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The Limits of Classical Social Theory in the Analysis and Transformation of Disablement -
(can this really be the end; to be stuck inside of Mobile with the Memphis blues again?)

By Paul Abberley

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I argue that the thoroughgoing adoption of a liberative social model of disability will necessitate a break with classical sociological perspectives rooted in Enlightenment thought. These world views, in their right-wing, Durkheimian and left-wing, Marxist forms share core notions of human perfectability and labour as definitional of humanity which are incompatible with the interests of impaired people. The limits of Enlightenment radicalism, as seen in the work of Marx, are defined by the logic and values of production. The meaning of humanity becomes co-terminous with such values, and the category of `disabled' is created negatively in relation to them. This approach forms an explanatory framework for understanding the form and nature of disablement as an historical product.

But if we remain within the social theory which gives rise to them, it also appears as inevitable. For a theory of disablement to serve the liberation of impaired people requires a break with such models of humanity and the development of philosophies which are not centred on the notion of `homo faber'. in particular, notions of perfectability and production-oriented rationality must be transcended. The development of liberative theories of disablement involves addressing some of the major issues of `new' social theory concerning identity and group membership, and a reconsideration of what have so far been disappointing attempts at the theorisation of the body in society.

SOCIOLOGY AND DISABLEMENT

In the last ten years sociology-based critiques of the existing situation of disabled people have proved analytically and politically most productive in a number of publications and actions based upon them. However this advance would not have been possible if it were only occurring in the minds o$ isolated individuals. intimately involved in the genesis of these works is the

real movement of disabled people in Britain, and the force of academic works resides to a large degree in the fact that they crystallise within them the beliefs, concerns and interests of the increasing number of disabled people who themselves see disablement as social process rather than personal tragedy.

We should, however be more precise as to which areas of sociology have been of use; its certainly not to such an inherently conservative perspective . as Functionalism that disability researchers have looked for their theoretical - tools. Indeed, in the hands of a sociologist like Topliss (1982) such a perspective has been identified as part of the problem. The deficiencies of such accounts stem not from individual inadequacies but from the theoretical problematic in which they operate. The thorough critique of such perspectives involves not merely the rejection of their assertions about disabled people, but the deconstruction of their notions of disability, that is, exposing them as ideological or culturally constructed rather than as natural or a reflection of reality (Alcoff 1988).

The founding father of Functionalist sociology, Durkheim (1964), posits a fundamental distinction between non- or pre-industrial societies and industrial ones. In the former, social integration is characterised as based on the similarity of roles in the social division of labour, `mechanical' solidarity. After industrialisation, with a growing separateness and distinction of the individual from the group as the division of labour is increasingly specialised and individuated, a good society is one with strong bonds of `organic' solidarity. These bonds are constituted through the recognition of the role of others in the complex division of labour that makes up that society. The venue where this solidarity is to be forged is the occupational associations. Thus to be deprived of such a role is to be deprived of the possibility of full societal membership. Whilst some of his polemical writing like the essay `Individualism and the Intellectuals' (Durkheim, 1971), written as an intervention in the Dreyfus Affair, places great stress upon the necessity for the good society to recognise diversity, there is no suggestion that this extends to the incorporation of those unable to work into full social membership.

It is then as a consequence of theoretical consistency that Topliss, operating from a functionalist perspective ultimately traceable back to the work of Durkheim, comes to advance the following argument for the inevitability of discrimination against disabled people –

> 'While the particular type or degree of impairment which disables
> a person for full participation in society may change, it is
> inevitable that there will always be a line, somewhat indefinite but

none the less real, between the able-bodied majority and a disabled minority whose interests are given less salience in the activities of society as a whole. Similarly, the values which underpin society must be those which support the interests and activities of the majority, hence the emphasis on vigorous independence and competitive achievement, particularly in the occupational sphere, with the unfortunate spin-off that it encourages a stigmatising and negative view of the disabilities which handicap individuals in these valued aspects of life. Because of the centrality of such values in the formation of citizens of the type needed to sustain the social arrangements desired by the able-bodied majority, they will continue to be fostered by family upbringing, education and public esteem. By contrast, disablement which handicaps an individual in these areas will continue to be negatively valued, thus tending towards the imputation of general inferiority to the disabled individual, or stigmatisation.' (Topliss 1982: 111-2)

For Topliss the inevitable disadvantage of disabled people, in any possible society, stems from our general inability to meet standards of performance in work. This can be contrasted to other perspectives, like Interactionism, where some writers (Haber and Smith 1971) suggest that the core `deficiency' of disabled people is an aesthetic one. However, aesthetic judgements may themselves be related, albeit in a complex manner, to the requirements of production, so it seems unlikely that the aesthetic explanation however attractive it may be in certain cases possesses the irreducibility that its proponents ascribe to it.

MARXISM AND DISABILITY

Given the political unacceptability of the implications of such perspectives as Functionalism and Interactionism to sociologists committed to the liberation of disabled people, one major source which we have drawn upon is Marxism. This has occurred in part because of the theoretical and political backgrounds of the sociologists involved. But equally I think because Sartre's 1963 judgement that all thinking has to operate in relation to the dominant philosophy of the age, Marxism, still holds correct. However, this utilisation has occurred at a fair distance from the fundamental economic and philo-sophical basics of the theory. Such notions as oppression (Abberley 1987, 1992) and hegemony (Oliver 1990, 1996), the former owing its initial credentials to Lenin's analysis of imperialism and the latter to Gramsci's work on ideology, have been found useful by some researchers and members of the disability movement. But as far as the nuts and bolts of the critique of

political economy are concerned, we have largely been silent. For my part this has not been accidental, but because I have come to see profound problems in utilising a Marxian model of human beings for the liberation of disabled people.

In part this is due to the potency of Marxism as a social theory of impairment and the consequent implication that with the abolition of capitalism the material basis of disablement will disappear. The clearest and most explicit reference to impairment to be found in the Marx/Engels corpus occurs in `The Condition of the Working Class in England', written in 1844/5.

Engels argues that the Industrial Revolution creates the proletariat in a gigantic process of concentration, polarisation and urbanisation, and with it, despite expansion of the whole economy and an increased demand for labour a `surplus population', which Marxists were later to refer to as the `reserve army of labour'. He was concerned to explore the conditions of life and the collective and individual behaviour that this process produced, and the greater part of the book is devoted to the description and analysis of these material conditions. His account is based on first-hand observations, informants and printed evidence, such as Commission reports and contemporary journals and periodicals. `Cripples' are cited as evidence of injurious working practices

> 'The Commissioners mention a crowd of cripples who appeared before them, who clearly owed their distortion to the long-working hours' (Engels 1969:180).

He cites the evidence of a number of doctors who relate particular kinds of malformation and deformity to working practices as an

> 'aspect of the physiological results of the factory system' (ibid: 181)

He continues

> 'I have seldom traversed Manchester without meeting three or four of them, suffering from precisely the same distortions of the spinal columns and legs as that described ... It is evident, at a glance, whence the distortions of these cripples come; they all look exactly alike' (ibid:182)

He continues for some pages to relate particular forms of impairment to factory working conditions and to condemn

"a state of things which permits so many deformities and mutilations for the benefit of a single class, and plunges so many industrious working-people into want and starvation by reason of injuries undergone in the service and through the fault of the bourgeoisie." (ibid:194)

He concludes his description of `the English manufacturing proletariat' thus

"In all directions, whithersoever we may turn, we find want and disease permanent or temporary ... slow but sure undermining, and final destruction of the human being physically as well as mentally" (ibid:238)

Engels here establishes the main form of Marxism's concern with impairment. It is exemplary of the predations of capitalism, and AS such, has propaganda value as one of the things socialism will abolish: the significance of disabled people is as historically contingent victims.

A hundred years later Hannington uses a similar analysis and sources of evidence, this time to condemn not factory-work, but the lack of it -

"These youths ... meet problems which render them increasingly conscious of the way in which their lives have been stunted and their young hopes frustrated and of the results of the physical impairment which they have suffered through the unemployment and poverty of their parents." (Hannington 1937:78)

Doyal (1979) refines this general thesis, and documents a relationship between `capitalism' and impairment on a wide variety of fronts, adding consumption, industrial pollution, stress and imperialism to the labour-centred concerns of Engels and Hannington.

Now I in no way wish to dispute the general accuracy and pertinence of these studies. My point is rather that for real disabled people such an analysis, linking impairment to capitalism as a very apparent symptom of its inhumanity and irrationality, is of little use. All it implies is that, with the state, impaired people would wither away in a society progressively abolishing the injurious consequences of production for profit. But there are two crucial objections to the notion of the problem of disability ending up in the dustbin of history. First, whilst socially produced impairments of the kind outlined by Doyal et al may decrease in number, it is inconceivable that the rate of impairment should ever be reduced to zero. Secondly, and of most significance for disabled people today, it is an issue whether such a situation, could it occur, would be

desirable. As long as there is a general eugenicist consensus between left and right that impaired modes of being are undesirable, disabled people must challenge such views as, in essence, genocidal.

Whilst in practice the propagation and implementation of right-wing theories of disability are a real and ever-present problem for disabled people, the social models of disability propagated as liberative of disabled people by the Disability Movement are necessarily perspectives `of the left' since they involve the radical overhaul of the status quo. Thus in developing our understanding of disablement and working towards its abolition, it is with perspectives which claim a critical and oppositional standpoint that we must come to grips. In particular, we need to understand the apparent failure of Marxist theory to provide concepts which we may employ to further develop a liberative social theory of disability.

I have argued above that Marxist analyses of impairment are heavily skewed towards prevention and cure. However, this emphasis seems no accidental consequence of the marginality of disabled people to Marxism's primary concern with production relations under capitalism, rather it is deeply grounded in Marxist notions of humanity. If so, it will thus apply across modes of production and historical eras. To see why this is the case, it is labour necessary to consider the Marxist model of humanity, in particular the role labour takes in the constitution of humanness.

For Marxism, whilst all human societies must produce their own material conditions of existence, the commodity is the form products take when this production is organised through exchange. The commodity has two aspects. Firstly it can satisfy some human want – it has use value: secondly, it can be exchanged for other commodities, a property Marx calls simply 'value'. Since a commodity is both a use value and a value, the labour producing it has a dual character. Any act of labour, 'productive activity of a definite kind, carried on with a definite aim' (Marx 1974 a:49) is useful labour productive of use value. This can be contrasted to pseudo-labour, (familiar to many who have undergone occupational therapy) – nothing can have value, without being an object of utility. If the thing is useless, so is the labour contained in it; the labour does not count as labour, and therefore creates no value (ibid: 48). This 'is a condition of human existence which is independent of all forms of society; it is an eternal natural necessity which mediates the metabolism between man and nature, and therefore human life itself' (ch.1) In analysing capitalism, however, he goes on to explore that aspect of labour which endows its product with value, and this is linked to the idea of the average worker –

> "Any average magnitude... is merely the average of a number of separate magnitudes all of one kind, but differing as to quantity. In every industry, each individual labourer, be he Peter or Paul, differs from the average labourer. These individual differences or 'errors' as they are called in mathematics, compensate one another and vanish, whenever a certain minimum number of workmen are employed together" (ch1) This abstract labour, productive of value, is equivalent to socially necessary labour time

> "the labour-time required to produce any use-value under the conditions of production normal for a given society and with the average degree of skill and intensity of labour prevalent in that society. .. what exclusively determines the magnitude of the value of any article is therefore the amount of labour socially necessary, or the labour-time socially necessary for its production".

Approximation to this norm serves to define the normal worker. Thus the whole project of Capital resting on the notion of abstraction from real data on wages prices profit etc. involves the construction of a norm of `human being as worker'. Marx's and Engels' description of capitalism captures the way in which capitalism creates both disabled people and a concept of disability as the negative of the normal worker. It is labour power which workers sell to capitalists for a money-wage, and impaired labour-power that characterises and accounts for the specific character of disablement under capitalism. So, Marxism provides powerful theoretical tools for understanding the origin and nature of the oppression of disabled people. Some, pointing to the withering critiques directed against utopianism throughout the Marx-Engels corpus, suggest that we can go no further in specifying the material basis of the transcendence of disablement than to argue that the progressive reduction of the significance of labour-power along the transitional socialist road results in reduced social significance for impairment in respect of labour-power. This, combined with technological innovation which equips impaired people to take part in the production process, results in the progressive abolition of disablement.

Now whilst part of me welcomes the rigour and coherence of this line of argument, I am still concerned that it fails to provide a way of conceptualising a satisfactory future for those impaired people unable to work, around which we can potentially unite and mobilise all disabled people. This concern arises from a consideration of the way in which Marx and Marxists present human freedom, the condition supposed to develop through the transcendence of capitalism and its vestiges. Marx occasionally seems to reduce the problem of human freedom to free time, in for example the 1847 Wage-Labour and

Capital (Marx 1969). On such a view there should be no problem for those unable to labour: free time would occupy the whole of life. But this position is more generally ridiculed and in the 1857/8 Grundrisse it is asserted that

> 'Really free working is at the same time precisely the most damned seriousness, the most intense exertion'(Marx 1973:611).

In the 1875 `Critique of the Gotha Programme' Marx makes the well-known statement that

> in a more advanced phase of communist society ... when labour is no longer just a means of keeping alive but has itself become a vital need...(we may then have) from each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs' (Marx 1974b:347).

But this implies that impaired people are still deprived, by biology if not by society. Impairment, since it places a limit upon creative sensuous practice, is necessarily alienatory, for those who accept that this term should be seen as an element of a Marxist terminological canon. This is not perhaps a problem in relation to free-time, since even in utopia people would not be expected to take part in all possible recreational and cultural activities. It does however constitute a restriction in relation to work, which is an interaction between agent and nature which results in production of social value. Whilst the distinctions between productive, reproductive and unproductive labour are crucial to the analysis of capitalism, rather than the exploration of a Marxist utopia, the ability to labour in some socially recognised sense still seems a requirement of full membership of a future good society based upon Marxist theory. Whilst children as potential workers, and elderly people, as former ones, may be seen as able to assume a status in a paradise of labour, it is hard to see how, despite all efforts by a benign social structure, an albeit small group of impaired people could achieve social integration. Following Marxist theory thus understood, some impaired lives cannot then, in any possible society, be truly social, since the individual is deprived of the possibility of those satisfactions and that social membership to which her humanity entitles her, and which only work can provide. For impaired people to be adequately provided for in the system of distribution, but excluded from the system of production, that is, on a superior form of welfare, would be unsatisfactory, since we would still be in the essentially peripheral relationship to society we occupy today. There seems to be, for Marxism, an identity of who you are with the work you do which transcends capitalism and socialism into the concrete utopia of the future to constitute a key element of humanity, and a key need of human beings in all eras. Whilst other needs can be met for impaired people, and this can perhaps be done in a non-oppressive manner, the one need that cannot be met

for those unable to labour is the need to work. This appears to be true for a whole range of Marxist thinkers.

William Morris, whose News from Nowhere envisages a profound erosion of barriers between necessary labour and the rest of human life therefore attributes to work a crucial role in human happiness and identity:

> 'I believe that the ideal of the future does not point to the lessening of men's energy by the reduction of labour to a minimum, but rather to the reduction of pain in labour to a minimum ... the true incentive to useful and happy labour is and must be pleasure in the work itself (cited Levitas 1990: 108).

Marcuse, whilst believing that work can be more pleasant than it is today points to a deep co-incidence of analysis between Marx and Freud

> 'Behind the Reality Principle lies the fundamental fact of scarcity .... whatever satisfaction is possible necessitates work, more or less painful arrangements and undertakings for the procurement of the means for satisfying needs' (Marcuse 1955: 35).

Andre Gorz, at the opposite pole from Morris in his advocacy of the minimisation of socially necessary labour and the maximisation of free-time, still sees purposive activity and competence as a condition of social inclusion
> 'the abolition of work does not mean abolition of the need for effort, the desire for activity, the pleasure of creation, the need to cooperate with others and be of some use to the community'. He continues- 'the demand to 'work less' does not mean or imply the right to 'rest more'.' (Gorz 1982: 2-3).

But this is precisely the kind of right that impaired people do demand, today and for the future.

This exploration would suggest that Gouldner was correct in his judgement that

> "Marxism never really doubted the importance of being useful. Its fundamental objection to capitalist society was to the dominating significance of exchange-value, not to use-value. It objected to the transformation of men's labor into a commodity, but it continued to emphasise the value and importance of work." (Gouldner 1971:406) It seems that Marxism, on this interpretation, along

with allopathic medicine which has been so tied in to the disablement of impaired people in the modern era, can never be other than a project of the Enlightenment. It shares with other such enterprises a Rationalist adherence to aspirations of 'perfection', and cannot avoid identifying non workers with the historically redundant bourgeoisie, one aspect of whose alienation is their failure to participate in social production.

WORK AND DISABILITY THEORY

How does this feed back into analyses of disability in society today? With less than one third of those in the relevant age-group in employment in Britain today (Martin, Meltzer and Elliot, 1988), for many disabled people the demand for access to work is seen as a crucial component of the struggle for equality. This is reflected in the focus of Government's feeble proposals to `tackle' disabled people's oppression which focus on the workplace. Equally the British Council of Disabled People, in fighting the government's cutbacks on the Access to Work scheme has asserted `The right to a job is a fundamental Human Right' (BCODP 1996:3). Recent work (Lunt and Thornton, 1994) has surveyed some of the issues involved in implementing employment policies in terms of a social model of disablement -but the aim itself is left unexamined. At the level of more general theory, Finkelstein has pointed out repeatedly (1980, 1993)

> that the predominant factor contributing to the disablement of different groups is the way in which people can participate in the creation of social wealth' (1993:12).

He goes on to argue that since

> `assumed levels of employability separate people into different levels of dependency .... By trying to distance themselves (groups of people with particular impairments or degrees of impairment) from groups that they perceive as more disabled than themselves they can hope to maintain their claim to economic independence and an acceptable status in the community' (1993:14).

He cautions against doing this for what are essentially political reasons, that it will divide the movement, and points out that those who did this would be surrendering to the logic of the medical model, which they claim to reject. Now this appeal to unity and theoretical consistency, whilst appropriate to its context, seems to me to pass over an essential issue for disabled people-that even in a society which DID make profound and genuine attempts to integrate

impaired people into the world of work, some would be excluded, by their impairment. Whatever efforts are made to integrate impaired people into the world of work some will not be capable of producing goods or services of social value, that is `participating in the creation of social wealth'. This is so because, in any society, certain, though varying, products are of value and others are not, regardless of the effort that goes into their production. I therefore wish to contend that just because a main mechanism of our oppression is our exclusion from social production, we should be wary of drawing the conclusion that overcoming this oppression should involve our wholesale inclusion in it. As Finkelstein recognises, a society may be willing, and in certain circumstances become eager, to absorb a portion of its impaired population into the workforce, yet this can have the effect of maintaining and perhaps intensifying its exclusion of the remainder. We need to develop a theory of oppression which avoids this bifurcation, through a notion of social integration which is not dependent upon impaired people's inclusion in productive activity.

FEMINIST ANALYSES

Feminism has pointed out that Marxism is deeply marked by the maleness of its originators-and never more so than in the key role assumed by work in the constitution of human social identity. It is argued that the apparent gender-neutrality of Marxist theoretical categories is in reality a gender–bias which legitimises Marxism's excessive focus on the 'masculine sphere' of commodity production. Whilst some approaches in feminist sociology have reproduced, though from a broader perspective, the concern with work as definitional of social inclusion (Abberley 1996), others have more profoundly disputed labour-dependent conceptions of humanity.

One aspect of this involves feminist conceptions of the human body, far less abstract than classical Marxist formulations. In exploring the politics of human reproductive biology, feminism opens up other aspects of our biological lives, and thus impairment, to critical reflection. Another is that it has pointed out that the traditional policy solutions for dealing with inequality- `get a job', and traditional technological solutions - have not resulted in a better society for women.

> 'One fact that is little understood ... is that women in poverty are almost invariably productive workers, participating fully in both the paid and the unpaid work force ... Society cannot continue persisting with the male model of a job automatically lifting a family out of poverty' (McKee 1982:36).

In `Black Feminist Thought', Patricia Hill Collins quotes May Madison, a participant in a study of inner-city African Americans who has pointed out that

> 'One very important difference between white people and black people is that white people think you ARE your work ... Now, a black person has more sense than that because he knows that what I am doing doesn't have anything to do with what I want to do or what I do when I am doing for myself. Now, black people think that my work is just what I have to do to get what I want' (quoted Collins 1990: 47-8).

Whilst white male non-disabled sociologists may interpret this as evidence for the thesis of the alienated or instrumental worker, we should perhaps see it as documenting the social basis of an alternative theory of social membership and identity. This negative evaluation of the significance of `work' and `technology' in the present is not construed as explicable in terms of `deformations under capitalism', but is carried forward into a critique of the viability for women of a society organised around `work' and the `technofix'. Such issues are, I think, of significance to the development of theories of disablement. Schweickart, amongst many! represents another strand in arguing that

> 'The domination of women and the domination of nature serve as models for each other. Thus, science and technology have a place in a feminist utopia only if they can be redefined apart from the logic of domination' (1983: 210).

This debate seems an important one for disability theory, both in terms of - such detail as the desirability of care activities being performed by machines and wider issues of how far it would be correct to transform impaired people to give us access to the world. Thus amongst the `deep' issues of the relationship between human beings and nature raised within feminism are many which echo in disability theory.

SOCIOLOGY OF THE BODY

For disabled people the much heralded advent of sociological interest in the body has been a disappointment. Sexuality, madness, textuality, sadness; all serve as diversions from the discussion of what the playful theorists of postmodernity fear to contemplate, the true negation of their sensuous savage, the disabled body.

> "The disabled body is a nightmare for the fashionable discourse of theory because that discourse has been limited by the very predilection of the dominant, ableist culture. The body is seen as a site of 'jouissance', a native ground of pleasure, the scene of an excess that defies reason, that takes dominant culture and its rigid, power laden vision of the body to task. The body of the left is an unruly body: a bad child thumbing its nose at the parent's bourgeois decorum: a rebellious daughter transgressing against the phallocentric patriarch. The nightmare of that body is one that is deformed, maimed, mutilated, broken, diseased." (Davis L 1995:5)

What we are confronted by in the literature of the body is the same as we find in the 'non-corporial' sociologies these approaches criticise: a silence on disability and impairment. And this is not a result of a lack of material. Foucault's 'Discipline and Punish' (1977) contains as one of its few illustrations a metaphorical representation of the calliper and spinal brace from 1749 captioned 'Orthopaedics or the art of preventing and correcting deformities of the body in children' (plate 10 opposite p 167). Yet this 'special' case is in the text invisible, totally subsumed and unremarked within the analysis of 'normal constraint'.

In its Anglophone version, we find a similar absence in the work of Turner. 'The Body and Society' (1984), with twenty-five separately indexed references to 'disease', fails to give a single mention to disability or any of its supposed homonyms.

Even the merely amateur psychologist may feel that so systematic an absence of the disabled body is evidence of the strong feelings of repulsion fear and disgust its prospect inspires in these theorists. Indeed I have suggested elsewhere (1993:108) that such feelings lie behind the analyses of disability provided by many psychologists themselves. But to describe such feelings should lead to the posing of the next question; what are their origins? And here I would suggest that repulsion, in terms of the theorists of the social construction of the body's own problematic, must be understood as the deeply internalised form of socially produced negative attitudes. The most deepseated oppression, then, is the one that becomes somatised, and appears to well spontaneously from the individual's inner core. It is with such responses, also evidenced in studies of racism and homophobia, that body sociology must come to grips, if it is to develop a thoroughgoing theory, and, to me more importantly, if it is to be of potential use to disabled people. As yet, at the level of theory, it is generally so far from doing this that it represses all recognition of our existence. In one of the few cases I know of where the notion of `reading' narrative texts and the ideas of discourse found in the work

of Derrida, Lacan and Foucault have been applied to real discussions of disability, the profundity of the rejection of disabled ways of being becomes apparent. Casling describes his use of story-telling and deconstruction in a Disability Equality Workshop. He concludes

> "In this workshop the invisible was made visible. The common experience of the nondisabled people in the stories, in all but one case assigned to the storyteller, the feelings were predicated on such constructs as 'anxiety', 'guilt', and 'anger'...The final throw of the dice came with the announcement by a group member that they had one other word written in their column of feelings attached to non-disabled people in relation to disabled people, and that was the word 'hate'… I was ... reminded of the statement of Adolf Ratka that 'society hates disabled people'. I had understood this on a structural level, but here it was being cited as the apex of attitudinal discussion, as if little by little more and more difficult feelings were being made visible within the group". (Casling 1993:208.)

As I understand it, the claim made by Casling for the technique is that the process facilitates the paring away of rationalising and justificatory verbiage until what remains is the bedrock of linguistic, and thus social characterisation of disabled people. What is exposed is a core truth, the nearest we can arrive at in language to a visceral response.

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

The theoretical perspectives I have considered above seem to me to imply an important distinction between disablement and other forms of oppression. Whilst the latter involve a utopia in which freedom can possibly be seen as coming through full integration into the world of work, for impaired people the overcoming of disablement whilst immensely liberative would still leave an uneradicated residue of disadvantage in relation to power over the material world. This in turn restricts our ability to be fully integrated into the world of work in any possible society. One implication that can be drawn from this, which finds most support in classical sociological perspectives, with their emphasis on the role of work in social membership, is that it would be undesirable to be an impaired person in such a society, and thus that the abolition of disablement also involves as far as possible the abolition of impairment.

The work-based model of social membership and identity is integrally linked to the prevention/cure orientated perspective of allopathic medicine and to the specific instrumental logic of genetic-engineering, abortion and euthanasia. Ultimately it involves a value judgement upon the undesirability of impaired modes of being. However this logic allows for the integration of perhaps a substantial proportion of any existing impaired population into the work process, but only insofar as the interface between an individual's impairment, technology and socially valued activity produced a positive outcome. Thus the abolition of an individual's disablement is ultimately dependent upon and subordinate to the logic of productivity. Recent events in China, where a genocidal eugenics law and state sponsored infanticide have been accompanied by significant equality legislation for some disabled people exemplifies this logic, which I suggest is perfectly consistent with that state's ideology.

An alternative kind of theory can be seen as offering another future insofar as it rejects work as crucially definitional of social membership and is dubious about some of the progressive imperatives implicit in modern science. But such perspectives are not mere piece-meal modifications to existing ideas of utopia. Such rejections and doubt also involve a distancing from the values of `modern' society insofar as such a society involves the identification of persons with what they can produce in such a system. A liberative theory of disability requires the posing of values counter to the classical sociological and revolutionary consensus, the assertion of the rights of the human `being' against the universalisation of the human `doing'.

One mode of analysing the rejection of the instrumental rationality of the modern world is examined by Shakespeare, who explores the possibility of understanding the rise of the disability movement in terms of

> `New Social Movements... most recent fixation of sociologists' (1993:257).

Whilst he considers the usefulness of a number of Social Movement theorists and finds them wanting, the work of Alain Touraine is not mentioned in his discussion. This is unfortunate, since Touraine's notion of Social Movements places particular emphasis upon the challenge that they pose to prevailing belief systems, and takes his analysis significantly beyond the empirical

From concrete explorations of the rise of Solidarity in Poland (1983a) and the French opposition to nuclear energy (1983b) Touraine concludes (1984) that far from being idiosyncratic areas of study, Social Movements constitute a

central issue for contemporary sociology, since they constitute important features of its nature, in contrast to previous eras when they were essentially peripheral. For Touraine the aim of a Social Movement is not simply to react against existing inequalities, but rather to try to change the norms and values of cultural and social life.

> "The idea of a social movement...is radically different to the idea of class struggle. The latter appeals to the logic of history, whereas the former appeals to the freedom of the Subject, even if that means rejecting the pseudo-laws of history. .. we must open up individual and collective clearings in the forest of technologies, rules and consumer goods. The demise of the political programmes and apparatuses that have dominated the last hundred years is opening up an already crowded space for ethical principles and truly social movements" (Touraine 1995:370-371).

At the same time, Touraine is at pains to assert the effects upon actors of social structure and of history. For action to produce new elements of social structure it must work through and against pre-existing institutions and cultural forms;

> 'A social movement is at once a social conflict and a cultural project' (1995:240).

Social Movements are linked to critiques of the instrumental rationality which dominates whilst the Enlightenment values of reason, freedom, method, universalism and progress hold sway. For the Frankfurt school, Foucault and postmodernist analyses, modernity is seen as inevitably giving rise to the very oppressions it seeks to overcome. For Touraine, however, such critiques fail to recognise a `self-critical' and `self-destructive' aspect of modernity- that the value-based rationality embodied in the practice of Social Movements is capable of challenging, and defeating, the ascendancy of production-based instrumental rationality.

Touraine thus attempts to reintroduce the notion of action and the Social Movement, the mobilisation of convictions based in moral conviction and personal issues, against a prevailing sociological determinism. To apply this to the Disability movement, the strength of classical sociological accounts is that in seeing society as an explanatory concept as much as an object of study they allow us to identify and explore the socially produced oppression of disabled people. Their weakness lies in their notion of system as value, be that Durkheimian stasis or Marxian historicism, for neither can offer an acceptable future for disabled people.

Jenny Morris has written: the philosophy of the independent living movement is based on four assumptions:

- that all human life is of value;
- that anyone, whatever their impairment, is capable of exerting choices;
- that people who are disabled by society's reaction to physical, intellectual and sensory impairment and to emotional distress have the right to assert control over their lives;
- that disabled people have the right to full participation in society. (1993:21)

Such assumptions contain clear counter-values to prevailing productionism, posing demands without obligation to `earn' and calling for as yet unachieved rights; they constitute a set of counter-values to prevailing social norms. As embodied in the practice of the movement, such ideas can be seen as coming to constitute a theoretical and practical alternative, in Touraine's terms, a Social Movement.

CONCLUSION

It seems to me that such theoretical perspectives as indicated above are fertile sources for sociological theories of disablement to draw upon in their future development. Politically, they unite the interests of all impaired people. Analytically, they provide ways of understanding the oppression of all disabled people as a socially-created category, not just of that subsection, however large it may be, which may potentially become part of the world of work. This is by no means to deny that the origins of our oppression, even for those with jobs, lie in our historical exclusion, as a group, from access to work, nor is it to oppose campaigns for increasing access to employment. It is however to point out that a thoroughgoing materialist analysis of disablement today must recognise that full integration of impaired people in social production can never constitute the future to which we as a movement aspire. If we must look elsewhere than to a paradise of labour for the concrete utopia that informs the development of .   theories of our oppression, it is not on the basis of classical analyses of social labour that our thinking will be further developed. Rather it involves a break with such analyses, and an explicit recognition that the aspirations and demands of the Disability movement involve the development and proselytisation of values and ideas which run profoundly counter to the dominant cultural problematic of both left and right. This is not a matter of choice, but of the future survival of alternative, impaired, modes of being.

I am thus arguing that we need to develop theoretical perspectives which express the standpoint of disabled people, whose interests are not necessarily served by the standpoints of other social groups, dominant or themselves oppressed, of which disabled people are also members. Such sociology involves the empowerment of disabled people because knowledge is itself an aspect of power. Disabled people have inhabited a cultural, political and intellectual world from whose making they have been excluded and in which they have been relevant only as problems. Scientific knowledge, including sociology, has been used to reinforce and justify this exclusion. New sociology of disablement needs to challenge this `objectivity' and `truth' and replace it with knowledge which arises from the position of the oppressed and seeks to understand that oppression. It requires an intimate involvement with the real historical movement of disabled people if it is to be of use. Equally, such developments have significance for the mainstream of social theory, in that they provide a testing ground for the adequacy of theoretical perspectives which claim to account for the experiences of all a society's members.

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