

# Contents

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<i>Acknowledgements</i>	x
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>PART I CULTURAL BODIES</b>	
<b>1 The Body in Culture: Before the Body Project</b>	<b>9</b>
Introduction	9
Before the body project	13
The body as symbol	18
Non-verbal communication	25
<b>2 The Body in Culture: The Body Project</b>	<b>34</b>
Introduction	34
Bodies of difference	34
Bodies of discourse	39
Technologies of power	44
‘Get undressed – but be slim, good-looking and tanned!’	51
Transcending the body/mind dualism?	58
<b>3 Ethnography Dances Back</b>	<b>64</b>
Introduction	64
Varieties of ethnography	64
Postmodernism and feminism: ‘the awkward relation’	67
The researcher as object	75
Dance ethnography as a situated reflexive bodily practice	77

## PART II DANCE, THE BODY AND CULTURAL THEORY

<b>4</b>	<b>The Body in Dance</b>	<b>91</b>
	Introduction	91
	'The sensible and the intelligible'	93
	The celebration of the visual in ballet	95
	The sense of touch in contact improvisation	102
	Bodily sensing in ballet and contact improvisation	108
	Technical shifts and aesthetic transformations	110
	<i>Water Study</i> – then and now	113
<b>5</b>	<b>Reconstructing the Dance: In Search of Authenticity?</b>	<b>121</b>
	Introduction	121
	The real thing?	122
	Reconstruction in context	123
	Varieties of musical authenticity	125
	Dance <i>as it was</i>	129
	Dance <i>as it is</i> /dance <i>as it was</i>	134
	Dance <i>as it is</i>	139
	'Performance museums' and lived traditions	142
<b>6</b>	<b>Dance and Difference: Performing/Representing/Rewriting the Body</b>	<b>146</b>
	Introduction	146
	Exoticism, eroticism and auto-eroticism	146
	Representations of women in western theatrical dance	158
	Dance and body politics	165
	Dancing bodies/subjects-in-process	167
	Dance as a metaphor for 'writing the body'	173
<b>7</b>	<b>Dancing the Night Away: Rave/Club Culture</b>	<b>177</b>
	Introduction	177

The 1950s dance hall experience and the 1990s club experience compared	180
From acid house to rave culture	184
Dance culture, youth culture and subculture	193
From subcultures to club cultures	204
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>213</b>
<i>Notes</i>	217
<i>References</i>	229
<i>Name Index</i>	255
<i>Subject index</i>	260

Part I

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*Cultural Bodies*

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# *Chapter 1*

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## The Body in Culture: Before the Body Project

### **Introduction**

I shall begin this initial discussion of developments in approaches to the study of the body in contemporary western culture with an anecdotal account which I hope will point to recent shifts in discourses of, and around, the body.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, I gave a series of lectures on the sociology of the body for an MA programme in the Sociology Department at Goldsmiths. These lectures developed and grew over time with the inclusion of new material. Although the interest in culture in sociological discourse, which became known as the 'cultural turn' in sociology, was gathering force by this time, the inclusion of the body in course programmes was still relatively new. One of the most disconcerting features of giving these sessions was the regularity with which this talk about the body in society seemed to provoke strong responses and unusual bodily behaviour in some of the students. That is, unusual bodily behaviour for what, in the context of other lecture courses, was an orderly lecture format with groups of mature and interested students. On one memorable occasion, when I was in full flow, a student seated behind a desk in the left-hand corner in the front row stood up suddenly and, without saying a word, stomped straight across the room passing directly in front of me, and exited stage right out the door. To all intents and purposes he did not appear to be going for a natural break. He returned some time later, retracing his pathway across the room in front of me to his desk, as if I were simply not there. Meanwhile, another student was questioning, in what I could only perceive to be a verbally accusative manner, what he considered to be the impossibility of the body being a 'natural' symbol. Yet another student, who was seated towards the back right-hand corner of the room (the top right-hand diagonal is a powerful position on the stage), rose

to his feet to point out the futility of studying the body in society in the first place, with extended forearm and finger pointing in rhythm with his speech. This student, I seem to remember, also walked out of the lecture and came back in again. These kinds of responses, which were uncommon in the context of the more traditional aspects of sociology I routinely lectured on, appeared to be the norm in the annual sessions on the body in society and culture.<sup>1</sup>

There are some unspoken but generally acknowledged ground rules of acceptable behaviour associated with giving or attending a formal academic lecture, just as there are cultural conventions for 'proper' audience behaviour, although these may vary according to cultural context. The traditional 'lecture' generally takes place in an ordered, bounded public space in which the teacher or lecturer routinely speaks from the front of the room, with the students in front of him or her, sitting in tiers or behind rows of desks, listening and making notes. In terms of interpersonal spatial arrangements, the lecturer is the one who moves, sometimes more or less, while the students remain relatively still in their place. Generally speaking, the hierarchical relationship works in such a way that students can interrupt the proceedings to comment or ask questions if they are invited to do so by the lecturer. To some extent, this is because the unspoken lecturer/student relation in the standard lecture setting is founded on the notion of a one-way communication process from the individual lecturer to the assembled student body, although occasional low-level whispers between neighbouring students are commonplace and acceptable. Any teacher who has tried to break out of the formal lecture mould and encouraged students to communicate publicly across the invisible spatial divide that exists between teacher and students in this setting will understand how difficult this usually is to achieve. The student who speaks out publicly, almost, as it were, separates him/herself from the group. As likely as not, he or she becomes the object of the gaze for the lecturer and the other students who turn their bodies towards the speaker and this, I suggest, contributes to the difficulty of speaking out. Moreover, it is often the case that other students do not like it when a student does engage the lecturer because it interrupts the communication flow from the teacher to the rest of the student body.<sup>2</sup>

What is interesting about the lectures on the body discussed above is that the unspoken rules for appropriate behaviour in the lecture space were disrupted, and were made visible and unstable by the intrusion of bodies and voices into, and across, spaces that are generally treated as 'sacred'. As these bodily behaviours disordered the sacred spaces, the

rule-bound character of the spaces was revealed. It was not only the rules that were made visible; the individual bodies were also thrust into visibility in an environment in which they are usually in a collective frame.

In certain respects, these bodily interruptions reminded me of going to see performances of Merce Cunningham's dance company in the late 1960s when they first began to perform in London on a regular basis. It almost became 'business as usual' for certain members of the audience to stomp out of the auditorium mid-performance, outraged by what they considered to be Cunningham's avant-garde 'not dance' style of choreography to the accompaniment of John Cage's 'not music' compositions. Cunningham was committed to pushing the boundaries of dance art as far as he could and no doubt expected these outbursts of audience indignation.

I, as lecturer/performer, was getting near to the point where I dreaded giving these lectures on the body because of the effect they seemed to have on the students, and on the interaction with the body-subject who was standing out in front doing most of the talking. Over the years, as audiences became more familiar with the Cunningham/Cage aesthetic, and the work gained in status, fewer and fewer people walked out of the auditorium during a Cunningham performance. Similarly, a few years down the line, this 'body work' lecture block came to be received with much more ease and engagement by subsequent generations of students.

Although the body had been a marginal topic in mainstream academic discourse, it turned into a veritable industry in the 1990s. In effect, it became a 'body project' (Shilling, 1993) generating conferences, numerous book publications and articles with the body in the title, and even an academic journal devoted to exploring the relations between the body and society. From being previously resistant to this kind of work, sociology students now came to sign up in droves for courses with the body and/or culture in the title. Even my courses or sessions on the Sociology of Dance began to lose the totally feminised appeal that such course content had held for several years, and increasingly began to attract interested male students. My anecdotal evidence reflects recent shifts in the fortunes of the study of the body within social and cultural studies which, it has been argued, have resulted from the influences of feminism, postmodernism, the concern with health (prompted by HIV and AIDS), the environment and consumerism in late modernity.

In this chapter and the one that follows, I hope to build up a picture of certain key concerns that have predominated in social and cultural

approaches to the body. It is not my intention to provide a comprehensive overview of developments in the study of the body. There are a number of recent texts that offer sustained accounts and critiques of the developments and debates on the body in different areas of the social sciences and humanities (see, for example, Turner, 1984, 1992; Ussher, 1989; Featherstone *et al.*, 1991; Shilling, 1993; Csordas, 1994a; Seymour, 1998; Williams and Bendelow, 1998; Burkitt, 1999; Weiss and Haber, 1999). Chapters 1 and 2 will lay the groundwork for certain recurrent themes within the social sciences and humanities that will be taken up and explored in relation to dance, as a topic and resource of cultural inquiry, in the succeeding case study chapters. In western theatre dance and social dance forms, the moving body is the primary mode of expression and representation. Theories of the body, as I will show in the dance case study chapters, have also become important in the field of dance studies in recent years, particularly in regard to gender representations and difference. A number of dance scholars have also become concerned to show how an attention to dance and dancing can contribute to social and cultural analysis of the body, as well as criticisms of the ways in which the body has been conceptualised in social and cultural studies. As will become clear in Part II, the activity of dance or dancing has not held a major interest for social and cultural critics, which is surprising, given the growth of academic interest in the body and culture. In order to begin to understand this neglect and in part remedy it, it is first necessary to contextualise recent approaches to the study of the body in terms of a 'pre-history' of the body in the traditions of sociology and anthropology.

This chapter continues by focusing on considerations of the body in the social sciences prior to the turn to culture and the body in these areas. The aim is to show how these contributed to the subsequent dominance of social constructionist approaches in contemporary social and cultural studies. The term 'social constructionism', as Chris Shilling has noted, 'is an umbrella term to denote those views which suggest that the body is somehow shaped, constrained and even invented by society' (1993, p. 72). The body, for social constructionists, to a greater or lesser degree, is a social entity. As such, they argue that analysing the body as a biological or natural phenomenon cannot generate adequate explanations. Naturalistic approaches view the body as a pre-social, biological entity. Observable differences between individuals, groups and cultures, from the perspective of naturalism, are biologically determined and not socially constructed. In naturalistic approaches, the body is the foundation upon which the social is built.

Social constructionist approaches privilege the symbolic, textual or discursive aspects of the body over and above, and often to the exclusion of, foundational, physical and experiential elements, which are also available in the history of the body. In so doing, as I hope to show, social constructionist approaches have helped to sustain the dualisms inherent in the western humanist tradition of thought. Although this is largely a 'historical' discussion, contemporary developments are also brought into the frame, where relevant.

### **Before the body project**

Although the body as topic and resource for social and cultural analyses has blossomed in the years leading up to the new millennium, it would be a mistake to think that hitherto it had been entirely absent in all areas of the social sciences. It can be argued that the subject of the body as a topic of inquiry *in its own right*, until quite recently, had been largely ignored by sociology, although, as Shilling (1993) has argued, it can be seen to be lurking underneath the surface of the discourses. Having said this, sociology has paid scant attention to the singularly most apparent fact of human life, which is that human beings *have* bodies that are both physically delimiting and enabling and that, to a certain extent, they *are* bodies (Turner, 1984). It is, after all, through our bodies that we feel, see, smell, touch, think, speak and experience the world. In part, the failure of sociology to address the body directly is a result of its overriding concern to separate and privilege the social over the natural world and the individual. The founders of sociology in the late nineteenth century sought to demarcate the domain of sociology from other more established social and natural sciences, in order to establish sociology as a scientific discipline in its own right. At the heart of the classical tradition of sociology there lies a rigid separation of the social from the biological and psychological, with the former assuming prime importance. The domination of social aspects over physical and psychological elements in the classical tradition, for the most part, has formed the basis of modern sociology (see Thomas, 1998a, pp. 110–12). In so doing, it has reinforced the culture/nature, mind/body dualisms inherent in the liberal humanist tradition of thought. As Paul Hirst and Penny Woolley have noted:

Sociologists have, on the whole, energetically denied the importance of genetic, physical and individual psychological factors in human social life. In so doing they have reinforced and theorized a traditional cultural opposition between nature and culture. Social relations can even be seen as a *denial* of nature. (1982, p. 22)

As Bryan Turner (1991) has indicated, there are other related reasons why classical European sociology did not give rise to a coherent sociology of the body. Classical theorists like Max Weber, Émile Durkheim, Georg Simmel and Ferdinand Tönnies were concerned to define and understand the character of industrial urban societies rather than the differences between human beings in terms of social evolution. Their concern was centred on the 'problem of social order'. That is, they wanted to know how it was possible for societies to survive and maintain a degree of social order in the face of the rapidly changing economic and political structures, in what was often viewed as an increasingly alien social environment. Classical sociology was also concerned to understand the character of industrial capitalism and the kind of social action that it was founded upon. The construct of social action that resulted from this modern social formation, particularly from the point of view of German sociology, as Turner (1991) argues, was one instrumental reason. That is, social action came to be viewed in terms of the most efficient means to achieve a given end. This model of rational action, in effect, became the yardstick for measuring all other forms of action. The question of the ontological status of the social actors, according to Turner, was overshadowed by this rational means–ends model, which served to formulate the key notions of the social actor: agency, choice and goals.

Further, Turner argues, the key thinkers in the classical tradition were concerned to map the historical development of the shift from feudalism to capitalism, and to understand the causes and effects of changing social structures. Consequently, the central problematic of what is nature, which, as we shall see, helped to mould anthropology, remained quiet, although implicated, in sociology. Simon Williams and Gillian Bendelow (1998, p. 23), whilst agreeing to some extent with Turner, have recently argued that the body is recoverable through a careful 'critical re-reading' of the sociological classics in 'corporeal terms', in light of the insights generated through the turn to the body in late modernity. Thus, for example, in Weber's (1976 [1904–5]) analysis of the pivotal role of the Protestant ethic in the development of modern capitalism, through Puritanism's emphasis on hard work for its own sake and the denial of all things of the flesh, the ascetic body is already and always implicated. In a poignant discussion towards the end of his text, Weber warns us that the ghost of the Protestant ethic that haunts modern capitalism, rationalisation, is in danger of penetrating into every corner of everyday life, with a resultant dehumanising effect. 'The Puritans', he tells us, 'wanted to work in a calling;

we are forced to do so' (p. 181).<sup>3</sup> The process of rationalisation, for Weber, entails 'a disenchantment of the world'.

Similarly, the construct of human (bodily) labour is central to Marx's philosophical anthropology, which he addressed in the 1844 *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* (1959). It is through the engagement of human labour that men (*sic*) differentiate themselves from nature and become social beings, transforming the natural world and themselves in the process. Moreover, capitalist societies, according to Marx, require continual production and reproduction of bodies in order to survive, which means that 'bodies become both the *means* and *object* of human labour' (Williams and Bendelow, 1998, p. 11). Having said this, Marx was overwhelmingly concerned with developing and demonstrating his historical materialist analysis of the capitalist mode of production with a view to projecting its demise, as opposed to focusing on the 'sensual emotional aspects of human beings' (1959, p. 12). Weber, too, was ultimately concerned with the social structure of modern capitalism and with generating a value-free sociology. His ruminations on the sorry ramifications of asceticism on modern capitalism are brought to an abrupt halt with the recognition that he is straying into 'the world of judgement and faith' (1976, p. 182), which, he declares, is of no interest to the task at hand. The real task is to trace the 'fact and direction' (p. 183) of the influence of Protestantism on modern capitalism. Thus, although there may be a history of the body in classical sociology waiting to be excavated, other factors, including the 'spectre of biologism' (Williams and Bendelow, 1998, p. 13) and the emphasis on instrumental action (Turner, 1991), as discussed above, were significant causes of the relative neglect of the body in sociology.

While classical sociology ultimately neglected to place the body at the centre of its agenda, it has been a focus of anthropological attention, to a greater or lesser extent, since the late nineteenth century (see Polhemus (1975) for a detailed discussion of the various phases of development in the anthropology of the body). A brief discussion of the reasons behind the emergence of the body as a site of investigation in the discourses of anthropology will shed further light on the dualistic character of sociology and the triumph of social constructionist approaches to the body in the social sciences. In turn, this will facilitate an understanding of recent challenges to sociology that were prompted by the rise of new developments within the academy and cultural changes in late modernity. These challenges subsequently opened up the pathway for the emergence of the body project.

In its early phase of development in the nineteenth century, anthropology directed its attention towards a consideration of the universal state of humanity. That is, it directed attention towards asking questions about the nature or essence (ontology) of man (*sic*). Philosophical anthropology, within the context of European colonialism and cultural imperialism, had to consider what human beings had in common (the universals) in relation to wide-ranging observable differences between cultures. Not surprisingly, as Turner (1991, p. 1) indicates, 'the ontological centrality of human embodiment emerged as a site of universality'. Because all human beings are and have bodies, certain requirements must be satisfied in order for the species to survive. 'The fact of human embodiment' led to a consideration of what were the minimum requisite social and cultural conditions for the maintenance and continuation of the species. Despite the wide-ranging observable differences between cultures, human beings at root were deemed to share certain common characteristics which made possible the survival of the species. The body, in part, as Turner suggests, provided one answer to the problematic question of social relativism and thus became a significant issue in the initial stages of anthropology.

Moreover, the body in pre-modern societies played a pivotal role in the rites of passage from one social status to another. Because the body constituted a more universal site for public symbolisation through ritual, it became a significant focus for the anthropological gaze. This is not to imply that the centrality of the body is only to be found in the societies of the 'other'. As Horace Miner's 1956 paper on 'Body Ritual among the Nacirema' ('American' spelt backwards) clearly showed, body rituals were central to the rapidly expanding consumer culture of the most dominant western market society in the postwar era. In this context, individuals conducted the many rituals enacted on the body on a daily basis in the privacy of the bathroom 'shrine', as opposed to public ceremonies. Further, in contemporary consumer culture, dress, demeanour and cosmetics are important markers of lifestyle and social class. Consequently, women are constantly being invited to transform themselves by doing something to their bodies. This notwithstanding, the public signification of the body as a marker of the individual's status, age, family, sex and tribal affiliation is more clearly symbolised in pre-modern societies, and anthropology in the nineteenth century started out by focusing on these sites.

The incorporation of evolutionary theory and, particularly, social Darwinism into anthropology also contributed to the interest in the body, although its influence in the development of the discipline was

largely of a negative kind. Charles Darwin's (1969) study of *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*, first published in 1872, argued that bodily expression is either innate or biologically determined and that it is cross-culturally universal. Responses to Darwin's thesis led to the development of a culture/nature debate within anthropology that centred on the issue of whether bodily expression is culturally relative or universal (Polhemus, 1975). The followers of social Darwinism, being interested in the natural, non-social aspects of behaviour, adopted the universalist position as a means of verifying their proposition. Cultural anthropologists, such as Kroeber (1952), Hall (1969), and La Barre (1978), being interested in the cultural aspects of human behaviour, have tended to adopt the cultural relativist position that bodily expressions varied from culture to culture.

This culture/nature debate developed into a second related debate, namely the learnt versus the innate character of bodily expression, or the nurture/nature dichotomy, with the cultural anthropologists again championing the nurture side of the argument (see Bateson and Mead, 1942; Hall, 1969; Efron, 1972; Birdwhistell, 1973). Neo-Darwinists (Eibl-Eibesfeldt, 1972; Ekman, 1977), unsurprisingly, rejected the nurture argument. On the basis of evidence drawn from comparative studies of animals and humans, they argued that there is a high degree of association and consistency across cultures between primary (natural) effects such as anger and fear and the facial gestures that express them. Accordingly, the neo-Darwinists argued, these facial expressions are natural and not subject to cultural learning.

The notion of the 'human animal' exemplified in the naturalistic approach to the body has had an impact on and, to a certain extent, has reinforced contemporary popular perceptions of the body as the biological basis upon which the individual and culture are built (see Fast, 1970; Morris, 1979). This view also finds expression in the recent development of sociobiology (see Hirst and Woolley, 1982, pp. 66–89). The dominance of the cultural strand in anthropology, in comparison with the marginal development of physical anthropology, however, has meant that the key theoretical trends in anthropology, like sociology, have addressed the cultural side of the nature/culture divide (Turner, 1991).

The American cultural anthropologists and ethnographers mentioned above were so busy doing battle with the students of animal behaviour that they failed to develop a more comprehensive theoretical approach to the study of the body (Polhemus, 1975). As the discussion in Chapter 2 will demonstrate, a significant exception to this is to be found in the work of Erving Goffman (1971, 1972, 1979). There was,

nevertheless, a small but consistent tradition, which developed out of the European Durkheimian school of thought and which sought to examine the relations between the body and society, in terms of 'body symbolism' (see Needham, 1973; Polhemus, 1975; Thomas, 1998a). Writers such as Robert Hertz in 1909, Marcel Mauss in 1934 and much later Mary Douglas in the 1960s and 1970s considered the 'social' aspects of body expression in order to illustrate the rules and the categories that are constituted through the 'social body', or society.

### **The body as symbol**

Durkheim, as suggested earlier, attempted to demonstrate the power of the 'social order' over institutions and individuals. Society, for Durkheim, constituted a reality in its own right. He sought to reveal how society shaped the individual in its own image by examining a range of social phenomena including the division of labour, suicide, and knowledge and beliefs. Durkheim did not specifically examine the relation of the body to society in any detail, except to indicate that it was located on the profane side of the sacred/profane religious dualism (Williams and Bendelow, 1998). Durkheim (1976 [1915]) argued that 'primitive' religious thought was characterised by the polar opposition between the sacred and the profane. The sacred embodied all that is good and pure while the profane represented all that is harmful to the sacred, the common and impure. Objects categorised under the sacred were elevated in the eyes of society, while those categorised under the profane were lowered and despised. The categories, rules and rituals surrounding the sacred and profane in primitive religions were established by consensus and maintained by coercion, according to Durkheim. That is, they were socially generated, not natural facts of existence. The sacred, in order to maintain its purity, had to be protected from outside forces and thus was surrounded by rituals to maintain its distinction and to ward off potential danger. The sacred/profane opposition affected the ways in which social groups treated the body. While the soul, for example, was viewed as sacred, the body was viewed as 'essentially profane' (see Williams and Bendelow, 1998, pp. 13–14). Durkheim, as indicated above, did not develop this in any depth. Rather, it was his views on the social construction of knowledge and beliefs, which he addressed in *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (1976 [1915]), which provided the impetus for this particular social constructionist tradition of the body. From the examination of aboriginal Australian and native American-Indian 'primitive' belief systems,

Durkheim argued that the basis of knowledge and belief in the cosmos in primitive systems of thought was constituted from within society itself as opposed to external social forces. Thus, primitive systems of belief and knowledge, for Durkheim, were socially constructed. Durkheim did not apply his findings to 'modern' industrial social systems because of his adherence to a dichotomous model of 'us' (modern)/ 'them' (primitive), and his belief in the objectivity of (modern) science (Douglas, 1975b). That is to say, he envisioned that modern societies were completely different from primitive societies. He also believed that while primitive systems of thought were socially determined, modern systems of thought were objective because they were based on science. Regardless, if these two beliefs are removed from the picture, the theoretical import of the analysis remains. This is particularly the case if the tables are turned round and contemporary western systems of thought and practices are examined in the same light as those of the traditionally perceived 'primitive others' (Douglas, 1975b), as Horace Miner (1956) demonstrated in his 'Nacirema' essay which was mentioned earlier. On first reading, the Nacirema tribe appear to be engaged in a strange set of ritual bodily practices that are far removed from 'modern' western market societies. On close inspection it turns out that the 'sacred shrine', where a myriad of body purification rituals take place, is nothing more than the bathroom, and the 'charm-box', in front of which the rituals are performed, is just the medicine cabinet. Miner's essay not only called into question the objectivity of anthropological accounts of societies of the 'other', it also begged the question as to whether the divide between 'us' and 'them' is as great as it is usually perceived (Douglas, 1975b). From this vantage point, forms of knowledge (traditional and modern) may be viewed as being generated from and organised within the social realm and enacted through a whole variety of everyday practices and experiences. That is, knowledge, 'ours' and 'theirs', and that includes bodily knowledge, is socially constructed.

Hertz, Mauss and latterly Douglas sought to apply Durkheim's ideas on the social construction of knowledge to the study of the body. In essence, they argued that the ways in which the body is viewed and treated in society reflect the rules and values inscribed in the social order. The characteristics of the 'natural' untamed body are given a symbolic loading by society, and societal members treat those, in turn, as natural or non-social. The human body in this approach is viewed as a microcosm of society, upon which order and symbolic values are imposed and in turn are rendered as 'natural' or non-social. This follows Durkheim's view of the individual as a microcosm of society.

So powerful is the social over the individual that the individual, without knowing it, is constrained to act in certain ways by the system's rules and categories. The body, in this view, is a symbol of society, which can be examined for the purposes of gaining a greater understanding of the social system in question. Hertz (1973 [1909]) turned his attention to the study of left/right body symbolism arguing that there was a tendency towards the primacy of the right hand in 'primitive' religious belief systems. The right hand was accorded a privileged status because it was categorised as sacred, while the left was despised because it was affiliated with the profane. This, in turn, generated much debate within the French school of anthropology as to whether the right hand was indeed revered and valued over the left throughout non-western cultures (see Needham, 1973).

Mauss (1973 [1934]), on the other hand, examined everyday 'techniques of the body' such as running, sleeping and walking, arguing that these so-called 'natural' bodily behaviours are learnt through formal and informal educational processes within a given culture. The concern with bodily techniques reemerged many years later in Pierre Bourdieu's ideas on bodily hexis and habitus, in Foucault's work on technologies of the body and in Goffman's analysis of everyday bodily behaviour in public places, which will be addressed more fully in the next chapter. Other researchers have used Mauss's work as a starting point for developing the sociology of emotions (Lyon, 1997), and for comparing and contrasting dialectical analysis in anthropology stemming from the neo-Kantian tradition of thought with the descriptive approach offered by Mauss (Hunter and Saunders, 1995).

Hertz and Mauss particularly stated that they were concerned to incorporate the 'natural' aspects of the body into their accounts. Hertz argued that biological considerations should be included in the study of the body in society. Mauss argued that the analysis of bodily techniques should involve physical and psychological elements as well as the social. Thus, they recognised the importance of including what Turner (1992) has termed a 'foundationalist' approach to the body, which takes account of the fact that we have, and to a certain extent are, bodies. Foundationalism, in Turner's sense, is linked to naturalism inasmuch as it recognises that the body is a biological organism. But foundationalism is more inclusive than most naturalist approaches because it also takes in the view that human beings experience the world through their bodies (Shilling, 1993). Naturalistic viewpoints generally do not factor in this idea of the 'lived experience' of the body into their accounts. In the last resort, Hertz's and Mauss's overwhelming adherence to the social

constructionism inscribed in the Durkheimian paradigm rendered redundant any significant exploration of the phenomenal (lived) body. As a consequence, they reinforced the culture/nature dichotomy discussed earlier in this chapter.

Douglas's work built on and extended the approach taken by Hertz and Mauss, in particular, by maintaining that the body is always treated as an image of society. The symbolism worked out on the human body, according to Douglas, is one of the most direct areas of human experiences:

The body is a model that can stand for any bounded system. Its boundaries can represent any boundaries that are threatened or precarious. The body is a complex structure. The function of its different parts and their relation afford a source of symbols for other complex structures. (Douglas, 1970, p. 138)

The 'powers' and 'dangers' that the social system generates, Douglas argues, are reproduced in the human body. The margins and boundaries of the social system, she maintains, are particularly vulnerable to attack from outside forces that could destabilise the society. Douglas (1970) examines cultural attitudes to bodily waste, such as nail parings, hair loss, faeces and so on. She argues that the social system's concern to maintain itself in its boundaries is reflected in the care taken to maintain the boundaries and margins of the body, through associated ritual cleanliness. We come to know our society through the rules and rituals surrounding the body and the prevailing societal attitudes towards it. Therefore, the sociologist or anthropologist can learn much about the society under consideration by paying close attention to the attitudes, perceptions and practices associated with the body. In this way, the body becomes a legitimate site for social investigation.

Turner (1992) has suggested that Douglas's work is more concerned with the symbolism of 'risk' than with the body symbolism as such. Thus, as Douglas demonstrates in *Purity and Danger* (1970), societies at risk or at times of crisis will symbolically shroud the boundaries of the body with rituals and sanctions to preserve it and to prevent unwanted foreign matter from polluting or defiling it. With individuals increasingly being exposed to danger through environmental hazards and technological developments generated by global systems, it is not so astonishing, as Shilling (1993) has commented, that the body has become a project for pressure groups and individuals living in contemporary 'risk societies' (Beck, 1992). Environmental scientists and consumer groups, for example, have expressed concerns over the possible

long-term dangers to bodily health, particularly to growing bodies, resulting from the increasing use of chemicals and pesticides in food growing and production.

In an attempt to get away from the culture/nature and the west/rest hierarchies in sociology and anthropology, Douglas (1973, 1975b) developed her analysis of the relation between 'two bodies' (the physical body and the social body). The central concern, here, is to provide a method for the analysis of ritual and body symbolism that would enable comparisons to be made between social groups who share the same social environment. She does this by adopting and modifying Basil Bernstein's (1971) influential (Durkheimian-inspired) theory of linguistic 'speech codes' and Mauss's concept of the body as an image of society. She proposes a modified structuralist approach and argues that there 'is a natural tendency' to represent situations of a certain kind 'in an appropriate bodily style' (1973, p. 97). She takes up the universalism inherent in the structuralist position by maintaining that the body is a 'natural symbol' because it is symbolised in all societies, to a greater or lesser extent. Her concern is not to delineate the features or common attitudes towards the body across cultures, as a structuralist approach such as that of Lévi-Strauss (1978) would advocate. Rather, attention is directed to analysing the ways in which particular cultures symbolise the body at a given moment in time. This is a consequence of her (Durkheimian) view that the 'social body constrains the way the physical body is perceived' (1973, p. 97). Douglas maintains that there is a reciprocal process of communication between the social body and the physical body and that the 'physical experience of the body' is 'always modified by the social categories through which it is known' (ibid., p. 64). She suggests that as the 'natural' expression of the body is culturally encoded and determined, so the 'social dimension' has to be treated seriously. This is an elaboration of the cultural relativist stance proposed in *Purity and Danger*, in which she argued that 'there is no such thing as absolute dirt', it is rather 'a matter of disorder', which 'exists in the eye of the beholder' (1970, p. 12).

Although Douglas begins from the proposition that there is a 'natural body', the focus of inquiry is overwhelmingly directed towards understanding the social formation that is mirrored in the ways in which the body is symbolised and perceived. As a result, according to Shilling (1993, p. 73), Douglas runs the risk of collapsing the ways in which individuals routinely experience, understand and perceive their bodies 'into the propositions and the categories made available by the social body'. That is, the phenomenal, experiencing body is in danger

of becoming a blank slate upon which society stamps its image. Shilling points out that although Douglas's work has been influential in the social constructionist approach to the body in anthropology, sociologists for the most part have drawn on other sources to develop their social constructionist approaches, which are founded on an anti-foundationalist stance towards the body (Turner, 1992). However, it should be noted that poststructuralist feminists, such as Julia Kristeva, Judith Butler and Elizabeth Grosz, have drawn on and/or have developed aspects of Douglas's work on the body. Her ideas on the dangers located in the boundaries and margins of a social system (Butler, 1990a), and her construct of bodily disorder and dirt (Kristeva, 1982; Grosz, 1994), formulated in *Purity and Danger* (1970), have been particularly important.

As the body project began to get under way in the 1980s, Douglas's 'two bodies model' multiplied to take account of different aspects of the body in relation to the world. Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Margaret Lock (1987), for example, proposed a 'three bodies' typology: the individual, social and political. The individual body refers to the lived subjective experience of the body, while the social body, much like Douglas's, refers to the ways in which the body is used in systems of representation as a symbol of nature, culture and society (Csordas, 1994b). The body politic, echoing Foucault, refers to the regulation and control of bodies. John O'Neill (1985) proposed a 'five bodies' model which added the world's body, consumer body and the medical body to the political and social bodies. O'Neill starts from the proposition that 'human embodiment functions to create the most fundamental bond between self and society' (1985, p. 23). The world's body, for O'Neill, relates to the human proclivity to anthropomorphise the cosmos, which means to give it a human shape, a tendency that he sees to be everywhere in retreat in the modern world. The social body, conceptualised in Durkheimian terms, centres on the 'interrelationship between our two bodies – the communicative and the physical' (p. 49). The body politic refers to the recurring ways in which the human body has constituted a 'symbolic expression' of the political community's 'beliefs concerning the sources, sustenance and potential threats to the orderly conduct of its members' (p. 67). The consumerist body refers to the creation and commodification of new bodily needs generated by a consumer-oriented culture in which the use of goods stand as markers of self-identity. The notion of medical bodies refers to the medicalisation of the body whereby, with the development of new technologies, more and more aspects of the body come under the scrutiny of the medical gaze.

It was Turner's 1984 study of *The Body and Society*, which examined the production of bodies in relation to changes in the system of production, that perhaps made a more significant impact on the development of the sociology of the body. Turner took as his starting point the Hobbesian problem of order, which focused on the issue of the regulation of bodies in society, as a means of generating a typology of 'bodily order' that operates from the level of society to the individual. In order to overcome some of the limitations of this approach, Turner proposed to rework Hobbes's classic problem of social order. Turner employs Foucault's (1984) distinction between 'the regulations of the population and the discipline of the body' to create his 'neo-Hobbesian' framework. He also draws on Featherstone's (1991a [1982]) distinction between 'the interior of the body as an environment and the exterior of the body' (Turner, 1984, p. 91), through which the individual presents him/herself to the outside world. Turner proposes that there are four related elements to the Hobbesian problem of order. At the population level, there is the problem of control of reproduction through time and 'regulation in space'. At the individual level, there is 'the restraint of desire as an interior body problem and the representation of bodies in social space', which relates to the outer 'surface of the body' (*ibid.*). Following the systems theorist Talcott Parsons (1951), Turner argues that all social systems have to 'solve these four sub-problems'. These distinctions are then used as tools for 'formulating a general theory of the body and for locating theories of the body' (Turner, 1984, p. 91). Turner's work, as suggested above, stands as an important landmark in the 'exhumation of the body' (Seymour, 1998, p. 8) in sociology. His unearthing of the role of the body in sociology in the sociological tradition was important to the subsequent development of the body project.

The body as a topic of social research was beginning to raise its head elsewhere in the late 1960s and early 1970s in connection with studies of non-verbal communication, and Douglas (1975a), in part, was responding to this, particularly in her essay 'Do Dogs Laugh?' Hall's (1955, 1969) proxemics (the study of interpersonal spatial relations and the use of public and private space within cultures) and Birdwhistell's (1953, 1973) kinesics (the study of everyday movement as a separate channel of communication within the context of culture) exemplified this emergent concern with non-verbal communication. This US-based work, which began to develop in the 1950s, involved multidisciplinary teams of researchers and in many ways grew out of the interest in communications theory at that time. Its primary aim was to develop a serious 'scientific' approach to the topic.

## Non-verbal communication

In a review of Birdwhistell's *Kinesics in Context*, which was first published in 1970, Laurie Taylor wrote:

Time is running out for those who make social capital out of their knowledge of body language. 'Your words are saying "no" but the tilt and angle of your eye says "yes"', type of thing is losing its novelty after all those popular magazine accounts and telly demonstrations. (1971, p. 467)

Birdwhistell's (1953, 1973) work on kinesics can be seen as a sustained attempt to lift the topic of 'body language' out of popular magazine and television accounts, with the psychological reductionism it had suffered from, and afford it a status worthy of systematic investigation from a behaviourist science framework. He developed a methodology and notational system for analysing everyday movement in micro-social contexts. Birdwhistell (1973) examined other notational systems, such as that developed by the choreographer and dance theorist Rudolf Laban, in the 1920s. Labanotation or kinetography Laban, as it is known,<sup>4</sup> continues to develop and has been used for many years to notate a range of dance styles and choreographic forms, as will be discussed in Chapters 4 and 5.<sup>5</sup> While Birdwhistell agreed that Labanotation was useful for notating movement in certain contexts, he decided not to adopt it for the study of kinesics because it was 'designed as a method for choreography' (1973, p. 257).

Most historical maps of the study of the body today pay scant attention to this developmental work that began in the early 1950s and continued through to the 1970s (see, for example, Birdwhistell, 1953; Hall, 1955; Schefflen, 1964). I suspect that this is partly because the dominant schemas that informed kinesics, American structural linguistics, communication theory and behaviourism were already coming under attack for their positivist biases through critical developments in European social thought in the late 1960s (see Bernstein, 1971; Walsh, 1972; Kristeva, 1978 [1969]). As a consequence, it ended up in the twilight zone. Nevertheless, this work generated discussion and research interest at the time, particularly in micro studies of social order and in social psychology (see, for example, Goffman, 1972; Laver and Hutcheson, 1972; Benthall and Polhemus, 1975; Argyle, 1975; Henley, 1977). Some dance researchers have also recognised the importance of this work in putting body movement onto the academic agenda (see Thomas, 1986; Daly, 1988).

The 'systems' approach that Birdwhistell proposed was developed in the USA by a multidisciplinary team of linguists, psychiatrists and

anthropologists. In this framework, body movement is treated as a 'learnt form of communication, which is patterned within a culture and which can be broken down to an ordered system of isolable elements' (Birdwhistell, 1973, p. xi). Communication within the systems framework is viewed as a multichannel process involving language, body motion and smell, through which interactants in any given situation continually contribute by sending messages. It is also through this multichannel process that they make sense of the situation at hand. This approach rejects the common-sense idea that language is the central message system or that it is the only channel of meaning. Neither does body movement simply duplicate what is being communicated through the linguistic channel. That is, there is not necessarily a goodness of fit between speech and gesture. Body movement does not always follow or punctuate speech patterns. Body motion, for Birdwhistell, is a separate channel of communication that stands in a structural relation to the other channels. He steers away from the thorny problem of using the term 'body language' to counter claims that kinesics is a form of 'pseudolinguistics', and to preserve the notion that body motion is a separate channel of communication (1973, p. xiii). At the same time, the work of American structural linguistics (the Sapir-Wharf-Bloomfield school), which had developed a highly technical and rigorous approach to the analysis of everyday speech, forms the basis of Birdwhistell's methodology. This school of linguistics was heavily criticised by a new generation of socio-linguists for concentrating on the minutiae of speech patterns and for failing to relate language to the structure of social relations (Bernstein, 1971; Poole, 1975). That is, this school failed to take into account the social context in which language is used and performed. Thus, although Birdwhistell stresses that body motion does not simply follow speech, he uses the techniques of descriptive structural linguistics as models on which to 'develop a methodology which would exhaustively analyse the communicative behaviour of the body' (1973, p. xiii).

Birdwhistell attempts to analyse the degree of structuration between the channels as they are observed and recorded within a given social context. Drawing on Goffman's (1959) insights into the 'neglected situation', Birdwhistell emphasises that analysis must be carried out in relation to the total social context in which it occurs. In this way, the analysis of the speech and the body movement should not be taken out of the context of the social interaction. The construct of social context that he employs, which is drawn from 'territoriality' studies in animal psychology (ethology), is entirely behavioural. The contexts of human

social relations are not viewed as qualitatively different from those of animals. This is because 'society' in Birdwhistell's kinesics, as formulated in the ethological studies he draws on, is theorised as an essential condition for the maturation and environmental adaptation of humans and animals. Hall's (1955, 1969) study of proxemics also draws heavily on ethological studies. In the final analysis, two technicist frameworks, ethology and American structural linguistics, inform Birdwhistell's kinesics. Ultimately, questions of cultural signification are subsumed under the demands of this 'objectivist' approach to socio-cultural occurrences.

Julia Kristeva's (1978 [1969]) critique of Birdwhistell's kinesics gave early warning of shifts in European social thought made possible through developments in semiotics, Marxism and psychoanalysis that would reverberate through the social sciences and the humanities on both sides of the Atlantic in a few short years. These developments, in turn, would contribute to the 'crises in representation' (Boyne and Rattansi, 1990) which befell the social sciences and the humanities in the late 1980s. In her essay, Kristeva (1978, p. 280) praises Birdwhistell's kinesic analysis as 'the first endeavour to study the gestural code as a system autonomous from speech, although approachable through it'. She considers it 'significant' that Birdwhistell sought to develop a 'scriptural' terminology as opposed to a 'vocal' terminology by using terms like 'kinesic markers' because they are not 'derivative of spoken language'. She argues that Birdwhistell's approach is so bound up with positivistic assumptions concerning communication, the message and the human subject embedded in western thought that ultimately it can not free itself from the domination of language. It remains locked into an ideology of exchange. Part of the problem is that Birdwhistell's kinesics is 'dominated' by the demands of positivist sociology. The major terms that Birdwhistell employs, such as 'subject', 'perception', 'human being' and the 'truth' of a message or communication, Kristeva argues, are being called into question by developments in linguistics, semiotics and psychoanalysis. Birdwhistell's approach is founded on 'a philosophy of communication' which is based on 'the intellectual domination of language' and a society based on exchange.

In order to escape the ideology of exchange, Kristeva suggests, it is necessary to move away from the 'philosophy of communication'. Kristeva's proposed remedy is to view gesturality as a 'semiotic text', which is 'in the process of production'; that is, as a 'signifying practice'. Taking gesturality seriously as a signifying practice, according to Kristeva, is a better way forward because it opens the possibility of not

being 'blocked by the closed structures of language', by focusing on the signifying processes of bodily action. As will become evident in Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6, dance scholars frequently bemoan the fact that despite the growth of interest in the study of 'the body' in academia in recent years, the moving dancing body has warranted little attention. Kristeva's theory of signifying practices, as will be shown in Chapter 6, was the starting point for Ann Daly's (1992, 1995) analysis of the 'feminist practice' of the early modern dancer Isadora Duncan.

International conferences such as the 1972 Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) programme, 'The Body as a Medium of Expression' (see Benthall and Polhemus, 1975), also sought to advance research in the study of the body, recognising that hitherto little serious work had been done in this field in comparison with the field of verbal language. Jonathan Benthall (1975, p. 7), with his feet set firmly in the social constructionist camp, suggested that the dominance of the study of verbal language to the 'neglect of the expressive resources of the body' is a consequence of the logocentricity of industrialism, the triumph of reason over experience and mind over body (see Thomas, 1995). Hence, there was a concern to move away from the term 'non-verbal' communication, which could be seen as a 'logocentric manoeuvre' (Benthall, 1975, p. 7), in favour of human bodily expression.

The 1975 annual Association of Social Anthropologists (ASA) conference on 'The Anthropology of the Body' (see Blacking, 1977, p. vi) sought to address the key debates in the 'use of the body as a nonverbal medium of expression' in different cultural contexts such as dance, gesture, posture and so on. The intention was to take the discussion further than the ICA conference, to 'break down the dichotomies between body and mind, emotion and reason, nonverbal and verbal' (ibid., p. vi) in the analysis of cultures. The human body was perceived to be 'the link between nature and culture in all human activities' (p. 5). Thus, there was an attempt to build on the insights offered by anthropologists such as Mauss and Douglas, but also to pay attention to foundational aspects of the human body within the context of culture. In so doing, the conference agenda foreshadowed more recent critiques of the predominance of anti-foundational or discursive approaches to the body over foundationalist or phenomenological approaches (see Turner, 1992; Csordas, 1993; Shilling, 1993; Seymour, 1998).

The foundationalist stance offered in the edited collection (Blacking, 1977) based on the ASA conference was in line with the neo-Darwinist views on non-verbal communication discussed above, which had been roundly criticised by Ted Polhemus (1975) for producing simplistic

positivistic accounts. In order to bring the phenomenal body back into the discussion of a sociology or anthropology of the body, it is not necessary to resort to the incorporation of reductionist biological models, which, as Turner (1992) points out, are rooted in nineteenth-century positivism. Turner, as indicated earlier, argues that sociological approaches to the body need to take into account the fact that humans not only have bodies, but also are bodies. Sociological approaches to the body rightly address the ways in which the body exists in the world; that is, how it is represented or symbolised by society. But this is only attending to one aspect of the body. It would also be legitimate to ask what it is like to be a body in the world. Turner (1992, p. 41) suggests that the insights offered by philosophical anthropology and phenomenology concerning the distinction in the German language between *Leib* and *Körper*, the subjective, lived 'experiential body' and the objective, instrumental 'institutionalised body', provide greater potential as a corrective to the oversubscription of anti-foundationalist approaches to the body. The 'double nature of human beings', according to Turner,

expresses the ambiguity of human embodiment as both personal and impersonal, objective and subjective, social and natural ... it precisely indicates the weakness of the Cartesian legacy in sociology, which has almost exclusively treated the human body as *Körper*, rather than both simultaneously *Körper* and *Leib*. In approaching the body as an objective and impersonal structure, sociology has by implication relegated the body to the environmental conditions of social action. (1992, pp. 41–2)

The phenomenology of Paul Schilder (1950 [1935]) and Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1962) has had an impact on recent developments in psychoanalytic approaches (see Weiss, 1999) and sociological approaches to the body (see Turner, 1984, 1992). In his study of body image, Schilder argued that *Körper* and *Leib* could not be separated, as there is a unity between the outer representational body and the subjective experiential body. Merleau-Ponty also rejected the Cartesian mind/body dualism and insisted that the body and the psyche are inextricably connected. For Merleau-Ponty (1962), human beings are embodied subjectivities and any analysis of the relation of the self to the world has to begin from the fundamental fact that we are embodied. The body is not simply a house for the mind, rather it is through our lived experience of our bodies that we perceive of, are informed by and interact with the world. Phenomenology has informed the work of several philosophers inquiring into the nature and aesthetics of western theatre dance (Langer, 1942, 1953; Sheets-Johnstone, 1979 [1967],

1984; Fraleigh, 1991). This work is situated within the tradition of philosophy of art. Although Merleau-Ponty's work was rooted in the realm of philosophical inquiry, it has been a source of inspiration in recent years for a number of writers attempting to overcome the dualistic approaches to the study of the body in society (see Turner, 1992; Crossley, 1994, 1995a, b, 1996a, b; Csordas, 1994b; Grosz, 1994; Jung, 1996). The import of phenomenology as a corrective to biological reductionism on the one hand, and to the neglect of the lived body in social constructionism on the other, will be taken up in the next chapter.

The point of the preceding discussion was to indicate that there was evidence of an emergent interest in the 'social aspects' of body in the 1960s and 1970s, prior to the explosion in the 1990s. I also wanted to show that certain themes, which are central to current debates, were beginning to be generated or implied earlier. Polhemus's (1978) reader, *Social Aspects of the Human Body*, is further evidence of this. Harold Garfinkel's 1967 ethnomethodological ethnographic study of Agnes, an 'intersexed' person, is an early example of 'passing' (Garfinkel, 1984). This study is also significant in regard to the key issues of the relation between perceptions of the inner/outer body, nature/culture, sex/gender and power/knowledge. These questions will be examined more fully in the following chapter and will be taken up further in connection with the body in dance and gender representations in dance, in Chapters 4 and 6.

Garfinkel's study of 'Passing and the Managed Achievement of Sex Status in an "Intersexed" Person' sets out to reveal how 'societies exercise close controls over the ways in which the sex composition of their own populations are constituted and changed' (1984 [1967], p. 116).

In 1958, Agnes was a white 19-year-old, who had been brought up as a boy, had developed secondary female characteristics at puberty and was now living and working successfully as a 'woman'. In order to pass for a woman, Agnes had to study and learn what a woman does in minute detail. Whereas 'natural women' ordinarily take their femaleness for granted as a fact of life, Agnes, having been brought up as a boy, had to consciously construct herself as a woman in order to pass for one. Mauss (1973) and Birdwhistell (1973) have argued that the learning of bodily techniques is particularly evident in gendered behaviour. While women do not routinely have to think about how to sit, move, stand and carry their bodies like a 'woman', Agnes did.

Agnes wanted to have, and subsequently did have, an operation to remove the male genitals from her body and create female genitals in

their place. She was referred to a doctor at the Neuropsychiatric Institute, University of California, where studies were being conducted on individuals who were classified as male or female at birth but who had subsequently developed severe anatomical anomalies normally associated with the other sex, which rendered them 'intersexed'. This case was one of a series that Garfinkel studied in collaboration with medical colleagues at the University of California. In order to be eligible for the operation, Agnes had to convince the doctors (and Garfinkel) that she was not a transsexual, and that she had not taken female hormones. That is, the 'experts' had to be sure that the development of Agnes's female characteristics were a result of natural, pathological failures in her 'male sex makeup'. Despite the presence of the penis from birth, Agnes insisted that she had always felt like a woman inside. Before the operation Agnes was very proud of her well-formed breasts, citing their presence as evidence of her femaleness. But she viewed the presence of the penis as a 'freak of nature'. That is, although it was part of her anatomy, its presence was contrary to her embodied female sense of self.

So successful was Agnes's passing that she was treated by the doctors and Garfinkel as having a rare disorder called 'testicular feminization syndrome' (Garfinkel, 1984, p. 285) and was therefore able to have the operation. Indeed, Agnes had learnt the art of behaving like a woman so well that Garfinkel commented that she appeared very feminine and on occasions seemed to be more female than a 'natural female'. Leaving aside for the moment Garfinkel's heterosexist notions of the trappings of femininity, it is clear from the discussion that Agnes's perception of her own body was measured by how she considered a 'natural' woman would look upon it, or how a heterosexual man would look upon a 'real' woman. Agnes insisted on having a very ample vagina constructed. The large breasts and the ample vagina indicated 'true' femaleness to Agnes. There could be no doubt regarding the sex of a person who possessed these characteristics. After the operation Agnes felt that she had finally become the natural woman she always thought herself to be. That is, her inner/outer body was consistent with the image of a real woman as others perceived it and with the woman that Agnes stressed she had felt herself to be in her inner body prior to the operation. Thus, the outer appearing body was now at one with the lived body. Occasionally, there was evidence of a nagging doubt at the back of Agnes's mind in case a 'real' heterosexual man could detect that her vagina was not natural but surgically constructed.

Some five years after the operation, Agnes shocked the experts by calmly announcing that she had indeed taken female hormones. Thus,

Agnes had passed herself off to the 'scientific' experts as a biologically defective male who had developed female characteristics, even though this was not the case. Agnes had so successfully negotiated the rules of femininity laid down in her own culture that she passed not only *for* a woman but *as* a woman.

Garfinkel's study raised issues concerning nature and culture in regard to medical and lay conceptions of sex and gender, and it pointed to the ways in which gendered behaviours are learnt, negotiated and produced within the context of culture. It also suggested, contrary to common-sense perceptions, that the body and sexuality are not fixed 'natural' entities but are unfinished and unstable. As such, it foreshadowed emergent debates in second-wave feminism concerning the distinction between sex and gender and the social construction of femininity and masculinity (see Gatens, 1996). Moreover, it resonated with more recent poststructuralist feminist critiques of 'compulsory heterosexuality' and gender as 'performative' (Butler, 1990a, 1993; Brooks, 1997). At the same time, the body work that Agnes had to put in to pass as a 'natural' woman points to the corporeal construction of subjectivity. This arguably contrasts with the 'overdetermination of the subject by discourse and social process in Butler's work' (Boyne, 1999, pp. 221–2) and in other discursive approaches, which will be discussed in the next chapter. Moreover, the medical identification of Agnes as a 'biologically defective male' prior to the operation seems to support Luce Irigaray's subsequent critique of western philosophical and psychoanalytic discourse for interpreting sexual difference 'as though it were only one sex, and that sex is male' (Irigaray, cited in Gatens, 1996, p. viii). That is, the male becomes the yardstick by which sexuality is measured.

It should be clear from the preceding discussion that although the body has not necessarily been a central focus of research in sociology and anthropology, it has not been quite as absent as is sometimes supposed. Moreover, certain recurrent themes that pervaded the 'pre-history' of the body, as we shall see in the next chapter, are also evident in a range of different theoretical frameworks that became central to the body project. These recurrent themes concern the problem of the dualisms in western social thought. This chapter has tried to do two things: first, to provide a brief and selective chronology of the uneven development of the study of the body in anthropology and sociology, and, second, to lay out the terms, shifts and nuances of the debate between social constructionalist and foundationalist approaches to the body. The next chapter moves the story of the body in social and

cultural studies into debates in feminism and poststructuralism. Although there is a historical dimension to that discussion too, the main thrust of the chapter is directed towards an elaboration of the triumph of social constructionism and anti-essentialism over foundationalism, along with a consideration of recent attempts to develop a more corporeal approach to the study of the body, which takes account of embodiment.

# *Name Index*

---

- Abu-Lughod, Lila 74  
Adair, Christy 161, 225  
Adams, Lawrence 122  
Ahmed, Jamilah 217  
Alderson, Evan 158  
Aldrich, Elizabeth 188  
Allan, Maud 133, 168, 171  
Althusser, Louis 197  
Appadurai, Arjun 74  
Archer, Kenneth 142, 224  
Argyle, Michael 25  
Aristotle 34  
Ashton, Frederick 100  
Atkinson, Paul 65, 67  
Auslander, Phillip 164
- Back, Les 181  
Bakhtin, Michel, M. 156  
Balanchine, George 100, 160, 162, 163, 164  
Banes, Sally 102, 109, 154, 161, 164, 165,  
218, 219, 221, 223, 225  
Barba, Eugenio 75  
Barbalet, M.L. 51, 54, 55, 166  
Barrett, Michèle 35, 39  
Bartenieff, Irgard 220  
Bartky, Sandra 99  
Bateson, Gregory 17, 179  
Baudrillard, Jean 50, 51  
Beardsley, Monroe, C. 126  
Beatty, Talley 44  
Beauvoir, Simone de 35, 41, 42  
Beck, Jill 21, 142, 223  
Bendelow, Gillian 12, 15, 18, 40, 41, 58, 62,  
63, 93  
Benjamin, Walter 125, 132, 143, 144, 223  
Bennett, Andy 66, 182, 192, 199, 202, 207,  
208, 209, 210  
Benthall, Jonathan 25, 28  
Bentham, Jeremy 47  
Bentley, Toni 160  
Berg, Shelley 121, 125, 133
- Berger, John 52, 54  
Bernstein, Basil 22, 25, 26  
Betterson, Rosemary 1, 52  
Betts, Leah 190  
Bird, Bonnie 112  
Birdwhistell, Ray 17, 24, 25, 26, 27, 30, 60  
Blacking, John 28  
Booth, Charles 65  
Bordo, Susan 37, 38, 39, 52, 54, 73  
Bourdieu, Pierre 20, 51, 56, 57, 58, 87, 117,  
118, 150, 165, 171, 206, 226  
Bourne, Matthew 109, 221  
Boyce, Johanna 159  
Boyne, Roy 2, 27, 32, 147  
Braidotti, Rosie 209  
Brake, Mike 66, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200  
Braverman, Harry 53  
Brewer, John, D. 66  
Brewster, Bill 183, 185, 196, 201, 227  
Bright, Graham 191  
Briginshaw, Valerie, A. 2, 174, 225  
Brooks, Ann 32, 131, 218  
Broughton, Frank 183, 185, 196, 201, 227  
Brown, Trisha 221, 225  
Browning, Barbara 1, 78, 81, 147, 149, 150,  
151, 152, 153, 156, 157, 158, 224  
Bruce, Christopher 112  
Buckland, Theresa, J. 66, 79, 226  
Bull, Cynthia J. Cohen 81, 93, 94, 95, 96, 98,  
99, 100, 101, 102, 104, 105, 106, 107,  
108, 110, 167, 219, 221  
Burkitt, Ian 12  
Burt, Ramsay 2, 44, 173, 224, 225  
Butler, Judith 23, 32, 48, 49, 50, 78, 150, 152,  
157, 158, 174, 210, 225
- Cage, John 11  
Caplan, Pat 66, 69, 70  
Carreras, José 112  
Carroll, Jon 162  
Carter, Alexandra 101, 147, 154, 160

- Carter, Simon 228  
 Case, Sue-Ellen 174  
 Caygill, Howard 223  
 Cézanne, Paul 218  
 Chambers, Iain 153, 194, 199  
 Chanter, Tina 39  
 Chernin, Kim 37, 38  
 Cixous, Hélène 174, 175  
 Clarke, Mary 95  
 Clark, Michael 166  
 Clifford, James 66, 67, 70, 76, 85, 160  
 Coffey, Amanda 77  
 Cohen, Selma, J. 115, 138, 222, 224  
 Cohen, Stanley 113, 123, 199  
 Collin, Matthew 187, 189, 190, 227  
 Collingwood, R.G. 223  
 Cook, Ray 125, 135, 136, 137, 139, 142, 224  
 Cooley, Charles, H. 53  
 Cooper, Lesley 210, 226  
 Cooper Albright, Ann 2, 147, 161, 167, 225  
 Copeland, Roger 121, 122, 123, 131, 173, 174  
 Copland, Aaron 222  
 Cowan, Jane, K. 1, 66, 78, 81, 147, 178  
 Coward, Rosalind 52  
 Craig, Edward Gordon 141  
 Cressey, Paul, G. 194, 195, 196, 210  
 Crisp, Clement 95  
 Croce, Arlene 131  
 Crossley, Nick 34, 59, 60, 61, 62  
 Csordas, Thomas, J. 12, 23, 28, 30, 51, 63, 93, 118  
 Culler, Jonathan 69  
 Cunningham, Merce 11, 94, 102, 112, 130, 131  
 Curti, Lidia 1  
  
 Daly, Ann 2, 25, 27, 118, 147, 158, 159, 160, 161, 164, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 175, 216, 224, 225, 226  
 Daly, Mary 35  
 Daniel, Yvonne, P. 147, 148, 149, 151, 152, 154, 224  
 Darwin, Charles 17  
 Davies, Martha 222  
 Dawson, Andrew 75  
 DeFrantz, Thomas 44  
 Deleuze, Giles 183  
 Dempster, Elizabeth 158, 161, 165, 166, 167, 171, 173  
 Denzin, Norman, K. 153, 223  
 Derrida, Jacques 50, 69, 78, 152, 174, 175  
 Desmond, Jane, C. 1, 2, 93, 118, 146, 174, 225  
 Diaghilev, Sergei 133  
 Diderot, Denis 141  
 Dils, Ann 133, 135, 136, 142  
 Dingwall, Robert 67  
 Doane, Mary, A. 160  
  
 Douglas, Mary 18, 19, 21, 22, 23, 24, 28, 51, 53, 107, 166, 201  
 Duncan, Isadora 28, 111, 133, 139, 140, 165, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 216, 225, 226  
 Dunham, Katherine 44  
 Durkheim, Émile 14, 18, 19, 35, 57, 209, 210  
 Dunn, Douglas 219  
  
 Eckert, Charles 54  
 Efron, David 17  
 Eibl-Eibesfeldt, I. 17  
 Ekman, Paul 17  
 Elias, Ellen 107  
 Elias, Norbert 56, 60, 150, 166  
 Elton, Heather 124  
 Emery, Lynne Fauley 44  
 Enslin, Elisabeth 66, 74  
 Everett, Peter 179, 181  
  
 Falk, Patsi 52  
 Farnell, Brenda 78, 81, 84, 88, 175  
 Farrell, Susan 163, 164  
 Fast, Julius 17  
 Faust 144  
 Featherstone, Mike 12, 24, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 186  
 Felföldi, László 124  
 Filmer, Paul 69  
 Firestone, Shulamith 35  
 Fischer, Michael 68, 69  
 Forster, W. 123  
 Forsythe, William 109  
 Foster, Hal 1, 125, 225  
 Foster, Susan Leigh 1, 78, 79, 93, 95, 97, 98, 101, 102, 103, 104, 106, 112, 119, 133, 141, 143, 146, 152, 153, 154, 157, 161, 164, 176, 217, 225  
 Foucault, Michel 20, 24, 37, 39, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 50, 51, 54, 56, 95, 118, 144, 154, 166, 217  
 Fraleigh, Sondra 30  
 Frank, Arthur, W. 93  
 Franko, Mark 2, 124, 140, 141, 142, 144, 224, 225  
 Fraser, Mariam 49  
 Frith, Simon 181, 196  
  
 Gainer, Joan 224  
 Gaines, Jane, M. 1  
 Gallagher, Catherine 40, 44  
 Gamman, Lorraine 1, 159  
 Gamson, Annabelle 140  
 Garafola, Lynn 144  
 Garber, Jenny 200  
 Garber, Marjorie 157, 174,

- Garfinkel, Harold 30, 31, 32, 49, 65, 80, 227  
 Gatens, Moira 32, 34, 36, 39, 166  
 Geertz, Clifford 66, 67, 68, 71, 81, 82, 127, 130, 218  
 Gellner, Ernest 68  
 Giddens, Anthony 52, 53  
 Gilbert, Jeremy 189, 190, 192, 204  
 Gilman, Sandor 1, 43, 44, 150, 218  
 Ginsberg, Amy 143  
 Goellner, Ellen, W. 1, 225  
 Goffman, Erving 17, 20, 25, 26, 34, 58, 59, 60, 63, 77, 100, 106, 179, 203, 210, 226, 227  
 Goldberg, Marianne 159  
 Goldstein, Laurence 1  
 Gordon, David 221  
 Gore, Georgiana 66, 185, 194, 227  
 Graham, Martha 44, 102, 104, 111, 112, 113, 132, 133, 139, 141, 165, 222  
 Gramsci, Antonio 197, 198  
 Grau, Andr e 66, 78, 80, 81, 147, 153, 155, 225  
 Griffin, Susan 35  
 Grosz, Elizabeth 23, 30, 166, 174  
 Guattari, Felix 183  
 Guy, Edna 44  
  
 Haber, Honi, F. 12  
 Hall, Edward, T. 17, 24, 25, 27, 60, 100  
 Hall, Stuart 66, 197, 198, 200  
 Hammersley, Martyn 64, 67  
 Hanna, Judith Lynne 79, 146, 147, 226  
 Haraway, Donna 73, 74, 209, 217  
 Harding, Sandra 165  
 Harris, Roy 222  
 Hartsock, Nancy 74  
 Harvey, David 53  
 Hastrup, Kirsten 75, 76, 77  
 Hayden, Melissa 111  
 Hebdige, Dick 66, 198, 200, 227  
 Hegel, G.W.F. 156  
 Henley, Nancy M. 25  
 Hertz, Robert 18, 19, 20, 21  
 Herzog, Charlotte 1  
 Hirst, Paul 13, 17  
 Hobbes, Thomas 24  
 Hockey, Jenny 75  
 Hodson, Millicent 142, 224  
 Holland, Janet 99  
 hooks, bell 43, 150  
 Horton, Robin 69  
 Humphrey, Doris 44, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 121, 123, 129, 133, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 165, 216, 222, 223, 224  
 Hunter, Ian 20  
 Husserl, Edmund 42  
 Hutcheson, Sandy 25  
  
 Hutchinson, A. 130, 221  
 Hutchinson Guest, A. 125, 130, 131, 223  
 Huysen, Andreas 70, 207  
  
 Irigaray, Luce 32, 166, 174, 175  
  
 James, Allison 68, 75  
 Jay, Martin 98  
 Jefferson, Tony 197, 198, 200  
 Jenkins, Richard 57  
 Johnston, Lynda 52  
 Jones, Bill, T. 49  
 Joplin, Scott 195  
 Jordan, Stephanie 99, 121, 125, 164, 182,  
 Jordan, Tim 219, 227  
 Jowitt, Deborah 111, 120  
 Joyce, James 169  
 Jung, Hwa, Y. 30  
  
 Kaepler, Adrienne 66, 79, 80, 82  
 Kagan, Elizabeth 114, 115, 116, 222  
 Kanawa, Kiri Te 112  
 Kaplan, E. Anne 160  
 Kealiinohomoku, Joann 79, 80, 82, 147, 149  
 Keefer, Krissy 162  
 Kendall, Elizabeth 170, 171, 223  
 Kenyon, Nicholas 126  
 King, Eleanor 136  
 Kirkland, Gelsey 160, 164  
 Kirsten, Lincoln 96, 97, 98, 100, 144  
 Kivy, Peter 128, 129, 139  
 Koritz, Amy 1, 2, 132, 133, 138, 170, 171, 173, 224, 225  
 Koutsouba, Maria 80  
 Kozel, Susan 174  
 Krauss, Rosalind 136  
 Kriegsman, Sally A. 121, 142  
 Kristeva, Julia 23, 25, 27, 28, 166, 168, 170, 175, 225, 226, 227  
 Kroeber, A. 17  
 Kuhn, Thomas 40  
  
 Laban, Rudolf 25, 220, 221  
 La Barre, Weston 17  
 Lacan, Jacques 168  
 Lange, Roderyk 79  
 Langer, Susanne, K. 29  
 Laqueur, Thomas 39, 40, 44  
 Lauretis, Theresa de 160  
 Laver, James 25  
 Lepczyk, Billie 101, 110, 220  
 L vi-Strauss, Claude 22, 198  
 Lewis, D. 150,  
 Lewis, John L. 220  
 Lincoln, Yvonne, A. 153, 223  
 Lloyd, Margaret 114

- Lock, Margaret 23  
 Lyon, Margot, L. 20, 51, 54, 55, 166  
 Lyotard, Jean-Françoise 144
- Macpherson, C.B. 110  
 MacSween, Morag 38  
 Maffesoli, Michel 209, 227  
 Main, Lesley 113, 115, 117, 121, 122, 123, 129,  
 133, 135, 136, 138, 139, 142, 222, 223  
 Makinen, Merja 1, 159  
 Malbon, Ben 1, 66, 88, 177, 178, 179, 180,  
 182, 190, 192, 193, 196, 202, 203, 204,  
 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 226  
 Maletic, Vera 220  
 Malnig, Julie 195  
 Manning, Susan, A. 141, 142, 147, 154, 161,  
 165, 166, 167, 173, 225  
 Marcus, George 66, 68, 69, 70, 160  
 Marion, Sheila 121  
 Martin, Emily 40  
 Martin, John 137, 142  
 Marx, Karl 15, 37  
 Massine, Léonide 133  
 Mauss, Marcel 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 28, 30, 41,  
 42, 57, 59, 87  
 Mayhew, Henry 65  
 McDonald, Christy, V. 78, 152, 174  
 McGuigan, Jim 66  
 McNay, Lois 45, 50  
 McNeill, William, H. 182, 210  
 McRobbie, Angela 66, 125, 182, 183, 187, 189,  
 193, 194, 200, 201, 205, 207, 208, 227  
 Mead, George Herbert 53  
 Mead, Margaret 17  
 Meduri, Avanthi 80, 81, 147, 148  
 Melchi, Antonio 209  
 Merleau-Ponty, Maurice 28, 30, 34, 41, 59,  
 60, 61, 62, 63, 94, 218  
 Michael, Mike 228  
 Miller, Daniel 80, 155, 156, 157, 208  
 Miller, Nicola 178, 195  
 Miner, Horace 16, 19, 60  
 Mitchell, Juliet 168  
 Moi, Toril 168, 174  
 Morris, Desmond 17  
 Morris, Gay 2, 49, 50, 118, 121, 225  
 Morris, Mark 49, 50, 109, 162  
 Morrison, Toni 226  
 Mueller, John 138, 224  
 Muggleton, David 66, 199  
 Mulvey, Laura 1, 52, 154, 159, 164  
 Murphy, Jacqueline Shea 1, 225
- Nead, Lynda 1, 54  
 Needham, Rodney 18, 20
- Nelson, Lisa 102, 103, 106  
 Ness, Sally, A. 1, 63, 66, 67, 78, 81, 84,  
 85, 86, 87, 88, 101, 149, 215  
 Nicholson, Linda, J. 74  
 Nietzsche, Friedrich, W. 45  
 Nijinsky, Vaslav 133, 139, 142  
 Nixon, Sean 55  
 Novack, Cynthia 1, 66, 78, 80, 81, 93, 101,  
 102, 103, 104, 107, 110, 147, 160, 161,  
 219, 221
- Oakley, Ann 35, 36  
 O'Connor, Barbara 178,  
 O'Neill, John 23  
 Orbach, Susie 37  
 Ortner, Sherry 34
- Park, Robert 65  
 Parker, Rozsika 52, 144  
 Parsons, Talcott 24  
 Paxton, Steve 102, 103, 105, 107, 219, 221  
 Pearson, Ewan 189, 190, 192, 204  
 Penny, Patricia 178  
 Pernod, James 143  
 Perpener, John O. 43, 44, 173  
 Phelan, Peggy 1, 144  
 Pini, Maria 1, 179, 183, 201, 204, 205, 207,  
 208, 209, 210, 227  
 Plato 168  
 Polhemus, Ted 15, 17, 18, 25, 28, 30, 60, 186  
 Pollock, Griselda 1, 52, 144, 145  
 Poole, Roger 26  
 Preston-Dunlop, Valerie 223  
 Prickett, Stacey 225  
 Primus, Pearl 44  
 Probyn, Elspeth 174  
 Proctor, Lynne 186
- Rabinow, Paul 45, 48  
 Rainer, Yvonne 109, 166, 221, 223  
 Rattansi, Ali 2, 27, 147  
 Redhead, Steve 182, 184, 185, 187, 188, 189,  
 192, 193, 199, 200, 202, 205, 207, 227  
 Reed, Susan 79, 146, 147, 148, 154  
 Reynolds, Simon 186, 187, 191, 227  
 Richardson, P.J.S. 196  
 Rietveld, Hillegond 182, 184, 185, 186, 189,  
 191, 192, 200, 209, 227  
 Roca, Octavio 163  
 Ronström, Owe 178, 226  
 Rose, Jacqueline 168  
 Royce, Anya, Peterson 66, 79, 179  
 Rubidge, Sarah 123  
 Rudner, Sara 219  
 Russell, K. 193

- Ruyter, Nancy, L. C. 170  
 Ryman, Rhonda 129
- Said, Edward 154  
 St Denis, Ruth 111, 133, 139, 171  
 Sanchez-Colberg, Ana 174  
 Sandywell, Barry 69  
 Saunders, David 20  
 Saunders, Nicholas 193, 227  
 Saussure, Ferdinand de 134  
 Savigliano, Marta 147, 149, 152, 153, 154, 225  
 Sayers, Leslie-Anne 97, 111, 164  
 Schefflen, Albert, F. 25  
 Shelton, Suzanne 171  
 Scheper-Hughes, Nancy 23  
 Schiebinger, Lona 41, 54  
 Schilder, Paul 28, 94  
 Schmais, Claire 222  
 Schmidt, Jochen 123  
 Schultze, Laurie 52  
 Schutz, Alfred 45, 117  
 Seale, Clive 225  
 Seymour, Wendy 12, 24, 28  
 Sheets-Johnstone, Maxine 29, 63, 131, 219  
 Shilling, Chris 11, 12, 13, 20, 21, 22, 23, 28, 44, 45, 47, 48, 50, 56, 58, 62  
 Siddall, Curt 102  
 Siegel, Marcia 113, 114, 121, 123, 131, 138, 142, 144, 222  
 Simmel, Georg 14  
 Sklar, Deidre 66, 67, 78, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 86, 228  
 Slater, Don 53  
 Smith, Nancy Stark 102  
 Sommer, Sally, R. 185, 192, 193  
 Spencer, Paul 66, 147  
 Stacey, Judith 66, 70, 71, 72  
 Stanley, Liz 64, 66, 67  
 Steinman, Louise 105  
 Stodelle, Ernestine 122, 129, 135, 136, 222  
 Stokes, Adrian 96, 97, 98, 99, 102  
 Stollar, Paul 219  
 Stone, Ruth, M. 179  
 Strathern, Marilyn 72, 73, 74  
 Swingewood, Alan 156  
 Sydie, Rosalind, A. 34  
 Székely, Éva 38, 39
- Taruskin, Richard 126, 127, 128, 129, 132, 136  
 Taylor, Laurie 25, 161, 164  
 Terry, Walter 112  
 Tetley, Glen 112  
 Tharp, Twyla 131  
 Thomas, Helen 1, 13, 18, 25, 28, 38, 60, 63, 66, 79, 81, 85, 94, 101, 132, 146, 154, 160, 162, 164, 178, 195, 202, 210, 217, 218, 219, 222, 224, 225, 226, 227  
 Thomas, W.I. 65  
 Thompson, Virgil 222  
 Thorne, Barrie 70, 72  
 Thornton, Sarah 66, 177, 180, 189, 192, 199, 200, 205, 206, 207, 210, 221, 227  
 Thrift, Nigel 193  
 Todd, Mabel Ellsworth 119  
 Tomlinson, Gary 126, 127, 128, 129, 132, 142  
 Tönnies, Ferdinand 14  
 Topaz, Muriel 122, 131, 142  
 Tudor, Anthony 100  
 Turner, Bryan 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 20, 21, 22, 24, 28, 29, 30, 53, 62, 63, 94, 166, 217  
 Turner, Victor 77, 88, 153, 182, 215
- Ulrich, Allan 163  
 Ussher, Jane 12
- Vachon, Ann 224  
 Van Wicks, Brooks 222  
 Van Zile, Judy 130, 132, 223  
 Venable, Lucy 136, 224  
 Vincent, L.M. 160, 161
- Wacquant, Loïc, J.D. 56, 118  
 Walsh, David 25  
 Ward, Andrew 176, 190, 193, 194, 202, 207, 227  
 Weber, Max 14, 15, 54, 60, 217  
 Weiss, Gail 12, 28  
 Wigman, Mary 141  
 Wild, S.A. 147  
 Williams, Drid 78, 79, 80, 82, 84  
 Williams, Raymond 143, 144  
 Williams, Simon, J. 12, 14, 15, 40, 41, 58, 62, 63, 93  
 Willis, Paul 66, 198, 199, 200  
 Wilson, Bryan, R. 69  
 Wimsatt, W.K. 126  
 Winch, Peter 69  
 Wittgenstein, Ludwig 69  
 Wolf, Margery 66, 69, 70  
 Wolfe, Tom 153  
 Wolff, Janet 1, 99, 152, 157, 161, 166, 167, 171, 173, 174, 175, 176  
 Woodford, Charles C. 222  
 Woolgar, Steve 67, 69  
 Woolley, Penny 13, 17  
 Wulff, Helena 223
- Young, Iris Marion 41, 42, 43  
 Youngerman, Suzanne 79

# Subject Index

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- acid house 184–5  
African American dance 43–4  
Alexander Technique 109  
American structural linguistics 25, 26, 27  
anorexia nervosa 36  
    bulimia and 37–8  
anthropology  
    of body 3, 12, 14, 15, 16, 63, 66–70  
    cultural 17, 67–72  
    dance 4, 66, 146–7  
    feminism and 70–5  
    French School of 20  
    philosophical 16, 29  
    physical 17  
*Appalachian Spring* (1944) (Graham) 132  
Association of Social Anthropologists (ASA) 28  
authenticity 77, 184, 122–3  
    of dance and music 129–34  
    musical 125–9  
auto-eroticism 146  
    *see also* wining
- ballet 95–8  
    Balanchine 111, 120, 162–5  
    contact improvisation and classical 108–10  
    modern dance and 110–12  
    visual in 4, 98–102  
ballroom dancing 177, 195–6, 202  
    *see also* dance hall  
behaviourism 25  
Birmingham Centre of Contemporary Cultural  
    Studies (CCCS) 65–6, 184, 185,  
    197–200, 206  
    *see also* subcultures  
bodily habitus 20, 51, 56–58, 117–18  
bodily movement 26, 41–2  
bodily techniques 20, 30, 41–2, 59–61  
body  
    anthropology and the 3  
    corporeal approach 14, 33  
    cultural and social analysis of 1–3  
    of discourse 45–8  
    histories 3, 4, 12, 44–8, 150  
    inner/outer 30, 53  
    natural 19, 20, 22  
    phenomenological 20, 21, 22, 29, 30  
    politics 23, 165–7  
    representation and difference 39–41, 150  
    social 22  
    social status and 16, 50  
    as symbol 20  
    as topic 1, 3–4, 11–13, 15–16, 24, 28  
    typologies of 23  
body/mind dualism 28, 39  
‘body project’ 11, 15, 23  
body rituals 16  
body symbolism 18, 20, 21  
    ‘risk’ and 21, 22
- carnival 155–8  
Chicago school of sociology 65, 196, 206, 209  
choreography: authorship and co-authorship  
    134–42  
clubbing: practices of 5, 203–4  
club culture 5, 177, 179, 183–4, 201, 204–6  
    *see also* rave culture  
communication theory 25  
consumer culture  
    and the body 16, 37, 48, 50–5  
    lifestyle 16  
contact improvisation  
    ballet and 108–10  
    touch in 4, 102–8  
cultural studies 65–6, 160  
cultural theory: body and dance 1, 3  
culture/nature debate 12–13, 17, 20–1, 22, 28,  
    30, 32, 35, 41  
Cunningham technique 102  
dance  
    case studies of 2, 4, 12, 64  
    communitas and 182  
    as discursive situated practice 1

- history of 5  
 as liberation or resistance 5, 173–4  
 moral danger 194–6  
 notation 4  
 representation and difference 1, 12; *see also*  
     representation and difference  
 restoration of 4  
 social and cultural analysis of 12  
 study of 1, 2, 4, 63  
 subjects-in-process 167–73  
 dance forms 110–11  
 dance halls 177, 181, 184, 194–6, 210  
     *see also* taxi-dance halls  
 dance reconstruction 134–45  
 dancing 94, 178  
*Dawn in New York* (Humphrey) 134–6  
*Dido and Aeneas* (1989) 49  
 difference 1  
     dance and race 5, 148–52  
     class 151–2  
     gender 4  
     *see also* representation  
 dress 16  
  
 eating disorders *see* anorexia nervosa  
 Ecstasy 186–7  
     *see also* rave culture  
 emotion/reason 28  
 emotions: sociology of 20, 56  
 eroticism 146  
 ethnographic methods 3  
 ethnography  
     dance 66, 77–88  
     as embodied activity 4  
     feminist 3, 147  
     postmodern 3  
     reflexive situated practice 65,  
         72–88  
     varieties of 64–7  
 everyday movement 25  
 everyday practices 19  
     body behaviour in public places 20  
 exoticism 151  
  
 feminism 2, 3, 11, 33, 34  
     discursive approach 48, 50  
     postmodernism and 67–75  
     second wave 32, 34, 37  
 feminist theory 4, 35–6  
 film and video technology: dance and 4  
 foundationalism 3, 20, 28, 32, 33, 62  
 French psychoanalytic feminism 39, 168–9,  
     174–5  
 gaze theory 154, 159–65  
 Graham technique 102, 104, 111–12  
  
*Hard Nut, The* (1991) 49  
 historicism 43  
 human animal 17  
 Humphrey technique 113–17  
 intersubjectivities 5, 65  
     clubbing and 210–11  
 Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) 28  
  
 kinesics 24, 25, 26, 27  
 kinetography Laban *see* Labanotation  
*Körper* 94  
     *see also* Leib  
  
 Labanotation 25, 82, 130, 131, 134  
 Latin American dance 178, 181, 153–4  
     rumba 148–51  
     samba 151–2, 158  
     tango 152–3, 154  
*Leib* 94  
     *see also* *Körper*  
  
 mind/body dualisms 3, 4, 13, 28, 29, 34, 44  
 modern ballroom dancing 178, 182  
 modern dance 4, 111  
     reconstruction 123–45  
 modern/primitive debate 19  
 modern societies 19  
     systems of thought  
 music 4  
  
 naturalism: body and 12  
 non-verbal communication 24, 25–30  
     *see also* proxemics; kinesics  
  
 Odin Teatret (theatre group) 75–7  
 ‘other’ 19, 42, 73, 75, 87  
  
 Panopticon 47  
*Passacaglia* (Humphrey) 137–9  
 phenomenology 29, 30, 42, 43, 58–62  
     in relation to philosophy of art 30  
     social 45  
 popular culture 65  
 positivism 43  
     critique of 45  
 positivist sociology 27  
 postcolonialism 39, 149  
 postmodernism 2, 11, 38, 39  
 postpositivism 153  
 poststructuralist feminists 23, 32  
 poststructuralism 2, 3, 33, 34, 39, 44  
 power/knowledge 30, 39, 45, 46, 48, 50  
 primitive religions or belief systems 18–19  
 proxemics 24, 27

- rave culture 5, 177, 178, 184–93,  
207  
dancing 200–1, 210–11
- representation  
of the body 1, 2, 4, 12, 44  
crisis in 2  
of dance, women and sexuality 4,  
158–65
- 'risk societies' 21–2
- ritual 16, 18, 22  
bodily practice 19  
rules and 21
- sacred/profane dualism: of the body 18
- semiotics 2, 27
- sex/gender 36, 39, 49  
dance and 146–50  
performativity 49–50, 150  
transexuality 30–2
- simulog* dancing 84–7
- social constructionism 3, 12–13, 15, 18–19,  
21, 23, 28, 30, 32, 33, 39, 48
- social dancing 4, 178, 184, 202
- social Darwinism 16–17
- social psychology 25
- sociology  
of the body 29  
classical 14–15  
neglect of the body 13–15  
positivist 26, 29
- subcultural capital 206
- subcultures 5, 65, 196–200, 204  
*see also* Birmingham Centre of Contemporary  
Cultural Studies (CCCS)
- subjectivities 5, 45, 62  
clubbing and 210–11  
rave and post-rave dance 207
- Talabot* (Odin Teatret) 75–7
- taxi-dance hall 195, 210  
*see also* dance hall
- theatrical dance 1, 4, 29–30, 121–79  
eating disorders 38
- Water Study* (Humphrey) 112–17, 119–20,  
121–2
- western humanist tradition 13
- wining 155–7
- youth culture 5, 183–4, 193–6, 207
- youth subcultures 65–6, 178