Introduction: Not Just the Reflexive Reflex

Flesh and Bone in the Social Sciences

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Seeing the Body: The Goals of Our Book

Sociologist Arthur Frank elegantly describes the body as follows: "the body is not mute, but it is inarticulate; it does not use speech, yet begets it."[1] When an academic tells a theoretical story about the body or bodies, she must listen closely to hear her own body speaking from within it. If she is able to hear this body, she then must translate its communication into an imperfect language.

As we reflect on this complicated process, we are forced to confront our own embodiment and the pleasures and dangers of revealing our bodies. If we trot out the usual demographic information to our multiple audiences, including our gender, race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, reproductive status, physical ability, grooming rituals, body modification practices—what might this enable the reader to glean about us? And how might such a practice of self-reflection enrich the contents of this book? For women, this practice of "sharing" these embodiments has become a necessary yet risky rite of passage into the academic right (and requirement) to produce knowledge. Importantly, this rite of passage is not equally mandated for our academic colleagues who inhabit bodies that are both physically and symbolically different from ours.

The body is the medium or raw material through which we navigate the world, but it is also an entity that is invested with meanings. Outing our bodies, speaking of and through them, is not only a subjective individual act but is also a political and cultural act. This is the case because bodies can convey a range of statuses, ranks, and relationships. Bodies may be read aesthetically, as things to be beautified, fixed, fetishized, and adorned. Or bodies can be registered bureaucratically and demographically via binary categories like male or female, black or white, and straight or gay. Bodies may convey national pride, as in the case of Olympic athletes who symbolically represent the fittest and the best. Or, conversely, bodies can communicate the effects of institutional racism, abandonment, and neglect as seen in the media images of poor black Hurricane Katrina victims stranded on rooftops begging for water and rescue. We may consider the body through the medical-scientific lens of a microscope or through the ideologies of religion. Clearly, the body is not neutral—it is the

entry point into cultural and structural relationships, emotional and subjective experiences, and the biological realms of flesh and bone.

Sociologists Simon J. Williams and Gillian Bendelow have called for an "embodied sociology," one that rejects theorizing "*about* bodies in a largely disembodied, typically male way" in favor of a "new mode of theorizing *from* lived bodies."[2] Approaching the body as lived, rather than as an abstract object or social construct, allows us to begin to understand the subjectivities of the flesh, and how bodies themselves hold an unspoken knowledge. Where possible, we have encouraged our "authors" to confront their own embodiment in the construction of their essays. In this way the "lived body" is made to be more alive and accountable in their work.

We define the body as the fleshy, verdant, carnal, sensate, engaged organism that is composed of bones, blood, organs, and fluids, as well as statuses, hopes, fears, and anxieties. It is the ultimate location of the division in sociology between structure and agency. What we mean is that the body is our first introduction to the performance of the self and identity—our expression of agency, while at the same time its structural location in stratified worlds that limit that very agency.

Bodies are sites of contradictions. The body, in this text, is that entity that both enables us with great potential and profoundly limits us. It is both material and symbolic. The flesh is inscribed with meaning both from ourselves with our consent and by others against our will. It is our possession and our prison, while at the same time it is out of our control as it leaks, fails us, and gives us away (Moore, this volume). Our bodies may not wholly belong to ourselves—particularly in the case of labor, reproductive and otherwise (Slavishak, this volume).

The everyday experiences and practices of living inside the body must not be overlooked or trivialized. As sociologist Anne Witz argues, it is imperative that we not only recuperate the body within sociology but also continue to forge *new* ways of thinking about the body that will be helpful to those working in a variety of disciplines.[3] This framework advances beyond simplistic dualisms (such as the Cartesian mind/body distinction) in an effort to explicitly recognize the somatic, subjective, and social components of embodiment and how they interrelate.

Now that we have recovered the body, we must make sense of it. Sociologist Bryan Turner's conception of different orientations to the body—having a body, doing a body, and being a body—is particularly salient in fleshing out the body's multifaceted nature.[4] We need to be cognizant of the somatic, subjective, and social components of embodiment and how they entangle within continually changeable cultural (and global) webs. We must be aware of the relationship between the body and the self, remembering that when we speak of such things as the unconscious, identity, and the mind, we are invariably talking about the body, as they are one and the same. We must consider the uniqueness of modern embodiment but remember that our understandings don't exist in a vacuum—a rich field of work reminds us of the historicity of bodies. And finally, it is imperative that we remember that the body is in praxis—undeniably shaped by society but simultaneously marking the world through the negotiation of everyday life.

Our book examines key concepts and theories of the body throughout each of its four sections: "Vulnerable Bodies," "Bodies as Mediums," "Extraordinary Bodies," and "Bodies in Media." Rather than organize the book around the familiar categories of gender, race, class, ability, and sexuality, we take the significance of these status variables as a given and highlight them throughout the volume. As an alternative, we present readings within larger thematic frameworks that are both salient and topical, paying special attention to bodies that are at risk, contemporary embodied practices and regimes, bodies that challenge norms, and representations of the body in mass media. While roughly half of the chapters in the book are previously unpublished and have been written with the intent to bring the "lived body" into focus, we also include previously published works from authors such as Sander Gilman, among others. Such germinal works have clearly shaped the field of body studies, and much contemporary work on the body draws from and expands such studies. Each section begins with a brief introduction that defines some key terms and concepts that run through the section's essays. It is our hope that these mini introductions will enable the reader, both students and teachers, to make further connections between chapters. While we have organized the book in these four sections, clearly there is a bleed among sections as scholarship on the body, like the body itself, traffics across borders and boundaries. Overall, the diverse studies in this book point to the significance of bodies, as objects invested with social meanings and as embodied actors that challenge and transgress the boundaries of culture and the flesh.

The section that follows, "Social and Cultural Studies Come to the Body," is meant to provide a general introduction to key readings and theories on the body, particularly within the field of sociology. In addition, we highlight the importance of interdisciplinary fields such as disability studies and science and technology studies, because of their valuable contributions to understanding the complexity of embodiment. We also place the body within the context of contemporary culture to show why and how the body matters at this particular historical moment.

Social and Cultural Studies Come to the Body

The assertion that the human body has historically been overlooked within social theory, and largely unseen within the broader discipline of sociology, is a well-worn truism. The reason why the body wasn't adequately theorized by sociologists is appreciable given the development of the field and its early substantive foci—making sense of major historical, political, industrial, and ideological changes in Europe during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Juxtaposing traditional with nascent industrial societies and tracing the fading import of religion, the rise of democracy and capitalism, and the emergence of the metropolis are all macrosociological, structural, or, more colloquially put, *society* questions. Furthermore, we suggest that part of the reason why bodies have been so absent from sociological theory and practice is that the disciplinary origins were limited by masculinist perspectives. Sociological scholarship and practice were created by men who privileged male ways of knowing and male prerogatives and thus constructed institutions of male domination. Ideologically, women embodied (or imprisoned) in the feminine flesh are positioned in a

dichotomous fashion in relationship to men. Historically, female bodies were posited as entirely fleshy, leaky, and linked to the primitive, whereas male bodies were associated with the mind, logic, rationality, and civility. We argue that the simultaneity of barriers to women's participation as producers of knowledge and epistemological beliefs that relegated bodies to obdurate binary dualisms severely hampered a rich sociological tradition of engagement with the body.

Additionally, the project of establishing sociology as a legitimate and distinct field of study (fueled by the efforts of Emile Durkheim and Auguste Comte) necessitated drawing boundaries that would distinguish sociology from the biological sciences and the field of psychology. This constellation of historical forces effectively eclipsed the individual bodies that constitute the basis of society itself. In order to be accepted as a legitimate disciplinary field, early sociological work made a strategic decision to privilege the social and relinquish the human body to other sciences. Over the past few decades, sociologists and feminist scholars have worked to bring the body back in.

Embodiment, despite recent attention to "the body," remains as conceptually problematic as it is riveting. One of the most interesting aspects of this discourse is how awkward and difficult it is to talk (or write) about embodiment and its consequences and implications, and how little shared vocabulary exists. This, of course, is no accident, as the "scientific revolution" of modernity was predicated on the denial of embodiment.[5] The science of the past few centuries, which required disembodied knowers and producers of knowledge (constituted through the erasure of bodies, actual work practices, and the messiness of life itself), produced very partial official knowledges, particularly stunted about embodiment in general and sexual, gendered, raced embodiments in particular (Frank, Kroll-Smith and Floyd, this volume). Through discourse and disciplinary analyses of a now very wide array of media, sciences, and technologies, feminist scholars have elucidated the "othering" and racialization of women, girls, females, the feminine, and many if not most aspects of bodies, including gender, sexualities, and reproduction (Patton, Collins, this volume).

The reasons why social and cultural theorists brought the body into sharper focus in the last decades of the twentieth century are complex. Yet, if we reflexively observe the world around us we can see how bodies do indeed matter, to paraphrase philosopher Judith Butler, albeit in historically unparalleled ways. The rise of media culture has brought new visualizations of the body that suggest which bodies are normal, healthy, and worthy (Huggins, this volume). For example, consider how bodies have recently been represented in the mass media in television shows like *The Biggest Loser* or *Extreme Makeover* (Kosut, this volume). Obese bodies and those deemed physically unattractive in myriad ways are displayed, analyzed, medicalized, and ultimately (if they are lucky and hard-working), these bodies are transformed as millions watch the process, some even discussing the merits and success of such transformations within the blogosphere. Bodies are endlessly mediated by our cultural commentary. Take for example, Thomas Beattie, a 34-year-old transgender man (with a beard and so-called baby bump), who garnered mass media attention by coming out as a "pregnant father." By sharing Oprah's couch with his wife, Beattie defied the long-standing

cultural belief that anatomy always dictates a person's gender. Beattie's body, like those who have undergone an *Extreme Makeover*, provides a new set of understandings and meanings about what it means to have and be a body and to reproduce a body. These media representations and the discourses surrounding them disseminate an amended and fluid embodied cultural blueprint that can take us beyond the confines of the flesh as we have previously understood it. And we are constantly bombarded by a dizzying number of opinions and expert reflections on these enhanced bodies.

Cyberculture and new media technologies have expanded and extended the way the body looks and functions as the interface between the real and the virtual, and the human and the machine, overlap and merge. Since the Internet has become a common public sphere of social interaction, networking, and recreation, the constitution and definition of the body has become even more liquid in cyberspace. While computer-mediated interactions do not require physical copresence, they do allow for a visual and virtual bodily exchange that is a tangible embodied experience. For example, televideo cybersex or more mundane video teleconferencing via Skype transpires as participants embody themselves in the mediated image (see Waskul, this volume). People feel, through their bodies, the pleasures and pitfalls that may occur through the process of virtual communication. Virtual spaces, such as Second Life, free the body from its physical limitations, as it can be rewritten through the avatar or visual representation of the user. However, studies suggest that the physical appearance of an avatar may be transferred to the person behind it.[6] Nonetheless, in an embodied encounter we are bound within our fleshy exterior (gender, height, race, age), whereas in a mediated environment our avatar, or virtual body, may be unbound from biological and social status variables. Televideo interactions and cyber-representations (avatars) both call attention to the murky interface between the real and the virtual body.

Indeed, what gets to count as a body—a normal, healthy, functioning body—is contested by medical professionals, the state, clergy, and lay people alike. Clearly, beauty and health products are marketed that prey on our insecurities about our bodily vulnerabilities—just as prenatal genetic tests are recommended to anxious parents to ensure the "normality" of the fetus (Karlberg, this volume). But these very vulnerabilities are undergirded by a complex system of physicalism, the practice of "rating an individual's social value solely on his or her muscular, sensory, and/or mental prowess."[7] Over the past few decades, disability studies, an interdisciplinary field of academic inquiry and political activism, has produced scholarship and advocacy that examine the heterogeneous and transhistorical meanings of disability.[8] Even though 15 percent of the population is made up of people with disabilities, these bodies are rendered invisible in social spaces, political arenas, and intellectual endeavors. Bodies of all abilities are at some point recalcitrant; for example, they may break, ache, or bleed. However, those deemed permanently *disabled* are demanding to be seen in myriad environments regardless of how they are categorized (Peace, this volume).

In the everyday realm, the emergence of new life-saving and life-prolonging technologies make novelist William Gibson's cyborg less fictitious and science-studies

scholar Donna Haraway's cyborg more feasible. This prevalence of the cyborg, an integrated circuit of flesh and technology, a blending of the "natural" and the "social," redefines the very notions of humanness and the distinctions of animate and inanimate. As a result, when life begins and ends, once historical givens that were empirically observable (either when the baby emerged or when the body went cold), are today rendered ambiguous and opaque events as medicine continues to breach previous technological boundaries. The case of 41-year-old severely brain-damaged Terry Schiavo, whose body became the center of an infamous right-to-die case in 2005, reminds us that what defines a living body, one that is truly *alive*, is open to question. Similarly, in recent years the congressional and popular debates over the use of human embryos in stem cell research have kindled arguments over exactly when a life starts. These kinds of cases illustrate that when bodies, or even parts of the body, are viewed and treated through a medical and scientific lens, conflicting moral, ethical, and religious viewpoints come into focus. As we know more about the body's biological workings, and arguably, for the most part, our lives are improved and extended, we are forced to ponder where the tangible and intangible meet.

In addition to new medical technologies, the growth of consumer culture, including the worlds of commercial beauty and fashion, the ubiquity of plastic surgery, and the arrival of the fitness and diet industries have also significantly shaped the way we recognize and experience our bodies in contemporary Western society (Kent, Dias, Gilman, Immergut, this volume). It can be argued that for certain people, particularly those with creativity and imagination, life inside the body has drastically changed. Depending upon one's economic and social capital, the body may be increasingly malleable and protean. French performance artist Orlan, who beginning in 1990 radically altered her body in unprecedented ways in live "surgery performances" epitomizes this notion. Orlan used plastic surgery to transform her face and body using iconic images of women in the Western art canon such as the *Mona Lisa* or *Venus*, as her template. While Orlan's work shocked those both inside and outside of the art world, almost twenty years later such radical surgical modification appears less scandalous and extreme. The rise of surgical and nonsurgical cosmetic surgeries in the West hints at the normalization of procedures like breast implants and liposuction. Cosmetic-surgery television shows like *Nip/Tuck* and *The Swan*, as well as media coverage of celebrity surgeries and advertising for nonsurgical products like Botox and Restylane have played a part in redefining cosmetic surgery as an acceptable and even mundane means to improve the body's appearance. Some people have become so obsessed with cosmetic surgery that they have been described as "surgery junkies" and "plastaholics."[9] While Orlan and plastaholics are examples of extreme cases, the larger message conveyed in the media is clear. If you have the means and the desire, your body can be potentially made more perfect than its natural or embryonic state (Vannini and McCright, this volume).

In the academic realm, the (re)emergence of feminism in the 1960s–1970s problematized sex, sexuality, and gender, effectively challenging conservative and functionalist views of the female body as posited by American sociological forefather Talcott Parsons and many others. Much of the best work in this area focuses on how the

socialization process transforms male and female into masculine and feminine, directly leading to the subjugation of women in various spheres. According to feminist social theory, claims about bodies are part of the social arrangements and cultural beliefs that constitute the gendered social order. Men's physical capabilities are, for the most part, considered superior to women's. As bodies prone to illness and early death, as well as higher infant mortality rates and lower pain thresholds, men's are actually more fragile than women's, and feminist analysis has tried to tease the physiological from the social, cultural, and environmental in illness and death rates. For example, in the United States in 2005, women's life expectancy was 5.2 years greater than men's.

Significant contributions and interventions into studies of the body have come from feminist science and technology studies, or feminist STS. A primary objective of feminist STS has been to explore the construction of gender/sex differences both within and across transdisciplinary borders, flowing through both the humanities and the social and natural sciences. In these studies, reproductive anatomy and sexual physiology are skillfully investigated, illuminating their reliance on beliefs of embodied differences.[10] Scholars of science, technology, and medicine also examine understandings of female and male embodied sexual pleasure, as well as pharmaceutical enhancements like Viagra. This work reveals how the orgasm, the natural locus of pleasure, is mediated by many layers of bodily tissue and morphology.[11]

The vulnerability of certain bodies is also apparent within the context of globalization, specifically with regard to a rise in global organ trafficking in which the human body is viewed as a pure commodity.[12] The most socially disadvantaged citizens of impoverished countries sell organs and other body tissues to affluent people, often foreigners, who do not want to wait through the sanctioned means of a donor list (Haddow, this volume). This phenomenon has spawned "transplant tourism," wherein buyers from the United States and Europe travel to developing countries in search of cheap kidneys and other body parts, sometimes via post mortem harvesting. The global capitalist economy has also fueled female sexual slavery, sexual tourism, and the trafficking of women and children, particularly from countries in the global south.[13] Both female bodies and impoverished bodies are increasingly dissected, mutilated, tortured, and sold to assure the health and pleasure of others. These invisible exploited populations provide a tangible example of the way real bodies are fundamentally shaped through a powerful web of technological, economic, political, and cultural conditions (Masters, this volume).

The rise of subdisciplines within the field, such as the sociology of sport, aging, and the life course, and postmodernism in general have also influenced the need to take the body seriously as a cultural construction, symbol, and conduit of social processes. The body is increasingly being recognized as a central concern not only within sociological subfields—medicine, sexuality, race, media—but within the discipline as a whole. Likewise, many scholars working outside of the social sciences, particularly in the areas of anthropology, history, English, media and communication studies, and philosophy, have also begun to highlight the body and its significance, many focusing on gender and sexuality issues in particular, including scholars such as Judith Butler,

Judith Halberstam, and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick. The relationship between race and the body has also been called attention to by scholars such as bell hooks, Patricia Hill Collins, and Dorothy Roberts. If one looks carefully, it becomes clear how important the physical body is within much contemporary research. Whether focusing on the reproduction of social stratification in systems of education[14] or the urban underground economy[15] these diverse types of studies share a commonality—a concern with the way the classification and treatment of the body due to race, ethnicity, class, or gender affect our life chances and the paths we take. The body is clearly no longer peripheral, but rather an increasingly central and problematic issue within social and cultural studies.

Early Sociological Theory

Approaches to theorizing the body are divergent in scope, methodology, and content, sometimes eluding categorical classification. For example, under the rubric of feminist theory, there is little agreement about how to theorize the relationships among gender, sex, and embodiment, nor is there a consensus regarding how these terms should be defined. There is also a surplus of body classification schemas. For example, in *The Body and Society,* sociologist Bryan Turner (1984) posits four types of bodies, while Arthur Frank (1991, 1995) advances a "typology of body use in action" that narrows the body into four abstract types. Sociologist John O'Neill (1985) develops a theory of *Five Bodies* and anthropologists Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Margaret Lock (1987) posit three bodies—individual, social, and political.

However, before we explore contemporary perspectives on the body, it is important to make clear that the "founding fathers" of sociology and anthropology did not entirely omit bodies from their work. Georg Simmel (1858–1918) explicitly considers the body in the essay "Adornment" and offers a more implicit treatment in his seminal work *The Metropolis and Mental Life.* According to Simmel, we adorn the body for the sake of the individual self, yet cannot accomplish the act (the reception of egoistic pleasure) without society. Simmel believes that this activity "is one of the strangest sociological combinations" because it is simultaneously egoistic and altruistic.[16] Wearing adornment, whether it is jewelry or a particular hair style, singles out the wearer by embodying a kind of self-feeling. Notwithstanding, bodily gratification is directed towards society because the wearer can enjoy it only insofar as she mirrors herself within it. While there is not an explicit discussion, there is a suggestion of a reflexive body-self within Simmel's analysis.

Although Karl Marx is criticized for his overdeterministic material analysis of history in which the individual is treated as a passive being (possessing agency only when subsumed within a class analysis), at the core of Marx's work one finds corporeal beings. In the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844,* Marx analyzes humanity's universal relationship to nature and our inherent need to produce, or labor for our survival. In order to survive *physically* as a species, humanity needs products of nature, i.e., food, shelter, clothing, housing, etc. Thus, nature provides the "means

of life" for human beings. Marx maintains that because we live on nature, nature is, in essence, our body. Notwithstanding, the human species holds a very distinctive relationship to nature because we are sentient creatures. It is precisely this consciousness or cognizance, our "species being," that distinguishes humans from animals. Humans emerge as a species being when we labor in the objective world.

Because human beings are capable of transforming their relation to nature (and to other human beings), Marx views humanity as inherently creative. Humanity creates itself as the product of its own labor, ultimately objectifying itself through the work it performs. Marx's regard for the bodies of the working class underscores his concept of alienation and alienating labor. He argues that with the emergence of capitalist production, the worker's mind and body become increasingly machinelike. For example, in the *Communist Manifesto* the proletariat "becomes an appendage of the machine, and it is only the most simple, most monotonous, and most easily acquired knack that is required of him."[17] According to Marx, alienating mechanized labor erodes and jeopardizes our species being—that which makes us humans. Even though Marx's focus was not specifically on the body, an acknowledgment of the corporeal undergirds some of his most influential writings.

An implicit approach to embodiment is found in the work of Max Weber, particularly his work on rationalization and religion. Unlike Marx, who had a passionate concern for the way (some) bodies are subjugated under inhumane capitalist labor, Weber is concerned, in his treatment of the body, with the way religious ideology and rationalization led to rigid corporeal control and denial of pleasure. For Weber, the emergence of modern capitalist society signaled an abnegation of the body's sexual drives. In *The Protestant Ethic* Weber outlines the way Calvinist asceticism (involving a combination of both hard work and negation of sexual pleasure) represented a devout spiritual commitment functioning to ward off "moral unworthiness."[18] Forsaking corporeal pleasure, the Protestant ethic emphasized intense commitment to hard work, frugality, and moderation as the only paths to salvation for Protestant devotees. Weber further expands on rationalization and the body in *Religious Rejections,* positing that because erotic passions cannot be calculated and thus rationalized, the tension that exists between the spheres of religion and eroticism is profound in modern life. Originally, sex and religion shared an intimate relationship due to the ideals and rituals surrounding magic orgiasticism, in which "every ecstasy was considered holy."[19] According to Weber, a tension between religion and sex arrived with the "cultic chastity of priests."[20] Priests renounced sex as a sign of their ability to resist temptation by the devil. Hence, the passionate nature of eroticism came to be viewed as inherently nonrational and therefore as something that must be denied. Within Weber's treatment of religion and rationalization one finds a self-controlled and self-regulated modern body.

Unlike Marx and Weber, Emile Durkheim's treatment of the body encompasses debates over mind/body dualism and the relationship between individuals and social structure. Much as in his dichotomous self-society and profane-sacred conceptualizations, the individual body is treated as secondary to the social body. For example, in *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life,* Durkheim asserts that the soul (sacred)

is always opposed to the body (profane). Society necessitates that we sacrifice our embodied selves for the greater good of the collective. Durkheim contends that "our nature is double" as "there truly is a parcel of divinity within us, because there is a parcel of the grand ideas that are the soul of collectivity."[21] It is society, not the body, that gives us life and humanity. Durkheim's lack of concern with corporeality is further evidenced in *Suicide*. Suicide, the ultimate catastrophic embodied act, is reduced to statistical categories of gender, race, and age. Here Durkheim's primary focus is on the relationship between society and its subjective effects on individuals. Suicide, the death of the body, becomes entirely disembodied. In Durkheim's work the body is sacrificed for, and subsumed within, the social landscape.

Like Durkheim, George Herbert Mead also neglects to seriously consider embodiment, instead focusing on the relationship between self and society. In *Mind, Self, and Society*, Mead theorizes society as a dynamic process between individual actors and the social world. Although explicit recognition of embodiment is absent, Mead offers an important conceptualization of self (and how it develops from childhood to adulthood). The self consists of two aspects, or what Mead calls "distinguishable phases"— the "I" and the "me."[22] The "I" is the spontaneous, uncalculated self and the "me" is the part of us that has internalized society's norms and structures. When a person says to herself, "I can't believe I did that last night," the "me" is reflecting back on the transgressions of the "I." These two aspects of the self arise in social interaction. For Mead, the self is ultimately a social construct rather than a biological entity or a derivative of the soul.

These early nineteenth- and twentieth-century sociological theories demonstrate how the body was sometimes hidden in plain sight. The tangible flesh and blood subject was symbolically covered by economics, religious ideology, statistical analysis, and societal concerns, and, in some cases, was completely absent. As will become evident in the next section, the body became increasingly important in theoretical analyses, occupying a key role in some of the most influential works of the mid- to late-twentieth century.

Socially Constructed and Civilized Bodies: Class, Power, and Control

The writings in this section cover a broad range of topics; sexuality, consumption, bodily control, institutionalization, and even table manners. However, these theories have a common thread. They show how social structures can, to greater and lesser degrees, shape the way bodies look, feel, and are expected to act. Whether the setting is an insane asylum or a medieval dining table, it is apparent that since early human history all bodies have been subject to powerful discourses and knowledges, both in formal institutional settings or within the familiar landscapes of everyday life.

In *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste,* sociologist Pierre Bourdieu posits that the body is a conveyor of symbolic value that reproduces "the universe of the social structure."[23] Although *Distinction* is not explicitly about bodies, it takes the body seriously as bearer of social values and was one of the first major sociological works to emphasize the growing importance of the body in the late twentieth century. Bourdieu places bodies within modern stratified consumer culture, arguing that the body bears the imprint of social class based on habitus, taste, and social location. According to Bourdieu, "the body is the most indisputable materialization of class taste" in that one's hairstyle, clothing, diet, and even gait function as signs within a larger system of social positions.[24] Bourdieu acknowledges that bodies are biological, yet stresses that they are inherently unfinished, becoming transformed (imbued with marks of social class) within society. Arguably, Bourdieu's most significant contribution to body theory is his conception of the body as a form of physical capital. As such, the body is a resource to greater or lesser degrees, and can be converted into economic, cultural, and social capital.

While Bourdieu approaches the body through a lens of culture and class, French social constructionist Michel Foucault underscores the notion of social power in a different way. Foucault asserts that the body is "directly involved in a political field: power relations have an immediate hold upon it; they invest it, mark it, train it, torture it, force it to carry out tasks, to perform ceremonies, to emit signs."[25] In essence, the Foucauldian body is a creation of culture and is modified as it is governed by various forms of power and manufactured through discourse.

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault outlines how a "history of bodies" is subjected to disciplinary systems that produced "docile" subjects. Using historical comparative analysis, Foucault illustrates how the body changed as a target of discourse. For example, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, punishment was a public and physical spectacle that relied upon burning, ripping, and mutilation of the flesh—acts that reinforced institutional authority and power. However, by the beginning of the nineteenth century, "the old partners of the spectacle . . . the body and the blood, gave way" to the penitentiary system.[26] Foucault argues that the development of prisons ushered in control not only of the bodies but, more importantly, of the minds and "souls" of criminals. Thus, as new sources of institutional knowledge and power emerged to constrain subjects, discourses shifted in focus from the body to the mind.

Similarly, in *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault traces the way Christian confession as a discursive ritual shifted in focus from the sexual activities of individuals to their intentions. Foucault asserts that sexuality is not a "stubborn drive" but an "especially dense transfer point for relations of power."[27] The sexual body is not a biological body but rather a product of a complicated network of social control. Foucault posits that four strategic sexually based categorizations emerged in the nineteenth century as foundations for knowledge and discourse: the hysterization of female bodies, the pedagogization of children's sex, a socialization of procreative behavior, and a psychiatrization of perverse pleasure. From these designs sprung the archetypal nervous woman, masturbating child, Malthusian couple, and perverse adult, all of whom are products of discursive strategies that utilize the sexuality of women, men, and children. After appropriately being typed and classified, the Foucauldian body is governed by experts—psychiatrists, gynecologists, educators, therapists, and social scientists—who serve to reinforce institutions of power.

Even though Foucault recognizes the malleability of the body, he never acknowledges the way individuals create or change discourse/culture. As sociologist Bryan Turner (1984) asserts, if we are determined by what we are permitted to know, then there is no theoretical space for human resistance to discourse. Another limitation of Foucault's theoretical treatise is that his bodies are disembodied. Simply put, the biological or material dimension of the body is suspended in discussions of discursive power. Although he explains how the target of discourse shifted from the corporeal body to the mindful body, he fails to acknowledge the obvious relationship between the two, that is, that the mind resides inside the body. The subjectivity of life inside the body—the personal, the particular, and the idiosyncratic dimension that each of us experience in our everyday lives—is missing here. Notwithstanding, Foucault's work is invaluable to the field because of its persuasive analysis of the way culture (power/discourse) constrains and invests human bodies. His enormous contribution is evidenced by his influence on many authors, such as historian Thomas Laqueur (1990), sociologist Barbara Duden (1993), anthropologist Emily Martin (1989, 1994), and countless others. In particular, Foucault's work points out the surveillance bodies experience in mundane ways, and the conceptual utility of the normalizing gaze. For example, feminist Susan Bordo (1993) uses a genealogical approach to explore the creation of docile female bodies, exposing the medical labels and social discourses that create the image of woman.

Like Foucault, American sociologist Erving Goffman also examines the body in terms of social structures and ideologies that are external to the body. However, even though he focuses on the way bodies are socially constrained, Goffman views the body as something that individuals have some control over to varying degrees. Goffman acknowledges the agentic quality that humans possess in terms of attempting to manage and control their bodies in different social contexts, from eating in a restaurant to going to the doctor's office. Unlike Foucault, Goffman assigns significance to embodied subjective experience. Our ability to interact in society and to achieve desired outcomes within specific social contexts depends upon the management of our bodies.

One of the central themes threading through Goffman's work is his treatment of bodily control and appearance as a central component in mundane everyday encounters among people. In *The Presentation of Self* (1959) Goffman uses a theatrical analogy to describe how self-controlled individuals attempt to follow cultural scripts that dictate appropriate behaviors in the presence of other people. According to Goffman, any successful social "performance" hinges on expressive control to keep inconsistent moods and signs from disrupting it. In order to achieve a semblance of reality or authenticity one must master the art of "impression management," a highly nuanced technique of constant reflexive self-examination (this involves both mind and body). Goffman asserts that "the impression of reality fostered by a performance is a delicate, fragile thing that can be shattered by very minor mishaps" such as a belch, a stutter, or flatulence.[28] In order to prevent embarrassment and disruption in social interaction we must learn to manage our body, including its demeanor, noises, smells, and facial expressions. Any agency in Goffman's theory is based on how we choose to act within different circumstances. Yet, it is important to note that all of the scripts

that constitute a successful social performance, as it were, stem from an internalization of social texts. If we fail to keep our bodies in check, we risk public embarrassment and social stigmatization. Thus, ultimately Goffman presents the body as socially constructed.

In addition to mundane contexts, Goffman also examines the role of the body in institutional environments. *Asylums* (1961) chronicles the way in which prisoners' and psychiatric patients' bodies are reconstructed and often mistreated during the institutionalizing process as part of destroying or degrading self-worth and self-autonomy. For example, upon entering an institution the individual is stripped of his or her "identity kit"— clothing, combs, hair products, accessories, and other items that differentiate a person as unique. As a result, the individual suffers a "personal defacement."[29] Goffman asserts that the self (preinstitutional) is often whittled away through defilement of the body. *Asylums* is a notable early contribution to body theory because it makes an explicit connection between the way changes in the body relate to changes in self within extreme institutional contexts.

Much akin to *Asylums, Stigma* (1963) examines the way we categorize others during social interaction by assessing attributes that may be read as "discrediting." Within *Stigma* is the implicit idea that everyone has at one time felt stigmatized in the presence of others. There are three different types of stigma: physical deformities or "abominations of the body," negative character traits such as "weak will" or "dishonesty," and "tribal" characteristics such as "race, nation and religion."[30] As opposed to "normals," stigmatized persons face discrimination and reduced life chances. Here Goffman focuses specifically on the moment when a stigmatized person and a "normal" are brought together within social situations. Because of the known stereotypes, both parties feel extremely apprehensive when faced with each other and often try to avoid, rather than manage, these interactions. Although Goffman is concerned with both stigmas of the body (such as blindness and scars) and stigma resulting from behaviors and actions (like being institutionalized or unemployed), he observes that the "social information" that each of us carries is embodied.

One of the most convincing social constructionist theories of the body is found within Norbert Elias's *Civilizing Process*. By tracing historical documents describing manners and etiquette, Elias identifies the processes that facilitated the emergence of the modern self within a civilized (controlled) body and the way this development relates to state formation. While the human body is not the principal focus of Elias's theory of the civilizing process, it does play a significant role. *The Civilizing Process* is particularly important within the field of body theory because it merges Foucault's historical and structural approach with Goffman's primarily micro or interactionist perspective. Elias demonstrates that different modes of behavior such as bodily carriage, bodily functions, and table manners change as part of an ongoing interactive process between individuals and larger structural formation. Elias adroitly illustrates the mind/body/society relationship by employing a microsociological, macrosociological, and historical lens.

According to Elias, from about the Renaissance onward "civilizational self-controls" became internalized, causing people to notice not only themselves but also others.

Civilité is dependent upon seeing and being seen by others and behaving properly in social situations. *The Civilizing Process* reveals that socially acceptable behavior is connected to social structure and the emergence of a self-controlled individual. Manners and bodily etiquette originated from the upper social strata, eventually filtering down to the daily interactions of people from all social classes. Elias shows how social control was mild in courtly medieval society as compared with later eras. For example, courtly table etiquette dictated that people could spit while eating (being sure to refrain from spitting across the table) and could eat from others' plates as long as they refrained from "falling on the dish like a pig, and from dripping bitten food into the communal space."[31] Centuries later, table manner etiquette changed rather significantly, as social controls became more exacting for the individual within public space. The civilized body is physically separate from others ("my" space), self-reflective, controlled, and aware of the way it must behave in any given social context—in both public and private realms.

Goffman's dramaturgical body and Elias's civil body are comparable in that they examine the way individuals must conform to modes of socially acceptable behavior or risk public (and private) embarrassment and shame. In everyday life and civil society it is necessary to monitor one's self and body, as well as the bodies of others. A main link between Goffman and Elias is an interest in examining how the body is controlled—both individually and socially. However, Elias's and Goffman's theories are also quite different in a number of ways. Most obviously, Elias's scope (breadth and depth) and methodological framework are more sophisticated than Goffman's, and it is also important to distinguish that Elias carefully considers the biological component of embodiment, which Goffman treats only peripherally. The evolution of human history and the process of "civilizing" the body contain at their core the unequivocal interdependence between the biological and the social.

Body Projects and Consumer Culture

Recent scholarship seeks not only to bring the body back "in" to social and cultural studies, as it were, but also to place the body within the context of contemporary society or what sociologist Anthony Giddens refers to as "late modern culture." Much of this work is in conversation with postmodern debates focusing on a variety of subjects, from the propensity to question scientific facts, experts, and the grand narrative (Lyotard 1984) to the proliferation of imagery and simulations (Baudrillard 1994) in contemporary culture.

In *Modernity and Self-Identity* Giddens argues that the complex and ambiguous characteristics of late modernity (erosion of science, changes in the family, occupation, etc.) have led to an increase in individual reflexivity and new problems with attributing meaning to one's life. In this context, Giddens contends that the body as an "action system" within everyday life has become an increasingly essential part of sustaining a consistent sense of self-identity.[32] Because contemporary individuals cannot rely on traditional institutional moorings (marriage) or roles (wife) to ground

the self, we focus on what we know best—the body. As the self is embodied, "the reflexivity of the self extends to the body."[33] Giddens maintains that the contemporary reflexive body-self is continually worked on through diet, exercise regimes, implants, and so on. We can see evidence of these practices and routines in the cases of "manscaping" and "extreme" body modification (Immergut, Kosut, this volume.)

Notwithstanding, Giddens's theory of a reflexive body/self has some limitations. Although Giddens attempts to link the self with the body, "it is the unconscious that receives more play than embodiment."[34] Furthermore, Giddens maintains that the body is an "action system" and a "mode of praxis" but does not adequately address the everyday experiential aspect of embodiment (life in the body). However, Giddens's work is still useful in that it provides a conceptual framework for beginning to think about contemporary bodies and whether or not the body is somehow experienced in a significantly different way than in previous historical periods. Giddens's theory raises a number of questions and ultimately creates a conceptual space for us to think in new ways about whether or not there is such an entity as a uniquely late-modern body. And if so, how do we begin to theorize it?

Much in the same vein as Giddens, sociologist Mike Featherstone also regards the emphasis on the self-body's surface as a phenomenon particular to contemporary society. However, Featherstone examines the overly surface-oriented body within the framework of consumer culture. He argues that the proliferation of stylized (idealized) images of the body via the media (advertisements, fashion magazines, popular film, television) constantly and relentlessly inundate individuals like never before. This process reinforces the ideology that if the body is maintained cosmetically, it will reap a number of rewards such as thinness, beauty, increased sexual potency, and overall healthiness. Unlike Weberian asceticism's ultimate eternal reward (heaven), the reward for consumeristic asceticism "ceases to be spiritual salvation or even improved health, but becomes an enhanced appearance and more marketable self."[35] Discipline and hedonistic pleasure are not antithetical; the subjugation of the body (through diet, exercise, and other health regimes) is necessary if one is to obtain "the look" that can guarantee a sexy, exciting, leisure-filled life.

Featherstone acknowledges that body maintenance regimes are not unique to contemporary Western culture; however, what is divergent is the propensity to view the body as a machinelike product. He argues that we are maintaining our bodies much in the same way as we maintain our cars. The goods we consume affect the way we think and act and this extends to the treatment of the body. Just as one would want to extend the life of one's car by waxing and polishing, changing the oil, and so on, so too do bodies "require servicing, regular care and attention to preserve maximum efficiency."[36] While Featherstone's neo-Weberian theory is creative and sophisticated—establishing a relationship among production, consumption, belief systems, and the body—he leaves very little space for human agency. It is also important to take seriously the way the dimension of social class affects the consumeristic body. Shiatsu, nail polish, herbal remedies, plastic surgery, and thigh masters are products and services that require discretionary income. The consumer body's success hinges upon its economic resources and presupposes the availability of choice.

The development of contemporary body theory requires an inherent task—seriously engaging the concepts of consumerism, globalization, and global culture. The advent of electronic media, the expansion of the tourist industry, and global migration have significantly changed the way we think about culture in general and thus will have some direct or indirect influence on the way we think about our bodies. For example, research on the modern primitive body modification movement provides us with an example of the way some contemporary Americans are appropriating ancient non-Western rituals, practices, and ideologies centered on the body.[37] Increasingly, we are witnessing hybrid "globalized" bodies on the horizon.

Challenging the "Natural" Body: Feminist Contributions

When asked about the inequities between men and women with respect to social power, we have often heard our students say, their voices exasperated, "women's and men's bodies are just different." These presumed differences are presented as evidence for why our culture is organized in certain ways. Importantly, feminist scholars of the body have worked to reveal how these "self-evident" differences are actually culturally produced. Certain bodies survive and thrive according to economic resources and social power. For example, men's bodies are at risk of military, athletic, and industrial exploitation and, for disadvantaged men, imprisonment, while women's bodies are controlled by institutions dominated by men, namely, medicine and religion.

Through the discourse of science and medicine these differences are recast as natural, physical, universal, transhistorical, and permanent truths. It is commonly understood in tautological fashion that men's and women's bodies are different because they were born that way. Feminist activism and scholarship have increased awareness of the way bodies are gendered by making visible the cultural and social dynamics that produce difference and dominance out of the flesh of male and female bodies. However, before discussing feminist critiques and contributions, it is important to discuss naturalistic approaches to the body.

In general, naturalistic approaches to the body hold that humans are constrained and/or enabled by their birth-given characteristics (sex, skin color, height, etc.). Correspondingly, social relationships, institutions, and the ideologies that support them are founded to some degree upon the biological body. Naturalistic approaches to the body have produced a highly polemicized field of work, particularly revolving around the sociology of gender and the basis for women's inequality (and social stratification in general). Some of the earliest and most controversial work in this vein emanated out of sociobiology in the 1970s, particularly the work of Harvard sociobiologist Edward O. Wilson, who received praise and publicity for his work on genetic evolution and social behavior.

According to Wilson (1975, 1978), human behavior is explained by and encoded within the gene. Wilson attempted (many argue unsuccessfully) to link genetic structures in animals to those in humans to establish a biological basis for human behavior. For example, in *Sociobiology: The New Synthesis* (1975), Wilson deduces that slavery is

part of the natural evolutionary order because there is a species of "slavemaking" ants that use "propaganda substances" and "engineering rules."[38] He conveniently ignores the reality that slavery is fundamentally an economic relationship. Wilson (1978) also professes that homosexuality is genetic (because it is common among animal species) and that racial differences have a biological basis. The insupportable but extraordinarily recalcitrant search for the "race" gene or the "gay" gene persists to this day. Of course, one of the major problems with Wilson's biological reductionist argument is the notion that evolution is synonymous with improvement and progression. His theories begin from within mainstream contemporary American society—racist, homophobic, patriarchal, ethnocentric—and serve to justify and maintain the status quo (social inequality).

Sociobiology developed simultaneously with the rise of the women's movement, particularly radical feminism. Not surprisingly, Wilson maintains that women's social subordination was natural because "women as a group were less assertive and physically aggressive" due to their genetic makeup.[39] Sociobiology quickly became a useful way to undermine the increase in feminist discourse and the call for gender inequality in both lay and academic communities. Nonetheless, other social theorists have attributed female inequality to biology, as in the case of Parson's AGIL system (1964), which posits women (expressive role) as different than men (instrumental role) due to their child-bearing capacity. For Parsons, woman is an inherently natural creature (best suited for reproductive work), while man, the more cultured being, belongs in the public sphere (the world of production). He further maintains that female discrimination in the workplace is functional to society because occupational equality was "incompatible with any positive solidarity in the family."[40] For Wilson and Parsons the "woman question" is conveniently answered in one word—biology.

Like functional and neo–social Darwinist theories, some early feminist theory also prioritized corporeal analyses in explanations of patriarchy and women's position in society (see Rich [1976] and Chodorow [1978] for two distinctive approaches that consider reproduction and reproductive work, i.e., mothering). Radical feminist Shulamith Firestone's *Dialectic of Sex* (1970) serves as a prime example of feminist biological reductionism. While Firestone recognizes that social institutions assist in maintaining patriarchy, ultimately the foundations of male dominance reside in women's reproductive capabilities. Both functionalist and feminist arguments that emphasize biology are highly problematic as the social construction of gender is typically neglected or absent altogether.

A notable and useful work on body and biology within the sex/gender debate is Thomas Laqueur's *Making Sex* (1990), a historical account of the medical, political, and cultural construction of sex from ancient Greece to the Enlightenment. Unlike the above arguments that place gender differences as a result of biology (sex), Laqueur traces the way medical knowledge and common understandings of sex and sexuality were based on cultural discourse rather than biology. To simplify, he illustrates how our biology was, and continues to be, culturally determined. According to Laqueur, the corporeal body (visible flesh and blood) cannot be regarded as the "real" foundation for cultural claims about sex and gender. This assertion is evidenced in

the rather extraordinary one-sex model of the body that held sway as a biological given until the end of the seventeenth century. Galen's "mole model or unborn penis model" stated the "obvious," that women had an unborn penis inside their bodies, thus proving biologically women's lesser perfection. His work reminds us that our duty as social scientists and historians is to understand how the "real" (biology) is only an expression of other, more pervasive, culturally constructed truths.

While Laqueur elucidates the way past scientific truths are infused with cultural assumptions, others have explored the way *current* scientific ideas regarding biology are culturally constructed and exist in a historical continuum. Sociologist Barbara Duden's *Disembodying Women* (1993) examines the historical process in which pregnancy has been transformed from a personal experience—between woman and child/fetus—to an impersonal and even public concern via technological advancements in medicine and shifts in discourses. Ethical and religious arguments surrounding the abortion debate, and more recently governmental policy that protects a "life" or prolife such as a stem cell, are evidence that women have been erased (or temporarily negated) from the experience of pregnancy (Rothman, this volume).

Within feminism, there is a long history of examining women's social location in stratified societies through examining their bodies. Early 1970s feminist theorists such as Gayle Rubin, Shulamith Firestone, and Adrienne Rich prioritized the corporeal in their explanations of patriarchy and the subjugation of women, seen as accomplished specifically through reproduction and reproductive work. Beginning with reproduction, and then subsequently through the menstrual cycle and menopause, feminists have insisted that bodies matter in all aspects of social analysis. Embodied dynamics of gender, race, class, and ability imbue the questions of who is encouraged to procreate and who is prevented, and what types of human bodies should be born. Of course, feminist work is also not solely relegated to examining female bodies. One of the paradoxical effects of male domination is that even though most men have dominance over most women, men are not a monolithic group. The ranking of culturally desirable male bodies, based on form and function, often mirrors their social standing.[41]

The self-help women's-health movement especially challenged predominant biomedical ways of constructing bodies.[42] As both consumers and scholars, many women rebelled against the hegemonic medical establishment's strategies of medicalization and mystification of female bodily functions. These challenges to "thinking as usual" within medical settings encouraged many women to wage feminist critiques against the standardization of male bodies as the model for individualism and better health. During the 1970s, *Our Bodies, Ourselves* and *A New View of a Women's Body* emerged as owners' manuals to women's bodies. As Moira Gatens (1996) argues, women are often forced to "elide" or suppress their own "corporeal specificity" to participate in liberal democracies.

Psychoanalyst and literary critic Julia Kristeva (1982) theorized an abject embodiment, referring to the point at which physical boundaries erode and the self must deal with a body that leaks unsightly fluids like blood and puss, betraying social norms and biological givens in the process. More recently, feminist postmodern theorists such as

Judith Butler (1990, 1993), Elizabeth Grosz (1994, 1995), and Donna Haraway (1991) have challenged binary sex/gender distinctions, championed queerness, and proposed a cyborg body that transcends materiality. While this feminist scholarship does not emanate from within the discipline of sociology, a critical sociology of the body acknowledges, draws from, and may seek to expand upon this ground-breaking work. Therefore any serious social and cultural scholarship on the "body" must consider the interdisciplinary contributions of certain feminists. Feminism thrust the body into focus, calling attention to its simultaneously political, biological, and cultural dimensions.

Anthropology, Phenomenology, and Cartesian Dualism

Since its beginning, the field of anthropology has generally been more observant of the body as compared with classical sociological traditions. This may in part be attributed to the anthropological focus on material culture as an object of study in its own right, as well as the employment of qualitative methods and methodology. Ethnographic fieldwork by nature presumes a degree of bodily engagement on two basic levels, primarily through the obvious interaction of a researcher and those she is studying (an exchange of and between bodies) but also in the sense that a researcher's body can be understood as a medium of data collection itself. Interactive ethnographic engagement, or what is referred to as "participant-observation," requires engagement of all of the senses. For example, listening carefully to the sounds of a particular instrument used in a ritual or discerning a difference between local dialects is by definition *embodied* fieldwork. To hear, taste, smell, and feel the tactile, material world is to experience and participate in the creating of culture. As anthropologist Thomas Csordas argues, "embodied experience is the starting point for analyzing human participation in a cultural world."[43]

Issues of embodiment have long been the staple of examining aspects of culture such as the social management of human waste, religious rituals, birth, death, nutrition, sex, and illness. Anthropologist Marcel Mauss (1935) was one of the first social scientists to stress that ordinary bodily actions—walking, running, throwing, eating—are not simply mechanical and universal in nature and should be assiduously studied and observed as "body techniques" or cultured acts that are performed by a bio-physical actor. He called attention to the fact that bodily dispositions and performances vary across both societies and generations. For Mauss, the "art of using the human body" is reflected by cultural context, even in a physical activity as mundane as swimming or chewing.

While Mauss argued that bodily techniques were culturally defined, anthropologist Mary Douglas (1970) focused on the way actions and activities deemed to be "natural" are reflections of two bodies, a bio-individual body and the social body. She asserts that the way people choose to modify their bodies can tell us about their social status and also their regard for social boundaries and control. In *Purity and Danger* (1966), Douglas directly links the body and society together in a discussion of the human propensity to maintain bodily boundaries in times of crisis and threat. Douglas

argues that "we cannot possibly interpret rituals concerning (the body) . . . unless we are prepared to see the body as a symbol of society, and to see the powers and dangers credited to social structure reproduced in small on the human body."[44] In other words, the body is an obvious and readily available sign of the social system. Douglas conceptualizes the body as "a complex structure," a metaphor for society as a whole. Viewing the body as social metaphor is reminiscent of anthropologist Clifford Geertz's (1973) analysis of the Balinese cockfight as a ritual that orders, reinforces, and gives meaning to both individual social relationships and society at large. Just as the cockfight says something about society, Douglas maintains that so too does the body.

Anthropological approaches have clearly influenced the way contemporary theorists from across disciplines envision what the body is in the most abstract sense. More recent scholarship in the subfield of medical anthropology in particular has further uncovered the complex relationship between the material and the social body, moving beyond simplistic dualisms. Notably, in "The Mindful Body," anthropologists Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Margaret Lock assert that the body is "simultaneously a physical and symbolic artifact that is both naturally and culturally produced, and is securely anchored in a particular historical moment."[45] They critique the field of anthropology and the Western tradition of favoring Cartesian dualism. Based on the philosophical writings of Rene Descartes (1596–1650), Cartesian dualism refers to the radical distinction made between the mind and the body in social and philosophical inquiry. In particular, proponents of this perspective have tended to privilege and highlight mental processes, the self, and the soul as being paramount to human existence. The physical body is in effect conceptually dislodged from the mind, as if the self or the soul could exist on its own—hence this advanced the idea that the mind and body are distinct entities that should be examined as such. This binary perspective of viewing the body and mind as separate has been challenged in academia, and in the field of medicine as well (Frank, this volume). For example, it is common within the mainstream medical community to speak of curing the whole person, referring to the patient's attitude or outlook as being connected to recovery and wellness.

Medical anthropologist Emily Martin moves beyond the pitfalls of both nature/culture and mind/body dualisms in her empirically based studies of the body. Her ground-breaking *The Woman in the Body* (1987) tracks the history of menstruation, menopause, and birth (from ancient Greece to late modernity), focusing on the way expert and everyday epistemological shifts correspond with dominant forms of societal organization—from medical institutions to globalization. Martin continues these ideas in *Flexible Bodies* (1994) by examining how contemporary bodies have become increasingly medicalized. Specifically, Martin traces the way the emergence of the immune system, its "discovery" by medical experts, and its subsequent ubiquity in popular media (fueled by the AIDS epidemic) signaled a focus upon the interior of the body. She argues that an epistemological shift from the exterior to the interior of the body ultimately empowers science and medical institutions as we have less ability to control what we cannot see. She adeptly captures lived embodied experiences and links them to changes in society, from the way we approach relationships and our jobs to the way we handle illness. Martin's creative and sophisticated approach

untangles the biological, the cultural, and the subjective elements of embodiment. The inclusion of subjective embodied experience or, simply, the way people themselves understand their bodies from the inside out, enables us to see the body from beyond the rubrics of nature/culture or mind/body.

French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1962) has been particularly influential in challenging the dualistic legacy of Cartesian thought. His phenomenological analysis of perception—how we become aware of the sensory world around us—rejects the subject-object division between mind and body and the notion that the mind is the locus of subjectivity. Merleau-Ponty asserts that perception is inherently carnal and stems from an openness to the world. In other words, when our mind perceives (observes, identifies), it does so through a practical and sensual embodied location within the social realm. A practical understanding of the body accounts for a fuller understanding of the way culture, customs, norms, and routines materialize through lived experience.

Mérleau-Ponty's phenomenological body is helpful in understanding the difference between studying the body as an object and the idea of *embodiment*, which refers to a perceptive way of knowing and experiencing the world through our own bodies. As embodied individuals, we all hold incarnate knowledge (Pine, this volume). For example, a professional guitar player may understand music theory, but through years of practice, her hands and fingers physically know how to achieve a particular sound by moving in a precise way. Even mundane activities such as text messaging or driving a car involve the collection of incarnate knowledge. Once we learn to text or drive *through our bodies*, we are able to "do it without thinking." This is because our body literally understands what to do. Incarnate knowledge moves beyond speaking *of* the physicality of bodies, instead speaking from *within* a body that is somatically perceptive.

NOTES

1. Frank, *The Wounded Storyteller*, p. 27.
2. Williams and Bendelow, *The Lived Body*, p. 3.
3. See Witz, "Whose Body Matters?"
4. Turner, *The Body and Society* and "The Possibility of Primitiveness."
5. See Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women;* and Hayles, *How We Became Posthuman.*
6. See Nowak and Rauh, "The Influence of the Avatar on Online Perceptions."
7. Russell, *Beyond Ramps*, p. 15.
8. See, for example, Garland-Thomson, *Extraordinary Bodies*; Davis, *The Disability Studies Reader*; and McRuer, *Crip Theory.*
9. Pitts-Taylor, *Surgery Junkies.*
10. See, for example, Kessler, "The Medical Construction of Gender"; and Moore and Clarke, "Clitorial Conventions and Transgressions."
11. See, for example, Tuana, "Coming to Understand"; and Loe, *The Rise of Viagra.*
12. See, for example, Cohen, "The Other Kidney"; Scheper-Hughes, "Commodity Fetishism in Organ Trafficking"; and Tober, "Kidneys and Controversies in the Islamic Republic of Iran."
13. Ehrenreich and Hochschild, eds., *Global Woman.*
14. Willis, *Learning to Labour.*

15. Wacquant, *Body and Soul.*
16. Wolff, *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, p. 339.
17. Tucker, *The Marx-Engels Reader*, p. 479.
18. Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, p. 158.
19. Gerth and Mills, *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, p. 343.
20. Gerth and Mills, p. 344.
21. Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, p. 267.
22. Mead, *Mind, Self, and Society*, p. 178.
23. Bourdieu, *Distinction*, p. 193.
24. Bourdieu, p. 190.
25. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, p. 25.
26. Foucault, p. 16.
27. Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, p. 103.
28. Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, p. 56.
29. Goffman, *Asylums*, pp. 20–21.
30. Goffman, *Stigma*, p. 4.
31. Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, p. 87.
32. Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity*, p. 99.
33. Giddens, p. 77.
34. Frank, "For a Sociology of the Body," p. 36.
35. Featherstone, *Consumer Culture and Postmodernism*, p. 171.
36. Featherstone, p. 182.
37. See, for example, Kleese, "Modern Primitivism."
38. Wilson, *Sociobiology: The New Synthesis*, p. 370.
39. Wilson, p. 128.
40. Parsons, *Essays in Sociological Theory*, p. 852.
41. See, for example, Kimmel, *Manhood in America*; and Klein, *Little Big Men.*
42. See, for example, Ruzek, *The Women's Health Movement*; and Lewin and Olesen, *Women, Health, and Healing.*
43. Csordas, "Somatic Modes of Attention," p. 135.
44. Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, p. 116.
45. Scheper-Hughes and Lock, "The Mindful Body," p. 6.

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Part I

Vulnerable Bodies

Introduction to Part I

One of the supreme ironies about human bodies is that they are simultaneously powerful forces to be reckoned with, while at the same time fragile things that require constant care, maintenance, and regulation. Take, for example, the experience of athletic achievement, no matter one's ability or skill: the miraculous feeling of catching a ball with one's fingertips, the exhilaration of speeding through wind as tears stream down one's face, or the joy of propelling oneself through water. These are awesome exercises in corporeality. And so is the snap, pop, crack, or stitch that emerges and prevents our forward momentum, releasing the "oh, no" gasp all too familiar. We move from feeling infinite to being hobbled so quickly—ah, the fall from grace.

This first section of this book, "Vulnerable Bodies," attempts to straddle that space of ironic play between power and fragility. To be vulnerable is to be susceptible to attack, persuasion, or temptation. Lurking dangers expose the skin, lungs, stomach, and intestines to germs and toxins, and human and nonhuman predators threaten the once strong and hearty body. Some of us, particularly those who are younger than twenty-five, may have the sense that the intact body (a dubious claim with temporal limitations) is invulnerable. Many more of us believe or hope that this invulnerability can be achieved through consumption of certain products or through the performance of certain rituals. Medical, health, and fitness experts train us to build up our muscle mass, decrease our body mass index (BMI), lower our cholesterol, take vitamins and supplements, or seek homeopathic or allopathic treatments. We can hold off the signs of aging with wrinkle cream, we can enhance our immune system with boosters, and we can achieve peak physical performance with the aid of elixirs.

As citizens of larger social bodies (the communities and institutions our bodies populate), we are responsible for keeping our bodies functioning in the pursuit of national goals and economic agendas. One of the primary ways contemporary Western bodies are kept functioning and healthy, able to stave off vulnerability, is through processes of medicalization. Medicalization is the encroachment of medical institutions that define social life and social problems. Biomedical interpretations and meanings of social phenomena are then deemed the most legitimate, dominant, and powerful, and therefore garner the most social resources. Defining and explaining alcoholism, baldness, impotence, restless leg syndrome, hyperactivity, homosexuality, and obesity