possible. they have breaches. you have got to turn up for all these ridiculous interviews and courses and you have got to prove that you have gone for so many jobs every fortnight and you are interrogated all the time about how many jobs you have gone for, where you have gone for them, what are the phone numbers of the employers and all that sort of stuff, they are trying to intimidate people to get them off unemployment benefits.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I explored participants' encounters with welfare authorities to demonstrate a clear shift in the use of control technologies which seek to maximise participation in the labour market, and reduce passive reliance on welfare benefits. Participant narratives reveal a shift from the disciplinary regulation of institutional spaces to the use of more subtle practices of modulation which operate increasingly at a distance. These new forms of 'ethical government' employ a range of techniques and strategies – continuous monitoring, perpetual training, rehabilitation programmes, the use of electronic databases and cross-referencing tools – for eliciting the self-governing capacities of individuals. Participant testimonies confirm the existence of both disciplinary and ethical techniques which intensify the call to manage ourselves responsibly and autonomously.

Practices of self-management reveal a broad range of subject positions in which participants are expected to engage in the rational reconstruction of conduct. Some of these positions are complex and uncertain – managing the enterprising jobseeker, the unskilled labourer, the chronically ill and excluded, the poor and legally prosecuted – each of these positions demonstrate the available human technologies we apply to ourselves for the calculated management of fear and uncertainty, autonomy and self-mastery, happiness and fulfilment. In many of these cases the language of psychology is a key resource for re-establishing 'the self' as the site of personal power and the proper locus of control. But psychological discourses, I think, also work to conceal some of the

material difficulties and structural obstacles that also pose problems for the management of self and identity. On occasions, evidence of marginality according to pathology, education or community are silenced or relegated to a minor role in participants' narratives as explanations tend to focus on rebuilding the capacities of a psychologically autonomous agent.

Pete's final statement reminds us that welfare is no longer a position where individuals can take 'time out' to compose or reorient themselves in relation to the labour market: it no longer rests on the implicit faith of the 'wage earners welfare state'; and for those unable or unwilling to activate themselves in responsible ways, welfare is no longer 'free insurance' against marginality and insecurity. Instead, welfare is fast becoming the only space for 'housing' the impotent and deficient. But even this final bastion of assistance – where subjects are left to continuously rehearse stories of pathology and failure – the impotent and incapacitated are expected to engage in some form of rehabilitation for the market. In the attempt to weed out 'dole bludgers' and 'welfare cheats', welfare is now increasingly provisional and cast with a presumption of suspicion. The self-managing capacities of the poor, the young, the sick and the idle are intensified through techniques that seek to elicit continuous demonstrations of autonomy, rationality and responsibility. In the next chapter, I discuss the final theme of diagnosis – to examine how freedom itself has become central to practices of self-formation.

9 'Freedom'

In this chapter, the category of freedom applies to a set of ethical statements about certain conditions, practices and possibilities of self-formation. I treat these ethical statements not as the anti-thesis of government – a state freedom beyond repression and subjugation – but as the 'ontological condition' of ethical self-government (Foucault, 1997a). Freedom is not the opposite or 'lack' of power but a necessary condition for its exercise and operation. I am therefore interested in how ethical statements of welfare recipients suggest we are both governed and govern ourselves precisely in terms of our freedom.

Under 'advanced liberalism' the freedom of subjects is central to understanding procedures and strategies of contemporary of power. Subjects are now impelled to think of themselves in the vocabularies and mentalities that optimise our capacities for practicing freedom. Expert discourses increasingly address individuals as active subjects by acting upon the technologies by which individuals engage in ethical activity. Psychological knowledge is arguably a key technology in the government of self as we become enjoined to think of ourselves in the language of self-realisation and self-fulfilment. 'The self' has become the site for maximising personal power, and transforming ourselves in ways that increase happiness, autonomy, confidence and self-control. As psychological subjects, we are required to render our lives meaningful by actualising ourselves, and by engaging in the personal choices that enhance our freedom. In the following vignettes, I will show how psychological technologies of freedom – the ethics of subjectivity – are coextensive with modern forms of government.

There are two kinds of ethical questions I ask in relation to the corpus: 'what ethical work is being conducted on the self?' and 'what kind of ethical subject do we aspire to become?' There are two positions I wish to explore in relation to the kind of ethical projects emerging from the corpus; the first being evidence of how subjects apply psychological knowledge as a work of self; and the second being the ethical activity

arising from the subject of pathology. The former examines how psychological knowledge is integral to the project of freedom, and the latter examines how pathologising discourses intensify the ambivalence of freedom. Both psychological and pathological discourses raise important implications for thinking how the government of welfare recipients operate through the open possibilities of self-formation and the continuous moral management of marginality.

Psychology: ethics of personal power

In this section, I explore four accounts ranging from Amber, the youngest participant (19yrs), to Mike, the oldest participant (50yrs), all of which encompass a broad variation of positions from age, gender, geography, from single mother to unemployed professional. In each account, I investigate how psychological discourses assemble ethical agents who engage in their own unique practices of freedom. At the level of subjectification, psychological knowledge is a key technology for governing at a distance, that is, by conferring to an ideal agent the capacities to govern oneself as responsible and free.

Amber

For Amber, the fantasy of freedom is not a space outside the labour market, but the locus of two modes of activity: lifestyle and flexible labour. Beyond the limited possibilities of community and her current welfare position, Amber describes freedom in terms of mobility – the mobility of a lifestyle conjoined with the possibilities of flexible labour – *‘I have wanted for ages to travel around and just have like experience, think different lifestyle and different people and do different things rather than being stuck in the same job or just doing the same thing for the rest of my life, or just having this one career that limits me to certain things’*. Under present conditions of labour market activity it is no longer reasonable nor possible to demand a ‘job for life’: and it has become a normative condition of the present that younger members of the labour force seek flexibility on the basis of constructing the self as flexible, mobile and

heterogeneous¹⁵¹. For Amber, the ethics of freedom is not connected to professionalism, skill development or career ascendancy, instead, the flexibility of wage-labour facilitates the maximisation of ‘*experience*’ by fostering personal growth and promoting the active construction of lifestyle. Freedom is a practice of self-formation that is both distinguished from, and dependent on, the flexibility of the labour market.

Like so many times in Amber’s narrative the problem of freedom is never fully reconciled. In the following account all the familiar devices are present: the small country community bereft of ‘*opportunities*’ and the present constraints of her welfare position. But the construction of a world of possibilities beyond welfare and community begins with a psychological relation to self. For instance, after returning to Bellingham and refusing to engage in any kind of work perceived as backward or menial (the degrading position of the supermarket checkout girl is invoked as a familiar example). Amber explains the realisation that ‘*money is money and work is work*’, as if to say the constraints of one’s freedom are merely moral and psychological rather than material and structural:

I think that there is a lot more choices elsewhere, like when I moved back from Sydney and I said to mum ‘I am never going to work in a supermarket, I am not going to do this and I am not going to do that’, and then after about a year I asked mum ‘I wonder if they have got any jobs at the checkout’ ... I don’t know it is just the situation I am in and I am not happy and I am starting to realise that you can’t be too choosy and money is money and work is work and you have to do the shitty jobs sometimes to move on and do something better, that’s how it goes. you can’t just jump into the right job straight away and expect that that is going to be it, then um the fact that I am open minded about it all rather than ‘I am only going to do this’, especially in town where there are not that many opportunities, or that many different kind of jobs ... everyone has so many options, it is only limited by what they think is, the limits around them, but I mean like if I really wanted to I could get up and leave, I mean I have done it before on less than what I’ve got now and did it, so it is just myself that is making it a problem ... so in that sense that is where my freedom if you like is a little bit limited ... it is a lot harder to do it, but like really I have got nothing holding me back, I can go and do whatever I want.

In the space of a year Amber describes something of an ‘attitudinal’ change in relation to the limited possibilities of the work. Despite the material constraints of ‘*just the situation I am in*’ and various ‘*shitty jobs*’, it is primarily self-realisation that establishes a new ethical relation to work. Flexible labour is desirable only if one is free to construct

¹⁵¹ This statement also reminds me of the ‘reversibility’ of power under neo-liberal government; by this I mean, before flexible wage labour became associated with insecurity, casualisation and fragmentation, it was the workers who first demanded flexibility of work (Buchanan, 2003).

oneself as a heterogeneous agent of experience, but it forms a recurring problem where flexible labour is relatively constrained, insecure, low-paid and homogeneous. In the absence of any real change in the material circumstances of community, it is primarily a psychological relation to self that emerges as a new valuation of work: the 'shitty checkout job' is transposed into a lucrative possibility, not because material circumstances demand *any* form of paid work, but because self-realisation views menial, casual labour as a moral transformation of self.

I am reminded of recent discourses which, in the absence of any genuine flexibility of the market, maintain that individuals must take on any kind of work. For example, the former Minister of Employment Services, Tony Abbott, is reported saying that the 'picky unemployed' must take whatever work is available (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 August 2000, p.9). Discourses of the 'job snob' exemplify the kind of moralising arguments designed to disparage those who would expect better opportunities from the labour market, not because there are apparent deficiencies in the labour market, but deficiencies among those who would expect better opportunities from the market. Taking pride in oneself as 'open-minded' is the only recourse for avoiding the title of job snob. In Amber's account a critical discourse of deprivation and inequality is subverted by a psychological subject that transcends material limitations. It is not one's environment that must change in relation to self, but the self in relation to one's environment. The logical extension of this argument is that '*everyone has so many options, it is only limited by what they think is, the limits around them*'. The world is in fact replete with options and that any feeling or perception of limitation is willed away as idle pessimism. What I think also belies Amber's account is that these opportunities do not reside within the community she speaks of, but requires that she again brace herself to leave community and embrace the world of flexibility. A psychological discourse facilitates ethical reconstruction of the self, to fashion oneself as active, mobile and resilient. It is by turning to 'the self' that Amber believes she can locate the personal resources to overcome her 'irrational' fears of the market.

Kate

For some who occupy relatively long-term welfare positions, themes of self-management emerge as actual or possible solutions for enhancing freedom through practices of autonomisation. For Kate, unlike her sister Amber, the possibilities for practicing freedom are more embedded among responsibilities of family and security of community life. Kate does not invoke her sister's discourse of deprivation to describe limited labour-market opportunities, but indicates a different kind of struggle as single mother. She employs a psychological language to describe the difficulties of inventing oneself independently of motherhood. In the following, the statement '*I hold myself back more than I have to*' suggests self-restraint is based on the irrational fear of temporarily leaving her two-year old son with carers:

Well I reckon I hold myself back more than I have to, I want to go out and do some like sports and that, but I panic about asking someone to mind Lou and I panic just about leaving him and if he is going to cry, I can get my sister to mind him and she will. But I am holding it back. I mean I am the one that is freaking out about it, but I kind of need to get out and do it ... I want to do like yoga and Thai-bo and all those kind of things, just to kind of like, work on myself for a bit because I am really stressed at the moment with the whole kid thing. I mean it is fun, but it is stressful because they rely on you every day, and I don't know a lot of women take it a lot easier than I do ... [Do you reckon your attitude about work has changed?] Yeah, totally, I want to go and work, I want to try new things and I want to get more confident where I was too scared to before [Why?] Because I am not, I felt I wasn't the brightest person, and I didn't want to look like an idiot when someone was trying to teach me something and I didn't get it and it is just kind of a big self esteem thing, but now I think being a mum you get a new self esteem and I want to go out and I want to learn things and I want to get a job and I want to be a stronger person and I want to kind of earn money

Here Kate describes two contradictory positions: 'single-mother' and 'worker'. The former constitutes the moral/irrational position of the worried mother who must manage independence carefully and dutifully. The latter constitutes the superior moral/rational position of the psychologically autonomous worker. The management of these positions entail two different kinds of work: the first is specifically ascetic – activities of 'yoga' and 'Thai bo' literally constitute a physical work on the self to alleviate the irrational and 'stressful' conditions of sole-parenting; the second constitutes the psychological benefits of work itself. The old discourse of 'moral and ethical transcendence' of work is reworked to express a psychological relation to oneself – work is an ethical practice through which psychological barriers of dependency are dissolved. Freedom is therefore the integration of these two positions which, for the moment, seem dislocated and

unresolved. Kate can only assert a psychological solution to integrating ‘irrational mother’ with ‘rational worker’ – ie. motherhood raises self-esteem, and self-esteem is a factor of work – but she gives very little sense of the structural difficulties of how she might integrate child care with casual, low-paid employment, and the complex forms of self-management this would entail. Perhaps it is ironic that Kate’s hope of ‘*becoming a child-care worker*’ is also a fantasy of combining child-care with secure employment.

Mary

Mary, who is thirteen years older than Kate, occupies a similar position as single mother receiving parenting pension. But there are important differences as well. From Mary’s narrative we gain a stronger sense that the world offers more possibilities for single mothers, possibilities which are more well-defined than in Kate’s narrative. The key difference is education. In Mary’s narrative education plays a more important role in the formative years before motherhood. She lived in the suburbs of Sydney, attended private school, and was constantly surrounded by educational influences in the family setting. I am reluctant to suggest that Mary’s background is ‘middle class’ only because she lived in a poorer part of western Sydney, and both her mother and father commanded a meagre income. But as an only child we sense a great deal was invested in Mary’s education. These influences are almost entirely absent in Kate’s narrative where education did not play an important role in her upbringing. While university life was always an expectation for Mary, for Kate leaving school at sixteen is narrated as a personal choice. As we saw in the previous vignette, Kate narrates a story in which a ‘stronger’ psychological subject is required to engage in the possibilities of self-formation, though the emphasis lies more heavily in becoming a certain kind of subject rather than engaging in any specific kind of self-forming activity. Mary’s position, on the other hand, appears to offer more possibilities for personal transformation given her educational background and her physical location within a network of employment and higher education.

An important motif in Mary’s narrative is the notion of progress. Since enrolling in a social ecology degree four years earlier, Mary successfully managed the roles of single-

mother and student to reach a point where self-belief is tied to a sense of personal growth and social responsibility: *'I feel like I've got the capacity to make a contribution, I feel quite um, called to, like I've got beliefs but I think that if I don't act on them I'm letting myself down, I could languish around but I feel a very acute sense of opportunity and need to do something'*. Freedom is an ethical project of self-knowledge and self-growth that is tied to an ethos of civic participation and environmental change. For Mary, progress is not only autonomy to transcend her welfare position through education, but to use her education to give something back to community.

Towards the end of Mary's narrative a sense of progress brings her to the intersection of two possibilities: to either embrace the mobility of career and take her transferable skills *'elsewhere'*, or buy the house she is currently renting and consolidate a position of stability. It is interesting how an ethical project is constructed in terms of the possibilities of life beyond a permanent welfare position, a vision that is not altogether clear in Kate's narrative. In the following testimony, Mary outlines the openness of a future in which ethical self-formation stands at the intersection of security and changeability:

So I'm going to be directing a bushcare group for here whether we get the grant or not, yeah and hopefully my plan is the evolution of this project to be able to put this into place will equip me with the skills to do that elsewhere, I feel like partly, I would love to just buy this house and just stay forever and a day, but also as you get older sometimes this I think 'My God what am I doing with my life, there is places to see and things to do and got to do it, got to do it'. so I don't know I feel like if I establish this park good thing, I will actually be free to leave, which will be a sad day but it has been a great time, it's been ten years ... In the past I've put a lot of concerted energy into that not happening, but I'm over that, like you go through a lot of processing in ten years and um, now I am at the point where 'Hey man, nothing lasts forever, it is all transitory', you can't hang on to anything longer than it is meant to and there is other things to do, and I'll actually be qualified, like before I've taken it relatively steadily I will be finished the degree when Christina finishes primary school, she is now in fourth grade, she'll finish in another two years, so it is a four year degree, fingers crossed I will be able to do it in five, yeah, and then, like she'll be free and I'll be free, and I was thinking the other day if I buy the house, you know, don't close yourself off to possibilities, but how would I buy the house, 'Good question', you may ask, well you know, as I said before, you know [If you can pay rent, maybe you can pay a mortgage?] Exactly and it's getting easier and easier with possibilities [It is getting easier is it?] Well I guess in my mental attitude it is, you know, and it is partly how you perceive things.

Together tertiary education and a discourse of participation constructs a world of possibilities beyond Mary's present welfare position, a position we already know she is happy to leave behind *'I'm sick of being so dependent'*. But the above account indicates that a great deal of work and self-management is required to bring these possibilities into

fruition. In the past, Mary narrated a life where the position of single mother disrupted a trajectory of higher education, and the need for stability came at the price of having to negotiate the morally tenuous terrain of welfare mother. But the fantasy of opportunity, afforded by her educational background and her interests in conservation, assembles a psychological agent who admits that the possibility of financial and intellectual autonomy is a work of thought: one must believe that life is *'getting easier'* despite the work ahead. I think Mary's position demonstrates that for one to escape a life of welfare dependency one must believe that constant self-management and educational attainment offer genuine possibilities for social and economic participation. A psychological discourse is integral to making these possibilities thinkable.

Mike

Before turning to those whose practices of self-formation are dominated by discourses of pathology, I want to discuss one more story. Mike is a 50 year old unemployed professional, who has enjoyed a distinguished and celebrated career as a journalist for the Sydney Morning Herald. Between 1999 and 2001, he twice received the highest award for Australian journalism, and describes himself as *'the most experienced journalist left in Australian music journalism'*. By July 2001 he took *'voluntary'* redundancy amid company cut backs, and has failed to find regular work since. Mike's story is both striking and disturbing. We are used to thinking of unemployability as those affecting the *'bottom-end'* of the labour market, those who lack proper education, skills or training. But in Mike's case we are presented with an extremely well-qualified professional who also describes himself as *'unemployable'*. At the *'higher-end'* of the labour market worklessness is endemic to *'the modern economy'*: *'that is the really interesting and significant thing because there are a lot of professional people now who are becoming retrenched, especially in the last two or three years with the failure of a lot of IT and so forth, who are just unemployable really, nobody wants them, and these guys have incredible records, but it doesn't matter a damn because they are worth way too much money and nobody wants to employ them'*.

One of the requirements of the flexible labour market is to meet the rapidly changing demands of post-industrial society. In the age of organisational change and economic rationalisation, the term 'voluntary redundancy' has become a euphemism for company cut backs, downsizing and retrenchment. Even professional spheres of employment are susceptible to the exigencies of the new economy. In Mike's narrative the unemployed professional is an anomaly to both welfare services and employment agencies. He claims that welfare services are geared towards the '*lowest common denominator*' in that they supply the high demand for low-skilled labour. On the other hand, employment agencies now include very narrow specifications for whom they wish to hire. The most debilitating requirement is age. Mike cites '*ageism*' as the single biggest obstacle to finding work in his field:

There is total ageism, there is no doubt about it, I mean I went to an interview recently for a job which I was incredibly well qualified for and it was through an employment agency. I sat down with this woman who was really interesting to talk to, and she said ... 'I will send this across and they are going to tell me you are over qualified for what they want, because' she said 'these days employers say I want a woman or a man between the age of 30 and 35 with blond hair who's 5 foot 6 inches tall' ... and they demand exactly those things, and because employers these days want to pay less and less and less, the whole magazine industry is largely based around paying people between the age of 25 and 35 low amounts of money to do a lot of work, so that is the modern economy for you

This kind of bias towards hiring the younger professional has its own economic logic, a logic that would seem to contradict the protective policies of anti-discrimination laws. The modern economy is, according to Mike, an enterprise that seeks to extract the maximum output of labour for the lowest possible overheads, in which case it is older professional whose experience is made redundant under the ambiguous term 'over-qualified'. In the context of Mike's narrative 'over-qualified' can represent any number of barriers to secure employment: one does not meet the preferred age specifications for employment; the younger employer is reluctant to take on someone whose work experience might be perceived as a threat to their own job security; but even the culture of professional work itself has shifted towards a more youthful image '*everything is now pointed at youth culture and the workplace is also pointed at the youth culture in the same sense and you reach 35 you are virtually over the hill*'. The aging professional is just as much a casualty of the flexible labour market as those to which welfare policy habitually refers, the poor.

So how does the aging professional maintain a project of ethical self-formation? What kinds of practices of self are required to keep a project of freedom in motion? In the following testimony a psychological discourse assembles one of two positions: a 'pathology of will' on the one side, and a 'psychologically robust agent' on the other. The language of the latter foregrounds an enterprising subject capable of reorienting self to the professional labour market.

[What hope do you have for the future?] I am just going to go on taking it day by day and seeing where it goes. I mean I can re-apply to the Sydney Morning Herald in July next year. If they aren't hiring then I will probably go back to Perth because I can go back to the West Australian in Perth probably [So there are prospects?] Oh look there are prospects, there is always prospects, you keep on doing what you can do but it is certainly difficult, it is certainly very hard and it is certainly not a place where anybody with a weak will would want to be, I mean I have, I know people who are going through the same thing and who find it absolutely devastating, and who are really developing serious psychological problems from that [Can you give me an example?] Yeah, just cases where people are developing problems, lack of self esteem, lack of self worth, feel like they are failures, all that kind of stuff, and it is very easy to do that, you know, if you are not strong minded and if you can't convince yourself that just because somebody doesn't want to employ you doesn't actually reflect on your own individuality, your own personality or anything else, you can really be underwhelmed by it and if you are sensitive to all the things you are exposed to as people in these situations have to do, then it is a very demeaning process as well

A pathology of '*weak will*' does some work to describe the psychological failure of those unable to compete in the professional labour market. Though Mike concedes it is easy for the dispirited jobseeker to become anxious, self-defeated and depressed, the adaptive professional is one whose persistence stems from some internal unity or resilience. Psychology goes a long way in making these ethical practices a natural and normative expectation of the new economy: '*my accountant lost his job last year, he is older than me, he is 52, it took him 68 applications before he got a job, he got one in the end, it took him 68, the other 67 he was ideal for but too old, but he found someone who wanted an older, experienced man who could do a professional job*'. The dangers of fabricating a psychologically robust agent is that anything short of flexibility is subject to a similar kind of moral/psychological scrutiny – depression and pathology are reduced to an aberration of will rather than a legitimate contradiction of the labour market.

Ethics and autonomy

In the four accounts presented here I have tried to assess how psychological discourses assemble different kinds of ethical subjects: the psychological subject of choice ‘I can do what I ever I choose to do’; the psychological subject of asceticism ‘I can overcome my fears by working on myself’; the psychological subject of optimism ‘Life is getting easier because I need to believe it is’; and the psychological subject of stoicism ‘In my industry only the strong survive’. Each of these statements invoke an ethical relation to self as the locus of personal power. The psychological reconstruction of the self deflects the ‘friction’ between practice and materiality as genuine obstacles to work. But a more negative application is its moral rather than ethical dimension, in which case the self becomes the target of self-blame, self-defeat and abjection. The reason why full participation and independence is unobtainable for some is attributed to some internal, moral deficiency rather than a complex ensemble of material processes.

At the level of subjectification, it becomes easier to grasp why a psychological discourse is such a useful technology of government. The solution to the problems of flexible, equitable or secure labour resides among these ethical relations of self on self – the solution to the difficulties of freedom are transposed into personal difficulties. Psychological knowledge has become an expedient source of political arguments maintaining that freedom is the moral responsibility of a psychologically autonomous agent. But what disappears from view, or at least remains unresolved, are the kind of arguments that address the structural and material contradictions of labour market flexibility.

Pathology: ethics of exclusion

In this section, I examine how exclusion from the labour market is constituted as a position of pathology. The term ‘pathology’ is taken to mean the set of practices and techniques responsible for constituting an object in terms of bio- or psychological deviation from a given norm. In terms of governing the free, pathology signifies a departure from full participation; all projects are altered or suspended as one becomes transformed by illness or abjection. Modern welfare provides a precarious liminal space

of assistance for the incapacitated and chronically ill especially when the ‘disability pensioner’ is still haunted by its bad double ‘the pauper’ and the ‘benefit cheat’. In the following four accounts, I examine how pathologising discourses assemble different kinds of ethical subjects whose exclusion from work is also a practice of freedom, albeit consigned to a life of constant self-management and welfare regulation.

Sam

In Sam’s narrative freedom is not liberation from participation or welfare regulation but linked to the fantasy of secure, full-time employment. Given a complex history of negotiating the exigencies of ‘single mother’, ‘hitchhiking hippie’, the transition from ‘busker-waitress’, and finally ‘office robot’, one would think that persistent self-invention would be tantamount to a liberal reward of financial security. But Sam’s ‘*great permanent job*’ emerges as an unobtainable fiction. More painful, however, is the claim that she willingly participated in job-retraining programmes, thinking one day she would acquire the skills to secure full-time employment. In the following testimony, a detailed account of self-formation emerges when I ask Sam why she ignored symptoms of chronic arm pain and fatigue for so long. Resisting a medical diagnosis for three years reveals a strong and protracted sense of ambivalence, torn between fantasises of autonomy and the painful admission of pathology. The following is worth quoting in full:

[So why so long?] because I was doing what I’ve always done um Michael, I I put one foot in front of the other because I had no choice, I had to survive, so I work- I had worked through pain, I’ve always had back pain because I have lower back problems when I was younger, but ... going through birth and thirty one hours labour just didn’t help, y’know and then all the hitchhiking around the country carrying the guitar the kid and the nappies didn’t help either. did I mention that I used to hitchhike a lot [Yeah], Yeah. um, so, my lifestyle and living in the bush and carrying shit around and all that stuff, that didn’t help um... but, it was sitting at the desk and doing that sort of sitting in one position and going di di di de office robot y’know keyboard mania, because everybody wants everything yesterday, and so, basically yeah ... it did creep up on me slowly, and so even after when I came back from living on the North Coast... and I signed onto a few temp agencies ... while I was looking around for somewhere to live and once I got somewhere to live and got a little bit more settled I could look for my great permanent job that I had now spent many years gathering my clerical skills, and honing my personal assistant charm or whatever (sarcasm) to um to get me y’know a 45K a year package which I bloody well worked for- y’know come from busker-waitress to there and, it was a pretty long journey and I reckon I deserve something good at the end of that yeah (laughs) and did I get it ‘No’ (laughs) oh dear oh dear... [Does that frustrate you?] Oh shit yeah, you bet ya, I did all their damn courses, I did every single one of their damn courses, I did so many courses, they steered me in that direction, they- all they ever had to offer me was office courses, and they still- they would still now be offering me office courses, they even a few years ago when I went to do this- the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service ah- course, programme, whatever that is, you get a case manager who’s like fourteen years old, and

doesn't know what to do with you (laughs), my work history is longer than their whole life, and um, anyway they offered me computer courses, I said 'Which part of my file did you not read that said I have RSI, and arthritis because of doing secretarial work, that's what got me into this mess and why I'm here now talking to you, why are you giving me office work courses, hello bells and whistles, red flag'... They do not know what to do with me, I've always fallen through all of their nets, I've never fit into any of their categories... Over qualified for a lot of their assistance (laughs) which is really funny (sarcasm)

This rich account documents the transition from work to welfare despite an enterprise of autonomy and security. Freedom is the practice of on-going management via numerous attempts to ethically reconstruct the self as a flexible wage earner '*busker-waitress*', '*office robot*' and '*personal assistant*'. Sam gives an exasperated account of why she ignored the symptoms of illness and exhaustion. Because life was not a journey consisting of simple rational choices, nor one that was entirely free of pain and material hardship. The theme of '*survival*' lies at the complex intersection of lifestyle (counter-cultural practices of self-formation), geography (limited employment opportunities of the country), single mother (sole and primary care-giver), and casual worker (flexible wage-labourer). Set amongst this background of scarcity, survival is taken to mean that one has '*no choice*' but to '*work through the pain*', conceding to illness would only guarantee further descent into poverty.

In the second half of the account, Sam gives an illustration of the ethical activity of the flexible worker. The transition from the '*North Coast*' to Sydney can be read as a story of labour market reattachment, the first port of call being '*temp agencies*', and then '*somewhere to live*'. The ethical construction of the flexible worker is cynically stated as the accumulation and refinement of technical and interpersonal skills, now made redundant by her permanent welfare position. The presumed telos of this ethical work is the putative promise of financial autonomy and security. Sam's sarcasm embodies the disappointment and frustration that there are no guarantees playing the game of competitive freedom. Sam constructs an account of exclusion from the market in the language of the deserving poor, '*y'know come from busker-waitress to there and, it was a pretty long journey and I reckon I deserve something good at the end of that yeah*'. Sam's account gives a sense of the tiredness of constantly re-inventing oneself, that even the demands of low paid, clerical work outstrip the capacities of the flexible worker '*but, it*

was sitting at the desk and doing that sort of sitting in one position and going di di di de office robot y'know keyboard mania, because everybody wants everything yesterday`.

Towards the end of her account, Sam conveys the frustration of complying with work programmes which seemed intent on ethically reconstructing women of work-force age into clerical workers, a project which was more directive than based on free choice *'they steered me in that direction, they- all they ever had to offer me was office courses`.* Given the flexibility of the market one might think that work programmes would provide more variable skills rather than highly gendered forms of clerical labour. Either way these paternalistic programmes reconstruct the capacities of the excluded by offering highly transferable market skills which attract low paid, casualised and intensely menial forms of wage-labour. Sam's account invites us to think that paternalistic supervisor falls short of individualised service delivery, in which case she is still being offered clerical work even though a medical discourse confirms that RSI and arthritis are industry-related illnesses. Her account of the 14 year old *'case manager`* works to undermine the credibility of paternalistic authority by suggesting public servants are incapable of understanding the exigencies of unemployment. The statement *'They do not know what do with me`* is a testimony of governmental-ethical programmes failing to address the unique circumstances of the client.

Exclusion from the labour market on medical grounds is an alienating experience. In Sam's case, being granted a disability pension is a not a victory, and certainly not the means by which one engages in a new career of dependency. A position of pathology is frequently circumscribed and disrupted by the very medical and psychological discourses that produce the pathological subject. Below, Sam illustrates that a position of pathology is not simply a discrete condition that excludes one from work, but an ethical activity in which one's whole life is reconstituted in terms of multiple deficiencies that prohibit full participation:

...despite the fact that I'd been a long term depression sufferer since I was ten despite the fact that I have chronic fatigue syndrome since 1987, so by the time I went for the pension I had depression, asthma, um, I had something akin to either having an ulcer or irritable bowel syndrome, but none of that's been properly diagnosed (humour), um so I've had like daily abdomen discomfort one of my last serious jobs I had my employer complained continuously

that I spent too much time in the bathroom... pff could I help it no (humour) huh... I have constant nausea, I have migraines, did I mention depression, I have back problems, I have RSI in both my arms hands fingers wrists elbows, above and below the elbows, and ahhhh, what's the other thing I have arthritis in my neck, that was diagnosed in 2000.

The way Sam takes comfort in extending the list of pathologies suggests that ethical work is not only a kind of moral management of the self 'I *am* the deserving poor', but an activity of self-formation that further excludes oneself from the world of work. Unable to engage in a normative project of competitive freedom, pathology marks out a dreadful position of marginalisation. And the longer one spends out of the labour market, the more one feels that the world of work has left them behind – the result is an acute experience of self-defeat and dislocation:

um, I'm sick of just feeling useless, like I don't fit anywhere anymore I can't do normal jobs because, my employers don't understand if I take too long in the bathroom or, I mean y'know because they're more on that than the fact that my work is always done, and that I'm very very good at what I do when I can I can focus on it, at the moment I don't feel I can focus on it. I don't feel I can focus on fucken anything, nothing, I'm just numb, I feel the world and I are quite separate at the moment, and um, but y'know that comes and goes and then I have bursts when I'm really motivated and I start looking for things ... the hardest thing now is that I been out of the workforce long enough to be really out of sink, and not up to speed with skills and the computer stuff is passing me by and ... anyway even if I was up to speed with the computer stuff, I simply can't sit there the way that you need to be able to put in the physical um effort, of getting jobs done in the way that other workers can, and at the end of the day employers are going to hire someone who can get the job done without having all these health problems...

Pathology is not necessarily a closed position. Sam still fantasises about activity but given the constraints of her illness it is unlikely she will ever find secure, permanent work. So how does one practice freedom when chronic illness demands constant self-management? The active policies of the new welfare means that even the chronically ill are still encouraged to think of themselves as active, enterprising agents, still capable of securing some kind of work. It is quite astonishing, however, that despite the links between pathology and her work history, Sam still speaks of computer courses and clerical work, as if there were no other positions for Sam to reinvent herself as a quasi-autonomous worker. The problem remains that the ethical imperative of rehabilitation programmes is to reintegrate the excluded through social and economic participation. But how does one reconstruct autonomy when the only options for self-invention is the competitive market of menial, semi-skilled labour? These contradictions seem unresolved towards the end of Sam's account: pathology simply means that there are increasingly

limited opportunities for market participation, especially when employers are more inclined to privilege the young and healthy. The practice of freedom remains largely ambivalent: ethical self-formation is divided by a project of autonomy and a project of endless self-management. As practices of freedom in the labour market and those of chronic illness become increasingly polarised experiences, how can we expect the chronically ill to compete in the flexible labour market when they lack the resources to practice freedom? *'The hardest thing now is that I have been out of the workforce long enough to be really out of sink, and not up to speed with skills and the computer stuff is passing me by'*. Under present neo-liberal forms of government, it seems the only way of closing this gap between autonomy and pathology is to continue reskilling the excluded in semi-skilled, flexible wage-labour.

Jay

In the previous chapter, I discussed how Jay's narrative conveys an ethical trajectory that must address the encroaching threat of social exclusion by engaging in part-time work. Again, there is nothing in this narrative to suggest a life of dependency is a conscious project of self-formation, if anything dependency guarantees a life of further exclusion:

[...what do you fantasise about?] Huh ... a clean place to live, away from noise and dirt. cause I'm allergic to traffic fumes, so just a quiet, clean place to live. but then. I guesss I should include in that, someone to share it with because, all my life I've always thought I just want to be left alone I jus want a quiet place on my own... get away from here (feigned desperation), and I've got that, and I thought 'Oh, hold on' ah heh (chuckles) yeah, and it- it's just not human to survive on your own, it's it's y'know I can do it but, I don't think any human really, wants to ...and I always thought I'd have kids but um that's not going to happen now [You don't think so?] I'm too old now... and sick (upset)... [What would you like to be doing?] Uhh... a normal sort of life I guess, working, going out. no I never, wanted, anything, um concrete particularly, I don't fantasise about having lots of money or, or that all I ever wanted was to keep learning and I think that distracted me from practical things a bit. y'know I never thought about a career or, the marriage and kids thing because that's not what I was focused on, it's not practical, but I actually use it sometimes heh (chuckle).

Jay fantasises about a space of security and stability *'a quiet, clean, place to live'*, and then proceeds to give an explanation why such a space is better shared with someone else. The point of whether it is *'human to survive on your own'* is an important one since it works to counter the prospect of becoming *'a hermit'*, a lingering theme raised in the last chapter. The ethical activity of auto-didacticism *'all I ever wanted was to keep*

learning' is perhaps the one kind of practice of self which '*distracted*' Jay from the normative possibilities of companionship and family. But aside from career expectation and family, an ethical project of freedom is more engaged in maintaining a sustainable level of social and economic participation.

Similar to Sam's account, Jay engages in educational practices of re-training with the hope that one day she will reach a position of self-sufficiency. Education is subsidised by the government so that disability pensioners engage in active as opposed to passive welfare receipt. The '*education allowance*' is a powerful incentive to encourage those at risk of social exclusion to engage in the ethics of participation. In the following account, Jay's experience demonstrates that governmental strategies are effective in instilling the self-belief that '*computer courses*' will lead to regular work:

At one point after GST came in, I was struggling to actually just survive, um, and I started worrying about housing you never know what ... but, I don't know somehow things have eased a bit, when I'm going to TAFE and when you do that you get education allowance, and that helps ... At the moment I'm doing, Desk Top Publishing, learning Photoshop and Pagemaker, all that sort of stuff [What prompted you to do that?] ... ah I had this fantasy that one day I'd be able to support myself again, um... I've been doing TAFE courses for the last couple of years, partly to get my education allowance, because that helps me to survive, but it makes me get out of the house um, my brain can cope with that level of education, and it might lead to some work [What sort of courses have you done in the past?] Mostly computer courses um... computer accounting [Why those courses?] Um... they're the sort of thing I think I might be able to get some work in eventually, um, that's what I'm looking at, and if I can never go out to work again, then maybe I can work from home ...it's just getting the practice, before you can get the work.

Despite the transferability of computer skills, again we can wonder whether flexibility of the market is a plausible solution to the ethical reconstruction of the chronically ill. It does mean that flexibility entitles one to participate according to the limits of their capacity, even the possibility of working from home, but it also means the chronically ill must compete in the market place without guarantees of security against discrimination and retrenchment. Though flexibility may provide some possibilities of participation, it is doubtful whether those who occupy a permanent position of pathology have the resources to continually compete in the labour market.

Jabe

So far, I have examined the experience of two women in their mid 40's for whom a permanent position of pathology has become a relatively recent transformation of self. In these two cases, pathology constitutes a position in which ethical practices are engaged in the management of stigma, dislocation and chronic illness. But management also entails the reconstruction of self in the form of an agent still capable of flexible participation. The following testimony differs from these two experiences in the sense that pathology is constituted as a *congenital* condition. How does pathology in this sense impact on the practices by which subjects constitute themselves as free individuals?

Having lived with Marfan's Disease all her life, Jabe's narrative marks out a trajectory where the possibilities of self-formation are already limited by the medical prognosis of '*a shorter life span*', in which case there is little or no conception of a '*future*' self. This absence of an 'ethical telos' signifies a departure from the contemporary rational project of self-formation, where enterprising subjects construct a biography of self on the basis of some planned or anticipated project of self-formation. For Jabe, the ethics of pathology is exclusion from a normative project of freedom, in which case employability fails to emerge as a rational enterprise or long-term expectation. But having lived beyond her medical expiry date, she finds herself ill-prepared for the ethical requirements of economic participation:

[Where do you think you will be ten years from now] Dead, ha yeah, dead, I will be really surprised if I am alive [Why?] I don't know, the thing about always knowing is that you have a shorter life span you never plan, I never plan for the future, I never plan for the future. I think I should have studied or did something while I had the time and the chance and the money, you know. um, I didn't expect to be alive, you know. 21 was like 'Wow'. like and now I am 28. and not only do I feel like I am getting older you know, it is weird being older because I never expected to feel older, and I never thought about it that it would be um a factor against me, my age, I never thought about it [You think age is working against you?] Ah well yeah, people want younger people to work for them, you know. everybody loves a young person, and I don't think I am that old, I really don't think 28 is old at all but as opposed to 20 you know, more often than not they are going to hire someone younger.

Jabe's account reminds us that not everyone engages in an ethical project based on the normative aspirations of personal development and employability. The statement '*I never plan for the future*' is arguably a symptom of the ethics of pathology, after all, planning is for the 'living and healthy', but it also signifies an awkward relation to the present.

Having exceeded the limits prescribed by medicine, Jabe conveys her exclusion from the labour market precisely because she never expected to have a future to plan for '*I think I should have studied or did something while I had the time and the chance and the money*'. But one can only regret these things retrospectively. At the age of 28, Jabe describes the anomaly of '*getting older*' as an unexpected development, and as a '*factor*' that now works against a project of self-formation. The peculiarity of growing old is compounded by the dearth of resources to engage in competitive freedom. Jabe invokes the '*young person*' as the kind of emblematic worker who is more able, more qualified, and subsequently more employable than herself, after all '*everybody loves a young person*'. Whether the latter is true or not is unimportant, the statement functions as true for a subject whose exclusion from the labour market is recognised as the incomplete work of freedom.

The ethics of pathology invoke a difficult trajectory of employability where competitive freedom is not a level playing field, but fraught with material obstacles of deprivation and marginality. These difficulties are exemplified by a statement already discussed in a previous chapter, one that encodes a profound sense of ambivalence regarding Jabe's prospects of employability: '*I'm not one of those people who gets employed really easily ... I don't know, I think its because I'm so tall and I don't know if that's an excuse or a real reason*'. Jabe is left to ponder whether labour market exclusion is linked to chronic pathology – a condition she is unable to change – or whether pathology is an imagined obstacle to autonomisation. Either way the possibilities for governing oneself as responsible and free are conflicted and unresolved.

Con

In the name of 'lifestyle', the subject of chronic pathology sometimes retreats from the conventional labour market and takes up a marginal position in which a very different project of freedom is constructed. In the following case, freedom constitutes the work of counter-normative practices of self-formation. For Con, it was not the rejection of work that produced an eleven year welfare position, but the rejection of the *regime* of work, the '*nine to five*', that formed a space with which to integrate the ethics of lifestyle with the

promise of security. But under the post-welfare regime, this position of ‘counter-activity’ (activity that masquerades as dependency) becomes an untenable project. The intensification of welfare regulation succeeds in producing the autonomous worker who is forced to engage in a new ethical relation to self. Towards the end of Con’s narrative, a discourse of pathology remains largely submerged as practices of freedom are transformed by the forced re-entry into the low-skilled labour market. It is not pathology that dominates the trajectory of self-formation (the management of Hepatitis C), but the complex intersection of practices of self-mastery, the project of an ‘*alternative lifestyle*’, and the constitution of the full-time worker. The limitations of pathology are implicit, while the relation between ‘lifestyle’ and ‘work’ form new contradictions as well as new possibilities for self-formation.

In the following account, Con gives a thumbnail of life on the dole, a project that now seems a distant, nostalgic fantasy. Here I want to show how freedom is aligned with counter-normative practices of an ‘*alternative lifestyle*’, that is, engaging in quasi-entrepreneurial activities of ‘scamming’ (selling collectables and music for a profit), as well as ethical activities of consumption, sociality and mobility. Con emphasises the present contradiction that secure, full-time work does not afford the same possibilities of freedom as the life he previously enjoyed on the dole. Instead, he invokes a discourse of the ‘working poor’ to support his conviction that the nine-to-five regime of labour is not a solution to the problem of freedom, but a kind of subordination to a moral project of responsibility:

[So where were you living?] Ohh, I’ve always lived in Fivedock, but I mean like I started hanging out in Newtown, and ummm, from hanging around people there, that’s when you discover like a lot of things, but its all things that you know ... you want an alternative lifestyle. you want. you want freedom, you want to fucken scam whatever you can. y’know. and um (coughs), but not bad things, just things to help you out financially and um, just things to keep you out of the nine to five and, I knew one day I’d have to do nine to five. but I was gonna, try as hard as I can, to keep out of it y’know, because um. like now I work nine to five. and y’know like I pay tax, and I pay my rent, I pay my bills and pay food, and I’ve got no money, whereas before I was going to fucken restaurants, I was going out every day and every night, meanwhile maybe we’d go out like um, we both had girl friends who were friends and like. Monday, no one’s working ‘OK let’s drive to the Blue Mountains’ umm ‘Let’s find those underground bunkers in the movie Stone, and like take photos’ ... ‘There’s a fucken mad movie playing at some Chinese theatre let’s go see that’, ahhhh ... we used to go see some theatre. we used to um, y’know some mate’d move out to Gosford I was like ‘Fuck let’s drive there. and stay there for a couple of days’, y’know and um, we did a lot of good things.

For Con, the ethics of counter-activity and the project of lifestyle are a work of freedom by virtue of resisting the world of low-skilled labour. The practice of freedom is a line of flight from conventional work, but only a temporary one. The production of the autonomous worker is an inevitable consequence of a much wider field of governance where there are fewer and fewer spaces to escape the flexible labour market *'I knew one day I'd have to do nine to five, but I was gonna, try as hard as I can, to keep out of it y'know'*.

To understand the intensity of this resistance we have to resist the temptation of viewing Con's position as a simple moral deficiency and more a rational rejection of the 'wage slave'. Resistance reveals not so much as an aberrant activity, but a mode of life shaped by the rejection of menial wage-labour. In the following account, Con describes a period of intense welfare regulation where he is directly confronted by the possibilities of life revolving entirely around a menial wage, not the least of which is an anathema to freedom:

Towards the end they did when [Social Security] changed ... after 98, it was a bit of a hassle y'know and um, but y'know they- they want you to fucken go two and half hours, and I'd be like 'I've got hepatitis I can't travel two and half hours' y'know like um ... [So, when you say they hassled you, how did they hassle?] Oh, y'know like ah, you want to go to this job two and half hours away, and it's like y'know, I'm not gonna go, work for three hundred dollars a week and travel two and half- two hours to work, and two hours back, y'know I might as well fucken be dead y'know, like ... for me, that's what it was- that's how strongly I felt y'know, and plus, because I was fucken making all this cash y'know like there was um... there was no reason to y'know

A discourse of pathology emerges as a counter-argument, a tactic by which to parry a mode of existence that is closer to death than life. *'I might as well fucken be dead'* is a powerful reminder that for some the problem of freedom carries with it a great investment. The prospect of spending four to five hours travelling for a menial job that pays only \$300 a week is not a solution to the apparent dependency of the welfare recipient, but a sentence to a life of subordination. The moral imperative of work is an anathema to a rational agent, *homo economicus*, who calculates a better life by adhering to counter-principles of self-formation. To use Con's words, *'there was no reason'* sufficient enough to lure the welfare recipient into a life of menial, low skilled labour: the

ethical formation of lifestyle far out weighs the moral imperative of work for its own sake.

Towards the end of the narrative, Con describes the forced transition to work, a period that coincides with the new reforms of welfare. The production of the autonomous worker, albeit in secure, full-time work, entails a new relation to self as an ethical agent. In the following account, Con describes his present trajectory as a cleaner for the State Rail Authority, a government position offering security in menial, low-skilled labour. What is interesting is how Con weighs the possibilities of promotion with the demands of shift work. The lure of earning good money is the only incentive for moral reformation. But even this project is tentative and provisional:

[And you reckon there's room to move in State Rail?] Yeah well cleaners are y'know there's security guards there they that's the shittest job but um, then there's cleaner and um now I'm gonna be on the stations and then from the stations I can go to either Station Master which is good money there or you go to Train Guard, and a train guard you can earn, up to eighty grand a year [You're kidding me] No if you put in the hours you can but usually y'know they're like on seventy grand a year [You're kidding me for a train guard?] Y'know 'Stand clear doors closing', and the only reason they get the money is because, they do the shift work, some nights you might have to start at one and finish at eight y'know or finish at seven ... It will be shit but it's but as long as like, y'know I I would try that out for a year or two, depends what it does to my health, but if it doesn't do nothing to me health I'll stick to it because with hours, y'know sleeping hours I can do things I can sleep for five minutes and recharge for a couple of hours y'know, but um yeah it's not it wouldn't be a good job but y'know like for fucken up to eighty grand a year I'll do it, and then you can become ah a driver, a driver's on, like twenty five bucks an hour but as soon as you work weekends and after six and all that, they're on a lot of money

Again, a discourse of pathology emerges as a kind of limit-experience '*depends what it does to my health*' which is a timely reminder that the demands of shift work may have an adverse effect on the capacities of the new ethical agent. Con is mindful of the potential contradiction between the economic imperative of earning '*a lot of money*', and the health risks of an agent who must manage the exigencies of chronic illness. But Con has recourse to an earlier discourse discussed in the previous chapter, '*I can do things I can sleep for five minutes and recharge for a couple of hours*' which, again, assembles a self-regulating agent, capable of mastering oneself through various dietetic, psychological and Eastern technologies of self. It would seem that between the reconstruction of the new ethical, low-skilled worker and the subject of pathology, we find a self-regulating masculinity, driven by economic incentive, as integral to the project of freedom. Practices

of freedom are neither repressed nor reduced but transformed into the self-governing agent who is enjoined to an ethical project of autonomy and responsibility.

Conclusion

In the first section of this chapter I examined different ethical projects in which welfare recipients narrate complex forms of self-management. Narratives of self-management reveal desires and aspirations to become autonomous, flexible and responsible subjects. In the case of Amber, the youngest participant, we find evidence of discourses which construct the sphere of flexible wage-labour as maximising the personal powers, choices and experiences of selfhood. For those who occupy the more permanent welfare position of single-mother, we find evidence of complex and, in some cases, unresolved forms of self-management. For Kate, it is the narration of asceticism and overcoming psychological barriers of dependency to explore forms of independence compatible with motherhood. Mary, who is 13 years older than Kate, narrates a story of progressive autonomy in which education and discourses of social responsibility play a much larger role in the autonomisation of self. Lastly, Mike, the oldest participant, narrates a story in which possibilities of freedom are blocked by ageism within the professional labour market. Freedom is equated with survival by virtue of assembling a robust psychological agent. In all these cases, psychological discourses seek to enhance freedom by constituting the self as the locus of control and responsible self-management.

In the second section, I examined the kind of narratives in which exclusion from the labour market is constituted as a work of freedom. Narratives of chronic pathology and self-management reveal ambivalent and unresolved positions in which a return to work is by no means certain or possible. In Sam's case narratives of autonomy are linked to governmental objectives to transform single mothers into flexible wage-labourers. Despite constant self-management and transformation of the self, the emergence of illness painfully ends her fantasies of permanent and secure work. The multiple pathologies of her narrative mark out the permanence of her welfare position in which pathology is the only position from which to constitute oneself as a moral agent. For Jay, pathology is more strongly linked to the threat of social exclusion. Fantasies of

autonomy and security are linked to the management of marginality and the desire to live in clean, affordable housing. Jay confirms that economic participation in low paid, casual work and perpetual training are governmental solutions to combating marginality. Jabe's narrative shows that a life of marginality and chronic pathology produces a precarious biography, one that fails to imagine or project an enterprising future of cumulative development. Having been told by medical experts that she would not live to see her 21st birthday, at the age of 27 she finds herself jobless, insecure and ill-prepared for the labour-market. Lastly, Con's narrative shows how control strategies successfully transform resistance to wage-labour into active forms of citizenship. The management of pathology becomes a means of fashioning a new project of self which, at the same time, is a psychological escape from menial, low paid labour. Practices of self-mastery and the lure of economic incentives are provisional solutions for the reconstruction of freedom.

Given the increasing demands to manage ourselves as rational, enterprising agents, it is not surprising that 'the self' emerges as the locus of personal power. Participant statements confirm that contradictions of the labour market are ethically managed through the construction of psychological agency. For those occupying a welfare position, we find that material contradictions pertaining to political economy, community and employability are transposed into personal difficulties. Governmental ethical practices act 'at a distance' by virtue of assembling a rational, self-directing agent who is called upon to manage the self as responsible and free. It has become a condition of governing the labour market that subjects increasingly think of their freedom in terms of the conditions of flexible wage-labour. For some of the interviewed recipients – those who cannot participate in this putative project of freedom – are consigned to institutional abjection – the endless regulation and moral management of marginality.

Conclusion

In the preceding chapters I have explored the possibilities of reconstructing the politics of the present by combining three techniques of diagnosis: genealogical investigation of contemporary welfare reform in Australia, an ‘analytics of government’ that attends to the complex ensemble of power/knowledge relations pertaining to political rule, and an ‘analytics of subjectification’ to inquire into the effects of welfare reform on subjectivity and experience. The general aim is to show that welfare reform can be reassembled in terms of a conception of political power that is productive, complex, heterogeneous and effective. The work of diagnosis offers up a kind of snap-shot of the present by showing that current solutions to ‘the crisis of the welfare state’ are not natural, normal and self-evident, but can be reconstructed in such ways as to show their contingent, historical and discursive character. The utility of this approach is one that strives to increase the contestability with which we accept these problematisations of welfare and experience as something beyond critique because of their apparently putative and normative character. Most important is that of establishing the possibilities of mounting a challenge to neo-liberal rationalities which, in the name of certain rational, economic and moral discourses, fabricate a ‘pathology of experience’ as a solution to our contemporary problems of freedom. Before reaching a conclusion for this investigation, I want to give an overview of the argument developed so far.

Overview

In Chapter 2, I argued that themes of mutual obligation and social participation in the McClure Report can be understood in terms of governing through a certain conception of space to which political rule applies. Following Rose (1996c, 1999a), I show that recent reforms of Australian social security no longer govern in terms of ‘society’ but the self-governing capacities and sectors of ‘community’. To understand this shift, and its relation to social welfare, I retrace Foucauldian themes on the art of government to show how the very idea of society was the discovery of early liberal political thought. Based on the idea of population, the ‘social’ emerges out of new concerns about the limitations of

government and the emergence of a domain possessing its own complex, independent reality. From this field of problematisations it becomes possible to situate nineteenth century debates on pauperism in terms of an aberration of conduct that represented the anti-thesis of this new project of socialisation. By drawing on Procacci's (1991) analysis of social economy, I show how the discovery of a politics of poverty poses the 'social question' in an entirely new way by probing into the moral habits and circumstances of the poor. The innovation of Malthusianism, for instance, was that of successfully linking the behaviours of the poor with imperatives of the new economic order – self-restraint, autonomy, economic responsibility. Pauperism and dependency would come to signify zones of disorder, moral abyss, symptoms of social and physical pathology, which served to not only develop instruments of socialisation, but formed sites of investigation for the production of wealth. In this sense a discourse of poverty and a discourse of wealth were mutually determining factors in the constitution of society.

In returning to the politics of the present, we find calls to 'community' signal new strategies in the liberal government of poverty. Principles of mutual obligation and social participation distance themselves from poverty as a social and structural phenomenon by constituting spaces of community to foster an ethic of self-governance. Arguments of welfare dependency succeed in justifying the minimisation of 'state responsibility' and the autonomisation of domains in terms of micro-sectors capable of generating their own solutions to the moral and systemic decline of self-responsibility and civic participation. But aside from their rhetorical and emotional appeal, we might think of these solutions to the welfare state in terms of 'ethico-politics' (Rose, 1999a). The language of community, participation and obligation are reactivations of earlier nineteenth century arguments which seek to manage *risk* in a new way. The re-invention of community is a technique for re-distributing and re-individualising risk, while more authoritarian solutions, like Mead's new paternalism, signal the responsibility of governmental authorities in managing the most risky through programmes of remoralisation and supervision. Ethico-politics is a new game of political power that acts on the self-governing capacities of individuals and sectors of the population by fostering new relations of obligation to oneself and others.

In Chapter 3, I show how problematisations of welfare dependency fabricate a veritable field of social and individual pathologies which are systematically linked to control technologies. The psychological and epidemiological characteristics of dependency warrant new strategies for the calculated management, detection and prevention of the ‘spread of welfare dependency’. But this preventive regime has a particular history, one that can be traced in terms of what Foucault (2000d) calls the ‘birth of social medicine’. By tracing a history of bio-politics, I argue that political power has, since the seventeenth century, sought a biological knowledge of populations – not to subjugate or repress life but to increase its value and utility (Foucault, 1979). The emergence of ‘medical police’, for example, identifies the linkages between medical and political rationalities, and how these enabled medical knowledge, by the eighteenth century, to problematise the sickness of the poor through the deployment of a general police of health. These themes are important for understanding processes by which the poor formed objects of medicalisation in nineteenth century Britain. The Poor Law Act of 1834 essentially converted English medicine into a social medicine insofar as this law implied a compulsory medical control of the destitute. Medicalisation of the poor served two main purposes: to augment the wealth of the nation by optimising the health of the labour force, while guaranteeing the poor would no longer constitute a medical danger to the rest of society.

These historical themes, I think, increase the intelligibility of welfare reform in our own period. Implicit to the post-welfare regime is a collective medical perception of populations, a field of visibilities, techniques and apparatuses for investigating the complex conditions in which active forms of citizenship are transformed into dependency, idleness and demoralisation. More precisely, the up-take of new paternalist solutions in Australia since the mid 90’s explicitly draw on a psychological knowledge of the poor. The emergence of therapeutic models and pastoral techniques of case-management resort to supervision, confession and advice-giving in order to change the personal habits of the poor and help welfare recipients fit into the social relations of work. But medicalised forms of continuous observation have, more recently, been

accelerated through the use of computer mediated technologies which resort to medicalised forms of monitoring to isolate and target risky sub-populations. For instance, the application of clinical and profiled risk and the use of computer-modelling, allow social security systems to provide more differentiated and rationalised forms of intervention. Arguably, the poor are no longer treated as equalised entities, but subject to more elaborate techniques for distinguishing the deserving and undeserving poor. Mutual obligation policies minimise the riskiness of moral behaviours and re-individualise risk by resurrecting the implicit social contract between citizen and government. On one side, the most risky are subjected to continuous and intensive assessment, while on the other, recipients are increasingly held responsible for managing their own risk.

In Chapter 4, I argue that discourses of dependency reactivate much older claims about the presumed idleness of the poor, in which case contemporary solutions seek to calculate and discriminate the deservingness of the poor. The historical task here is twofold: to locate the conditions out of which a discourse of the poor applied to practical solutions for the proper administration of the nation, while gaining a sense of what the discovery of poverty had previously displaced by the nineteenth century. Arguably, problematisations of idleness and labour were, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, endemic to a mercantilist police of the poor – a combination of moral-oeconomic statements that located idleness and labour shortages among the customs and habits of the labouring population. But mercantilist solutions, with their empty juridical taxonomy and their themes of setting the poor to work, failed to examine the complex and diffuse conditions in which industry was transformed into idleness. Suffice to say, paternalistic and repressive regulations never succeeded in resolving the escalating crisis of poor administration by the end of the eighteenth century.

In returning to the present, the problem of idleness continues to play an important and popular role among contemporary welfare debates. The reactivation of distinctions that calculate the deservingness of the poor and the shrinking of any acceptable forms of dependency are strengthened by moral/psychological technologies that seek solutions through remoralisation and reconstruction of conduct. The recent discovery of welfare

dependency in Australia is directly related to American problematisations of welfare, in which case dependency has emerged as a specific psychopathology, a contemptible behavioural syndrome for problematising subjectivity in terms of pathologies of will. Psychological explanations encode individual attributes of 'post-industrial' idleness whereby increased reliance on benefits are thought to erode motivation and self-esteem. Arguably, the utility of these arguments is to deflect concern away from the structural and economic conditions of relative deprivation by locating problems of worklessness among specific behaviours of individuals, families and demoralised communities.

In Chapter 5, I revisit Dean's (1991) 'event of pauperism' to reconstruct the transformation of liberal government out of which a definite concept of poverty emerges. By tracing the intersection of several themes – population, economy, poverty and police – I show the political, intellectual and administrative conditions whereby poverty begins to specify a natural, general condition of population and subsistence. As poverty becomes a natural lamentable consequence of the imbalance between population and subsistence, pauperism emerges as the proper target of reform. Indeed, the central objective of the New Poor Law would effectively abolish out-door relief for able-bodied men and redraw boundaries of state responsibility; denying the right to life outside the market meant that only women and children remained legitimate objects of assistance. By retracing the constitution of poverty in terms of 'government', we find support for Polanyi's thesis that economic liberalism was not incommensurate with interventionism, but illustrates to what extent liberal authoritarianism was a factor in the creation of a national labour market; that is, by sealing off poverty from pauperism to constitute the ethical ideals of independent labour. Thus, the possibility of modern welfare and the conditions out of which it becomes possible to produce a pathology outside the market, is located among those conditions in which pauperism plays a technical role in the reformation of wage-labour.

In Chapter 6, I suggested a diagnosis of political power can no longer inhere within the spaces of enclosure characteristic of nineteenth century institutions. Following Deleuze (1995), it is necessary to understand how contemporary mechanisms of control

operate beyond the forces composing 'disciplinary society', that is, by keeping pace with the increasing changeability of society. Among 'societies of control' it is not merely regulation of conduct that is important, but constant modulation in the way control is designed into the very networks, practices and spaces that shape human conduct: control is now continuous, variable and capable of acting more efficiently from a distance. This hypothesis of power provides new lines for thinking about the government of contemporary welfare systems. Australian welfare administration reveals at least two kinds of control technologies that characterise novel forms of governing 'the excluded' via circuits of information, continuous monitoring, reciprocal obligation and self-improvement. In the name of promoting 'active society' and fostering useful forms of 'social and economic participation', technologies of *risk management* and *psychological reconstruction* are instrumental to a new politics of conduct.

What I call the medicalisation of welfare refers to this complex configuration of control that bears on the behaviour of welfare recipients: the new welfare not only problematises subjectivity in terms of discrete, individual deficiencies, but seeks to resolve these deficiencies through therapeutic assessment and reconstruction of conduct. This is evident among 'activation' policies which, since the mid 80's, have installed a variety of techniques ranging from case-management, medicalised monitoring, training of 'soft-skills', and the use of psychological instruments for assessing risks of new clients. Such policies have found their purchase by constructing a pathology of behaviours outside the labour market, and like nineteenth century techniques of combating pauperism, are designed to play a technical role in the reformation of *flexible* wage-labour.

But aside from intensive and continuous control of the poor there is a much darker side of reform. If the medicalisation of poverty succeeds in constituting dependency as a treatable pathology, there is the greater concern of subordinating the poor to the terms and practices of expert discourses while the broader political-economic forces that produce marginality are left to continue their work. Despite global transformations of work, the increasing individualisation of risk and the fragmentation of social life, the poor

are called upon to change their behaviours, raise their self-esteem, acquire a more positive outlook, become more motivated, and manage themselves responsibly. The hypothesis I therefore develop at the end of Part I is that neo-liberal welfare reforms produce sectors of the labouring population that are casualised, underprotected from risk, insecure and desocialised.

The new diagram of 'advanced marginality' that begins to emerge is linked to more recent problematisations of neo-liberal utopia by diagnosing patterns of insecurity and under-employment (Wacquant, 1996, 1999). The re-emergence of the 'working poor' is a recent symptom of the decline of stable and protected employment which gives existence to a new kind of poverty that is social rather than individual, and economic rather than moral. Arguments related to under-employment, the instability of flexible wage-labour and the rising costs of living are amenable to a critical investigation of the kinds of self-management required to sustain this project of mandatory autonomy and continuous flexibility. This is as much a problem of subjectification as it is government. The task of Part II, then, is to diagnose practices of subjectification among welfare recipients to recover explanations of worklessness and insecurity that might otherwise decompose claims of welfare dependency.

In Chapter 7, I offer a detailed understanding of the technologies by which subjects engage in the management of subjectivity and freedom. Subjectification reveals the variability of statements and practices in which welfare recipients engage in constant ethical work. In the current climate of reform where distinctions between the deserving and undeserving are re-inscribed and intensified, experiences of recipients are caught up in a position that is frequently intersected by ambivalence, contradiction and continuous moral management. Among the younger sample there are clear indications that welfare positions are managed in terms of moral/psychological discourses which are consistent with neo-liberal strategies of autonomisation and responsabilisation (Rose, 1996b). The experience of younger participants confirms the effectivity of neo-liberal strategies in fabricating a psychological agent who engages in the management of autonomy, flexibility and resilience which are now key virtues of labour market participation. The

increasing stigma of welfare receipt explains the heightened form of moral management which not only seek to evade the moral positioning of idleness and dependency, but employ distancing strategies ('I'm not one of them') which reactivate moral/psychological pathologies of conduct. The curious effect of these paternalistic discourses is that rather than promote moral and benign circuits of community, they tend to desocialise the very sectors of marginality in which the poor are concentrated.

In Chapter 8, I show how welfare administration increasingly targets the ethical sphere of conduct by creating a welfare position that emphasises freedom and obligation. The shift from 'office-counter' regulation to more subtle practices of modulation demonstrate the way surveillance has become more anonymous, ubiquitous and efficient. The constant incitement to manage oneself responsibly is linked to the management of electronic databases which, for the monitored client, intensifies the insecure and provisional position of income support. Among other statements, it is clear techniques of modulation embody programmes designed to 'rehabilitate' individuals through perpetual training. For some, these courses offer the putative promise of financial autonomy through the reconstruction of conduct, but, as we see in the case of Sam, the endless management of casual labour provides very little guarantee of such promises. Furthermore, it is not just welfare mothers and the long-term unemployed who are targeted, but also the chronically ill who must demonstrate *some* capacity to engage in quasi-autonomous conduct. Where pathology of worklessness is a target of control strategies, physical incapacity is no longer a secure position for relief, but subject to continuous medical monitoring and constant pressure to participate in work programmes.

For those who treat welfare as a hiatus from work, to recompose oneself before re-entering the labour-market, Pete's experience sharply demonstrates how perceived non-compliance is penalised through 'breaching' claimants and prosecuting those suspected of 'welfare fraud'. The modern welfare position is one that must be carefully and rationally managed in such ways that continually demonstrate one's responsibility to find and keep work. Pete's narrative conveys the extraordinary lengths one must go to in order to evade prosecution and manage security. New measures of 'cracking down on welfare

cheats' seem to be more intensely regulated among marginal communities where stereotypes of idleness and dependency are concentrated. Pete offers a concise overview of the current direction of reform: *'They are trying to make an example of people who are over claiming benefits but it is also a vote winner, I mean nobody likes a dole-bludger ... I think another really big thing is with Centrelink their strategies at the moment are trying to get people off benefits by making their life as difficult as possible'*. Arguably, techniques of continuous monitoring, perpetual training, electronic surveillance, breaching and legal prosecution are designed to transform ethical practices through the intensification of calls to manage ourselves responsibly and autonomously.

In Chapter 9, I explore the ethical statements of welfare recipients who engage in complex forms of self-management. Among younger participants we find evidence that maintaining a psychological relation to self is key to constructing expectations and fantasies of autonomy and financial security. Practices of freedom are tied to an 'ethics of personal power' whereby self emerges as the locus of control and the key site for personal transformation. Contradictions within the domain of wage-labour are not linked to marginality, education or resource allocation, but transposed into personal difficulties. Barriers to employment are located among practices in which subjects are required to engage in ethical work on the self: asceticism, stoicism, self-affirmation, confidence-building, etc. The underside of such discourses is that 'the self' is also an object of blame, ambivalence and constant moral management. Ethical work is an endless enterprise as the materiality of deprivation, inequality and insecurity disappear into the self. What remains more distinct than a milieu of constraints is a psychological agent who is solely responsible for the management of autonomy.

While the optimistic and generally uncritical accounts of younger participants place more emphasis on possibilities of personal transformation, pathology becomes a more dominant position among older participants. For those excluded from permanent, or even flexible, wage-labour we find stronger evidence of an 'ethics of pathology', that is, subjects who, for medical or psychological reasons, are unable to participate in work, but continue to engage in practices of freedom. The only recourse for freedom is to constitute

oneself as a medically or psychologically flawed subject in order to exonerate oneself from discourses of dependency. But rather than think of these subjects as the products of a welfare system that created dependency, we find among personal histories of work and freedom numerous and deliberate attempts to constitute oneself as autonomous wage-workers. For those who failed to find financial security in the flexible labour market, transformations of self are linked to government retraining programmes seeking to reconstruct the behaviours of single mothers and disability pensioners to participate in low skilled labour. In most cases, however, even the promise of autonomy is not a sufficient guarantee for security, and fails to resolve the contradictions of the competitive game of freedom. Nonetheless, the necessity of ethical reconstruction is designed into the meagre conditions of welfare assistance, in which case we find strong evidence of ambivalence among those who are compelled to find low-paid, casual work to stave off the threat of permanent exclusion.

Diagnosis

Having restated the arguments of each chapter, we are now in a position to diagnose the politics of the present by combining two ethical domains: the domain of ‘government’ and the domain of ‘subjectification’. In Australia, policies of mutual obligation, social and economic participation and community regeneration, have recently emerged as putative solutions to the crisis of social welfare, that is, by problematising the latter in terms of the systemic passivity and dependency it has created. The work of genealogy seeks to locate the conditions of possibility by which neo-liberal solutions re-activate collective memories of pauperism to transform welfare from an income redistribution scheme to a behaviour modification regime.

Among nineteenth century debates on pauperism, poverty was constituted as a natural and unfortunate imbalance between population and subsistence, while pauperism emerged with all the clarity of specifying a form of life-conduct that was unnatural, immoral and anti-social. That is to say, pauperism formed the *negative* conditions for positing the rational, moral and economic values of ‘society’. More positively, however, pauperism also served as the multiplicity of domains, problems and reflections for the

development of instruments by which to carry out the new project of socialisation. Without succumbing to resemblance, it is possible to rethink policies of the present in terms of the construction of new a kind pathology that lies beyond the wealth and virtue of wage-labour. Welfare dependency draws from the respectability of psychological knowledge and from the moral memories of Bentham's abyss to posit the values of a society that is 'active', and of a conception of citizenship that embodies an ethic of autonomy and self-governance. These are not new discoveries or solutions. But in Australia, at present, we find a strengthening of this alignment between pathology and work to execute two broad strategies: to remove the systemic passivity created by universal welfare entitlements, and to inscribe the ethical ideals of self-governance and social obligation through the reformation of flexible wage-labour. The more recent sentiments of the McClure Report would further suggest the expansion of mutual obligation no longer finds within the role of society guarantor of freedom, security and progress. but that the moral, ethical and emotional spaces of 'community' are posed as quasi-autonomous sectors to shoulder some of the burden of self-governance. Following Rose (1999a), we might describe these recent transformations of government and citizenship in terms of 'ethico-politics' – the politics of life itself has become immanent to contemporary technologies of government.

But the call to govern ourselves rationally and responsibly only forms part of the story of welfare reform: strategies of control and practices of subjectification tell another. The recent introduction of American 'paternalist' solutions would suggest that advanced liberal government also retains an authoritarian dimension. This is certainly the view of Polanyi (1957) who argued that liberalism and brutal interventionism were not mutually exclusive realities. In fact, the new conditionality of Australian welfare reveals a whole array of control strategies designed to produce rational, self-governing subjects. Technologies of risk management and psychological reconstruction reinstate a new social contract which, as Yeatman (2000) points out, is certainly not a relationship between equals. The failure to comply with contractual obligations, to manage ourselves rationally and responsibly, reveals, in the form of breaching policies and legal campaigns against 'welfare cheats', the illiberal aspects of advanced liberal government. Under the new

conditionality of welfare and social citizenship 'beyond entitlements', it seems some risks are not worth managing, and the failure of moral improvement are, after all, failures of the undeserving.

The old and compelling stories of wilful idleness and dissolute conduct, those without regard or obligation for the hard working and virtuous, are expedient strategies for reactivating the collective fears and memories of those unfit to take part in society. But what these popular moral statements displace is a history of the poor whose numbers were so widespread and endemic to a nation that 'poverty' had to be naturalised in order to invent wage-labour as the only means of salvation. A history of under-employment, over-population, economic scarcity and political mismanagement are conveniently eclipsed in order to produce as well as impose the moral and economic necessity of unremitting toil. Alongside these memories of monstrosity, it is possible to recover alternative stories that, in contrast to dependency, show the insecurity of flexible wage-labour and the increasing stigmatisation of welfare. These are certainly the stories borne out among the participants of this study.

Personal histories of subjectification reveal among the older participants that the nature of work has transformed in several ways: with the gradual disappearance of manufacturing, we sense an erosion of protected labour, and the increasing casualisation of unskilled work. While welfare assistance during the 70's and 80's remained relatively secure and unproblematic, older participants relate stories of personal mobility in which possibilities of self-formation are intertwined with unskilled labour. By the late 80's and 90's, working experiences are more diffuse and short-term as participants begin to narrate stories of 'recession', increasing obligation to take part in 'work programmes' and having to comply with 'activity tests'. By the mid 90's, older female participants narrate experiences of exhaustion alongside expectant fantasies of financial autonomy; circuits of sociality are frequently disrupted by transitions in the casual/temporary labour market: and for those who struggled to stay in casual labour due to illness, there is a growing sense of marginality and stigmatisation of welfare receipt. Currently their welfare positions are strikingly similar: while taking part in some form of further education or

training, nearly all the older participants, now in their mid to late 40's, suffer from chronic illness; nearly all convey a deep regret that previous labouring experiences never transpired into permanent or secure work; and, especially the older women, now abandon any kind of hope of achieving full-participation. The constant rehearsal of medical and psychological pathologies seem to anchor a position in which meaningful, secure work is completely unobtainable.

In contrast, the two youngest (female) participants narrate stories of labour market opportunity despite numerous references to under-employment, poor wages and highly competitive local labour markets. In the case of Amber, who left the comfortable but limited circuits of rural community, the transition to a large city is narrated in terms of a growing sense of maturity and personal autonomy. Fantasies of urban life are short-lived, however, as friends begin to migrate to other cities, and the precarious circuits of shared accommodation raise feelings of isolation despite regular casual work in a call centre. The return to community is narrated as a painful loss of autonomy, coupled with the sense of closure that characterises her current welfare position. A sense of self struggles to emerge with any clarity as she tries to supplement her income with sporadic, casual work in the local service industry. But despite the constraints of welfare and work, Amber narrates an acute sense of psychological agency – one is only confined by one's ability to make choices – exemplifying the kind of resilience and fantasy of flexibility that has become a condition of modern wage-labour. For the young female worker there is no sense of work offering long-term security other than forming a transient relay in the maximisation of experience and the on-going construction of an individual biography. Amber's narrative, I think, exemplifies the kind of psychological autonomy that younger generations of workers are now enjoined to think as desirable possibilities for the active construction of identity and lifestyle through the fantasy of unlimited choice.

Among narratives of participants in their late 20's and early 30's, there is a stronger sense of ambivalence and resistance to the normal, moral circuits of flexible wage-labour. For those who occupy a long-term welfare position while continuing to collect benefits, there is a belief that endless flexibility in low skilled or casual employment are not

adequate solutions to the problems of freedom and identity. It is as if identity work is defined by its opposition to the regime of wage-labour, in which case participants narrate counter-discourses of work by engaging in marginal, liminal and risky forms of activity, ranging from freelance trading, sex work and other forms of black employment. These counter-normative practices of work are understood not as examples of moral aberration, dependency or fraud, but acts of resistance where marginality engages in alternative projects of self-formation; it is not the absence of work that define these positions but that work itself is more closely aligned with the ethical work of freedom. In Jabe's case it is not the rejection of normal wage-labour that defines her welfare position, but that her own history of marginality warrants automatic exclusion from ordinary employment. Con, on the other hand, rejects the insecurity and meaninglessness of conventional wage-labour, in which case 'masquerading as dependency' is itself a strategy for managing the risks of marginal self-employment.

One of the symptoms of marginality and insecurity is that welfare recipients must engage in complex forms of self-management. For instance, participant narratives reveal two distinct, but overlapping, poles of experience: 'pathology' and 'freedom'. In the case of pathology, recipients invariably present themselves as the deserving poor through constant rehearsal of medical and psychological discourses. Among older participants, pathology signifies partial or total exclusion from wage-labour, in which case a sense of profound ambivalence and dislocation are constant markers of self-formation. Some participants, like Jabe, refuse a pathological identity but at times is uncertain whether pathology is a genuine explanation for unemployment or a method of deflecting self-blame. Vacillation between self-blame and moral vindication is indicative of how some recipients are unable to resolve the sense of ambivalence and division arising from physical marginalisation and moral atonement. For others, like Sam and Jay, discourses of pathology are the only means of recovering a sense of self inevitably excluded from secure or regular work. In Jay's case, the only recourse for managing marginalisation is working a few hours a week as a casual cleaner to counter the encroaching threat of isolation.

In the case of freedom, self-management entails the kind of ethical work in which recipients are expected to discover within themselves the personal resources for active participation. The difficulties of self-management, however, reside within the respective positions in which welfare recipients are expected to overcome a number of material barriers of participation. In the absence of any real labour market opportunities for younger people living in small rural communities, the difficulty of participation is sometimes resolved by an 'open-minded' acceptance of the realities of employment. For instance, having returned to her family after working in the city, Amber narrates self-realisation as a kind of personal adjustment to the inflexible conditions of the local labour-market. For those of whom a welfare position actually excludes full-participation, like single mothers, the difficulties of practicing autonomy are less easily resolved. In Kate's case, it is an ascetic relation of 'working on the self' that must somehow overcome the stress of sole-parenting while building self-esteem to face her fears of the labour market. In a more striking example, we are told by the oldest participant, Mike, that barriers to professional employment such as ageism and redundancy, though very real industry-related constraints, requires personal resilience to overcome obstacles of active participation. Common to all these accounts is the narration of psychological discourses that maintain an ethical relation of self-belief, asceticism, stoicism and optimism. Arguably, psychological relations of 'responsibilising the self' are key factors in the management of freedom even when the material limitations and inequities of labour markets remain problematic and unresolved.

Future implications

Finally, I want to consider some future directions for research by elaborating some of the implications raised in the thesis. The future of welfare envisaged by the Coalition Government, with its language of participation, community and mutual obligation, actively produces a new plane of political thought and action, one that has been described here as 'ethico-politics'. Ethico-politics responds to neo-liberal problematisations of the welfare state by transforming welfare into a new kind of preventive regime that imposes 'work for the dole' policies on the young and maintains unacceptably low rates of allowance through delayed and meagre indexation of payments. Whether deliberate or

not, these strategies have the effect of making allowances for the unemployed, particularly Youth Allowances, substantially lower than the Henderson Poverty Line (approx. \$320 per week). Furthermore, increased supervision of claimants, the threat of breaches and coercive techniques of increasing 'participation rates' have, I would argue, transformed welfare into a system of social *in*security. But these 'reforms' of welfare have not gone unnoticed or uncontested.

Indicative of the Senate Report (2004) findings on 'Poverty and financial hardship' and the sustained commitment of organisations like ACOSS in developing 'Anti-Poverty Plans', I think the future of left critique on matters of social security, social inequality, long-term unemployment, under-employment, financial hardship and the rising cost of living and housing, should renew attempts to examine the realities of a 'poverty of participation' in Australia today. The possibility that deprivation and disadvantage have actually increased to alarming levels would render the Howard Government's policies based around welfare dependency, mutual obligation and participation unconscionable and dangerously ineffective. Attempts to quickly recycle the poor by driving them into flexible wage-labour may have all the effect of exacerbating the current mechanisms that produce 'advanced' forms of marginality.

At the level of applied research, I think it is essential that social investigations continue to examine the complex social and economic conditions of inequality and understand how people manage long-term unemployment. Further, I am not convinced that poverty should or can be restricted to analyses of those who cannot or will not work, but that deprivation and hardship are conditions associated with those who *do* work. Rather than focus energy and resources into demonising welfare dependency, I think there are very strong grounds for examining the lives of 'the working poor'. Focus on the latter might render visible and thinkable the complex conditions in which standards of living, quality of life, poverty of consumption, poor health and access to basic services and even the insecurity of participation, have become lived, multiple and entrenched realities.

At the level of theoretical research, I think the work of left critique must continue to disrupt and decompose the certainties of ethico-politics *vis-à-vis* social welfare. Where the current work applies history, policy and subjectivity as counterpoints for discussion, recent claims about ‘the rise of the working poor’ are also important for increasing the contestability and intelligibility of discussions pertaining to the future of welfare politics. One direction for research, and by no means a new one, is to assemble appropriate theoretical tools with which ‘social economy’ might continue to disrupt the certainties of a politics of conduct and displace medicalising approaches to welfare administration. This, however, would require careful reformulation of what we mean by ‘the social’.

In Australian politics, formulations of the social carry with it neo-Durheimian assumptions invoked by principles of obligation, participation and community. Indeed, Durkheim argued that the voluntary dimension of the social contract implicit to these policies function in relation to, and on behalf of, the social order, but only to the extent that it is composed of a normative compliance of the behaviours on which the social depends. As it currently stands, the reterritorialisation of the social is viewed as immanent in individuals: the idea of ‘society’ is reduced to an individual psychology that sustains a normative dualism between ‘individual’ and ‘society’, explaining why social intervention often targets individual conduct. But if we take social economy to mean the forms of reflection and activity that are critical of political economy – a means of testing and verifying it – then a critical reworking of this project would eschew temptations of thinking ‘the social’ as an abstract or independent domain of norms, processes and conducts. Rather, the task of a renewed and critical focus on social economy would endeavour to explore the social in terms of its technical, discursive and immanent character. In arguing for a ‘return’ of social economy, the task is to assemble a plane of thought and action out of which new problematisations, new control strategies and new subjects of control emerge. This approach, among many others, is perhaps essential to maintaining a critical vigilance of advanced forms of liberal government.

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