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On Corporeality and Selfhood: Of Food and the Flesh

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On Corporeality and Selfhood: Of Food and the Flesh

Disciplines
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On corporeality and selfhood: of food and the flesh

By

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Abstract
This study takes as its point of departure: a) Foucault’s insights into the nature of power, knowledge, discourse, and the body, and b) the problems inherent with his conception of them. From this theoretical framework an empirical analysis of the discursive construction of salad and eating disorders is made, not from tracing a causal link between the two, but rather by demonstrating that their construction stems from the same discursive field. It is shown that to understand the intelligibility, meaning, and experience of salad and eating disorders is to take into account the socio-historical life of different discourses and their interrelationships within a consumer capitalist context. It is only within this discursive field in consumerist culture that we can understand how power/knowledge links, and is linked with, the discursive and the non-discursive, and how the textual is linked with and mediates the psychological and physical.

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Chapter 1
Introduction

1.0 Foucauldian power/knowledge, discourse, and the body

M. Foucault’s insight into the nature of (modern) power and its application in social theory has been both fecund and problematic. Foucault (cf. 1977b, 1980) begins his analysis of power by rightly observing that the sovereign model of power, also called the ‘juridico-discursive’ model of power (Minson 1986: 109), is deficient for understanding the modern social (anthro-)topography. In the sovereignty model of power, power is localized in the legal code of the state, whereby illegality is defined as an affront to the (body of the) sovereign. In this model, power is purely repressive and something ‘held’ and exerted by subjects (individual bodies, the state, etc.). Foucault traces in time, through various discursive and non-discursive phenomena (cf. J. Bentham’s texts, types of punishments, etc.), the change from the sovereign model of power to what he calls ‘disciplinary’ power, or ‘surveillance.’ The rise of this disciplinary power, inexorably linked to the ‘accumulation of bodies’, involved the decentralization of power, whereby power is now constituted in the classification and control over individual bodies (Foucault 1980, Turner 1984). Contrary to the sovereign model,

“power must be analysed as something which circulates, or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain. It is never localized here or there, never is in anybody’s hands, never appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth. Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organization” (Foucault 1980: 98).

Moreover, power is not exerted only over individuals who transgress the law in localized events of illegality, but involves the continuous exertion of power on (constantly) disciplined bodies. The rise of this dispersed power-grid is intimately linked with the stipulation of the human inner self and correspondingly the gaze into that self through knowledge of the body. That is, in the effort to control and regulate populations knowledge of individuals is crucially necessary. Thus, in the modern surveillance society, disciplinary power is linked with the normalizing gaze and the human sciences (e.g. psychiatry, the normalizing science par excellence, see Foucault 1965). That is to say, power and knowledge are directly linked. As Foucault (1980: 52) puts it, “It is not possible for power to be exercised without knowledge, it is impossible for knowledge not to engender power.” In this sense, power is productive, it presupposes and entails knowledge about the object that it exerts force on and thus the ‘field’ (discursive or material) in which that object exists, through its (power-)relation with it (cf. Foucault 1977b: 27). This displacement, from the decontextualizable agent to the relational non-agentive, is part of Foucault’s general project to replace the historian’s fetishization with the creative individual in history with the broader socio-discursive (Foucault and Chomsky 1997). For Foucault it is not the creativity and freedom of the individual which gives rise to power and change, but it is the role of discourses and their (inter-)relationships with the non-discursive, especially the physical body: “What I want to show is how power relations can materially penetrate the body in depth, without depending even on the mediation of the subject’s own representations” (Foucault 1980: 186). Thus, there is a triadic relationship which is at the core of social life: power/knowledge, discourse, and the body.”
"In a society such as ours, but basically in any society, there are manifold relations of power which permeate, characterize and constitute the social body, and these relations of power cannot themselves be established, consolidated, nor implemented without the production, accumulation, circulation and functioning of discourse. There can be no possible exercise of power without a certain economy of discourses of truth which operates through and on the basis of this association” (Foucault 1980: 93).

Discourse then is one medium through which power is applied to the body, through which embodiment takes place. As he discusses in The Archaeology of Knowledge (1972), discourse systematically forms the Object, including the body, of which it speaks. In addition to the embodied effects of discourse, it is through discourse that things can be known, formulated, and disseminated as True. Again, the body is part of this relation in that the experience of bodies is mediated by the naturalization of that body through/in discourse (e.g. sex as a biological/Natural category, Butler 1990).

Within this grid, the subject-object himself is not just a destination or target of power, but is also a medium through which power is articulated: “The individual which power has constituted is at the same time its vehicle” (Foucault 1980: 98). This is intimately tied to the nature of the modern society wherein discipline and surveillance are mediated through

"the inspecting gaze, a gaze which each individual under its weight will end by interiorising to the point that he is his own overseer, each individual thus exercising this surveillance over, and against, himself” (Foucault 1980: 155).

Additionally, insofar as this (self-)disciplining is a widespread social phenomenon, bodies serve as normative signs to other individuals, as iconizable indexes of their role as self-disciplinarians of their own body. Therefore, the body is simultaneously the subject, object, and medium of power/knowledge relations, and crucially, is constituted in and through discourse. That is, to attend to the body, power, or knowledge is to attend to the discursive topography. As Foucault puts it:

“nothing is man—not even his body—is sufficiently stable to serve as the basis for the self-recognition or for understanding other men because the body, far from being able to guarantee any transcendental identity, is itself always-already discursively constituted and regulated in the specificities of its socio-historically specific discursive contexts” (Foucault 1977a: 153 quoted in Maizon 1999: 142).

Central to Foucault’s theorizing is the notion of the ‘flow’ of power relations as ‘bottom-up’, or ‘ascending’ (Foucault 1980: 99, Wickham 1986). Thus, (self-)disciplining power works through the ‘smallest elements’, what he often calls ‘capillary’ (Foucault 1977b). Put in other words, the locus of analyses of discourse and power lie not in simply in global strategies of power and their macro-effects, but rather in the application of discursive power at the micro-level, specifically at the level of the habit and routine (Foucault 1977a). Like Giddens (1984) who has dealt at length with the routine as the central feature of social structure, Foucault (1977a, 1977b) realizes that the connection between the discursive and the non-discursive is mediated through the routinization of everyday practices, and that the embodiment (of discourse) necessarily involves the structuration of those quotidian tasks central to everyday social life. One most notable example of this, as this study will show, is diet (Turner 1984).

A final aspect of Foucault’s theorizing on power, which also differs from the sovereign conception of power, is that for Foucault power is productive of desires:

“If power were never anything but repressive, if it never did anything but to say no, do you really
think one would be brought to obey it? What makes power hold good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn’t only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse” (Foucault 1980: 119). That is to say, the productivity of power and discourse are intimately linked to those repressive technologies. This productive/repressive couplet is critical in deconstructing and understanding how it is that modern self-discipline is linked to the “internalization” of discourses and their ‘cultural’ logic.

In sum, Foucault’s conception of power is exciting, dynamic, and has been particularly fecund in much of social theory (cf. Turner 1984, 1992, Bordo 1993). It offers an insightful way to understand the relationship between discourse, meaning, Truth, the body, and power/knowledge. It provides a framework wherein questions of intelligibility and meaning are coupled with the political and historical field, thus situating semiotic phenomena in the power-laden relations inherent to social life. It also provides a framework through which to understand modern social institutions and discourses on self-control: schools, the military, hospitals, the human sciences, hygiene and diet, cosmetics, etc. Importantly, it provides a critical lens through which to reflexively view all of social life (including the sciences and social theories themselves). That is, it exposes the role of power and knowledge in discourses whose rhetorical force lies in their ability to obscure the relationship between knowledge and power (e.g. science). It also focuses our attention to power and its relationship to the body. Additionally, it displaces analysis from the traditional ‘fixtures’ of historical analysis (i.e. great men, important events, etc.), instead placing the locus of interest on the routine aspects of everyday life, thus providing a model for understanding the embodiment of discursive effects at the level of the individual, sub-individual, and para-individual (that is, objects and [body] techniques whose uses are meaningful parts of social life and the [self-]construction of the body/self).

1.1 The problematics of Foucauldian power/knowledge

However, the potency of Foucault’s conception of power also makes it problematic. For Foucault, power is literally (and metaphysically) everywhere. The strength of this approach (discussed above in section 1.0) is counterbalanced by the weakness that it offers no principled way to distinguish different types of power relationships, nor does it offer a way to hierarchically rank (or differentiate) power relationships. Rather, it simply offers a homogenous view of power. And, of course, this is a necessary step before one cannot begin to ‘get a feel for’ the differences between types of power-relationships. The Foucauldian notion of power, by positing its existence everywhere saps it of its meaningfulness. What does it mean then to talk of power? How are we to conceptually differentiate observably different orders of phenomena while committing ourselves to the analysis of power (taking Foucault’s insights into account)? More specifically, what are the differential points of contact through which power operates? And how can we best conceive of discourse (and the interrelationships between discourses) as producer and medium of power/knowledge in space and in time?

Foucault does offer some schematic answers to these questions. It is primarily his obsession with the war-model of power (cf. Foucault 1980: 90, Marks 2000) which shapes his approach to these questions, primarily his methodology, the ‘genealogy.’ The genealogy through the analogy of war, is a method through which historical knowledges are emancipated from subjection (Foucault 1980: 85). That is, the genealogy is “the
tactics whereby, on the basis of the descriptions of these local discursivities [what he terms ‘an archaeology’], the subjected knowledges which were thus released [by the archaeology] would be brought into play” (Ibid.). Thus, we are presented with two methods, the descriptive archaeology and the pragmatic/political/war-like genealogy. However, exactly what are the relationships between these two and power? In the former, it is the emancipation of discourse and knowledge from power, and in the latter it is the re-appropriation of that emancipated discourse/knowledge in a new power relationship (it opposes the repression of marginalized discourses). As we see, Foucault adamantly demands that these methods can only be used at local and discontinuous (cf. Foucault 1972) sites of discourse production/power enactment:

“What it [the genealogy] really does is to entertain the claims to attention of local, discontinuous, disqualified, illegitimate knowledges against the claims of a unitary body of theory which would filter, hierarchise and order them in the name of some true knowledge and some arbitrary idea of what constitutes a science and its objects. Genealogies are therefore not positivistic returns to a more careful or exact form of science. They are precisely anti-sciences” (Foucault 1980: 83).

There is an interesting tension then, between the non-essentialist methodology Foucault wishes to use (whose addressivity is linked to Foucault’s wish to dispense with teleological approaches to history and the humanistic meta-narratives of science, Turner 1992: 179) and his essentialist and extremely broad/global notion of power (Wickham 1986). That is, Foucault would like to consider discursive events/clusters as idiosyncratic all the while employing a concept of power which homogenizes and essentializes whatever idiosyncrasies we can glean from a local analysis. This tension of course is not surprising as it is a product of the development of Foucault’s thinking on the subject—that is, if power is everywhere, even at the margins, then it would logically follow that regimes of Truth in operation at both the center and the margins would involve the muting of local knowledges and discourses. However, as the foundation for a methodological approach to power, this tension is relatively non-productive. In the end, we must abandon the homogenous and omni-present conception of power, replacing it instead with a more dynamic and heterogeneous formulation of it. And this is not to say that Foucault himself does not hint at this or do it in his empirical work or his abstract/theoretical discussions. For example, Foucault often talks of understanding power as the circulation of discourses and through the power of discourses to produce and form Objects (Foucault 1972). In this model, it is from the point-of-view of the discourse (and not through that of disciplines and technologies of power, i.e. the war model) that we are able to approach the notion of power in a more satisfactory way insofar as discourses have differential distributions and applicability over different individuals and groups. Additionally, from this discourse centered point-of-view we can better understand the relationship between power and the body as a discursively mediated phenomenon in that it is discourse which dynamically construct the body and not disciplines/technologies of the body as circulatable entities independently of discourse.

Another issue to be discussed is the appropriateness of the polemic genealogy (i.e. a war-based model) for the analysis of all social phenomena. Indeed, this methodology seems to be applicable only to a limited number of cases insofar as not all power relationships are analogous to war (Wickham 1986). It imputes intentionality onto persons and non-persons (as roles within the war analogy) where it is not even clear who would be at war with whom. As there does not exist a non-problematic essentializing or unifying analogy more apt (to my knowledge) to replace Foucault’s war-analogy, I can
only suggest that we put aside Foucault’s polemic prejudice and analyze power relations as local happenings deserving of description on their own terms (Wickham 1986).

As this study will show, it is through the refocusing of Foucault’s theoretical lens we can better understand the relationship between the body, subjectivity, discourse, and power/knowledge. We can take from Foucault a number of insights concerning power, while modifying others to better fit the inherently local aspect of discourse analysis.

1.2 On the discursive constitution of the salad and eating disorders

This study aims to take the amended Foucauldian insights and to expand upon them through the analysis of the construction and emergence of the salad and eating disorders (as quasi-independent phenomena). By way of a literal interpretation of Foucault’s discussion of discourse, this study seeks to understand how the discursive and non-discursive are crucially linked through relations of power, whereby meaningful cultural forms and their experience by individuals can be deconstructed as the precipitates of discursive phenomena. As will be shown, to understand this project is to take on a more fundamental problem: how is it that cultural forms and their embodied tokens are made intelligible and meaningful through discourse? That is, what are the cultural logics by which power materializes? This is inherently a semiotic endeavor whose aim is to understand the process by which material forms (salad and eating disordered individual) are shot through and imbued with meanings.

Though coming to discursive phenomena at a different trajectory, F. de Saussure (1959 [1915]) crucially recognized the three areas necessary to be attended to in any linguistic analysis: the psychological, the textual, and the physical. Of course, Saussure’s approach to language does not encompass all three (more or less ignoring the physical), nor does Foucault’s (more or less ignoring the psychological). In this study of salad and eating disorders I link these three areas. Thus, following Foucault and Saussure, the constructive discourse of salad qua object and eating disordered individual qua embodied personae must be considered as the systematic intersection of all three. Though all three are important, this study will focus primarily on the mediation of the physical (embodiment) and psychological through the textual. Indeed, as I will show, the textual must be centrally situated in any analysis of these cultural forms insofar as it is through discourse that social regularities of the psychological and physical arise.

One might ask at this point (perhaps prematurely), what does the discursive construction/embodiment of the salad have to do with power over bodies? Though this question cannot be fully addressed in this chapter (it is of course addressed in later chapters), a more general answer can be offered.

Foucault’s main concerns centers on the body, disciplines of the body, and discourses which construct both. However, this is a slightly limited view of the social landscape, especially with the late 20th century explosion of media/information technology and advertising. In this (post)modern era, a crucial third player (besides the simple discursive vs. non-discursive distinction) is made highly salient: the connection between non-discursive phenomena and discourse in the form of images or objects qua representations. That is to say, we can expand Foucault’s power analysis of bodies in/through discourse to the analysis of objects (e.g. salad) and their connection to social schemata of personae, i.e. to other discourses. Thus, it is through the meta-semiotic imbuement of objects that disciplines constructing the body/self are made possible.
through object consumption/performance. Therefore, from this point-of-view, one fruitful area for the application of Foucault’s insights is the meta-semiotic imbue of objects connected to social schemata of personhood (one notable example being advertisement). It is the making intelligible of material forms that provides the ‘raw materials’ from which the construction of the body/self is made possible. In this way power acts on individuals not only through the direct application of disciplines onto the body, but through para-individual level phenomena, which may involve objects whose (power-)effect simply involves indexing other discourses (e.g. salad).

Part I outlines the general argument through its application to the salad. In Chapter 2, I analyze the (historically emergent) discourses relevant to understanding the meaning of the salad, and the cultural logic within which the salad is embedded. Chapter 2 thus deconstructs the construction of a cultural form, and situates that form in a discursive field whereby it is imbued with meaning and made usable as a (social) sign. Chapter 3 expands this discursive framework by situating the salad in a consumer capitalist context. Through the detailed analysis of a number of texts constructing the McDonald’s McSalad Shaker, it is shown how the salad as cultural type is commodified/precipitated into a cultural token of that type. Part I then is concerned with the general issue of how to approach the construction of an Object in discourse, and how that Object is embodied, commodified, and disseminated through discourses, linking a discourse1 to an object (imbued with meaning by discourse1) to another discourse2 (where discourse1 does not necessarily, but could, equal discourse2). Additionally, the connection between object and discourse, discourse and object is deconstructed, thus showing how a meta-semiotically imbued object (e.g. the salad) becomes part of the fashioning of the body, both through regimes of self-discipline (e.g. diet) and through the semiotic performability of self in interactional frameworks. The salad is shown to be a performable sign in the inhabiting of social personae.

Part II takes as its departure point the discursive framework in consumerist context outlined in Part I. It argues that to understand the construction of eating disorders as a community of individuals and to understand it as an embodied experience (thus psychological and physical) is to attend to exactly the same issues discussed in Part I. In contrast to Part I, however, the textual data is comprised by the discourse produced by eating disordered individuals. Whereas Part I analyzed the emergence and construction of a form through a number of texts, Part II analyzes how the discourses relevant to both salad and eating disorders are reflected in the textual production of eating disordered individuals such that their experience conforms to a certain regularity (thereby making it possible to typify them as eating disordered in the first place). In contrast then, Part II looks at the imbue of a performable sign in the inhabitation of culturally valorized personae, while Part II tackles the issue of how the discourse internal logic provided to individuals, both through texts and objects imbued with meaning through texts, constructs the experience of individuals as social personae. Chapter 4 outlines the general issues necessary to deal with eating disorders, faulty approaches to the topic, and definitional issues. Chapter 5 investigates in detail how the methodology developed in Part I can be meaningfully applied to understanding the modern phenomenon of eating disorders. As discussion will show, eating disorders and salad go to the heart of a number of issues in (post)modern social life, as well as addressing the same theoretical
issues Foucault makes central in his work. Note that at no point am I making a direct causal connection between the salad and the eating disordered individual. Rather, the argument of this study is to show that discourse acts in a number of ways to formulate the conditions under which material objects and social personae have meaning and form, and thus to understand social life is to take a socio-historical discursive approach which is sensitive to the textual, psychological, and physical (embodied)—in other (not exactly parallel) terms, to power/knowledge, discourse, and the body.

1 We can interestingly, though perhaps not exactly, apply Peirce’s (1931-1959) metaphysical trichotomy of Firstness, Secondness, and Thirdness to Foucault’s triad. In the Peircean framework power/knowledge is a peculiar kind of Firstness. For Peirce, “Firstness is that which is such as it is positively and regardless of anything else” (Ibid., 267), “it is not relative to anything; it is absolute, or positive. ...It is, indeed, in itself, a mere possibility” (Ibid., 268). How then is power/knowledge, a purely relational concept a Firstness? Insofar as the relational is inherent in all objects (for their delimitation or existence at all) we can consider power/knowledge as that positive ‘residue’ which necessarily results from any type of relational structure, or in a Nietzschean formulation, it is to say that all things have ‘the will to power.’ Thus, insofar as we are committed to a universe constructed of that which is relational, we can abstract a positive notion of power/knowledge, which is only a mere possibility (since relations must be demonstrated before such an abstract possibility can emerge). That is to say, “it is not nothing. It is not existence. We not only have an immediate acquaintance with Firstness in the qualities of feelings and sensations, but we attribute to it outward things” (269). The body, then, would exist as an instance of Secondness, which is “that which is as it is in a second something’s being as it is, regardless of any third” (267); “Secondness only is while it actually is’ (268). Thus, the body is an actuality. As Peirce points out “it is impossible to prescind Secondness from Firstness” (270); that is, all actualities, insofar as we can experience them as actualities, are Firsts, and thus the body as a Second (in relation to other Seconds) presupposes that quality of power/knowledge. The body is composed through power and is an instrument, or sign, of power. Thirdness, then, “is that whose being consists in its bringing about a secondness” (267). In our discussion, discourse is an example of Thirdness insofar as it is a regularity of producing Seconds, of which we can compose the set of texts and bodies, both of which (as Seconds) are also necessarily connected to power/knowledge. This is because, as Peirce points out “Thirdness without Secondness would be absurd” (270); also remember that secondness cannot be separated from Firstness. In general then, “since all three are invariably present, a pure idea of any one, absolutely distinct from the others, is impossible” (267), something Foucauldian thought on the subject also agrees with. That is, discourse produces bodies only through the quality, or possibility, of power/knowledge, which as a positive attribute of all relations (of which discourse is one example). Thus, the logic of the discourse, that is, its regularity in local happenings, is that which links itself as a Second (that is, as an articulation of itself qua Third, as a text qua Second) to particular bodies (also Seconds) thus producing and fashioning those bodies. Note that this concept of the body as Second does not commit us to the notion of a pre-discursive body, but simply that discourse acts on bodies already present (fashioned by past discourses). However, as we will see, in both Peircean and Foucauldian terms alike, this formulation of power/knowledge is a bit problematic in that it is essentializing (see section 1.1 this chapter) and assumes its existence a priori.

2 This approach is also a result of limited access to data. However, as I will show through this study, one can gauge an accurate understanding of the embodied effects of the meta-semiotic to discourse produced by (eating disordered) individuals. In each case, it is the cultural logic, which is retrievable from discourse, which shapes the intersection of the physical, textual, and psychological.
Part I. Salad

Chapter 2
The building of a cultural type: salad as social-semiotic

1. Introduction
1.0 The unit of study

The topic of this chapter is the analysis of the salad as constructed cultural form. What are the (social) meanings of salad in modern (American) texts? What conditions motivate(d) and allow(ed) these meanings to emerge/exist? This chapter will show that to understand the meaning-imbuement of salad is to take a socio-historical discursive approach, and thus requires analysis of the relevant meta-semiotic discourses within which salad is constructed.

However, what exactly is meant by ‘salad’? Though ‘salad’ may be understood as referring to a large number of possible foods, such as bean salads, fruit salads, etc., this is not what I mean. Rather, I am referring to the stereotypical or prototypical salad1. That is, in this chapter ‘salad’ will not be used as a category definable by the necessary and sufficient conditions of ‘saladness.’ Rather, we are talking about what comes to mind when someone simply says, “I am going to have a salad.” In this sense, ‘salad’ is not an ambiguous word, though its intensional definition is fuzzy at the edges (cf. Labov 1978).

It may be argued that such a lax ‘definition’ is an impediment to the study of salad2. However, as I am not concerned with truth states or the properties of salad that can be asserted from some position without perspective--i.e. the transcendent properties of salad--what is of interest is what is perceived and experienced as a salad in some socially regular way. From this point of view it matters little what a salad actually is unless what it ‘actually’ is relates to the perception of what it is. It is important to note that what ‘salad’ is, if indeed it has such a unity, need not correspond to what it is perceived to be. This distinction is an important one, and the two should be kept separate lest we become confused by the relationships between ‘Truth,’ the presentation of some truth, and the perception of that truth3.

Because of the nature of such an inquiry, ‘native’ intuition is a necessity. That is, what do people think of salad? The method by which we will address this question is rather indirect (see n. 1). It is through the analysis of texts through time that the process of salad’s semiosis will be deconstructed. Questions regarding method are discussed in section 3.1.

1.1 The aim of the chapter

The question is then, what are the meanings of salad, and how is it that salad has come to take on these meanings? It is argued that to locate the meaning-(construction) of salad we must take into account three distinguishable but interlinked discourses as they move through time: 1) the scientific-medical discourse, 2) the authoritative discourse on moral personhood, and 3) the body as ascetic (sign) versus the body as aesthetic (sign). These three discourses can be modeled as a coordinate system, whereby each discourse represents an axis. The ‘origin’ of this three dimensional coordinate system (time ‘0’) is the historical starting point of this study, though we could move the ‘origin’ as far back in
time as we have access to texts within these discursive axes. Movement from this origin represents movement in time (figure 1):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>t₀ → time → t₀</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X: Humoral science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y: Religious morality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z: Body as ascetic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In three-dimensional form we can visualize this model in the following way (figure 2):

![Figure 2](image)

In this model, texts can be described as having a coordinate 'position' along each axis. These discursive axes do not move together, but separately in time; that is, each discursive axis has a different 'speed' (with non-zero 'acceleration') moving towards time 'n.' Note that these are not the only significant axes. Discourses constructing gender and a mind-body dualism, for example, also move through (and are part of) this discursive field (or matrix), influenced by and influencing the other discursive axes. Additionally, not all texts equally reflect these discursive axes. However, as a whole, the corpus of data examined will show that to study salad is to locate it within this discursive field.

The second point to notice is that texts within this field, by their dialogicality (Bahktin 1986) and symbolic-qua-memory quality (Lotman 1990), 'contain' past texts/discourses embedded within them. That is, time 'n' is never independent or completely separable from time 'O.' Thus, this model does not argue that asceticism or religious language are non-existent in current texts; these discourses are still highly available to us. However, it is to say that over time some discursive formations are transformed or displaced such that new distinctive discursive formations play a more prominent role in text formation (see section 3.0). In sum, within this model we can 'track' salad through time.
2. The data

2.1. Time point '0'

*Acetaria: a discourse on sallets* (Evelyn 1699) is a philosophical treatise in the tradition of Latin and Ancient Greek scholars, and by the addressivity and dialogicality of its speech genre (Bakhtin 1986), is written accordingly. This text, within the three-dimensional model described above, can be described as \{X = humoral, Y = ascetic, and Z = non-secular morality\}.

2.1.0 The humoral, ascetic, religious salad

In *Acetaria* salad ('sallet') is primarily a combination of leafy green vegetables (lettuce, mallow, spinach, etc.), either raw or boiled, and served with oil, salt, pepper, and vinegar. This text is for how one 'ought to choose, sort, and mingle his materials and ingredients together' (Evelyn 1699: 82). However, this discourse on sallets is *not* a cookbook. Rather, it is a philosophical discussion (note its tropic title) on the properties of those ingredients in relation to the human being: physically, mentally, and morally. The direct connection is drawn between food and health, food and morality, and food and lifestyle, with specific discussion of salad (ingredients). Of course, these connections are not new. However, what is of interest is how the meanings of salad are constrained and enabled by the discursive field, thus entailing meanings not reducible to the historical continuity of those connections.

First note that salad is couched in the language of *use*. Consider the following (Table 2.1.0):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2.1.0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salad is &quot;of a cleaning faculty, deobfrustrating [sic], nourishing, and comforting the stomach&quot; (7).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salad will &quot;revive the hypochondriac, and cheer the hard student&quot; (13).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salad &quot;alleviates heat, bridles Choler, extinguishes thirst, excites the appetite, kindly nourishes, and above all represses the vapours, conciliates sleep, mitigates pain&quot; (31).</td>
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This text draws on humouralism, a medical theory often attributed to Hippocrates (Nutton 1995, McGrew 1985, Mennel et al. 1992), but whose origin is rooted in ancient Greek philosophy (e.g. Heraclitus, Thales, Anaximenes, Pythagoras) (Foster 1994), and whose popularity and usage spread during the second century AD with Galen (McGrew 1985, Nutton 1995). This medical system was widely used at all levels of society (Nutton 1995) all over the world (Foster 1994). Humouralism, though in decline by the 17th century, continued into the 19th century (McGrew 1985), and continues on to this day in many countries and areas of the United States (Foster 1994, Harwood 1998).

A brief discussion of humouralism will be of use in understanding how salad and diet are constructed in *Acetaria*. In humouralism, all matter is constituted by the dynamic balance between four elements: earth, wind, fire, and water. This includes the human body, which is believed to contain four humours (blood, phlegm, yellow bile, and black bile) that circulate in the body and are stored in various organs. Associated with these four humours are the properties (also called 'qualities') of heat, cold, dryness, and wetness (moisture) (Wilkins 1995). These properties are the metaphoric application of sensorially perceivable stimuli to objects to which they do not always literally apply. This framework, thus, provides a classificatory principle for everything (Foster 1994).
These binary pairs (heat/cold, dry/moist) motivate a logic of oppositions applicable to all objects. Personality was also defined by the balance of the humours in the body: the sanguine (cheerful), the bilious or choleric (ill-tempered), the melancholic (depressed), or the phlegmatic (calm, composed, sluggish, apathetic). Illness and abnormality were contained within this oppositional logic by the “principle of opposition”:

“Diseases caused by over-eating are cured by fasting; those caused by starvation are cured by feeding up. Diseases caused by exertion are cured by rest; those caused by indolence are cured by exertion. To put it briefly; the physician should treat disease by the principle of opposition to the cause of the disease, its seasonal and age incidence... This will bring the patient the most relief and seems to me to be the principle of health.”

Hippocrates (quoted in Foster 1994: 6)

“Health is primarily that state in which these constituent substances are in the correct proportion to each other, both in strength an quantity, and are well mixed. Pain occurs when one of the substances presents either a deficiency of an excess, or is separated in the body and not mixed with the others.”

Hippocrates (ibid.: 5-6)

“It seems that health is characterized by the equality and symmetry of these humours. When they are deficient or increasing contrary to what is necessary either as regards quantity, quality, shifting of position, irregular combination, or putrefaction of things that have been spoiled, disease occurs.”

Galen, *On Humours* (quoted in Grant 1995: 376)

Because humoralism is based upon balance as the Natural state, diet and digestion, as processes by which humoural quantities change, are central. That is, food as matter is imbued with properties based on its humoural-affecting composition. For example, foods with excess moisture cause epileptic fits (associated with phlegm) while foods with excess heat dry the brain causing madness (associated with bile) (Nutton 1995). Additionally, disease states are seasonal and weather based (Foster 1994), and thus the diet, as the primary intake of such humoural qualities (heat, cold, dry, moist), acts as a preventive measure to the dynamic environment. Note that though this theory does ‘atomize’ foods at an abstract level, there is not an empirically reliable criterion upon which foods can be tested as being composed of heat, cold, wetness, or dryness. That is, one cannot (empirically) keep breaking down lettuce, for example, until one has isolated the quality of ‘coldness’ to a single particle. Thus, the level at which food took on meaning, though conceptually at the level of the humours and elements, was pragmatically for doctors and laymen at the level of the actual food.

Returning to the quotes from Table 2.1.0, the salad is equated to medical (hypochondria and Choleric states) and non-medical states (“thrift,” “cheer the hard student”). That is, there is a causal link established between eating salad and being a certain person in a certain (mental, physical) state. Also note the connection between salad and a physiological structure within the human body; that is, salad cleanses the stomach. This digestion cleansing property persists today in the guise of roughage and fiber. There is also a direct equation of “health and long life” and eating salads (Evelyn 1699: 137). Thus, salad is directly connected with the body and person, positively valorized as a healthy food.

There are several other themes that are important to identify: 1) the notion of salad as connected to a humoural (as discussed above) state (“allays heat”) and, thus, that salad is a soothing object, i.e. a moderate food, and 2) salad as *exciting* the appetite; not as alleviating hunger but as stimulating it.

What does it mean to say salad “allays heat”? As discussed above, heat is a humoural ‘quality,’ whereby an imbalance in the humours results in illness; heat is associated with
dyspepsia and choler, as well as with fevers (Harwood 1998). Thus, salad exists in opposition to ‘hot’ foods. Another expression of this property of salad is what Evelyn (1699: 31) terms the “Principal foundation of the Universal Tribe” of Sallets: which is to cool and refresh.” We observe that the language surrounding this temperature related property of lettuce, and salads in general, is its frequent description as cool, refreshing, and refrigerating. Interestingly, there is also the connection between weight and the ‘temperature’ of vegetables, whereby the cold and moist nature of the salad is good for the diet of the obese. Conversely, the warmness of certain foods (such as herbs) are good for the “Cold, Lean, and emaciated” (p. 126-7). In this case, it is implicitly asserted that the obese may suffer from ‘over-heating’ while the undernourished require ‘warming up.’ Note that this value of salad as good for the overweight is different from our concept of the salad as healthy. In this case, it is the humoural related properties that are important insofar as they relate to a medical conception of the body based along hot-cold and wet-dry axes, while for the modern dieter it is the caloric properties that are of importance section 2.5.0). Since in humouralism cold represents abstemiousness and warmth represents the corporeal body (Grimm 1995), the obese, as corporeal, are viewed as requiring a de-emphasis on hot foods, and an emphasis on cold foods. In sum, salad is located within a framework of medical knowledge that defines the criteria of importance and the values that salad takes by those criteria.

Next, consider the text’s construction of salad as a digestible whose function is different from other foods. It contrasts with foods that replenish the body physically (corporeally), i.e. foods that satisfy the bodily requirements necessary for strength. Salad instead ‘sets the stage’, so to speak, for physically replenishing foods. This, of course, assumes that salad has a specific temporal placement within the meal; namely, it occurs before other dishes. Implicit in this is that salads are not main dishes, but are accompanying dishes. This is not completely presupposed though. Prompted by his observation that there is variation in the meal placements of salad, Evelyn takes up this question: should one eat the salads at the beginning of the meal or at the end? First, he asserts the truth that salad makes digestion easier (he cites Hippocrates, Galen, and Celsus, p. 114), and then concludes “therefore the French do well, to begin with their herbaceous Pottage, and for the Cruder, a reason is given: Prima tibi dabitur Ventri: Lactua moverdo” (p. 115). Later in the passage, he indicates that though “they ancienly did quite the contrary” (p. 115), in later times lettuce came to be eaten before the meal. Note how salad is metonymically represented by lettuce (“Lactuca”).

We should pay close attention to what is meant by the phrase “exciting the appetite” (Table 2.1.0) within the larger framework of the book, and how its meaning in this text compares with what we may take it to mean today. Within this book, salad is constructed as an invigorating and energizing food. It stimulates the appetite, the mind, and the health of the body. It is not a heavy food that weighs down the mind and body. This property of salad is opposed directly with that of meat. There is a binary opposition constructed between meat and salad following from their humoural ‘qualities.’ Thus, meat is equated with slothfulness, and meat eaters are considered as dull, inactive, and stupider than those who eat salad (p. 137-8). This is, of course, in accordance with the beliefs that animals are unclean and that flesh is unnatural to eat (p. 145). He uses a specific historical tradition to legitimize this view, citing herbs and plants as the Universal food for the last two thousand years, starting with Plato, Pythagoras, and
Porphyry\(^8\), where meat was banished from the Platonic table (p. 149). Then he equates meat with excess and debauchery using the Roman Empire as his case in point. He observes that the Roman state changed from one of debauchery to one that was calm and sedate when salad use became popular; previously, laws existed to prevent “pride and excess of sallets” (p. 180). If we take meat to be an opposite of salad, the meanings of salad become those of purity, clarity, non-corporeality, temperance, abstemiousness, and control. That is, there is an increasingly abstracting movement from the bodily effects of salad to the cognitive effects of salad to the moral effects of salad, where the three exist not as isolated, but as tightly conjoined. Thus, a salad-based diet is a road to virtue and health. As suya, Evelyn (1699: 32) aligns himself with “the most abstemious and excellent Emperor Treitus (...[who was] frugal) [and] was yet so great a friend to Lettuce.” Note the equation of salad with asceticism embodied within a specific historical figure.

If salad is non-corporeal, what does it mean for salad to be exciting and invigorating? Is this a statement of the actual energy amount contained within salad (consonant with modern nutritional science)? That is, is the connection between the body and salad one where food is fuel? The answer is no. Ingredients in this text are not decomposable based on a model of food qua fuel, partially due to the technology of time (there were no units of food energy units \textit{per se}). Though the modern mechanical model of the body was cotemporaneous with this text (e.g. Descartes’ \textit{Discourse on Method} had been published), this author does not draw on thisiatromechanical scholarship. Rather, he aligns himself with a classically oriented view (i.e. through invoking humouralism, and the use of Latin and ancient Greek quotes and references).

In sum, the units of ‘foodness’ are different in this text than in modern nutritional science texts (section 2.5). This, as I have shown, greatly influences how food, and thus health and personhood insofar as they are connected to food, are perceived and conceived. In addition, because foods, pragmatically the basest humoural units, are perceivably/palpably different and are not conceived as based upon chemical compositional structure (e.g. ‘fat cell,’ the carbohydrate, etc.) there is no unifying metaphor for the underlying commonalities of foods outside their humoural properties. Thus, food uses, functions, and effects disperse, engendering wide variation. This influences at what levels of food related activity meaning is most likely to be generated. For example, we go on the idea that food is divisible into “good” and “bad” cholesterol, an important difference between two otherwise equivalent foods would be based solely on this criterion. And to be expected, this type of distinction is not found in \textit{Acetaria}. What is found is an emphasis on the properties of different ingredients, combinations of different ingredients from separate genera, rigid rules concerning preparation, and the appropriate times of the year to eat certain ingredients. Because this view of nutrition does not ‘atomize’ food into Universal empirically replicable and locatable units (independent of subjective experience), the mechanism for differential meaning generation occurs, not at the level of the interchangeable chemical, but at the level of the individual food and the different ways through which that food can be manipulated. Thus, every possible difference in preparation of some ingredient has a meaningful difference (p. 104-105), and eating certain foods at different times of the year have different meanings (p. 108). In a very real way, of course, this is \textit{not} that different from having what I have termed an ‘atomic’ model of food (i.e. modern nutrition); rather, it
simply displaces meaning-generation up a couple of levels. However, as shown above, this displacement has profound effects on the perception of the salad, the use of the salad, and the meaning of the salad, insofar as the levels displaced are asymmetrical in their ability to be phenomenologically experienced.

2.1.1 Summary: time point ‘O’

To recapitulate the construction of salad in Acetaria: the salad is medicinal and affects both physiology (the stomach) as well as the humours; in accordance with humoural theory, salad is discursively equated with religious and ascetic values such as frugality, temperance, self-control, and morality partly through those physical effects on body and mind. Insofar as asceticism was the model of morality, the body as sign of asceticism was directly linked to diet and to salad. Salad was a central ingredient of this ascetic lifestyle and thus imbued with ascetic values. As the body was sign of asceticism, salad was the sign of the ascetic. The salad was also non-corporeal, and was associated with ‘lightness’ of the mind, and thus, in a not fully-articulated way, presupposes a mind-body opposition (in the Platonic tradition).

Salad takes on its meaning as: a) a combination of ingredients which share certain properties, b) its existence in opposition to meat, and c) its placement within a more general medicinal and historical framework (Greco-Persian humouralism). The legitimacy of the salad is asserted through the invocation of socially valued discourses such as ancient Greek and Roman history, religion, and the transcendent Natural. These essentialize the (meanings of) salad. Some of these meanings we find in our culture today, while many were transformed with changing beliefs concerning medicine and physiology, and religion and the body. To summarize in Evelyn’s own words, “The infinite blessing and effects of temperance, and the virtues accompanying it [sallet]; with how little Nature, and a civil appetite may be happy, contented with moderate things, and within a little Compass, reserving the rest, to the nobler parts of life” (p. 191).

2.2. The seeds of domestic science
2.2.0 An American first

From Acetaria (Evelyn 1699) we saw how one construction of salad was mediated by historically locatable discourses. As I will show, as these discourses change in time the construction of salad also changes. This change was not punctuated, nor did the different axes move in temporal synchrony. Rather, changes occurred in some axes while not in others. However, shifts in discourse were not the only important factors in the differential construction of salad. Crucially important was the emergence and wide circulation of new speech genres. One such emerging speech genre that laid the roots for the eventual domestic science explosion at the turn of the 19th century was the cookbook. American Cookery (1796) by Amelia Simmons is an important example of this transition.

This cookbook is the first American cookbook of note, whose impact on American cookery was great, setting key precedents. It represents a general trend in cookery where more and more women were writing books on cookery and housewifery for women (Wilson 1958). That is, it is the beginning of a trend whereby authority over cookery was increasingly mediated and contained within the domain of femininity.

One key precedent is the use of the vernacular (presupposing increasing literacy) which made domestic texts accessible and addressable to the population at large. This
On corporeality and selfhood: of food and the flesh

Chapter 2 - The building of a cultural type: salad as social semiotic

has importance both on the circulation of discourse surrounding diet and health (and thus salad) and on how diet and health become available to other institutions in order to be circulated/marketized (e.g. the food industry, the publishing company, mass media, etc.). That is, diet and health authority are made commodifiable by the circulation of discourses to different markets.

Because Simmons is a self-proclaimed orphan from the lower class, we see the roots of certain ideals within domestic science of the early 20th century. In her own words,

"As this treatise is calculated for the improvement of the rising females in America, the lady of fashion and fortune will not be displeased if many hints are suggested for the more general and universal knowledge of these females in this country, who, by the loss of the parents, or other unfortunate circumstances, are reduced to the necessity of going into families in the line of domestics, or taking refuge with their friends or relations, and doing those things which are really essential to the perfecting them as good wives, and useful members of society" (from the preface)

She goes on to say that it is necessary to have an "adherence to those rules and maxims which have stood the test of ages, and will forever establish the female character, a virtuous character" (original emphasis). She recognizes that her treatise is class based and makes an appeal to the class which she recognizes as having authority on such matters. It is ironic of course that this text becomes such a source of authority.

As the above quote shows, this text (and speech genre) is not simply a book of recipes for cooking. It is also a book of recipes for living; and not just living in general, but of a specific kind of lifestyle: being a virtuous woman; that is to say, feminine. Thus, this book is a resource for those who do not have the benefit of ‘good’ upbringing. Note what ‘good’ means in this case: “good wives” who are “useful members of society.” This lifestyle is also associated with the upper classes, women of "fashion and fortune."

Thus, this is a pragmatic book. It is a book for how to live the appropriate way (as defined based on class and education/upbringing). Additionally, the presentation of what is feminine (“the female character”) and how to be it is naturalized by its presentation as an eternal Truth. Yet this is not a Truth of deterministic existence. Rather, it is a Truth about what the best way to live is, and thus this ‘best way’ is able to be deviated from. Thus, as readers of the book we are entreated to actively abide by these “rules and maxims” in order to establish this normative notion of femininity. This connection between femininity, virtue, cookery, knowledge, and class continues into the domestic science movement at the turn of the 19th century.

In contrast to Acetaria this book belongs to a different speech genre and thus uses different devices to present its content. The ‘addressivity’ (Bahktin 1986) to women of this emerging speech genre set the standard for texts to come. This is a pragmatic and moral guide for women rather than a philosophical and medical-scientific text. As we will see, the pragmatic and the scientific/medical, and the rational and the moral are central to the discursive construction of salad by domestic science (section 2.3).

2.2.1 Rationality and domesticity

American Cookery shows how the discourse on food, diet, and personhood became addressed and contained within the domain of femininity, and how the character of the ideal woman was linked to a virtuous lifestyle. Next I would like to consider how, within this speech genre, the rationalization of food and lifestyle as part of realm of femininity was discursively created/constructed. The valorization of rationality has a
history much older than its expression in cookery texts. What is novel, however, is not
the emergence of valorized rationality, but rather, the appropriation (or co-opting) of
rationality to feminine domains (contra Seidler 1987). This rationalization of cookery
and domesticity set the stage for the application of the natural sciences and emerging
germ theory of medicine and disease to diet and lifestyle by providing the criterion by
which these discourse would assume the voice of authority.

One such liminal text is *Domestic management, or, The healthful cookery-book: to
which is prefixed a treatise on diet as the surest means to preserve health, long life,
&c.: with many valuable observations on the nutritious and beneficial, as well as the
injurious effects of various kinds of food: also remarks on the wholesome and pernicious
modes of cookery, intended as an antidote to modern errors therein: to which is added
the method of treating such trifling medical cases as properly come within the sphere of
domestic management by a lady* (1810) by Bell Plumptr. This rather long title is quite
informative. The focus of this book is the connection between diet, health, medicine, and
the role of the female.

Like *Acetaria*, one central theme of this book is the value of self-moderation and
temperance. She writes, “the object of this little Work...is to temper instead of to pamper
the appetite” (p. A2). Another key theme is the connection between diet and the family:
“A well arranged and steadily conducted system of domestic management is the
foundation of all the comfort, respectability, and welfare of private families in particular,
though no family can be truly respectable and happy where this is wanting” (p. v). Thus,
note that the social-evaluative aspects of family-life (“respectability and welfare”) and
affective quality of living (“happiness”) are explicitly linked to the management of the
home, whose responsibility is, implicitly (by the addressivity of the text and
presupposition of gender roles), the woman’s.

Furthermore, we see that the ability to truly manage a home is something that
must be learned. This book indexes this belief that such an education is crucially
necessary, and in fact, dependent on highly explicit principles not to be found in tradition.
Thus, the point of the book is to “suggest leading principles, as guides,...for the
assistance of the inexperienced, on their entering upon this important department of
female life”, “acting upon general rational principles” (p. vi). This notion, that the
general population could not adequately manage their own homes without formal
education forms the platform upon which future discourses (the domestic science
movement, section 2.3) were based insofar as formal education of this sort was widely
unavailable.

In sum, the education required to adequately live “respectably” was to be found,
not in the traditional, but in “rational principles.” Though these rational principles are
different from those of later texts in terms of what kind of scientific and medical
framework they use (Plumptr uses humoralism), the idea that there are some set of
principles which exist outside those available to women (as uneducated and irrational)
that guide ‘correct’ living is the same. Additionally, this notion that *all* females should
abide by these rational principles provides the foundation for the belief that there should
be an ideal domestic management for *all* families, including a standard diet (i.e. one
authoritative diet).

The separation of the body from the eating experience is heavily emphasized in
this text, partly by the substitution of rationality as the principal criterion for formulating
diet. Sensory (taste) and healthy aspects of foods are clearly separated: the “leading consideration of food ought always to be its wholesomeness. Cookery may produce savory and pretty looking dishes without their possessing any of the qualities” (p. x). It is the fact “that we require food, as vegetables require water, to support our existence, [that] is the primary consideration upon which we should take it” (p. xv). Thus, the act of actually sensorially reflecting upon what is eaten is not only irrelevant, but often misleading: “the appetite can betray the stomach and health in order to indulge our sensuality” (p. xviii). It is those who eat only for pleasure, and not with the consideration that eating is our life-force, that are (implicitly) labeled as somehow degenerate (physically, cognitively, and/or morally). This follows the emerging capitalist discourse which emphasized the moral imperative to lead an ascetic lifestyle; as many argue (Turner 1984, Foucault 1977b) this discourse served to put under control, and make more productive, a growing work force.

This degeneracy is one that is primarily based on the explicitly direct connection between food and health, especially disease. As she states (p. x) “human diseases lie lurking in almos: every dish.” Thus, every disease has an antecedent in food. This concept of disease connects body and mind, “hence the head is sure to be affected by whatever disorders the stomach” (p. xx). This connection is one that is based upon humoralism. Within the humoral perspective, as we saw with Acetaria, disease often derives from problems of digestion\(^6\), as well as from digested food insofar as they affect humoral balance. Thus, food is related to our “blood and juices”, with the power of causing them to be overcharged or deficient.

The humoral meaning of balance in diet is attached to the notion of asceticism as healthy. Thus, “the art of preserving health, and obtaining long life, therefore, consists in the use of a moderate quantity of the diet” (p. xvii). Additionally, “if we value our health, we must never make it a rule to eat to satiety or fulness” (p. xix, original emphasis). She also states that “abstinence is, in short, one of the best remedies to which we can resort; and if resorted to in time, will entirely cure many disorders” (p. xxi).

Because of the text’s use of humoralism the construction of salad has more in common with previous texts than with future texts (i.e. the domestic science movement). For example, the properties of salad are defined in reference to time, as in Acetaria, recommended between February and June when they “are in greater perfection, and consequently more powerful,..., in cleansing, opening obstructions, and sweetening and purifying the blood” (p. 95). Thus, the function of salad, and consequently its perception and experience, is directly related to the humoral framework. As a “cold” food, the salad represents one way to restore the balance created by the consumption of animal products (which are hot and heavy). The consumption of animal foods is considered bad because animal products are high in fat, rendering them indigestible, while salad on the other hand is of a cleansing quality. Thus, within this humoral framework, meat is located in direct opposition to vegetables and salads in their humoral makeup, their digestibility, and their connotations of personhood (meat is associated with a “grossness of habit” (p. 148)). Salad ingredients (lettuce, mallow, etc.) in this text are also doubly located as food and as medicinal. That is to say, salad ingredients are not just foods that are medicinal, but also are ingredients in herbal medicines, or Ptisans. Thus, salad ingredients have a dual existence as food (with medicinal properties) as well as non-food (as medicinal).
In summary, salad’s meaning in this text is formed by: a) the medical framework used, b) the religious meanings associated with an ascetic lifestyle, c) the connection between medicine, rationality, and asceticism. The salad is constructed by Plumptre (1810) within a rationalist and ascetic framework, explicitly linked to moral states of personhood. Some of these meanings are found to persist in domestic science, while others (such as those entailed by humouralism) are replaced. This text, in comparison with *Acetaria* (Evelyn 1699), *American Cookery* (Simmons 1796), and future texts of domestic science, is a transition between the humoural and the nutritional scientific. By the valorization of rationality, the salad comes to be defined by the criterion of the ‘rational.’ As we will see, this criterion provides the foundation for the emergence of nutritional science and its atomization of food.

2.3. Domestic science: late 19th century, early 20th century
2.3.0 Historical background: Emergence and legitimation

Nutritional science, an interdisciplinary field encompassing chemistry, biology, physiology, and medicine first emerged in response to problems related to food storage, food transport, and health (particularly among the poor), as well as a growing food industry concerned with standards of quality (Mennell et al. 1992, Budra 2000). Food adulteration was rampant, and with the use of new technologies (e.g. the microscope) liberties taken by the food industry were put under scrutiny (Tannahill 1973, see Accum (1820) *A Treatise on Adulterations of Food, and Culinary Poisons*). The low quality of health in city slums was attributed to inadequate food (supply) and nutrition (Mennell et al. 1992, Turner 1984), thus the scientific study of food was perceived to be a necessary aspect of social reform.

It is this advent and application of scientific theory and new technologies (in response to these problems) to various domains, such as cookery, nutrition, and housewifery, upon which the conception and experience of food, diet, and health was revolutionized. The modernization of domesticity arose around similar time periods both in Europe (called “organized virtue” in the Netherlands, Mennell et al. 1992: 25) and the United States (called “domestic science” or “home economics,” Shapiro 1986). These movements drew heavily upon science as a model, body of knowledge, ideology/philosophy, and rhetoric. Note that the specific branch of science central to domestic science, nutritional science, was parasitic upon other branches of science (cf. Harre et. al’s 1999 discussion of environmentalism) in that it was not distinguishable methodologically or theoretically, but rather was the thematic extension of science to food, diet, and moral personhood. This emerging nutritional discourse was part of the general rationalization of society, and one of the reactions to the ‘accumulation of bodies’ (Turner 1984). Within the emerging capitalist society the nutritional discourse (like the psychological and carceral) was a way to make productive the workforce (Foucault 1977b, Turner 1984), whose health and nutrition were compromised by urban squalor. That is to say, control of (individual) bodies, especially with regards to diet, was necessary for (maximal) capitalist production (Turner 1992, Turner 1984, Turner 1982a, Turner 1982b, Crawford 1984, Falk 1994). Especially in the United States, whose Protestant work ethic had a natural affinity to asceticism, the morally loaded nutritional discourse acted both as a remedy for ill-health and for immorality. The emergent nutritional discourse acted as a self-disciplining logic which acted to make the worker in
control and productive. This asceticizing of the (ideal) worker also sets up the binary opposite ‘Other’ as the hedonistic consumer. This hedonistic ‘Other’, though disruptive on the job, comes to be crucially important for the other half of capitalism: consumerism (cf. Chapter 3).

In the last quarter of the 19th century the complete modernization and rationalization of the housewife occurred (Shapiro 1986, Mennell et al. 1992, also see section 2.2.1). That is, an application of the ideals and methods of ‘natural philosophy,’ or science, was perceived to be necessary in the realm of cookery; i.e. “the necessity of the application of logic and reason to these questions of gastronomy” (Child 1890: 13). More generally, the role of the woman was no longer to be rooted in traditional knowledge. Rather, it would take as its model the natural sciences, as well as the stable, sterile, and uniformly predictable factory assembly line.

The call to progress, fueled by scientific discovery and recognized social problems, was being made across domains, including domesticity. Beecher’s (1841) Treatise on Domestic Economy was one of the first texts to place American progress, moral and other, on the same plane as the domestic. This powerful combination between morality and science was the basis of the domestic science movement. The major themes of this movement are: a) the control of food and the appetite (and thus the body) through the application of, and unabashed faith in, science and rationality, b) an emphasis on education and knowledge, convenience, innovation, hygiene, and speed qua progress, and c) a transcendent diet linked directly to virtue and health (a single ideal American cuisine) (Shapiro 1986). As Julie Corson of the then-famous New York Cooking School said (quoted in Shapiro 1986: 144), “right living” was “cleanliness, order, decorum, a visible refinement [and] a cultivated intelligence.”

This moral-scientific discourse wasn’t able to take hold of the eating habits of the United States until legitimized through the (male-dominated) authoritative institutions of the time. That is, the discourse produced by domestic scientists did not become authoritative itself until it took a place among already legitimate discourses through those discourses.

Domestic science became legitimized through: a) the mandatory educational system and the increase in literacy, which allowed the wider circulation of cookbooks, food magazines (Tannahill 1973, Mennell et al. 1992), and other popular media discourses such as recipes in newspapers, b) the use and mimesis of scientific discourses, c) government institutions such as the USDA, the National Research Council (produced the RDA), and N.I.H. (produced the Dietary Guidelines), d) colleges and universities, e) the food industry; domestic science and the food industry had a similar goal: to change the eating habits of America through innovation and progress.

Through these various institutions, the themes and values of the domestic science movement laid grip on the eating habits of America. Indeed, as will be shown, it is their legacy which informs how we think about and choose our foods, including salad.

2.3.1. What was legitimized?
2.3.1.0 Domestic science and tradition

The domestic scientists had a deep revulsion towards traditional cookery and the traditional in general (Mennell et al. 1992, Shapiro 1986, see Didsbury’s (1890) disdain for the “ignorance” of those on the Mayflower). The moral necessity of progress,
knowledge, and rational cookery rejected tradition (cf. Beecher 1841). For domestic science, femininity and cookery were not to be based in traditional domesticity but in universities and other (scientific/progressive) institutions (Shapiro 1986). Despite the domestic scientists’ disdain for the past’s traditional notions of cookery and housewifery, the past’s moral attachments to food and eating largely remained. In fact, they were for the most part directly imported from the traditional past. Plumptre’s (1810) “treatise on diet,” for example, tells us that “temperance and moderation in eating and drinking” (p. xviii) form the basis for a “moral order and rational happiness” (p. v). Shapiro (1986: 16), quoting Home (Sedgwick 1835), also provides insight on what the values of these scientists of the kitchen became: “punctuality, order, neatness, temperance, self-denial, kindness, generosity, and hospitality.”

Though domestic science drew on past discourses on morality, the legitimization of its moral platform was not the traditional, but rather, was the scientific, both in rhetoric and knowledge. In section 2.3.1.1 how scientific discourse reshaped the discourse on diet and food is discussed; in sections 2.3.1.2.0 and 2.3.1.2.1 how discourse on medicalized asceticism and moral personhood constructed and shaped the salad is discussed.

2.3.1.1. Nutritional framework: units of meaning

Nutritional science changed the way we approach food. The transition from a humourally based understanding of food and health to one based upon “the immutable theories of scientific dining” (Didsbury 1890: viii) engendered a different framework for perceiving and experiencing food. These changes provided criteria for constructing the causal linkage between food, disease, and personhood. During this time period the calorie and other food components were discovered and made quite familiar to the public by the publishing of the USDA’s food composition tables (Shapiro 1986). These nutritional reports articulated and circulated to the population at large the ‘ideal’ diet. Food was defined by domestic science not as social or magical, but as scientific/medical.

2.3.1.1.0 The checklist approach to diet: balance and composite

When analyzing humouralism we noted key differences with modern medical science (germ theory), one being humouralism’s emphasis balance. “Balance” was part of the larger philosophy, whereby all matter (including people and food) was composed of the four elements which were in a precarious and dynamic equilibrium. Man too was (in) a precarious balance, requiring constant vigilance against disequilibrium. Because food was constantly coming in and out of the body, and because foods were made predominantly of one kind of matter, food could cause (im)balance in the diet. Imbalance was illness, and humouralism aimed to “restore harmony, rather than act as lethal weapons against disease” (Craig 1995: 345) contra the weaponry approach of modern American biomedicine (Payer 1988).

Second, because humouralism had no replicable criterion to quantifiably determine the compositions of foods independent of subjective experience, its construction of the link between food and health remained, pragmatically, at the level of the food itself. That is to say that even though humouralism atomistically broke food into smaller parts, it had no method of identifying those parts in a systematic way. Therefore, food was the actual unit of health as it was the most sensorially salient/palpable. Thus, foods were prescribed to balance the diet and prevent illness, instead of, for example,
more/less protein, more/less vitamin B12, etc. Third, humoralism constructed the relationship between food and the body as one where not any one food was bad or good per se. Thus, the emphasis was on total diet, composed of different foods which could be used to balance that diet (i.e. the ratios between the qualities).

Nutritional science, like humoralism, atomizes food. However, its units (the calorie, protein, fat, carbohydrates, etc.) are: a) replicably identifiable empirically, and b) a subset of the total number of chemical structures. This shattering of food into identifiable atomic components shifts the emphasis from food as the unit of meaning to the food component as the unit of meaning. This provides a classificatory scheme whereby it is not the food per se which is good or bad, but rather what the food is composed of. Additionally then, it is not just the food that is used for some purpose, but what the food is made of that is used for some purpose.

Therefore, in contrast with the humoral balance between food types (the logic of oppositions) the emergence of nutritional science engenders a new kind of normative diet that specifies exactly what chemicals in what quantities are necessary. While they may not have known what each chemical did, they had established a framework wherein food was decomposable into parts such that certain chemicals were believed to perform some function in the body. Additionally, because the number of nutritional categories was a subset of the total number of chemical formulas (contra humoralism where all matter could be broken down into the four elements) there emerges a criterion for excluding food as non-nutritive. This ‘checklist’ approach to diet is reflected in RDA (Recommended Daily Allowances) labels on foods.

Within this approach, food charts (emergent during this time period, Turner 1984), and diet in general, took the form ‘if X then Y,’ whereby, if you ate food of chemical composition A (fulfilling the daily requirement of fat and iron for example) then you must fill the other daily requirements by eating foods with chemical compositions B, C, and D without exceeding the allotted daily requirements of fat and iron. Thus, each chemical necessary for human physiology was assigned a ‘slot’ (‘daily requirement’) to be filled by eating. The notion of oppositional balance (based on coldness, hotness, moistness, and dryness) was replaced by a balance based upon distinct categories of food components (proteins, fats, vitamins, etc.) required in specific amounts.

Thus, the virtues of a balanced diet in a nutritional framework are different from the balanced diet of humoralism precisely because the criteria for the calculability of ‘balance’ is based upon the ‘checklist’ approach to diet. That is, one does not eat meat, for example, in order to balance the effect of salad. However, one should eat meat to fulfill the daily protein requirement. In this way, it is not the state of the universe as constantly dynamic which is transcendent, but it is the requirements of the human body, and the human body itself, which are transcendent in static form. In this nutritional scientific discourse the body is not a balanced entity; it is an entity which has specific requirements which must be fulfilled in order to function normally. In essence, it isn’t balanced, but maintained. Thus, the modernization of the diet involved ‘discovering’ the transcendent Universal diet based on scientific principles. This “rational living,” it was said, would show that preferences for ‘unreasonable’ foods would disappear and that appetite, like the discovered nutritional requirements, would become alike for everyone (Shapiro 1986: 214).
The emergence of nutritional science was not, however, a punctuated event. What foods were composed of exactly and what each component did was not available all at once. Units were, and are, ‘discovered’ over time. For example, the vitamin was not discovered until some time after the turn of the century, and thus only appears in later texts (cf. MacLeod and Nason 1930, Piggly Wiggly 1927, Harris 1926). Texts from the 1890s and early 1900s have very few mentions of vitamins (cf. Child 1890, Beecher 1841). Because modernity and science have the belief in progress, the atomism of nutritional science is an iterated process. Chemicals can always be broken down further. Additionally, the method by which such knowledge accumulates is based upon newer and newer technologies. Thus, contrasting with humoralism, nutritional science is a constantly growing field with no end in sight, an *ad infinitum* subdividing of chemicals.

Within this framework not everything is explainable at any one moment, but everything is assumed to have an explanation. This contrasts with humoralism, for example, which has an all-encompassing knowledge framework (as opposed to a method) whereby all phenomena are explainable within that framework (Foster 1994). In such an all-encompassing explanatory system there is less *internal* pressure to expand the number of categories used to explain some reality; this explanatory system is held in stasis by the all-encompassing power to explain all phenomena. It is precisely external pressures (cf. bubonic plague, see Tuchman 1978) that undermined humoralism’s legitimacy.

In contrast, rather than undermining nutritional science’s legitimacy, constant contradictions with past knowledge actually strengthen it. That is, with each discovery there is progress in the science of food, where the new transcendent goodness or badness of food is located and where the new and ‘really true’ Truth is located. Thus, within this framework the unit of food could stand apart and have meaning decontextualized from the individual and his/her diet. This is markedly different from humoralism, in which the meaning of food is highly context-dependent (Craik 1995). With the context erased, and the ‘Truth’ regarding some substance exposed, the meaning of each food component could be fixed.

Because of the notion of a quantifiable amount of some chemical that the body needs (as opposed to a relational amount of food that the body needs) and the never ending shattering of food components, the perception of food and the units of food-meaning bifurcate from individual foods having individual effects on the body (cf. *Acetaria* (Evelyn: 1699)) into: 1) the food component (smaller than the food *qua* unit), and 2) the *summation* of those food components into a ‘checklist.’ This break into the larger and the smaller, in conjunction with the standardization of diet, provided the necessary framework from which our modern concept of salad exists. How this is articulated and presupposed in modern texts is discussed in sections 2.5.0.0 and 2.5.0.1.

This new classificatory system fueled and was fueled by the prevalent metaphors of the time. These metaphors shaped the perception and experience of food. First, recall that science *qua* method was one type of metaphor, as well as a model, for domesticity. Another metaphor of the time was the automobile metaphor (Payer 1988, see Ainsworth 1931, Macleod and Nason 1930 for examples). From this metaphor the body is thought of not just as a machine (not a new view) but also as a machine with a fuel requirement.

The car metaphor, by providing the notion of food as fuel, foregrounded the calorie as the primary criterion for evaluating the ‘value’ of food. That is, food could be broken up into how many calories it was worth. Food meaning was thus changed: it was
not simply a medical tool or a container of elements to balance the body; instead it was quantifiable nourishment whose function, analogous to that of the car, was to keep the body going. This provides the necessary framework to hierarchically organize foods by the amount of energy they provided (i.e. high energy food vs. low energy food). Additionally, the calorie was something that could be applied to other food components: fats and sugars could be represented as calories. Thus, the calorie, as a meta-nutritional quantification of food components, provided the standard unit by which to compare the value of all foods.

It should be noted that this metaphor provided, among other meanings, a potential for value attribution. Simply to say that the caloric existed is not to say that the caloric was imbued with a determinate meaning. For example, high calorie foods were seen by domestic scientists as a good value (Shapiro 1986), while modern texts equate high caloric foods with un-health (section 2.5). Even though the meaning of the calorie differed, what is important to note is that nutritional science, in conjunction with metaphors of the time, provided a framework, or set of criteria, by which to judge food, diet, lifestyle, and personhood. Thus, though the moral values attached to the calorie, to fat, etc. were not formed, the units by which such moral values were to be attached were coming into wider circulation.

2.3.1.1.1 Salad in the nutritional scientific framework

The nutritional science discourse had a number of effects on the meaning of salad. One, vitamins were not discovered for some time after the emergence of nutritional science. Thus, the ‘value’ of salad, known to be low in protein, fat, carbohydrates, and calories, was indeterminate. That is, salad was outside the framework of meaning which was used to understand foods and therefore was initially understood through its humoural function, mainly to balance hot foods (meats). In sum, salad was initially constructed by its binary opposition to meat (section 2.3.1.1.3), its connection to femininity (section 2.3.1.2.1.0), its role within the meal as peripheral, and its initial existence outside scientific understanding. All these factors imbued salad as non-food. It was conventionally eaten as food and yet not fully integratable into the new theory of food and diet.

Even with increased understanding of food composition, and thus an understanding of the nutritional properties of salad, salad still remained non-food. That is, because food was judged primarily upon the criterion of caloric value the salad, as low-caloric and low-fat, was as close to a non-food (scientifically) as possible while still being a food (socially). It occupied the liminal space between food (material, corporeal) and non-food (immaterial, non-corporeal), allowing a connection between the two. This connection was differently used than today (cf. section 2.5). Shapiro (1986) notes that salad was a food not for those who used their body (manual labor) but for those who used the mind (note the mind-body distinction). Note that the use of salad to become a slimmer person was not present in domestic science texts, but this slimming use of salad is rooted in and depends upon the connections engendered by a nutritional framework and a mind-body dualism. It is the association of salad with a kind of person from which the possibility of becoming that kind of person through salad consumption arose. However, the desire to become that kind of person (that is, the social valorizing of that type of person) is required to utilize and motivate such behaviors (see section 2.5.1).
Salad, when integrated into an understanding of food composition, was also characterized by its non-fueling yet physiologically based functions, i.e. those conferred by vitamins and roughage. The idea of salad as cleansing of the digestive system was not new (cf. Evelyn 1699, Plumtre 1810) though the vitamin was. The vitamin is a chemical substance intimately connected to foods, and yet separate from foods in that it provides no caloric content and is never converted into the body as matter the way, for example, proteins, fats, and sugars are. The vitamin, thus, is not inscribed upon the body unless in pathological deficiency/over-dosage, in contrast to fat and calories which can be “read off” the body.

In sum, salad within the nutritional science discourse is set up to be judged along several criteria all of which (potentially) motivate its non-food qualities. It is a food which exists on the fringes of the emergent discourse defining food.

2.3.1.1.2 \( f(\text{Meat}) = \text{Salad: the germ theory, control, and salad} \)

The opposition between meat products and vegetables has a long history going at least as far back as the Ancient Greek philosophers Pythagoras, Empedokles, and Porphyry (Osborne 1995, Evelyn 1699). This opposition has persisted, though modified by the beliefs of the time. For example, the binary pairing of meat and vegetables was constructed by domestic science texts based upon the emerging nutritional science discourse. Thus, protein became the criterion by which meats were differentiated from vegetables (Shapiro 1986) instead of by humoral qualities. The change was slightly more complex than a simple substitution, however, because protein was not an isolated unit, but instead was associated with, and implicated, a cluster of other nutritional meanings. Thus, protein, as criterion for evaluating food was extended past meat, though to be sure meat served and still serves as the exemplary high-protein food. This shift in focus provided a different conceptual framework and vocabulary to understand food, through which past values were brought to bear. Thus, the construction of salad, despite being changed by nutritional knowledge, remained a food opposed to meat.

From this opposition salad had a negative meaning (in de Saussure’s 1959 [1915] sense). That is, the meaning of salad was, in many ways, simply in relation to that of meat (Twigg 1983). Partly this was because nutritional science was initially unable to describe the properties of salad (they had not discovered the vitamins, see section 2.3.1.1.1)\(^7\). Consonant with salad’s opposition to meat is meat’s centrality to the meal and salad’s marginality. That is, salad existed as a side dish accompanying other dishes. Additionally, consonant with the salad-meat binary opposition is that salad is a clean food as opposed to meat which is not. If salad is defined primarily by its cleanliness and freshness, then the criterion by which salads are judged will be cleanliness and freshness. Not surprisingly, the “fresh salad” is the most common description of salad. The emphasis on freshness is also a product of the fact since salad is most often eaten raw, its freshness is more likely to be sensorially salient than meats which are mostly cooked, salted, smoked, or heavily spiced.

However, the values of purity and sterility regarding salad are not simply a function of the reactivity of salad in relation to meat. In general, Tannahill (1973: 323) suggests that America in particular has “always [been] more preoccupied with hygiene than other countries—perhaps because so many of her early settlers belonged to sects which held that cleanliness was inseparable from godliness.” Within the domestic
science movement and the culture at large the fetishization of cleanliness and sterility comes into sharp focus.

The notion of dirt and germs as evil was rooted in the emergent germ theory of disease (Payer 1988). Germs in this medical framework are imbued with the power of un-health. Because they exist outside the body in that which is dirty, cleanliness is equatable with health. Additionally, as discussed above, the virtues of purity and cleanliness were central to the food industry, which was trying to clean up its image and push newer technologically prepared products that were uniform and pure (see n. 39). In sum, the goal was to completely divorce food from human contact. In effect, one more step towards the banishment of the human body from the eating process and from the self (see section 2.3.1.2.0). This banishment, Shapiro (1986) notes, was part of a more general effort by domestic scientists to tame Nature via the isomorphic taming of the kitchen. This was reflected directly in the preparation of salads:

"Arrange the lettuce in a salad bowl, the outer leaves on the edge and so on, the small ones all in the middle and the edges up so that it will have the effect of a head of lettuce fully open. Put at the left of the hostess a small, shallow, fancy bowl in which to mix the dressing... At her right place the oil, vinegar, salt, pepper and mustard... Pour it over the lettuce, letting it touch every leaf if possible. Then with the salad spoon and fork, or two forks, if you have no salad set, turn the leaves over and over until all are until all are saturated with the dressing. After a little practice one may do this so deftly that the leaves will be left in nearly the same shape at first" (A presentation by Mrs. Lincoln to a Denver audience: quoted in Shapiro 1986: 96).

Child (1890: 73) recommends having "each leaf oiled separately with a brush, which is a very ideal way of proceeding." Some cooks even instructed cutting leaves of lettuce in "ribbons of uniform width" in order to be neatly arranged (Shapiro 1986). The pre-cut lettuce is also described by Harris (1926: 17) as "imperfect leaves." Additionally, Harris (1926: 14) advises: "Let the hands come in contact with salads as little as possible."

Salad, thus, came to represent a cleaner food which was an icon for order and control over the unclean and ever entropic world. It was a raw food—where in raw is symbolically associated with that outside culture (barbaric, uncontrolled, and untamed)—converted by manipulation of appearance into food under control (Shapiro 1986). Typically, cooking is used to transform food into that which is cultural. For the raw salad, however, it is not the cooking process per se, but the meticulous preparation which converts the salad from ‘Other’ to a symbol of control via the iconism of its preparation with ‘control’ (see Atkinson 1983).

2.3.1.2.0 Asceticism, gender, and the medicalization of moral personhood

In texts of the time (turn of 19th century), there is hardly ever any reference to the actual act of eating (Shapiro 1986). Though many references to cooking food, choosing foods, serving foods, and like exist, there are hardly any references to the tasting of food or the enjoyment of food. Food was not to be savored and enjoyed, but rather to be used to some end. When the appetite is discussed it is negatively valorized as unhealthy and disgusting. As Beecher (1841: 72) states:

"Very often, intemperance in eating produces immediate results, such as colic, headaches, pains of indigestion, and vertigo. But the more general result is, a gradual undermining of all parts of the human frame; thus imperceptibly shortening life, by a debilitated constitution, which is ready to yield at every point, to any uncommon risk of exposure. Thousands and thousands are passing out of the world, from diseases occasioned by exposures... It is owing to these considerations, that it becomes the duty of every woman, who has the responsibility of providing food for a family, to avoid a variety of tempting dishes.... How often is it the case, that persons, by the appearance of a
favorite article, are tempted to eat, merely to gratify the palate, when the stomach is already adequately supplied. All such intemperance wears on the constitution and shortens life. If not infrequently [sic] happens, that excess in eating produces a morbid appetite, which must constantly be denied.”

Child (1890: 194) similarly discusses the act of eating: “The material side of eating cannot be other than disagreeable if looked at from an absolute point of view, instead of from the point of view of usage and convenience.” Child, like Beecher, believes that at their core “food and the act of eating...are in themselves disgusting phenomena” (p. 193-4). However, because they are necessities we would be better off approaching them “without ostentation, and without false shame” (p. 194). Likewise, Sedgwick (1835) describes the ideal family, where, “the monster appetite was thus early tamed. Its pleasures were felt to be inferior pleasures- to be enjoyed socially and gratefully, but forbearingly” (Shapiro 1986: 17-18). Thus, even when mentioned food and eating qua corporeal acts are discussed with the aim of discouraging them as such. In sum, “intemperance in eating” was morally wrong and bad for one’s health.

This asceticism was particularly aimed towards the woman, whose moral inferiority historically was linked to her body and appetite (Bordo 1993, Leiwica 1999, Seidler 1987, Turner 1984). Thus, the appetite of the woman was discursively erased; or rather, it was deemed inappropriate and unfeminine. In short, the genderedness of food and its role was made explicit in texts that enjoyed wider circulation than ever before.

Not coincidentally, it was in areas which proudly adhered to a lifestyle of “plain living and high thinking” (Shapiro 1986: 49) and which held a general disdain for food where the first cooking schools of the time arose: New England. These cooking schools were aimed at reforming the American kitchen through educating the lower classes which were morally and intellectually degenerate due to their lack of scientific knowledge (Shapiro 1986). The determination of what bad foods vs. good foods (with regards to morality/intelligence) was made within the discourse on ‘scientific’ principles.

Note that lower classes of this time period included an increasing population of immigrants. These foreigners were often perceived as outside culture and humanity (‘the Other’). The reason for their barbarous nature was causally linked to their bad food and slovenly eating habits (Mennell et al. 1992, Shapiro 1986: 131). Thus, to change these sub-humans required first a change in what and how they ate. In sum, any and all stigmatized groups—people from rural areas, people from different geographic regions, minorities, the poor, immigrants, and even whole nations—were essentialized as inferior through the ‘scientific’ discourse on diet and morality. It was not (just) by social criteria or snobbishness that these groups were deviant or lower class, but by actual ‘medical’ reasons which were causally linked to these groups. That is, for domestic scientists there was a non socio-historical reason that was locatable within individuals for why inequality existed as it did. This physiological reason, diet, was amendable by a change in lifestyle, as dictated by their scientific knowledge; hence, their emphasis on education.

The goals of this movement, of course, were not to vilify these groups (though to be sure they did not valorize them), but rather to help them. Thus, for example, the purpose of Child’s (1890: viii) book is to “help increase in America a knowledge of the true principles of delicate feasting”, in order to “develop...intelligence and moral sensibility”, because “the hygiene of the stomach is also the hygiene of the mind and soul” (p. x, quoting T. de Banville).
The increasing use of medical terminology and knowledge to describe conditions of personhood and morality instead of humoral or religious discourses (Turner 1992, Turner 1984, Foucault 1965, Llewica 1999) was co-occurring with an increasingly industrialized and secularized American society (Helman 1994, Turner 1992). This discursive movement conflated the moral and the corporeal with the ‘objectively’ determinable knowledge of scientific inquiry. It was not just that “the virtue of the invisible soul became deducible from the signs of the external physique [and that] bodies came to be seen as windows to the self” (Llewica 1999: 42, also see Chapter 4 section 4.1 and Chapter 5 section 5.2), but also that the deduction of those signs was increasingly done by the medical/scientific gaze (Turner 1992). This discursive shift wasn’t a punctuated event, and thus the period of domestic science was the liminal space within which the medical/nutritional and the moral/corporeal were conflated. This is not to imply that humoral texts did not medicalize morality, for to be sure they did (section 2.1); rather, it is to say that the discourse surrounding morality in this time period began to incorporate and rely upon scientific discourse, which provided a vocabulary by which moral judgment could be made invisible and which was essentialized by reverence for the objectivity of the scientific. That is, the authority upon which morality was based was shifting.

Note the assumption within these texts is that there are Universals regarding the correctness and appropriateness of eating and cooking that can be identified and learned, and that are applicable to all individuals. That is, there exists an ‘ideal diet’ for all individuals based upon scientific knowledge. Without this knowledge one is not blissfully ignorant, but is actually harmful to those around them as well as to society as a whole (cf. Beecher 1841). Because poverty and deviancy were equated with lacking scientific knowledge regarding diet, cooking and eating were the road to morality and “rational living.” And because the family was constructed as the principle building block of the country and was centered around the meal, the family became an icon for the whole nation. That is, improvement in eating habits, which was mediated through the family institution, was an improvement in the future of the country. Thus, cookery was above mere preparation and consumption of meals, it intellectualized and transcended the corporeal and sensual aspects of eating.

The implicit and explicit female centeredness of this discourse was characterized not only by a rigid set of mores surrounding the meanings of food and eating, but also by the valorization of female asceticism. This asceticism was made attractive by the way it was discursively constructed in texts of the time (Shapiro 1986). First, cookery was put forth as: a) a challenging and intellectual task that required rigorous thought and a denial of bodily pleasures, b) critical for the moral future of the family and country, and thus c) was not common drudgery. That is, domesticity was a lofty mental task whose responsibility was great; it was not a lowly corporeal and perfunctory task. Additionally, it was presented as something uniquely feminine, that could really only be taken care of effectively by women as it was a woman’s domain. Thus, note that food was not just used as a medical tool, but also as a social tool because of its medical properties. This medico-social use of food is dependent upon: 1) a scientific-medical discourse and 2) the medicalization of (moral) personhood.

Domestic science, though aimed at the morally and culinarily impoverished lower classes was initially successful only with the middle and upper classes. Indeed, lower
class individuals were much less likely to be accepting of domestic science than the upper and middle classes, partially for the reason that “no cookbook, however economical, could supply the working wife with time, equipment or fuel” (Tannahill 1973: 372). Mennell et al. (1992) point out that currently there is a similar social distribution of ‘correct’ nutritional knowledge. Note that such health discourses were and are unevenly distributed socially, and as such, serve to index social class, and personhood and their psychological correlates (lazy, smart, etc.). That is, the rationality and healthfulness of food was connected with desirable persona (morally, intellectually, and monetarily).

Through the modernization of the American diet, gender and food were constructed such that food was imbued with deep moral meanings, and that the ideal woman was, effectively, without a body. Simply put, food consumption was unfeminine. Shapiro (1986: 72) states that though “slimmness and dieting did not become national passions until well into the 20th century...there was a long-standing assumption that well-bred women were creatures with light, disinterested eating habits.” This gendered connection between morality and the body has had a long history. Because the Nature of the woman was perceived as irrational, corporeal, and excessively passionate (sexually voracious), an ascetic diet, as a sign of abstemiousness and virginity (both highly valorized), was thus necessary to control the undesired aspects of the woman. These associations, as Bordo (1993) and Assiter (2000) point out, are still with us today. Thus, over a long history, the seductress archetype (negatively valorized) was associated with appetite. In opposition, the abstemious and virginal archetype (positively valorized) was characterized by lack of appetite. This idea of femininity as “light” is something that was made quite explicit in the literature of the time, where adjectives such as “dainty” and “delicate” were commonplace. Shapiro (1986) indicates that “dainty” and similar terms were used as indexes for femininity.

Despite this cultural-temporal continuity, how the discursively constructed femininity was achieved was mediated through co-occurring discourses (e.g. on nutritional science, on modernized domesticity) which themselves did not have a cultural continuity per se, but were emergent during this time period. This construction of gendered asceticism is crucial to the construction of salad both in domestic science texts and modern texts. In this section I have shown how the body, health, and diet were all discursively constructed with specific reference to femininity. It was shown that states of personhood and disease were equated in the context of medicine through food, whereby food was located within the discourse of nutritional science.

2.3.1.2.1. Salad as type of person

“Tell me what you eat. I will tell you what you are”
Brillat-Savarin, A priorisms IV

2.3.1.2.1.0 Salad as gendered

Within this period, in contrast to previous texts, salad becomes emblematic of ideal femininity. Domestic science was defining the ideal world with ‘science’, where the family was the keystone. The family’s success depended on its diet and temperance. Food preparation was exclusively the female’s role and the meal was the center of familial interaction (Mennell et al. 1992), yet women were expected to be detached from the food itself (Shapiro 1986). Foods for women that could be used by women to project femininity within a social context that frowned upon the female appetite were necessary. That is, the responsibility of food preparation and presentation coupled with the emphasis
on the feminine disinterest in eating required signs to project female personhood in order to simultaneously maintain both. Salad was/is one such performable sign.

One way salad took on its gendered meaning was through the belief that only the lady of the house was to prepare a salad (Shapiro 1986: 97):

"Surely no lady who has a hand and knows how to use it deftly and gracefully would be willing to relinquish this most fascinating part of the dinner service";

"I never allow a servant to touch the leaves of the salad I have served at table, for to have the salad to perfection the touch must be light, the fingers to trim and arrange must be nimble" (quotes from domestic scientists of the time).

Note the class distinction associated with salad. Additionally, salad preparation required a highly trained and knowledgable individual, in this case, the lady of the house. Thus, preparation of salad is one way through which the attractive and intellectual/rational aspects of femininity were coded in salad. That is, salad reflected the feminine image of the cook; it indexed the femininity of the cook by its iconic relationship to the schema of femininity.

However, that salad is feminine is of course not to say that from biological sex necessarily follows feminine behavior. This is precisely because femininity, as a semiotically projected (aspect of) ‘self’, is performable (Goffman 1967). And as McNay (1999) points out, it is because gender is performable that variance from normative schemata of personhood arises. That is, the performativity of femininity provides the criteria to judge how feminine someone/something is. Thus, to say that salad is gendered is to say that salad is one such way that femininity can be performed to create some social meaning (most usually that one is feminine). It is not that eating salad makes one by definition feminine, or that being feminine means you must eat salad. Rather, it is simply that to be feminine means to project femininity. This projection, of course, only occurs through semiotic media, and mainly through indexes accessible in interaction. Salad preparation and, as will be argued, salad consumption are both such indexes.

Another way that salad became an emblem of femininity was through its isomorphism(s) (iconicity) with other cultural schemata of femininity. One was through the discourse surrounding salad as decorative, ephemeral, frail, dainty, delicate, and creative (Shapiro 1986, see Child 1890). That is, the same words to describe salads were also words to describe ideal women. Partly this is because the main ingredients of salads, with which salad are readily identified (lettuce, tomatoes, etc.), are actually lighter than other foods. However, this cannot be the only reason as there are many light foods that are not gendered as such. Additionally, recall that the taming of salad (discussed above) represented one way that domestic science tried to ‘sell’ itself as intellectually challenging and stimulating to women. Thus, the elaboration and perfection-orientation of salad displaced the functional and the edible properties of salad. That is, the presentation and creativity of the salad became primary to its meaning. The idea of salad as “too artistic too eat" expresses this notion that salad was defined primarily by its non-food related qualities. It was to be looked at, and only secondarily (if at all), to be eaten and enjoyed. This is also reflected in later texts, cf. Corn Product Refinery Company (1949:11), where the cook is to “garnish salads for eye appeal...to accent the beauty of your salad.” As Harris (1926) says about “pretty salads” (p.7): “To make and to serve the salae, it is the art of arts” (p.31). Additionally, in Harris (1926) the salad is often described in terms of its attractiveness, or by the ways that one can make the salad more attractive; for example, serving it with chrysanthemums (p. 51). Thus, the salad
contained an appeal to women *qua* salad makers/servers that had no such appeal to those who would never prepare or serve it (i.e. men).

Salads were placed mainly within the category of side dish; they were not perceived to be enough to satisfy hunger. This is perfectly aligned with the (supposed) feminine disinterest in food. Thus, the woman who consumes salad is someone who doesn’t eat in order to allay hunger, precisely because she is someone who is not hungry (corporeal). This non-nutritive aspect of feminine food was also reflected in the idea that women ought to dislike meat (defined by its nutritive qualities) and have a taste for sweets (defined by their flavorful qualities) (Twigg 1983). This was so strong at the time that adolescent women suffered from epidemic levels of iron deficiency (Shapiro 1986). Additionally, the visually apprehensible effects of chlorosis (the “green sickness” due to iron deficiency) were considered beautiful at the time (Shapiro 1986).

This coding of food eating habits along the lines of masculine/feminine was quite overt in print media. Consider the following from a prize-winning essay published by *Good Housekeeping* (Jan. 9, 1886) entitled “How to eat, drink, and sleep as a Christian should” (quoted in Shapiro 1986: 101):

“[Young Tom] looks and acts just like a girl. It is a more difficult task for the little mother to feed him, and the father often looks up from his own dinner or thinks it over during his hard day’s work at the office, wondering if “mother” is on the right track. Both parents know that Tom should be helped up to a sturdy boyhood, not having all his girlish fancies indulged. How can they make him love the rare, juicy tender roast beef, and the hot baked potato that he now turns from, holding in his hunger until the pudding gets on the table?”

Thus, eating and looking like a girl are coupled. Moreover, eating like a girl includes dislike for traditional masculine staples (meat and potatoes) and indulgences in sweets. Additionally, the idea of restraining from certain foods in order to eat other indulgent feminine foods is clearly associated with how women eat. It is cause for concern for both parents, yet the mother takes the ultimate responsibility. We can see how a popularly circulated discourse clearly prescribes how (Natural) femininity is linked to diet in general and certain foods in particular.

Femininity was also constructed through depictions of masculine diet. For example, take the Boston Cooking School lecture entitled “What Husbands Like to Eat” (Shapiro 1986: 102). In this meal-demonstration, a heavy emphasis is placed on cheeses and meats. While a lettuce salad is served, it is introduced “weighed down with an oil-and-vinegar dressing to which a scoop of Colonel Skinner’s Chutney had been added.” Additionally, it was served with an entire baked ham which was to be passed, by the lecturer’s instructions, with the salad. In this case, we see that salad for men is passable only when accompanied by a meat dish, and only when it is associated with a ‘heavy’ dressing. That is, the meat and the dressing act to ‘masculinize’ the salad. In this Boston school lecture, salad=feminine, whereby dressing=masculine because it is not “dainty.” This is congruent with the idea that women should not be interested in taste, and dressing as an ‘taste additive’ represents one way for men to de-feminize some dish on the assumption that women should want to do the opposite. Note that the underlying presupposition that women should be without appetites is still with us today (cf. Grimm 1995, Bordo 1993, also see Chapters 4 and 5).

We might question why the caloric content of salad was not the primary criterion (like it was for other foods) for its meaning as feminine. The calorie was, after all, a publicly ratified unit of food composition. However, women and men, though expected
to eat differently, were expected (paradoxically) to eat the same number of calories (Shapiro 1986). The calorie as of yet had not taken on its role as meaning carrier to be used for weight-loss or weight-gain. However, salad was considered a ‘light’ food, and women, as delicate and fragile creatures, were expected to eat accordingly. Additionally, as previously noted, women were linked through appetite and diet to sexuality. Foods, that were light were virginal, non-corporeal, and thus, ideally feminine. Salad, as one such food, made quite a good fit, even if not along a caloric criterion, and actually independent of it. The caloric criterion, as we will see, becomes more important with time (section 2.5.4).

So far we have looked at femininity being constructed directly and indirectly through masculinity. However, in domestic science texts, the salad also exists in direct relation to the feminine ‘Other.’ That is, the barbarous woman who exists outside of ‘correct’ society. Helen Campbell, a dietary reformer of the times, characterizes such women raised in villages and farms in the following way: “Her teeth fall; her hair falls off; her skin grows leathery…Nine time out of ten she has never heard of salad, and is incapable of a soup, and her family subsist on fried meat, chiefly pork, and on pie and cake three times a day” (quoted in Shapiro 1986: 168). This construction is both the antithesis of ideal femininity as well as a criticism of the lower classes. Thus, femininity and sophistication, as correct and high class, are automatically associated with knowledge of salad. Salad is the quintessential food that identifies what a ‘true’ and ‘correct’ woman is. These farmwomen are not only unfeminine, they are also bad for society: the belief that these women have “delivered more children to the insane asylums than any other class of women and were themselves doomed to a living degeneracy” (ibid.) was commonplace. Thus, we see how femininity is performable through salad because of its linkage with certain types of gendered personae.

2.3.1.2.1.1 Other aspects of personhood: beyond the feminine

First, recall H. Campbell’s construction of the non-salad eater discussed in section 2.3.1.2.1.0 above. Sophistication, urban-residence, and use of scientific knowledge rather than (barbarous) traditional knowledge are explicitly linked with salad consumption. Additionally, medical and non-medical states are linked to knowledge of diet and salad (consumption). Also recall that salad was something only to be prepared by a ‘lady’, where what ‘a lady’ exactly means is not reducible to gender but also includes ‘not a servant.’ The salad was not to be handled by servants who had neither the ‘know how’ nor the necessary sophistication to prepare a salad in the correct way. This educated mind (as eater of salad) was also characterized by his/her sensitivity to detail and propriety (cf. n. 50).

This notion that salad was desirable and necessary for “rational living” was part of the larger standardization of diet (section 2.3.1.1). This movement naturalized food categories and behaviors surrounding those foods such that a transcendent diet was constructed/discovered. The type of person who didn’t eat this ideal diet was precisely the type of person to be looked down upon, because: a) he/she was ignorant and irrational, and b) his/her bad diet caused (and was caused by) his/her moral and social deviance. Thus, for example, alcoholism in lower classes was directly thought to be caused by an ‘unhealthy’ diet; that is, someone who was fed well wouldn’t turn to
alcoholism (Shapiro 1986). The marginalized were synonymous, among other things, with those who did not know how to eat healthily (section 2.3.1.2.0).

Thus, “good living” was reserved for the emerging middle class and the already present upper classes (Tannahill 1973, Mennell et al.1992, Shapiro 1986), partially for the reason that, for the middle class especially, diet was defined precisely in order to serve as “an indication of status” (Tannahill 1973: 368, see Crawford 1984 for discussion of this in modern American culture). The eater of salad was perceived to be a particular class of person; salad was for

“people who needed something other than blunt, substantial calories from their meal. Students, professionals, office employees, and others in the expanding white-collar class known as ‘brain-workers’ were supposed to prefer light, easily assimilated foods that would leave their minds clear and active. The presence of salad on a menu became an effective way to distinguish the meal as one meant for the wealthy, or at least the ambitious middle class, which could afford relatively expensive ingredient wrought into a cajoling design” (Shapiro 1986: 97).

As Harris (1926: 7) states, “the addition of a pretty salad to a menu...gives a refined, attractive appearance to the table” (my emphasis). In sum, the eater of salad was a privileged individual who was identified not by his/her body but by his/her mind (see section 2.5.4.1). That is, the educated wealthy were consumers of salads particularly because it was the mind that salad refreshed and not the lowly body. Note that the clarity conferred by salad exists in implicit opposition to unnamed foods which, by implication, are heavy and slothful (read: meats, which attend to the body at the price of the mind’s ability to function34). This ‘mind’ aspect of salad is also “cemented” by its legitimization as healthy, which was determined, not by traditional knowledge, but by the emergent nutritional science discourse. Thus, the salad is constructed as healthy through the rational criteria provided by nutritional science35. This differential distribution of personhood was directly related to the distribution of nutritional knowledge, which in turn was not independent of class structure.

This notion of salad as non-corporeal leads to a crucial point, whose import is clear in modern texts (section 2.5): salad is a food whose use is that of non-food (see section 2.3.1.1.2). That is, salad is defined by its non-foodness36. This construction is contingent upon several discourses. First, note that salad is identified in domestic science texts with the non-corporeal aspects of the mind-body dualism, made famous by Descartes (see Assiter 2000), and whose roots can be traced to Plato (cf. Plato 1981, 1989) and followed through Augustine (Bordo 1988). The other side of this duality, the corporeal, is an impediment to rationality and to Truth. It is defined as outside the ‘real’ self; that is, it is the ‘Other’ (Assiter 2000). Thus, the salad is aligned with that which is not bodily (material); it is aligned with the essence of the self. Thus, the material or bodily aspects of: the salad, if described in these texts, do not emphasize bodily growth (like descriptions of meat and dairy for example), but rather emphasize the maintenance of microscopic physio-chemical reactions (i.e. vitamins), or the quality of the ingredients (which are both para-corporeal).

Because salad was non-food, and food was constructed as utilitarian, salad was often perceived to be a dietary luxury. Because salad was not perceived to be calorically necessary for a meal, those who ate salad were indexed either as well-nourished such that they could enjoy the salad without worrying about calorie deficiency, thereby being allowed to attend to the more sophisticated aspects of the dining experience (cf. Child 1890), or disinterested in eating. In summary, salad was “a fragile, leafy interlude that
was something of a nutritional frill...the salad course had a non-nutritive function: it enhance the femininity of the whole meal and made the cook herself more socially palatable” (Shapiro 1986: 100).

2.3.2 Notes on domestic science

By comparing texts from the 17th century to domestic science texts, the changing meaning of salad was deconstructed. The discursive changes necessary for domestic science’s construction of salad were by no means independent of each other or past discourses. They also did not change as integrated wholes, but rather emerged as a series of historically distinguishable, yet interrelated, events.

The change from humoralism to nutritional science had a large effect on the meaning of food in general and salad specifically. The emergent scientific/medical discourse constructed diet as a nutrient-based checklist (contra diet as balanced in humoralism). As we will see, this discursive shift, though necessary for the changing meanings of salad, was not sufficient to account for salad’s modern meanings. The connections between food and health (both mental and physical), temperance as moral, indulgence as immoral, and the Female requiring vigilant self-control have been constant through the texts analyzed. What was novel, however, was the emergence of a new medical-scientific discourse used to describe, explain, and legitimate morality. This discourse, as we will see, is used in future texts to describe states of moral personhood without ever referring to morality at all.

With industrialization, an increase in media discourse circulation, an increase in literacy, and domestic science’s legitimization in other authoritative discourses, domestic science had a wider distribution both in gross number and in demographic distribution. The interaction of all these factors foregrounded salad as a type of non-food, usable in the performance of gender, education, sophistication, morality, and class. Moreover, the nutritional science framework positioned salad in a way which is crucial, as we will see, for its semiotic construction in future texts. Note that the power/knowledge involved in these regimes of Truth and self-control are dependent upon the status of discourses as: a) legitimate and authoritative, and b) widely disseminated.

2.4 Post-domestic science

I will now turn my attention to several texts following the domestic science movement proper but still before current times (Point X). These texts represent the absorption and presupposition of the values of domestic science. More interestingly, however, are the hints of change regarding the meaning of salad in modern texts.

In contrast with domestic science texts, these texts do not have the urgency of reform that were characteristic of past texts with their didactic lessons on diet and morality. This is not to say that they are not there of course. With the success of domestic science to wedge itself into American consciousness the values and mores of domestic science were commonsense, presupposed, and thus largely unstated. The Piggly Wiggly Cook Book: All Over the World (1927) provides us with a great example of a post-domestic science text, exhibiting how many aspects of domestic science were integrated into American life after the ‘fad’ of domestic science: conflation of food science and the food industry, the use of scientific nutritional categories (vitamins, minerals, fats, carbohydrates, etc.) connected to health states (beriberi, scurvy, rickets,
anemia) and states of personhood (langor, being overweight/underweight\textsuperscript{28}), and an emphasis on the purity and freshness of products\textsuperscript{39}.

An interesting change is the status of salad as a main dish at quasi-meal times. This placement of salad is not seen in any past texts. Thus, in \textit{Piggly Wiggly} (1927) for example, the salad occupies the central slot for the ‘5 O’ Clock Tea.’ Other examples of this change in placement include Harris’ (1926) and Corn Products Refinery Company’s (1949) discussions of salads. The salad moves into a main dish position, often at a “luncheon”\textsuperscript{240} (cf. Harris’ 1926 chapter on luncheon salads, also see Corn Product Refinery Company 1949, Piggly Wiggly 1927, and Bradley 1928). By this gradual movement through quasi-meals, salad still retains its “light” meaning as it is the center of “light” meals.

Thus, salad takes on its main dish status in post-domestic texts when the meal is not judged by the criterion of daily nourishment (gauged in nutritional science units). That is, it is only in the peripheral (light) meals, which are primarily social, that the salad can function as the central dish in the stead of other typical main dishes (e.g. meat dishes). It is when the perceived level of nutriment associated with the meal is at the perceived level of nutriment of the salad that the salad can be used as the main dish. This type of reasoning is also used in more modern texts, though in a different fashion (section 2.5.4.0). Additionally, the temporal placement of the salad within the day \textit{qua} main dish (i.e. lunch time) is dependent upon a culture which does not emphasize lunch as the main meal of the day, but rather emphasizes dinner (partly because of the modern work schedule).

To recapitulate: this chapter has tracked the meaning-movement of salad as a function of different discursive formations within which the salad is semiotically imbued with meaning. These changing discourses (medical, moral, and corporeal) co-occur(red) with the relatively stable/constant discourses on gender and the mind-body dualism. Different texts are located at different locations within this ‘discursive field’ (discussed in section 1.1). Figure 3 summarizes the different ‘coordinates’ of some of the texts discussed so far:

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|l|l|l|}
\hline
\textbf{Text} & \textbf{Coordinates (X, Y, Z)} & \textbf{AXES} \\
\hline
\textit{Acetaria} (1699) & (H, N-M, ASC) & X: H= humoral, N= nutritional science \\
\textit{Domestic Management} (1810) & (H/N, N-M, ASC) & Y: N-M= non-secular moral, S-M= secular moral \\
Domestic Science Texts (turn of & (N, N-M/S-M, ASC) & Z: ASC= asceticism, AES= aesthetic body \\
the 19\textsuperscript{th} century)* & & \\
\textit{Piggly Wiggly} (1927) & (N, SM, AES/ASC**) & \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Figure 3}
\end{table}

* Domestic Science Texts= \textit{Delicate Feasting} (1890), Beecher (1841), Mann (1860), Harris (1926), see Shapiro (1986), Mennell et al 1992. Tannahill (1973)

** \textit{Piggly Wiggly} has hints (in the form of advertisements) of the aesthetic body, though not to the extent that we will see in more modern texts. It has little mention of asceticism \textit{per se}.

‘Spatially,’ we can ‘linearize’ this discursive movement (Figure 4):
2.5 Point X: modern texts

In this section I will discuss texts from modern times, heavily drawing on recent texts (1999-2000). These texts construct diet, and salad in particular, through: $X =$ nutritional science, $Y =$ the use of an implicit vocabulary to describe morality based on medical categories, and $Z =$ an emphasis on control of the body as aesthetic.

2.5.0 Modern medicine: nutritional science

2.5.0.0 Atomization of food

Since domestic science, the experience of food has been increasingly filtered through the lexicon of nutritional science. This vocabulary has expanded considerably, including terms and distinctions that did not exist in domestic science. Because of a supposedly all-encompassing replicable method for discovering facts and uncovering relationships, the lexical register of nutritional science is constantly being expanded. This nutritional scientific framework is the way that the salad is experienced, textually and phenomenologically.

Consider the following articles from *Nutrition Today* (July 1999) entitled “Salad Dressing is Good for You (Nurse’s Health Study)” and *Prevention* (Nov. 1999) entitled “Give Up Naked Salads and You May Save Your Life! (oil-based salad dressings may reduce heart attacks).” These articles inform us that contrary to previous belief, salad dressing can be “good for you.” Though oil-based dressings are “bad” for one’s health because of their high-fat content, oil-based salad dressings “can [also] cut your risk of dying from a heart attack in half” (*Prevention* Nov. 1999). They go on to say that “good” fat, “alpha linoleic acid, an omega-3 fatty acid, had protective effects against heart disease” in a study of nurses’ diets (*Nutrition Today* July 1999). Thus, note the
distinction between “good” fat (mono- or un-saturated fat, also called “healthy fat”) and “bad” fat (saturated fat) is a concern for women (cf. *Sports Illustrated for Women, 4/27/00*). Nutrition and diet are refined by increasingly finer distinctions based upon newer subdivisions of nutritional categories, forming a new codex of advanced casuistry, constantly outstripping past discourses on nutrition, diet, and propriety (see section 2.5.2).

This constantly changing corpus of knowledge on the ‘ideal diet’ is metadiscursively commented on by *Prevention* (Nov. 1999): “For years we’ve been told to reduce the fat in our diets. But by giving up dressings made with oil, we inadvertently abandoned a major source of ‘good’ fat.” Who is ‘we’? By and large, the readership of this magazine is female. That is, women have been told fat=bad. However, now let it be known that ‘we’ women can have fat and not feel bad about it: “Do you use fat-free salad dressing but long for the real thing? Then you’ll love this: An important study of more than 76,000 nurses…” (*Prevention* Nov. 1999). Notice how ‘longing’ is linked with dishes with fat (also see Bordo’s 1993 discussion) and with bad-health.

Of course, even though oil-based salad dressings are “good” for you, in the end it is calorie and fat content that are central to the modern diet. Thus, *Prevention* (Nov. 1999) tells us to “keep the following advice in mind: don’t go hog-wild. ALA [alpha linoleic acid]- rich foods are high-cal food, so keep portions small. When you add some to your daily menu, you have to subtract calories elsewhere.” The centrality of calories and fat will be returned to in later sections. Note how over-eating (of fat *qua* caloric) is typified as animalistic (that is, opposite of Culture).

The hegemony of this the modernist discourse over food and eating is such that even challenges to it are subsumed by it. For example, descriptors such as “real” (“real salad dressing”) are posed in opposition to “fat-free.” Thus, there is an implicit commentary upon the status of ‘tampered with’ foods as un-Natural. This discourse of Naturalness vs. artificiality is a challenge to the modernist values of science and progress. This challenge resists modernist values and yet is constrained by the methods and vocabulary provided by nutritional science discourse (also see Budra 2000), and thus, rather than moving outside such a modernist nutritional framework, even challenges are retained within the atomization of food. Indeed, food and eating are discursively constructed almost exclusively in terms of nutritional categories.

Salad and salad dressing are thus defined by their caloric and fat content. Note the emphasis by McDonald’s on the low-calorie McSalad Shakers in its “Nutritionist-McDonald’s USA” webpage. This webpage is set up in a question and answer format. The ‘question’ “I’m on a low fat diet…what can I eat at McDonald’s?” is answered with, among other things, “a freshly tossed salad.” Later in the webpage it is asked: “I’m looking for a ‘light’ lunch or dinner. What is recommended?” The answer is in the form of “meal combinations” that “contain less than one-third of the daily values for [total] fat and saturated fat”, including: 1) the Garden McSalad Shaker, Fat-Free Herb Vinaigrette Dressing, Croutons, Lowfat Apple Bran Muffin, and medium Ice Tea, and 2) Grilled Chicken Caesar McSalad Shaker, Red French Reduced Calorie Dressing, 1% Lowfat Milk. Next to each meal combination the total fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, sodium, calories, and calories from fat are listed. Within texts of this time, as I have shown, the salad is constructed as and characterized by its low-calorie, low-fat, and thus healthy status.
If salad were not presupposed to be a healthy low-fat, low-calorie food, then articles such as “Salads make the meal: a low-fat diet means fewer calories and less cholesterol” (Parents Magazine June 1993) could not claim that “Healthy salad” is not a redundancy”, where ‘healthy’ is defined through fat and calories. Only if this meaning of salad qua healthy (low-fat, low-calorie) was assumed could we be reminded as such. That is, “a salad can contain a couple of healthy ingredients but still be unacceptably--and unnecessarily--high in fat and relatively low in nutrition. The best salad, however, is a satisfying meal full of appetite appeal, bursting with fresh flavor as well as nutritional value, and containing only a scant amount of fat.” Again, food is broken down into nutritional units. Note that high-fat content is judged quasi-morally (“unacceptably high in fat”) and quasi-functionally (“unnecessarily high in fat”).

The article proceeds to say that “Fat is an important nutrient; we cannot live without it”, but then to put it in its place. It atomizes fat, separating the “good fat” from the “bad fat”, whereby “bad” fat is to “be eaten in modest amounts.” Fat is then linked to weight-loss: “These days, most of us know that the buzzword for weight loss (and weight maintenance) is ‘fat’ and less of it.” Notice that monitoring fat content isn’t just something for the dieter anymore, but is the concern of everyone (for “weight maintenance”). That is, the construction of ‘correct’ and ‘healthy’ behavior involves less fat in order to stay the way we are (a paradoxical account of weight-maintenance indeed). The article proceeds to give methods to limit the fat content of salads, increasing the salad’s health qualities. Note how this framework is also part of the emergence of an increasingly ‘(self-)discipline’ oriented society (cf. Foucault 1977b: 180-181, Turner 1984) whereby nutrition and food, like the discipline of institutions such as the school, is located within a ‘micro-economy’ of punishments and indulgences. That is, like the prison, the school, and the hospital, modern nutritional discourse constructs the body through its (arbitrarily) quantifiable micro-economy, controlling the body in the most corporeal and palpable way (i.e. ‘watching what we eat’) via techniques whose locus of power is opaque (cf. Foucault 1977b). This discipline, in hegemonic fashion, is self-administered and thus is a form of self-surveillance; note, for example how each article is addressed to the individual to be carried out on themselves.

In sum, within the modern discursive field, salad, like all other foods, is atomized into particular components which are imbued with meaning. Because health is explicitly equated with food and diet, this atomization of food engenders an atomization of health. That is, each food component is linked to some aspect of health and physiology. How these components are reorganized into a checklist diet (see section 2.3.1.1.0) by modern texts is discussed in section 2.5.0.1.

2.5.0.1 The checklist approach and the balanced diet

In section 2.3.1.1.0 the conditions that engendered the checklist approach to diet were discussed. In this section I will show how such a checklist approach shapes the (traditional) wide-spread notion of ‘balance’ as ‘healthy’”. As we will see, the scientific-medical discourse tropically formulates ‘balance’ to the end of rhetorically equating salad, healthfulness, and low-fat/low-calorie.

In modern texts the body is implicitly constructed as an object with a Natural healthy state. Because every physiological function in the body has a ‘normal’ state, and diet provides the nutrients and fuel for such a ‘normal’ state, there exists, therefore, a
Natural diet to maintain that normalcy. Additionally, because nutritional science has atomized food into a series of identifiable nutrients, diet is atomized in terms of these nutrients; and not just by nutrients, but by the correct amount (a quantifiable number) of those nutrients\(^{46}\). Thus, the criterion for ‘balance’ is to fill each ‘slot.’ Once one ‘daily requirement’ has been ‘checked off’, the diet should be ‘balanced’ by other foods which fill other slots while not overfilling the already ‘checked off’ nutrients\(^{46}\). This balance-logic often takes the form of ‘if X then Y’, where X is some food or calories/nutrient, and Y is the ‘balancing food.’ Thus, “when you add some [ALA-rich foods] to your daily menu, you have to subtract calories elsewhere. For example, if you add 2 tablespoons of regular ranch dressing (170 calories), reduce your pasta by ½ cup (100 calories) and have one less slice of bread (70 calories)” (Prevention Nov. 1999), or “If you give into temptation, just make sure that your next meal is lighter” (Good Housekeeping “Energy Makeover Quiz—Tips to help you beat fatigue”). Note this advice (Good Housekeeping “Weight Loss Secrets from Big-Time Losers—Have your treat and eat it too”):

“Balance high-cal/high fat foods with nutritious ones.
For Kathleen Ortwein, 51, of San Diego, indulgences vary—... Her strategy:
‘I make up for fat indulgences on one day by eating fewer fat grams the next.’”

“Balance” is used so much as a descriptor of the healthy and correct diet, that it has become an idiomatic index signaling not balance per se, but the essence of health and the notion that, as a dieter, ‘you can eat whatever you want’ (as long as it is conforms to the correct checklist framework). It is often used to temper prescriptive advice by invoking notions of health and necessity, and by making salient that it is still okay to eat whatever one wants. For example, Good Housekeeping “The Bottom Line—Eating Smart” is about getting rid of cellulite. Their prescriptive advice is “don’t put on pounds...once you create fat cells, they never disappear. So stick to a balanced menu that’s low in fat” (my emphasis). As this example shows, ‘balance’ can also be used as a euphemism for ‘don’t eat too much (fat) = healthy.\(^{47}\) The equation of low-fat, health, and balance (where ‘balance’ is an ‘empty’ term indexing low-fat and health) is also used in the McDonald’s website. Returning to the question-answer pairs from McDonald’s (2000) “Nutritionist-USA” webpage:

1 “Q. I’m on a low fat diet...what can I eat at McDonald’s?
A. All McDonald’s menu items can fit into a balanced diet and we offer a number of menu items that fit especially within a lower fat diet. These include a lowfat apple bran muffin or hotcakes and syrup for breakfast and for lunch or dinner a regular hamburger, a Chicken McGrill sandwich without mayo or a freshly tossed salad” (my emphasis).

2 “Q. How does McDonald’s fit into a healthful eating plan?
A. All foods can fit into a healthful eating plan, because it’s the total diet that counts...there are no good or bad foods. Balance, variety and moderation are smart concepts to follow when planning a diet. Also, getting the facts about our menu will help you plan well-balanced meals that will fit within a healthful diet. The next time you visit McDonald’s, look at the nutrition poster or ask for a brochure about our foods” (my emphasis).

The first question asks about a low-fat diet and is answered with a ‘balanced’ diet. This metrical substitution assumes, and thus formulates, their equivalence. Likewise, the second question asks about health and is answered with balance. Interestingly and perhaps not coincidentally, the “smart” concepts of “balance, variety, and moderation” are also the three concepts of health that 95% of the respondents to a survey commissioned by the American Dietetic Association (ADA) and the International Food Information Council (IFIC) viewed as “keys to healthy eating” (FDA Consumer, June
1990). Thus we see that health, low-fat, and balance are all used interchangeably. Additionally note that a “freshly tossed salad” is one such item usable within the following equations: balanced = healthy = moderate = smart = low-fat diet. Indeed, the salad is all of these: a) it is healthy\textsuperscript{48} b) it is low-fat, c) moderate, d) smart, and e) part of a balanced diet.

As the texts analyzed show, food and diet are defined by their chemical/nutritional composition, primarily fats and calories. Food and diet are increasingly atomized into smaller and smaller subdivisions. This approach is contingent upon the emergence of a nutritional science which can identify such chemicals replicably independent of subjective reporting. Such a perspective of food is not possible in a humoural framework, but rather depends wholly on a science of food. However, the emergence of such a science cannot tell us why fat and calories, and not other food subdivisions which are just as crucial to bodily function, are fetishized. To answer this question requires appealing to the separate, but related, discourses on the aesthetic body, medicalized morality, and gender.

2.5.1 The aesthetic body

As many have observed, the last century (particularly since World War II) in the United States has been accompanied with an increasingly thin ideal female body (see Lelwica 1999, Borzekowski et al. 2000, Bordo 1993, Nichter and Nichter 1991, Becker 1995). This emphasis on the body as aesthetic rather than as sign of religious asceticism is a trend connected to an increasingly consumer culture\textsuperscript{49} (Turner 1992, Turner 1984, Falk 1994, Nichter and Nichter 1991). This modern aesthetic body is defined by the conflation of discourses on beauty, health, fitness, and thinness (see Glassner 1990).

Mennell et al. (1992) speculates that this positive valorization of thinness is rooted in the changing social distribution of food during the 20th century. That is, when food supplies were scarce the sign of wealth and prosperity (and thus health) was being ‘overweight,’ while the mark of poverty (and thus unhealthiness) was thinness. With the increased sophistication of food technology came the decrease in food scarcity, and thus the thin body came to serve as a sign of being upper class (those who could afford gyms, ‘fresh’ foods [non-processed high-calorie/fat foods], etc.), while being overweight was a sign of being lower class. This economic explanation, however, cannot answer why it is predominantly women who are targeted by this aestheticism. The positive value of the thin body cannot be reduced to this economic explanation. Rather, we must locate this trend within a greater discourse on the body through history (Assiter 2000, Lelwica 1999, Bordo 1993, Seidler 1987) whereby the female body is constructed within a discourse of desire and self-control (see section 2.5.3). Additionally, this overly simplistic explanation of the rise of the thin aesthetic body is on shaky historical ground, as Girard (2000) argues. For Girard, the belief that the past was filled with food scarcity is a retrospective distortion. Thus, we see that an analysis into the thin aesthetic cannot be reduced to food availability. An exploration of this topic is discussed in Part II; however, suffice to say, there has been in recent years an increased emphasis on weight and weight-loss. There are an unreal number of articles, products, and magazines devoted exclusively to weight-loss and dieting. And within the texts examined in my research, every article on dieting and weight-loss presupposes that weight-loss and thinness are
desirable across the board. It is not a matter of discursive interest, but is strictly assumed by the authors.

The value of thinness and weight-loss are mediated within the discourse of nutritional science. It is precisely within this framework that “high-fat foods...are your enemy in the battle against cellulite” (Good Housekeeping “The Bottom Line-Eating Smart”). Consider the statistics (Burden 1989, also see Nichter and Nichter 1991) that the number of consumers of low-calorie foods and drinks had doubled since 1979, increasing 15 million from 1986-1989; “Twenty years ago, this kind of calorie counting would have been considered dieting”, says clinical psychologist John Foreyt, “But now dieting is perceived as a temporary weight-control program rather than a way of life.” Additionally, Burden (1989) reports that “keeping up an attractive physical appearance was another popular reason given for counting calories.”

Weight-loss, in addition to being couched within the aesthetic discourse of a slim body, is discussed in the context of health (Glassner 1990, Crawford 1984, Nichter and Nichter 1991, Eskes ct. al 1998, Kirk and Colquhoun 1989). As Turner (1992) suggests, this may be linked to an increase in chronic diseases in modern societies which are largely untreatable by biomedicine. These diseases are not mono-causal or easily explained within a medical theory designed for acute infectious disease, and thus such diseases come to be linked quite often with notions of lifestyle, specifically diet (Crawford 1984). “Diet and lifestyle” (see New York Times Sunday 4/28/00) are often used as a pair as the analysis of domestic science and humoural texts also showed. For example, authoritative institutions on diet and nutrition such as the USDA emphasize Americans aiming for a “healthy weight”, with a “diet that is low in saturated fat and cholesterol and moderate in total fat” (USDA 2000) a message in response to studies which connect diet and chronic disease, and conclude that “Americans need better diet” (New York Times Sunday 4/28/00).

Such medical information is often widely disseminated by companies whose profits depend on weight-loss as aesthetic. Thus, consider the following Weight Watchers press release subtitled “Program innovation for Year 2000 targets an initial 10% weight loss, which can result in significant psychological and health benefits” (Weight Watchers: “Weight Watchers ‘the 10% difference?’ is a whole new approach to dieting”):

“By achieving this realistic goal and experiencing its positive results, good feelings kick in early,” said Karen Miller-Kovach, chief scientist for Weight Watchers International. ‘Cosmetic changes that accompany a 10% weight loss, like dropping one or two dress sizes, and the health benefits are highly motivating.’”

The press release goes on to say that

“research has shown that there are significant health benefits from a 10% weight reduction, such as lowering blood pressure and blood cholesterol... That’s why when the National Institute of Health issued the first federal obesity clinical guidelines in June 1998, they recommended that overweight Americans make their initial weight loss goal to lose 10% of their body weight” (my emphasis).

Thus, note how weight-loss as aesthetic is couched in a medical register and voice. “Cosmetic changes” that come with “the health benefits” of losing weight, put in units of dress sizes, are “highly motivating”; read: women who come to Weight Watchers rightly want to lose weight to look better, p.s. it also happens to have health benefits. It is not simply, as Williams (1997: 1042) puts it, that we have a “tendency to ‘confuse beauty with health’”; rather, it is that the two are conflated discursively.
However individual-specific such recommendations are (by height, body-mass index, etc.), they are generally reported and experienced as decontextualizable dicta for all individuals. Thus, consider the following (Sports Illustrated for Women 4/12/00):

"Jennifer Jones, an exercise-science major at North Carolina, was eager to eat right to stay healthy. Having learned that Americans consume too much fat, she cut back on the fat in her diet. 'I was serious about not eating anything bad for me,' says Jones."

First, it is (metrically) presupposed that fat is bad/unhealthy, and that J. Jones is one of the individuals who "need[s] a better diet." Weight and fatness become emblems of both proper care of the body as well as beauty. Thus, we see how the discourse on asceticism has been absorbed and conflated into a discourse on the healthy and aesthetic body, often in the form of youthful (read: more beautiful) longevity (Turner 1984). It is this emphasis on health qua proper care of the self that is the hinge upon which valorizations of personhood as (im)moral are made (section 2.5.2).

2.5.2 The modern morality of personhood: secular and medical

Many have observed the transition in modern societies of the discourse on morality and personhood from authoritatively rooted in religion to medicine and science (Turner 1992, 1984, Bordo 1993, Martin 1998, Nichter and Nichter 1991, Foucault 1965). By virtue of its perception as perspective and bias independent, nutritional science makes ascriptions of morality and personhood linguistically non-transparent and implicit.

Idioms such as ‘your body is a temple’ belie the use of the body as sign of self-respect and decency (see section 2.5.1, Crawford 1984, Foucault 1980); it is the slovenly, debauched, and idle who are overweight (Turner 1992, Crawford 1984, Nichter and Nichter 1991, Falk 1994, Iancu et. al 1997, Kirk and Colquhoun 1989). This starts quite early in socialization:

"Wooley and Wooley (1979) examined the stigma and hatred suffered by obese children. They report that ‘the child whose build is socially ‘deviant’ comes early in life to be regarded by others as responsible for his/her condition and deserving of social disapproval, and sooner or later, is subjected to pressures to restrict food intake in order to ‘correct’ his/her condition. Failure to do so is seen as ‘weakness, wanting to be fat’ or even as a masochistic desire for rejection.' The authors emphasize the hatred expressed towards obese children by other children and adults. The effect of this carries on to adult life so that anti-fat attitudes learned in childhood form the basis for self-hatred in those who become obese in later years, as well as providing anxiety and self-doubt in others who live with the fear of becoming obese’ (Martin 1989: 262).

"Millions of three- and four-year-old girls equate fat with ‘badness’ even before they can read. Katie will probably be on a self-imposed diet by the time she is nine (four out of five fourth-grade girls are), and by the time she hits puberty will react to her body filling out with a distress that ‘gradually gives way to disgust’ (Heyn 1989, quoted in Nichter and Nichter 1991: 259).

These sentiments, perhaps not as explicitly formulated by the authors above, are presupposed in the texts analyzed (as well as in anorectic’s and normals’ discourse, Chesters 1994).

In addition to the body acting as window to morality (Lelewica 1999, Crawford 1984), eating habits and food choices are also connected to morality and rationality\(^1\). Note that the connection of food to morality is not new\(^2\). However, its discursive formulation is. Thus, with an increasingly sophisticated and valorized scientific register, it can be described and explained why individuals are overweight without ever using
overtly morally laden terms. That is, for example, ‘lazy’ has no quantifiable scientific unit while ‘weight’/’fat’ as mediated through nutritional science does. Thus, moral descriptions can be made through the scientific register, which connotes objective and interest-free (read: value-free) meanings. These valorizing terms are thus, on the surface, opaque; that is, there is no semantically (i.e. dictionary) based reason why these terms are moralizing. However, by the discursive presupposing of wider cultural values, to those within the text the implications are perfectly clear.

The carrier of immorality, as mentioned above, has become fat— as substance located in foods, as a descriptor of the body, and as persona—and to an extent the calorie insofar as fat(ness) is expressible in terms of calories. As Page Love, nutritionist cited in Sports Illustrated for Women’s article (4/12/00) “Why fat is your friend” reflects, “An unbelievable amount of attention is given to appearance... People look at the body type and blame fat [consumption] if it is not perfect.” The question is, blame fat (and metonymically ‘them’=the fat) for what? This presupposition is precisely how moral descriptors are made without ever seeming like moral descriptors.

Often the moralization of foods is done by drawing iconic relationships between types of people and their food habits, a technique done in texts from all time periods analyzed thus far. One way this happens is through the use of tropes such as “Eating Smart” and “Eating Right” (Special to the Washington Post 11/21/00, Good Housekeeping “The Bottom Line-Eating Smart”, Good Housekeeping “Drop Those Last 10 lbs.—Eating Smart”) which connect eating ‘healthy’ (low-fat) with rationality (i.e. that which is based on nutritional science). Let’s take a more explicit formulation, found in “Shoppers Hungry for Health” (Brandweek Sept.1999). In this article, survey results are discussed about “the Growing Self-Care Movement.” The article outlines the four types of respondents. One such categories is

“the Indifferents who are... uh, yeah—and don’t go trying to give them nutritional advice or health-beenie-boosted products. They don’t care, OK? They will just munch louder on their Sugar Bowl’s cereal, or whatever it is they eat, because they tend to disbelieve ‘it is very likely that foods like fruits, vegetables and grains contain substances that can prevent disease’ and further, ‘they are tired of experts telling them what to eat.’”

Another such category is

“the Young & Healthy segment. These robust, if lazy, whippersnappers (mostly Gen Xers) think healthful foods cost more, limit their choices of tasty treats and ‘aren’t convenient to make.’ Apparently, they are not yet aware that fruits, veggies and grains may be eaten ‘as is,’ or perhaps they find turning on the microwave too fatiguing. Study did not specify.”

Note how individuals with bad eating habits are explicitly characterized as lazy, apathetic, ignorant, and even hostile to the Truth. Implicitly, this is done by iconically-orthographically (and ironically) representing their language, using “...”, as well as colloquial (read: uneducated) formulations such as “uh, yeah” to perform their ignorance and stupidity. This performance is also achieved by the ungrammatical and convoluted introduction; that is, they can’t form clear logical sentences because they can’t form clear logical thoughts. Later in the article, it is the “Indifferents who want something to read and sneak at on the bus home” (reffering to nutritional information distributed at grocery stores). These “Indifferents” are malcontents who apparently are not wealthy enough to have cars. The “Young and Healthy” are stereotyped as “demanding in-store mommies-for-hire to work their microwaves.” On top of everything else, these individuals are immature, dependent, and possibly even technologically impaired. Thus, we see that it is the ignorant, lazy, immature, dependent, poor, apathetic, and hostile who do not live
‘healthy’ lifestyles and who do not benefit from nutritional science; for example, they eat
“Sugar Bomb” cereal, a made-up cereal invoking both their bad sugar-based diet and the
commodification of violence, two discourses on the problems of badly raised children
(perhaps an etiology for their degenerate condition?).

In addition, insofar as being overweight is linked to the lower classes and the
lower classes are also linked to separate cluster of moral delinquencies, the language
(register) of nutrition, as it indexes class, is by association also the language of morality
(and moral reprieve- i.e. the common sentiment that ‘anyone can eat well’). This rather
indirect method is often done by equating ‘health’ with being upper class. Thus, in
McDonald’s marketing campaign for its new McSalad Shakers (McDonald’s 04/12/00,
05/08/00), it is the ‘traveler of the sky’, the person ‘on the go’ and ‘on the fly’ who is the
ideal consumer of the McSalad Shaker, a healthy food (cf. Chapter 3). A third and most
powerful way that morality is linked to and articulated through nutritional science is via
the discourse on gender and temptation (section 2.5.3).

2.5.3 The gendered discourse on desire and self-control

There is a long history of women equated with temptation, desire, sexuality, and
section 2.3.1.2.0), and consequently of asceticism as moral control over the ‘Otherness’
of the female. This construction of the ideal female body as site, sight, and sign of
struggle, embodying temperance and virtue, is not a new phenomenon. The feminine
temptress as cultural icon is balanced alongside of the (idealized) virginal woman. This
out-of-control sexuality is directly linked with the woman’s voracious appetite for food
(Bordo 1993). That is, the feminine appetite, constantly on the verge of being out of
control, historically is linked directly with the Natural feminine qua immoral. However,
this discourse has changed as the body as sign of the ascetic has changed to that of the
body as sign of the aesthetic (section 2.5.1). That is not to say that ascetic self-control is
not with us today, but rather that the discursive focus has shifted: self-control is an
embodiment of not just purity and virtue, but also of the attainment of a body-type and
persona in alignment with the beautiful and desirable. Rather than the ascetic body being
replaced by the aesthetic body, we see that the two exist side-by-side, where asceticism is
voiced through and imprinted on the aesthetic body (see section 2.5.6)53. This historical
re-focusing places food and nutritional categories as the locus of meaning regarding the
ascetic/aesthetic body.

In modern texts it is made quite clear how gendered diet is:

“Even if you don’t buy the ‘men are from Mars’ theory, you have to admit their eating regimes
can seem alien at times. The average male jock is likely to sit down to a bacon cheeseburger,
fries, and a gallon of Coke and call it a snack, while you feel guilt about eating the croutons in
your grilled chicken salad” (Good Housekeeping “Your Food: Eat Like a Guy”).

Thus, even for the skeptic of ‘popular’ theories on gender, it is ‘apparent to everyone’
that men eat certain (unhealthy) foods in certain ways (as snack), while women eat other
foods (healthy salads) and experience them differently (with guilt). This article then lays
out a series of contrasts between men and women by describing men. That is, “He’s
always eating” (original emphasis), “He’s a carnivore at heart”, “He doesn’t deprive
himself”, and “He doesn’t think fat is a dirty word” (original emphasis). Another article
(Good Housekeeping “To Love, Honor and Diet!”) constructs femininity similarly:

“When it comes to shedding pounds, do you ever feel like you and your sweetie are on a
seesaw? You munch on a salad while he feasts on onion rings.” These articles schematize femininity as: being in control and corporeally modest (“munch[ing]” vs. “feasting”), having a small appetite, being ashamed of fat, and eating vegetables, forming a framework wherein salad fits quite easily: it is not meat, it is not fatty, it is not heavy/high-calorie, and thus it is not an out-of-control food. In these texts it is explicitly used as an index of gender.

The unit of most interest, of course, is the fat, insofar as it contains the most number of calories64. Additionally, that which does not have any fat or calories, such as “dried or fresh, snipped herbs” which “contribute subtle flavor to dressing and salads” can be sprinkled “on salads or any food that needs a little sinless flavor lift” (Parents Magazine 1993; my emphasis). Fat is thus loaded with moral implications, and the fat person is also tagged as, among other things, without willpower or moral fortitude (Bordo 1993). That is, “The bottom line: Eating better equals feeling better” (Good Housekeeping “The Bottom Line-Eating Smart”) can be rephrased as ‘Eating less fat equals being better.’

How is temptation and self-control discursively constructed in these texts? In “Weight Loss Secrets from Big-Time Losers” (Good Housekeeping “Weight Loss Secrets from Big-Time Losers—Have your treat and eat it too”) women are advised several ways to ward off temptation and increase self-control with the ultimate goal of losing weight. Thus, these texts provide a logic by the presupposing of values and by providing techniques of self-denial (avoidance of temptation). These methods include only giving permission for some foods at certain times, balancing high and low calorie meals, separating oneself physically from foods, only eating low calorie foods, and carrying pictures of yourself when you were overweight, among others55. From this myriad of methods several things of interest emerge. One is the power of fat (and fatty foods) over women. Notice how it is only fatty foods that these women (and they are only women) fear, crave, and are tempted by. To take another example, the article “Indulge yourself!” (Good Housekeeping “Indulge Yourself”) is subtitled “What are you craving? We’ll show you what to have instead.” The article continues,

“Do you dream about eating pizza oozing with cheese and of gooey jelly-filled donuts? If you’ve got high-fat fantasies but are afraid of an expanding waistline, check out the Good Housekeeping Institute Nutrition Department’s low-fat alternatives. These guiltless substitutes let you have your cake-and eat it, too.”

The woman is constantly at risk of losing control and moving into that nether region of immorality. The ideal woman is constructed as being vigilantly in-control of herself (herself=her Nature), requiring multiple tricks to do so; that is, she must constantly be on guard of ‘slipping’ into her Natural (immoral) state. Notice as well that it is food components that mediate this eminent descent; they determine whether something is a temptation food or not.

These cravings are not only linked to moral issues, but also to medical ‘pathology’; for example, the woman must “keep food craving in check in order to keep PMS in check (Good Housekeeping “PMS Remedies—Simple, Safe Solutions”). These cravings are not only embedded within the nutritional science discourse, but also within a larger medical discourse: “There are psychological and biological forces behind this bingeing, and once you understand them, you’ll have a better shot at keeping your
impulses in check” (Good Housekeeping “Diet Destroyers: Seven Triggers That Make You Eat”).

In this section I showed how the temptation, food, and gender are interlinked. It was shown how femininity is constructed as the precarious balance between control and indulgence. It is within this discursive field that salad takes on its modern meaning(s).

2.5.4. Where is salad located within the discursive field?

2.5.4.0 At the intersection of discourses

“Tell me what you think you’re eating, and I shall tell you what you think you are.” Budra (2000: 242)

Now that the discourses of gender, temptation/control, nutritional science, and the aesthetic body have been discussed I would like to locate the salad within this discursive field, showing how it is only with respect to these discourses that we can understand how it is that salad has been semiotically charged as a cultural food form, and what its meanings are.

With an emphasis on weight-loss and low-fat/low-calorie diets the salad can now take on the role of a main dish for lunch and dinner: “The best salad...is a satisfying meal full of appetite appeal” (Parents Magazine June 1993). Also consider the new McSalad Shaker which is marketed as a meal unto itself, especially for the person looking for a “light” lunch or dinner (McDonald’s 2000 “Nutritionist- McDonald’s USA”). This full meal status is not reducible to nutritional science since its emergence as main dish did not occur simultaneously with the emergence of nutritional science, section 2.4, but also requires the emphasis on thinness and weight-loss.

Thus, the salad, via its socio-historical discursive movement, exists in an interesting position as a food that is both a side dish and a main dish. For the health-conscious person (i.e. someone worried about fat and calories) the salad is a crucial component to diet because it represents a low-calorie/low-fat food. Additionally, insofar as anxiety over fat and calories is gender-skewed towards women (Bordo 1993, Nichter and Nichter 1991), the salad as main dish is feminine. This femininity of salad is not exactly the same as that within the humoural texts analyzed (2.1), nor within the domestic science texts analyzed (2.3). It is only within a culture concerned with weight/health where ranking food by caloric value is possible that the salad can function as a sign of health and weight loss, especially for women; this gender marking of salad was discussed in section 2.5.5. I suspect that with increased emphasis on aestheticism and thinness for men (for example, the non-genderedness of the USDA (2000) report on American diet, also see New York Times Sunday 5/28/00 and Bordo’s 1993 discussion) that the salad will come to be less gender-marked with time. It was also noted that within the discursive field wherein thinness is emphasized, salad as a sign of health and weight-loss is also class marked (see section 2.5.2 and Chapter 3’s discussion of the McDonald’s McSalad Shakers press releases).

Because fat has become a carrier of meaning within these discourses, and because salad is low-fat and low-calorie, the salad can be used as a way to eat without, in effect, eating. That is to say, the salad is non-food (cf. section 2.3.2.1.0). Insofar as food is defined within the intersection of these discourses as fuel (“To achieve her goals, she had to understand that food was fuel.” Sports Illustrated for Women 4/12/00), salad is the absence of ‘foodness.’ It can be used as a tool to avoid eating when eating is required. In essence, it is like the diet soda: it tastes like soda, looks like soda, and yet has no calories; it is, so to speak, ‘free.’ Accordingly, it is discursively constructed like the salad; for
example, consider Diet Pepsi’s slogan: “so light, so crisp, so refreshing.” The salad is, like Good Housekeeping’s indulgent alternatives (Good Housekeeping “Indulge Yourself”), a “guiltless substitute.” It is precisely because salad is food and yet is non-food that it can be used to eat without the corporeal associations of eating.  

For example, Good Housekeeping’s article “Weight-Loss Secrets from Big-Time Losers” tells us that one way to lose weight while still going out to eat is to “reinvent the meal. Hunter sometimes splits an appetizer with a friend, then has a big salad... as her entrée.” This use of salad is contingent upon its substitutability (equivalence) and non-equivalence (calorically, in fat content) with other foods.

The liminality of salad as stereotypically belonging to the category of food and yet semiotically charged with non-foodness is thus a “bridge” to connect non-foodness with foodness. Because salad is a side dish and entrée, and yet is often characterized by its food/non-food duality, or bridge, the role of the salad often requires metadiscursive ‘clearing up’ in contexts where the health-conscious customer cannot be presupposed (e.g. Pizzerias). For example, ‘Pizza Boli’s’ description of its “Chef’s Salad” explicitly states that it is “A meal in itself.”

Contrast the discursive formation of this ‘food→non-food bridge’ with the opposite scenario: “smoothies”, ‘health’ drinks, and Slim Fast milkshakes which are outside of the food category proper (i.e. they are beverages) and yet are often advertised as meal replacements. The discursive formulation of this non-food category creates a ‘bridge’ in the opposite direction of the salad: non-foodness→foodness. The meta-semiotic advertising discourse on these products, akin to that of the salad, charges the meal replacing ‘drink’ with meaning: it is used to replace a meal. Contrasting with the “light” and non-corporeal descriptions of salads, the smoothie (non-food qua food) is described as “thick and creamy.”

Consider how the Ultra Slim-Fast milkshake is discursively constructed:

“Our delicious ready-to-drink shakes will fuel your body to feel good and look great. If you’ve tried them in the past, you’ll love the delicious, creamy flavor of our most popular products. Slim-Fast Ready-to-Drink shakes are an easy and time-saving way to enjoy a healthy meal anytime, anywhere” (my emphasis).

Often, these meal replacement beverages, because they are stereotypically non-food, but are marketed for those who want low-calorie meals are accompanied by explicit metapragmatic descriptions, such as ‘Odwalla’ s “Carrotonic”, which has the slogan/description “This Juice is Food!” Thus, like the salad, these meal replacing drinks are, in effect, eating without ‘really’ eating at all though in the opposite direction.

Salad, as a sign of health concern, weight concern, and educated upper class status also takes on moral meanings. It is not the food of the “Indifferents”, but of the health-conscious person: a person who respects his/her body, a person who takes care of his/her body. It is also a person who is in control, is not tempted, and is strong. In sum, it is a person with moral fortitude (cf. Bordo’s 1993 discussion, Lester 1997, Crawford 1984, Nichter and Nichter 1991) and rationality insofar as salad’s desirable qualities are based on scientific ‘facts.’ It is not the food for the irreverent, idle, lazy, weak, or ignorant.

The meta-semiotic discourses of science/medicine, morality, and the body (ascetic/aesthetic) charge salad with meaning. This meaning, discursively constructed in a particular socio-historical time and space, is not however simply ‘out there’ in the world. It is not simply a dormant unit of meaning. That is, the salad is used for some
purpose. This use undoubtedly has some physiological component (i.e. we digest salad). However, its use is not reducible to this. Rather, its use is also social. Salad is used to ‘perform’ certain interactional variables such as class, gender, intelligence, self-respect, and health-consciousness. It is used to affirm, change, and create social realities for individuals and corporations (cf. McDonald’s) via its consumption. This is why Budra’s reformulation of Brillat-Savarin’s maxim is quite apt: the salad is simulacrum, commodified and foregrounded from the modernist backdrop yet all the while constrained by modernist vocabulary and values. The salad is part of a lifestyle to be bought and sold, and this lifestyle is a part of postmodern culture. With the commercialization of knowledge and medicine (Turner 1992) the salad is a sign imbued with the meanings discussed in this chapter, and represented as part of a malleable and buyable reality (see Chapter 3). Reality, in this discourse, is not simply reflective, but since shattered, is strategically used to inhabit personae of ‘our choice.’ For the salad, the shattering of modernism into a plurality of realities has congealed as a single puddle on the ground. McDonald’s, Good Housekeeping, and Sport’s Illustrated for Women may tell us we can be whoever we want and we can look however we want, yet the set of ‘whos’ and the choices of ‘looks’ is suspiciously small and familiar.

2.5.4.1 Decomposing salad: parallel dualisms: mind-body // salad-salad dressing

We have seen that the discursive field within which salad exists has been continually cross-sectioned by the discourses constructing gender and the mind-body dualism. The valorization and separation of mind from body and rationality from passion has engendered the use of salad as the minimum commitment to the body in the essentially corporeal act of eating. In this section I will analyze another dualism: the salad vs. the salad dressing (also see section 2.3.1.2.1.0). This is not simply a parallel or analogous dualism, but rather, is a discursively constructed calculus that directly follows from the salad’s position in the discursive field.

Consider the following explicit separation, from Men’s Health “Foods with Super Powers: 15 ways you can fill up and feel better” by Brett Bara:

“Salads are healthy. Salad dressings aren’t. Break the stalemate by drizzling some canola oil and red-wine vinegar over your roughage. Like the vino you drink straight, red-wine vinegar contains flavonoids, which help keep your arteries clear by preventing platelets from clumping together. Canola oil contains monounsaturated fats that lower “bad” (LDL) cholesterol without affecting “good” (HDL) cholesterol levels.”

Notice that the properties of fat and cholesterol are separated from the salad proper and attributed to the dressing. It is the dressing which takes on the ‘foodness’ of the salad qua dish (salad + salad dressing), for it is the salad dressing that contributes directly to the unhealthy value (i.e. fat) of the salad qua dish. It is the dressing as the carrier of fat which motivates its separation from salad insofar as salad is perceived to be a health food. That is, by separating the salad from the salad dressing, the health attributes remain predicable of the salad while the dressing (as container of fat) becomes the villain. “The average salad can fatten up an otherwise nonfat salad more than you might think... Salad dressing is one of the leading sources of fat in the American diet, especially for women aged 19 to 50, according to USDA surveys” (University of California, Berkeley Wellness Letter Oct. 1994; my emphasis). That is, “Dressing can make or break a salad” (Sports Illustrated for Women 4/12/00). Question: Break the salad as what? Answer: As healthy, as low-fat, as non-food.
The corporeality of the salad dressing, and, by implication, the fear that it will contaminate the health value of the salad, has, as already mentioned, lead to an increasing number of fat-free and reduced-calorie salad dressings. Additionally, the salad is often kept quite separate from the salad dressing in texts such as the McDonald’s advertisements, press releases, and webpage. For example, the McSalad Shaker is defined independently of the salad dressings (see Chapter 3); each dressing can be mixed and matched, or not even used, with each ‘core’ salad. Nutritional information about the McSalad Shaker vs. salad dressings is also kept in distinct sections of the webpage. Contrast this to other condiments, which though quasi-independent of their accompanying dishes, are not discursively or spatially separated from the sandwiches. This can be partially explained by the trope “freshly tossed salad,” which we have seen from texts from previous time periods. However, the complete separability conceptually, discursively, and spatially is not reducible to this cultural idiom. Rather, it involves the marketing of a food form defined by its non-foodness. This separation allows advertisers to discursively cut the calorific value of the salad qua dish in half and discursively erase its fat content. This economically driven separation, however, is only possible via the presupposed meanings of salad constructed within the discursive field.

Food, in the modern nutritional scheme is shattered into chemical components, each of which is assigned some value. The value of fat, for example, is so negative that since it is the main component of the salad dressing (i.e. oil), it is conceptually separated from the salad core (lettuce, tomatoes, other vegetables) in modern texts. That is, because the salad dressing has fat while the salad core does not, the salad dressing is assigned a negative and corporeal meaning, thus motivating its conceptual separation from the salad itself. These meanings of salad vs. salad dressing are iconic with, and derived from, a set of binary oppositions engendered by a mind-body dualism in conjunction with discourses on aesthetic asceticism, nutritional science, and medicalized moral personhood.

3. Concluding remarks

3.0 The voices of discourse: moving past linear models

This chapter placed salad within a discursive field whereby, with time, the discursive axes changed from X = humouralism to nutritional science, Y = religious morality to medicalized morality, and Z = religious asceticism to aesthetic asceticism; it is at the intersection of these discursive axes that the salad qua cultural type is constructed. However, are these really complete metamorphoses of discourses? Have we completely replaced religious discourse on the moral with scientific discourse? Have we replaced asceticism with aestheticism? Is humouralism simply the forgotten precursor of modern biomedicine? More generally put, is the historical life of a discourse within some spatio-temporal discursive continuity (i.e. we exclude population/cultural extinction) ever a one-to-one replacement?

Extending Giddens’ (1984) notion of the ‘double hermeneutic’, and Bakhtin’s (1986) notions of ‘addressivity’ and ‘dialogicality’, we see that the simple reduction of these axes as simple historical metamorphoses (of the form $A_{\text{time}_0} \rightarrow B_{\text{time}_n}$, where A does not equal B) is in fact a much more complicated ‘co-habitation’. Insofar as: a) discourses, like utterances, are formulated with respect to other utterances/discourses (past and anticipated) and to speakers of those utterances, b) that the object described is
transformed/constructed by the discourses that describe it (Foucault 1972), and thus c) future discourses must attend to the changing nature of discursively constructed objects (Giddens 1984), then d) these axes must be considered within a total history. For example, though we can track an emergent emphasis on aestheticism in recent decades, it is not to say that modern concerns with aestheticism do not exist independently of past discourses on asceticism, as this chapter has shown and as Bordo (1993), Lelwica (1999), Crawford (1984), and Hepworth (1999) have all pointed out. Rather, it is in its presupposition and transformation via recontextualization (with respect to other discourses) that asceticism has come to inhabit, or be 'voiced' in, modern texts. As this chapter has shown, the body qua aesthetic sign is a reformulation of body qua index of virtue/temperance, whereby the emergence of medical/scientific discourse reformulated discourses on personhood such that the emergent discourse on the aesthetic body is, in fact, a form of modern asceticism. That is, the conflation of beauty, health, and thinness regiments the semiotic means (media) whereby positively valorized personae are performable. The self-hate, self-control, and denial of the body characteristic of religious asceticism (cf. Nietzsche's 1967 [1887] discussion) are also characteristic of aesthetic asceticism. However, note that the meaning and expression (the logic) of this asceticism at the level of 'discursive consciousness' (Giddens 1984) are different (though not causally unrelated) from past asceticism, as Bordo (1988) has pointed out and as this chapter has shown via the analysis of the discursive construction of salad through time.

The same, of course, applies to religious morality and humoralism; it is not that we are divorced from, or without, religious discourse or humoral medicine, but rather it is that their distributions are quite different from the discourses that have come to dominate much of modern social life. It is this notion that cultural texts have differential value and distribution over time and space that is at the heart of the matter. This chapter has illustrated this point by analyzing one such cultural form (salad) through time, noting continuities and discontinuities in meaning across time and texts.

In other words, the life of a discourse is not an all-or-nothing affair, but rather, a gradient one. In fact, this must be so for the discourse to have any meaning whatsoever. Like the germ theory medicine reacting to humoralism in the 17th century, the historicity of discourse always requires that its articulation be in some instance of time and space from some 'mouth' (that is, from some perspective) and thus a product of social structure and social distribution. This, in fact, is the aim of this chapter: to locate those 'mouths', to contextualize them with each other in order to unveil the interactional life of discourses over time. Additionally, it is to assay which voice is 'louder' than the rest, and to see how it is that within this history of discourses, the object salad is (meta-)semiotically articulated, used, and thus imbued with meaning from these voices (the 'loud', the 'quiet', the unarticulated, the presupposed).

As this section has shown, the simple model used at the beginning of the chapter is not a completely accurate representation of the observable social realities. Rather than considering the movement of discourse as a linear monosemous set of axes, the discursive field within which any cultural object is imbued with meaning exists in a complex set of relationships between semiotically-mutually-implicating discourses which, by association in time-space with other discourses, are inherently polysemous; that is, they dialogically index past, present, and anticipated (future) discourse(s). The salad, as an example of one such object, showed that to understand its current meaning:
1) required a historical analysis and 2) required the recognition of a discursive field within which salad was imbued with meaning. Additionally, analysis showed that: 3) such distinguishable discourses (axes X, Y, Z) were intimately related to each other such that the meaning-construction of salad by any one discourse was dependent upon other such co-occurring discourses for any meaning all to emerge. For example, the nutritional (biomedical) construction of salad never exists as such; it only exists as a co-construction with a multiplicity of other discourses. Another way to put it would be that no social object is ever one dimensional, or ‘uni-discursive.’

It should also be recalled that the salad as object, non-reducible to its physical properties but semiotically imbued through discourse(s), is not a passive sign. Like all social signs (as its multi-dimensionality evinces), salad is used to some effect, for some purpose. As this chapter has shown, salad is a potentially usable sign in the performance of a particular type of personhood. That is, salad is a socially-constructed sign which can be used in the embodiment of a socially-constructed self that is iconically related to the construction of salad by meta-semiotic discourses which salad simultaneously indexes as authoritative discourses on the value of salad (e.g. nutritional discourses, moral discourses, scientific discourses, restaurant discourses, etc.), thus achieving its symbolic value as the semiotic fusion of salad qua physical object (secondness), personhood (firstness), and cultural value (thirdness) (cf. Peirce’s (1955 [1902]) triadic semiotics) (figure 5).

**figure 5**

3.1 Considerations of method
There are serious unaddressed issues crucial for understanding the life of discourse in the context of human interaction. One is the connection to individual psychology. Though the psychological literature may be dismissible by anthropologists and students of discourse and culture, its aims and areas of inquiry are not. Inevitably, the connection between text and speaker/hearer qua idiosyncratic individual must be made. It is not simply a truism to be assumed, but it is a valid inquiry in of its own right insofar as it is individuals who interact in real-time scenarios. A second concern is the question of the status of the texts analyzed; that is, what was/is their circulation? What was/is their impact relative to other texts? What were the reactions to these texts? The question of the text-in-context as relevant within the larger discursive scheme of things was simply assumed by this analysis.

Some remarks on the problems above; in regards to the second problem the following can be said: a text, as an instantiation of some set of presuppositions is also part of the production of those presuppositions in later discursive events. That is, the “duality of structure” (Giddens 1984) of the text is such that the text need not be the most important, most revolutionary, or most circulated to be considered as part of the production and reproduction of social regularities and social realities. There need not, in fact, be any such seminal text(s). What there need be, however, is a corpus of texts which serve to circulate the presuppositions upon which meaningful cultural interactions are based, and which create (ir)regularities of sharedness within communities via their circulation.

The (c)aim to draw direct causal arrows between texts and effects in the world is not made. Rather, what is asserted is that to understand the construction of meaning (and thus [of] behavior and belief) through time and space is to understand how discourses either foreground or background and allow or do not allow the LOGIC (semiotic) (Peirce 1955 [1902]) necessary for certain meanings to emerge. That is, “truths” can only take on meaning if they are, as Foucault (1972: 224) puts it, “within the true”; that is, inside the system from which signification arises. Therefore, the study of the cultural form, insofar as it is based upon meaning (Geertz 1973), is never reducible to the study of truth-values. Instead, it must always address the historically contingent social realities engendered by the perceivable/construable signs in discourse(s). Access to these signs-in-discourse are not limited to historically important texts, but can be found in any text of the times. Indeed, it is the routinization of (embodied) textual experience which is central to social life (Giddens 1984, see Chapters 1, 4, 5 as well)

In regards to the first problem, there are good reasons shown by this chapter to assume that the salad constructed in the texts analyzed have (had) a psychological reality to those “within the text.” However, the task of connecting individual to text and individual to discourse is a major task outside the scope of this chapter (see Part II for an example of one approach to this task). This is not the just the problem of agency (cf. Turner 1992, Giddens 1984), but rather the problem of explaining the plurality of agencies, and within what framework we can reconcile the felt intuition that we are not simply brainwashed and yet not simply rational brains attached to material bodies.

This chapter has attempted to bring the problem of meaning to bear upon how objects that are part of the physical world and our everyday social lives are transformed into meaningful signs used to transform social life itself. The semiotic imbuement of
salad was deconstructed using a socio-historical discursive analysis of salad as cultural form, that is, as social-semiotic. The analysis of this cultural type is extended in Chapter 3 by the discussion of how it is that cultural types becomes embodied as cultural tokens within the context of a consumer capitalist society.

1 This is something that could be empirically tested in individuals, by priming studies commonly found in cognitive psychology (Anderson 1995). However, in this study, prototypicality is gauged by regularities in the presuppositions made by the texts examined.

2 Cf. Geertz's (1973) critique of cultural studies being unable to progress in the study of culture because scholars have not been able to adequately define 'culture'. Geertz's criticism, however, is based on the goal of intersubjectively (within the academic community) determining a unit of study that is independent of the meaning and use of the word 'culture' in the culture at large. This goal is not that of this chapter's insofar as there is intersubjectivity of the word 'salad' in the culture at large. What that intersubjectivity is, and how it is constructed discursively, is the aim of this study.

3 I make no epistemological commitment to whether there is a singular Truth independent of perspectives regarding salad, and instead am concerned with the perception of such Truth(s), which may, in fact, be multiple. For a discussion and critique of such an epistemology see Attewell (1974).

4 What is meant by religious vs. medical morality refers to discourses describing moral conditions; that is, from what authority texts draw on to index and formulate moral personhood. In all texts analyzed, morality is medicalized to the extent that medical frameworks are brought to bear upon moral conditions. However, this medicalizing trend of morality (Turner 1992, Turner 1984, Falk 1994) is one wherein moral conditions increasingly are not indexed in any way but by their scientific description, as opposed to past texts where medical reasoning was applied to already religiously situated morality. Helman (1994: 106) says of this medicalization, “ideas of ‘sin’... often seemed to be replaced by ideas of ‘health’ and ‘disease’” (also see Glassner 1990).

5 That is to say that this text situates itself within a philosophical history when formulating its argument. This genre, for example, can be distinguished from the cookbook, the advertisement, or the scientific text, which though may indeed draw of philosophy or be philosophical, do not take as their main aim the discussion or advancement of issues raised in philosophy.

6 “Tribe. 4. Informal A large family. 5. Biology A taxonomic category placed between a subfamily and a genus or between a suborder and a family and usually containing several genera.” (American Heritage 1992).

7 "Lettuce will be first given to you for the purpose of moving the stomach" (translation by Dimitri Nakassis).

8 Cf. Porphyry, On abstinence from animal food

9 This is similarly emphasized in other humourally based texts. For Hippocrates, taste and enjoyment of food were completely irrelevant (Craik 1995).

10 Culmptre states that "food badly digested is so far from yielding nourishment, ... it only serves to debilitate the whole system, and proves a source of diseases; producing obstructions, distention of the body, rickets, scrofula, slow fevers, consumptions, and sometimes death" (p. 3).

11 As MacLeod and Nason (1930: 1) articulate: "[progress] in foods and nutrition does not depend upon the cook or caterer but upon those who understand the theories that govern the behavior of matter and particularly that kind of matter known as food.”

12 Domestic science's use of scientific methods in general and chemistry specifically (cf. MacLeod's and Nason's (1930) textbook Chemistry and Cooking) allowed domestic science to establish "Departments of Household Science" that were only for women studying the 'chemistry of cooking' (Shapiro 1986): "When the boys learn to grow wheat, the girls learn to make it into bread! When the boys raise apples, the girls give them pie... And so both sides of the house shall be trained, until the perfect home shall be attained, and every community will bless those women who are experts in the line of domestic science" (The founder of the domestic science program at Kansas State Agricultural College, quoted in Shapiro 1986: 187).

13 Both domestic science and the food industry at this time wanted to assert their legitimacy as trustworthy and authoritative sources of information. For the food industry, this re-establishment was made necessary by the scandalously low quality of food sanitation.

14 As Plumptre (1810: xvii), who worked within a humoural framework, states "It is very difficult, almost impossible, to ascertain exactly what are the predominant qualities either in our bodies or in the food we
eat. In practice therefore, we can have no other rule but observing by experience what it is that hurts or does us good.”

15 Plumptre (1810: 350), expresses this sentiment: “All good things have their good and bad qualities, thus fire, which is good to warm and comfort, will also burn, if not managed with discretion.”

16 This metaphor provided parallels for the functioning of the body: “think of your body as a super-automobile,..., if you don’t drive it too fast for too long, and if you feed it the right fuel, give it periodic checkups, and maybe wash it occasionally, you’ll prevent major rumblings” (How to Live Cheap But Good quoted in Payer 1988: 148).

17 For example, Mrs. Lincoln, a cooking celebrity of the times, was not unlike her colleagues in her lack of knowledge regarding the functions of vegetables in the diet: “Vegetables are rich in saline substances which counteract the evil effect of too much animal food” (quoted in Shapiro 1986: 95).

18 For example, Ellen Richards emphasized that sweeping and dishwashing are “a step in the conquering of evil, for dirt is sin” (Shapiro 1986: 181). Additionally, Child (1890: 195) states that “cleanliness, it is said, is next to godliness.”

19 This notion was also part of the Hippocratic notion that agriculture tamed plants, and that eating those tamed plants tamed human nature (King 1995).

20 This study utilizes Peircean (1955 [1902], 1931-1959) semiotics, cf. definitions of the icon, index, symbol, legisign, thème, etc.

21 As Child (1890: 178) says, “to have a stupid mouth is just as to… have a stupid mind.” Additionally, Mann (1861) connected morality and diet, saying that “there is more prolific cause of bad morals than abuses of diet” (quoted in Tannahill 1973: 369).

22 “There is no severer and more conclusive test of a country’s state of civilization than the way its inhabitants dine” (Didsbury 1890: viii).

23 Perhaps in the same way the WHO helps third world nations “informing people about the importance of a prudent diet” (Mennell et al.1992: 39).

24 The home, and thus the family, is the “germ of Anglo-Saxon civilization, the unit of social progress;… the nursery of the citizen” (Ellen Richards, domestic science celebrity, quote in Shapiro 1986: 181).

25 As Child (1890: 13) states, “The destiny of nations… depends upon the manner in which they eat.”

26 Quoting Isabelle Bevier, professor at the University of Illinois, advising her chemistry and nutrition students, “the final goal is gracious womanhood” (quoted in Shapiro 1986: 216).

27 The construction of ideal female behavior (as opposite of her corporeal Nature) is present as early as Hippocratic texts (King 1995). These texts link women to the humour of blood, and thus to the flesh. This linking of women to the body can also be seen in early Christianity, whereby sexuality and appetite were linked such that voracious eater was a woman whose sexual desires were out of control (Grimm 1995, Bordo 1993).

28 See Child (1890) Delicate Feasting, where dining [eating and drinking] is “delicate”, foods are “delicate” and “dainty”, rooms are “delicate”, senses are “delicate”, people (gourmets) are “delicate”, cooking and food preparation are “dainty” and “delicate.” Additionally, a quick survey of the titles of many cookbooks of the era shows a high number containing of titles containing “dainty” and “delicate” (see Brown and Brow 1961).

29 In this case we can contrast the Natural feminine (irrational, corporeal, passionate, sexually voracious) with the ideal feminine (the opposite of the Natural feminine). It is this tension between the two, and the attempts at conversion from Natural to ideal, which is of interest with regards to both the salad and eating disorders. In other words, we must distinguish between discourse on what women are versus what they should be.

30 cf. Harris (1926) Florida Salads: A collection of wholesome, well balanced, easily digested salad recipes that will appeal to the most fastidious.

31 A quote from an audience member at a Boston Cooking school lecture (Shapiro 1986: 102).

32 This idea, within a humouralistic framework, is slightly different though related. In humouralism, the woman is to avoid meat, not because it is unfeminine per se, but rather because the woman is characterized by her abundance of blood (humour). Meat, which is high in blood (as a humoural quality), would cause an imbalance, making her ill (King 1995). Also note that humouralistic femininity was tied to the appetite. Thus, meat, almost always a main dish, if consumed by women would represent a large appetite, as meat would metonymically index the meal as a whole.
Note the obvious similarities with the high prevalence, and almost gender exclusivity, with eating disorders today.

See discussion of Acetaria (Evelyn 1699) (section 2.1) and section 2.3.1.1.3.

See, for example, Harris' (1926: 7) ‘Preface’ for a discussion of the health value of the salad within the nutritional science discourse: “The addition of a pretty salad to a menu... is appetizing... speaking from a health standpoint. Fruits and vegetables contain a large amount of the necessary salts and vitamins required by the system, and to have health and ‘tissue tone’ we must eat them.”

Note that it is not that salad is not food, but rather that it is non-food. This distinction is necessary for its use in modern texts (section 2.5).

This merging of domestic science and the food industry takes place not only in grocery companies such as Piggly Wiggly, but also between food producing companies, such as Mazola (see Corn Products Refinery Company (1949) Mazola Recipes for salads, cakes, and fried foods), and appliance companies (see Bradley (1923) Electric Refrigerator Menus and Recipes: recipes prepared especially for the General Electric Refrigerator).

In this text being overweight/underweight is not explicitly linked with any kinds of other health conditions (e.g. diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, etc.). Interestingly, the text explicitly mentions aesthetic concerns regarding rapid weight loss.

For example, Dunbar Shrimp are “uniform and dependable. Economical, too” (p. 10); Snowflake Baker “guarantee freshness. By reason of our new wax-wrapped package you are assured of oven-freshness and crispiness always” (p. 12); FLUFFO has “all five qualities of a perfect shortening... purity, creaminess, freshness, flavor and digestibility” (p. 87) and “you can buy FLUFFO perfectly fresh—because it is sealed air-tight. No ‘off-flavors’ in your baking” (p. 88); Sperry Drifted Snow flour “is uniform, sack after sack” (p. 95) because “over 100,000 laboratory and kitchen tests guarantee the uniformity of Sperry Drifted Snow Flour. This means successful baking for you” (p. 98), and because “every batch of Sperry Flour is tested in Sperry Kitchens and over and over again before it comes to you in the sack” (p. 99), where there is “strict laboratory control of every step.” To that wasn’t enough, “Over 800,000 Pacific Coast housewives use Sperry Drifted Snow Flour, because it insures success in their baking” (p. 108), and “Sperry Drifted Snow Flour is sifted over and over through the finest imported Swiss silk with over 15,000 meshes to the square inch” (p. 115). Combining the theme of less work/convenience with the idea that the human touching of food is bad, the following FLUFFO advertisement states that “Too much handling spoils the pie dough. Make it with FLUFFO and very little mixing is necessary” (p. 109). Notice several other important themes: the value of economy, the value of science, the suppression of variation, and the use of scientific methods as evidence of product desirability.

Defined in American Heritage (1992) as “an afternoon party at which a light meal is served.”

For example, cholesterol, alpha linoleic acid, trans-fatty acids, complex carbohydrates, poly-saturated fat, monosaturated fat, unsaturated fat, serum cholesterol, blood cholesterol, and a myriad of others.

For example, Good Housekeeping’s “Drop Those Last 10 lbs.—Eating Smart” discusses a diet to lose weight. This diet is described calorically and temporally: “On each day, you should try to consume approximately 1,200 calories, divided as follows: Breakfast- 300 calories, Midmorning snacks- 100 calories, Lunch- 400 calories, Midafternoon snack- 200 calories, Dinner- 500 calories.” Emphasis is also placed on the breakdown of the calories consumed by protein, carbohydrates, and fats which are also converted and expressed in terms of calories. Additionally, the nutritional breakdown of every food product is made by McDonald’s in both its restaurants and on its webpage (http://www.mcdonalds.com/countries/usa/food/nutrition_facts/nutrition_facts.html). Another constant reminder of the content of foods is the nutritional label (RDA) on all packaged foods.

“Nutritionist-McDonald’s USA.” http://www.mcdonalds.com/countries/usa/food/nutritionist.html

“The survey, commissioned by the American Dietetic Association (ADA) and the International Food Information Council (IFIC), found, for instance, that 95 percent of respondents viewed balance, variety, and moderation as the keys to healthy eating. Eight-three percent recognized that their diets may affect future health” (FDA Consumer, June 1990).

For example, “no more than 30 percent of daily calories should come from fat” (Parents Magazine June 1993). A succinct formulation of this is the title of the Sports Illustrated for Women article (4/12/00) “Why fat is your friend: Low fat, good. No fat, bad. Here’s the skinny on how much and what type of fat you need” (my emphasis).
For example, we are told in *Good Housekeeping* “Drop Those Last 10lbs.—Eating Smart” that the “body burns calories more efficiently with a balanced diet, so each meal should contain a healthy mix of protein (about 25 percent of total calories), carbohydrates (about 50 percent of calories), and fat (about 25 percent of calories).”

This is also shown by *Sports Illustrated for Women*’s article (8/00) “Olympic Feasts” on Olympic basketball star Teresa Edwards, who “loves her vegetables” and “follows a balanced diet. ‘I listen to my body’, says the 36 year-old five-time Olympian. ‘I always make sure I eat at least two healthy meals a day. And I never eat too much of anything’” (my emphasis). The article later defines health and balance in terms of “calories” and “nutrients.”

Salads are healthy foods. They help consumers meet the recommended quota of five servings each day of fruits vegetable to maintain good health” (*Agricultural Research* Jan. 1999)

Consider the meta-cultural criticism co-opted in an advertisement for cosmetic surgery: “Beauty matters in our culture. Lookism is rampant. We rate each other’s looks, often without noticing we do it.” (“Better Than Ever” by Harvey W. Austin M.D., advertisement for The Austin-Weston Center for Cosmetic Surgery, in the *Washingtonian Magazine*, July 1996)

Diet in fact, comes from the Greek *dieta*, which meaning a mode of life (Turner 1984: 165).

For example, consider this excerpt from “Eating Right” by L. Lindler (*Special to the Washington Post* 11/21/00) discussing the difficulty in eating healthfully (defined by frequency of low-fat and non-fat products, including salads) at airports:

“Adding to the problem is that there’s a moral vacation that people go on when they travel... That is, hanging around an airport is a lot like hanging around a Las Vegas gambling casino, another place were reasons takes a holiday” (my emphasis).

Thus, we see that eating unhealthily (as defined within nutritional science discourse) is directly linked to morality (through explicit mention of morality and allusion to Las Vegas, a debaucherous and morally corrupt locale) and with irrationality.

Remember, in *Acetaria* (Evelyn 1699: 180) it was the meat-eating Romans who were immoral and corrupt. In domestic science it was the poor, the minorities, the rural, and the ignorant (section 2.3).

Note, however, that the aestheticized body was also present in past texts. Recall the ‘chorosis’ of young girls during the times of domestic science (section 2.3.2.1.0). The argument put forth here is not that aesthetics were not of concern to past generations of women, but that there is an increasing trend on the emphasis on the aesthetics of the body as primary discursive site.

As *Parents Magazine* (June 1993) reminds/advices us: “Count the fat grams, not the calories.”

The methods discussed in the *Good Housekeeping* corpus include: only “giving... permission to eat these things [fried foods and pizza]... but only once or twice on the weekend. That way, she cut the number of days she allowed herself to indulge from seven to two, and was often able to avoid giving in altogether”, “Keep[ing] one goody in your diet... Chaffin got rid of the junk food, but allows herself one diet soda every afternoon to satisfy any cravings”, “balancing high-cal/high-fat foods with nutritious ones” (“I made up for fat indulgence on one day by eating fewer fat grams the next day” says K. Ortwein), “Put[ting] miles between yourself and temptation”, this is advised for people who “literally can’t eat just one,” like R. Stevens, who is “aware of her diet demons, and thus does what she can to “avoid them: I know I can’t eat the first bite of a bakery cake. If I do, I’m out of control and eating dessert every day.” Explains Kelly Streit, M.S., R.D., a nutritionist in private practice... “They feel guilty and too weak to stop eating, even thinking, If I get rid of it all now, I won’t have to worry about having it around later” (original emphasis).

Another testimonial formulates it in the following way: “Liz Gazzola Brazeau, 32, of Greenville, S.C., cleared her kitchen of ‘trigger’ foods like ice cream, microwave popcorn, potato chips, M&M’s, cheese, and peanut butter, so that if she had the desire to go on a binge, she’d have to drive to the store for whatever she was craving.” She goes on to say “If you have to work at indulging, it buys you time to think about what you’re doing. You may decide to make do with a healthier version of what you’re craving, low-fat frozen yogurt rather than ice cream, for instance- or realize that you can go without a treat at all.” Other methods include “discover[ing] the joy low-cal cooking”, “get[ting] smart about fast-food fat”, “remembering the fat old days” (carrying pictures of yourself when you were fat), using significant dates as motivation (losing weight for your “twenty-fifth wedding anniversary”, when your “first grandchild was born”, or even “after a divorce”), and “putting food in its place” (not eating when depressed).

Note for example that though women make up the majority of clients of plastic surgeons the market for male plastic surgery is growing (Williams 1997).
Note that this is not to say that salad does not have fat or calories. As we have seen, that salad is caloric is well emphasized (remember “Healthy salad is not a redundancy”, Parents Magazine June 1993). However, it is to say that salad’s meaning is formed by its ability to be used as non-food, and not by the actual number of calories it contains. The frequent use of low-fat and reduced caloric salad dressings is evidence that it is the salad that is used as non-food. That is, because salad dressings have calories and fat, the salad does not lose its meaning as non-food; thus, the salad dressing (as addition to the salad core) is tailored to fit with the meaning of the salad core qua non-food and not vice versa (i.e. dressing is made to be non-fat). Indeed, in general, the salad dressing is considered quite separate from the salad itself. This dualism is discussed in section 2.5.4.1.

A Washington D.C. Pizzeria.


The Smoothie King website: http://www.smoothieking.com/sk_smoothies.htm


McDonald’s introduced the McSalad Shaker among other products (e.g. Chicken McGrill) as part of its newest advertising campaign in order to expand its (more health-conscious) demographic and to change its image as promoter of extremely unhealthy food, see Chapter 3.

Compare the salad as part of a buyable lifestyle with the advertising of other ‘lifestyle’ altering services such as plastic surgery and weight-loss programs; for example, “We believe cosmetic surgery has proven to be an effective and powerful tool for personal change” (The Austin-Westen Center for Cosmetic Surgery advertisement printed in Washingtonian Magazine, July 1996). Also take, for example, Weight Watcher’s slogan (11/00): “You’ve got it in you, to get it off you. And we can show you how.”

Again, the comparison to cosmetic surgery is apt: “We look in the mirror and think we are the reflection looking back...but it’s not so. The mirror lies. It can say we are old when we are not. It can say we are unattractive when we are attractive. And these are powerful lies. They can make our lives miserable. Consider the possibility that the mirror neither shows who we are nor what we really look like...This reflection is a lie because it has nothing to do with our inner reality nor is it what other people see of us. The hooker is that we really think it does” (original emphasis). Cosmetic surgery, it is asserted “supports people to have their face and/or body come into harmony with their true inner being-their youth and beauty” (The Austin-Westen Center for Cosmetic Surgery advertisement printed in Washingtonian Magazine, January 1996).

Other examples of this attempt to separate the experience of the body from the act of eating involve efforts to ‘trick’ the body when eating. “Have some aroma as an ‘appetizer.’” Klarinda Hart...always turns to air-popped popcorn when she wants to indulge. ‘Because it smells so good while popping, I enjoy it even before I eat it, so it’s almost doubly satisfying’” (Good Housekeeping “The Bottom Line-Eating Smart”). The article goes on to give other ways to “Trick your eyes and your appetite”, including ways to increase the perceived volume of food and to emphasize appetizing colors. A similar idea is expressed by Nutri/System’s “longue spray” that “allow[s] you to taste it [food]” without having to eat it (Nichter and Nichter 1991: 258).

An exception is the ‘Chicken McGrill’ which has a no-mayo option; however, like the McSalad Shakers, the Chicken McGrill is marketed as a health food (where mayo is ‘unhealthy’ because it is high in fat).

We might also include the ‘co-opting’ of discourse by hegemonic discourses (Eskes. et al.1998) as another such way that the discourse is always locatable in relation to past discourses.

Giddens’ (1984) “duality of structure” is simply the notion that structure is both the outcome and the medium of the conduct it recursively organizes. That is, the instantiation of some power-relationship simultaneously acts to reproduce the conditions under which that instantiation is possible.

‘The problem of meaning’ is not used in the Weberian sense.
Chapter 3
The fantastic, fun, and fresh McDonald’s McSalad Shaker: A cultural token of the cultural type

3.0 Introduction: general context

In chapter 2 we tracked the construction of a cultural type: the salad. In this chapter we will look at one cultural token of this type: McDonald’s ‘McSalad Shaker.’ By analyzing the commodification of this cultural form (the salad) and the discourses constructing that form we see how the cultural discourses discussed in chapter 2 are embodied within a consumer capitalist context. This chapter will deconstruct how McDonald’s seeks to align the McSalad Shaker to widely held cultural beliefs of desirability and well-being. Because McDonald’s is tracking and forming cultural attitudes, the analysis of its newest products can serve as an index of those dynamic cultural attitudes.

The question is, how did McDonald’s, a promoter of thrombotic foods, come to offer new ‘healthy’ foods? What is the motivating cultural context? It will be shown that the McDonald’s products analyzed can be located within the framework of modern asceticism, which emphasizes the aesthetic body¹ as sight, site, and sign of morality (Turner 1992, Glassner 1990, Bordo 1993). This modern aesthetic asceticism, like previous versions, is based on a denial and hate of the body². While the religiously-based asceticism of the past would allow us a heavenly afterlife, the new asceticism, that McDonald’s reflects and forms, promises us, in effect, a heaven-on-earth. The lean, young, and healthy body ensures a here-and-now, in situ, paradisiacal existence, perhaps to dispel the fears of eternal dieting.

It is by presupposing this cultural context that McDonald’s can: a) introduce ‘healthy’ products such as the ‘McSalad Shaker’, and b) construct an advertisement-internal universe such that an iconic relationship is created between the advertisement-internal universe and the reader qua member of the wider cultural context; this cultural context includes the presupposed values of leanness, well-being (health), and beauty. Like Budweiser’s classic “Tastes Great/Less Filling” debate, McDonald’s iconically (re)creates, partly by presupposition, the range of values relevant to its customers, giving every customer a (potential) ‘position’ to inhabit and align themselves with. Within this McDonald’s world, each product is strategically placed in relation to the others such that culturally shared personas and beliefs of desirability are matched to specific products. This advertisement-internal universe (a microcosm of the ‘world out there’) neatly keeps each (possible) product/persona ‘choice’ within the realm of McDonald’s.

Thus, there are two distinguishable aspects crucial to the construction of the McDonald’s McSalad Shaker: 1) the ‘discursive field’ (cf. Chapter 2) within which the salad as a cultural type is constructed, and 2) a capitalist consumer society whereby products are infused with meaning such that they are connected to social schemata of personhood. That is to say, culture itself is commodified whereby the salad qua commodity acts as a pivot, simultaneously indexing the consumer qua social persona and the discursive field through which the salad qua cultural type is constructed. It is only within a society where: a) the body acts as a sign of the ‘inner self’ (Leiwica 1999, Falk 1994), and b) a plurality of constructable (socially valorized) selves are possible (Turner...
through consumption (Falk 1994) that the McSalad Shaker takes on its embodied meaning.

The analysis of the McDonald's McSalad Shaker will show that to fully understand how the discursive construction of salad (Chapter 2) is embodied requires contextualizing discourse in the development of the modern capitalist society.

3.1 Consumer Capitalism
3.1.0 Capitalism and the ascetic

Following the Reformation, asceticism, originally reserved only for the monastic lifestyle, was exported outside the monastery and made applicable to every individual (Turner 1982a, 1982b, 1984). That is, the change in religious discourse that emphasized the individual's responsibility for piety, versus the previous ascetic 'division of labor,' involved a discursive shift such that it was every individual's duty to lead an ascetic lifestyle. In addition to this emergent religious discourse, this discursive shift occurred as part of new medical discourses dealing with the health and morality of the elite (cf. Cheyne's iatromechanics, Turner 1982a, 1982b, 1984, Falk 1994), and later of the working classes (cf. domestic science, see Chapter 2). This class refocusing occurred partly as a result of the accumulation of bodies (Foucault 1977b) and the resultant increase in urban crowding and disease (cf. domestic science, see Chapter 2). The low levels of hygiene and sanitation, accompanied by high levels of disease were viewed as the cause of a less than productive work force. This was a major locus of anxiety for an emergent upper class whose economic success was dependent on the productivity of the work force. As Turner (1984, 1992) and others (Falk 1994, Crawford 1984) argue, following Foucault's (1977b) insight in his analysis of the emergence of the modern 'surveillance society' and Weber's (cf. 1992, see Turner 1984, 1992) work on the Protestant work ethic and the rise of capitalism, the emerging capitalist discourses required a workforce which would not be compromised by ill-health. An unhealthy workforce would cause both strain on the upper classes with regard to lost revenue due to un-productivity as well a resulting tax burden on the rich (Turner 1982a). These new capitalist discourses additionally served to individualize pathology, thus alleviating responsibility of organizations that could otherwise be blamed for unsanitary living conditions (Turner 1982a). Thus, within a quasi-medical and morally loaded discourse on the relationship between hedonistic lifestyle and productivity (i.e. hedonism leads to disease) it was an imperative to inculcate in the working population an ascetic lifestyle.

3.1.1 Capitalism and consumption: the hedonist vs. the ascetic

Parallel to this discourse on self-denial and sobriety runs the discourse on self-improvement, as well as the notion that there is a distinction to be made between (legitimate and 'basic') needs and (luxurious and unnecessary) desires (Falk 1994, Turner 1984). It was realized that first worker's basic needs must be met for maximal productivity; secondly, some luxuries can increase productivity if kept under control. That is to say, the workforce is most productive if needs and some desires are met. Thus, a cost-benefit analysis was applicable to the slippery difference between desires and needs, such that one could increase productivity by decreasing the alienation inherent to labor while still maintaining a hold over the overall wholesomeness of the worker's lifestyle. However, this relaxed asceticism still required absolute control while on-the-
job (Falk 1994). That is to say, one must put off temptation during the workday to be
allowed the opportunity to indulge after hours (Bordo 1993).

Additionally, it is evident that though capitalism involves a premium on an ascetic
workforce, it also must involve individuals consuming the goods produced by that
workforce. Thus, we see the schematization of a clear contradiction inherent in capitalist
society: the hedonist consumer and the ascetic producer (see Falk 1994, McGuigan 1999,
1993, Schmid-Bortenschlager 2000). Moreover, because there is no clear division of
labor between producers and consumers (that is, producers are also consumers and vice
versa), individuals (who do indeed have basic needs) are recruited to be consumers (of
their own needs and desires). And because the distinction between needs and desires is a
slippery one, the advertising discourse often can get away with conflating the two. Thus,
crudely put, each individual is expected to be both an ascetic and a hedonist.

Concomitant with the emergence of consumer capitalism was the expansion of
media technologies (which consumer capitalism was dependent upon) that could now
advertise extensively based on the representations of goods; thus, there is a shift from the
utility of commodities to the image of commodities (Falk 1994). Moreover, within a
social system that affords more social class movement, these images of commodities are
linked to culturally valued discourses which allow/imply the inhabitation of those
discourses through consumption, including those on (the morality of) asceticism. That is
to say, the hegemony of consumer capitalism is such that even cultural discourses such as
anti-consumption are commodified (Turner 1984), e.g. diet products, diets themselves,
gym memberships, and salad. Thus, salad as an index, icon, and symbol of the socially
valorized aesthetic Cartesian ascetic persona (implicitly moral as well) is commodifiable
as a consumable which performs non-hedonism. It is within this framework that we can
understand how it is that cultural discourses which construct cultural types (such as the
salad) precipitate into cultural tokens of that type qua commodities (such as the McSalad
Shaker). The analysis of this semiotic construction will show how it is that material
objects are made to become the vehicle for commodified culture/discourses. Section I
deals with advertisements for McDonald’s products on McDonald’s products while
Section II discusses the McDonald’s press releases regarding the McSalad Shakers.
Though each genre constrains the semiotic imbuing of the McSalad Shaker, both act to
commodify the McSalad Shaker through connecting it to culturally valued schemata of
personhood.

Section I. Metricality of advertisements on McDonald’s products

3.2 The data—McDonald advertisements on McDonald products

The first data set consists of three McDonald’s product containers: a soda cup and
two French fry holders (one medium and one large). These were collected in the Fall of
2000. These materials, more than holders of a commodity, are also advertisements of
other commodities. The Soda Cup (SC) advertises the ‘Big Xtra!’ hamburger, the
‘Crispy Chicken’ sandwich, and the ‘Chicken McGrill’ sandwich (fig. 1.01, see
appendix)3. The large French Fries (LFF) advertises ‘Big Xtra!’ , ‘McFlurry’ (ice-cream),
‘Crispy Chicken’, and ‘PrePaid Calls’ - a phone card (fig. 1.02)4. The medium French
Fries (MFF) advertises ‘McSalad Shaker’, ‘Chicken McGrill’, ‘Breakfast Bagel’, and
‘PrePaid Calls (f.g. 1.03)’

These data represent part of the advertisement campaign for a new McDonald’s product line; thus, these advertisements can be considered as intertextually linked, and thus as part of a larger semiotic structure.

My specific interest in this sample is the McSalad Shaker as it represents an atypical McDonald’s product, by which McDonald’s attempts to attract a new type of fast-food customer.

3.2.0 Spatial metricality

These containers show a highly metrical spatial layout. The metricality of the spatial layout serves several purposes: 1) it tells us that this is something of note (i.e. it tells us that this is an advertisement), 2) it foregrounds the roles of each component of the advertisements (i.e. what is the name?, what is the description?, what is the actual product?), 3) it structures the components of the advertisement such that each component indexically points to its appropriate accompanying component (i.e. which name goes with which picture?, which picture goes with which description?, etc.), and 3) through 1) and 2), it focuses our attention to each product qua unitary entity of which each component (picture, name, description) is a ‘gloss’ of its essence. By foregrounding distinct unitary entities, the advertisement, in effect, makes invisible (non-transparent) its constructive power to create such unities. That is, through construction, the construction itself is made invisible (backgrounded). Notice that this is not simply done through spatial contiguity/juxtaposition, but through the superposition of metrical patterns of (spatial) equivalence and non-equivalence.

The spatial metricality, in essence, provides us with the means to know what it is we are looking at. What those unities come to mean is discussed below.

3.2.1 Syntactic metricality

In this section I will show how syntactic metricality in the McDonald’s advertisements foregrounds meaning. First, notice that each description is a fully grammatical sentence, as opposed to the names of the items which are noun phrases, some of which contain an adjective, and some of which do not (see 3.2.3 for further discussion). Thus, asynctactic-syntactic metricality is one way that the names are distinguished from the descriptions.

Now consider the syntactic metricality of the descriptions themselves. As previously mentioned, each description is a fully grammatical sentence, and is marked accordingly: the first word is capitalized, the sentence is finished with a period. Each description has the following form: “Taste the Z”, where Z (in all cases but one—which is explainable by rhythmic/syllabic constraints) = Z_{adj} Z_{adj} Z_{noun}. The members of set Z are discussed in section 3.2.3.

Next consider the imperative form of the descriptions (V_{imperative} NP_{Z}: “Taste the Z”) which lacks an explicit subject. This imperative sentence is, thus, aimed at whoever is reading the description. Its lack of framing with quotations or other devices precludes its interpretation as reported speech, in effect deictically uprooting the utterance, unambiguously directing the utterance at the reader of the sentence. As verbs in the imperative mood are tenseless, this construction indexes a ‘here-and-now,’ invokeable by the reader every time it is apprehended. That is, the description is written to be continuously in the here-and-now, moving with us as we move in time reading it. It is, thus, decontextualized (temporally and referentially) as well as being easily
recontextualizable (temporally and referentially), making it 'for all time.' The
descriptions (syntactically and semantically) are part of the 'standard register' (Lippi-
Green 1998, Silverstein 1996) in the sense that they are unmarked socially. Though, as
we will see in section 3.2.3, they contain words that are not part of the standard register
per se, the (non-Standard) tropisms used do not deviate in any stereotypically
enregistered way (assigned to some social group or valorized in some way) except
possibly towards the register of McDonald's, e.g. the use of "Mc______." In sum, the
effect is that any customer at any time in any space can read the advertisement and align
her/himself to it.\(^{11}\)

3.2.2 Phonological metricality

This section focuses upon the phonological metricality of the advertisements. By
phonological metricality I simply mean the repetition of some phonemic (or some
categorically recognizable phonetic) sound(s)\(^{12}\) within some other patterning, be it
lexical, syllabic, or rhythmic/temporal. This secondary patterning serves as a baseline
from which the recognizability of the phonological metricality is judged.

Alliteration is found in two of the six product names: 'McSalad Shaker' and
'BREAKFAST BAGEL.' 'CHICKEN McGRILL' (\(d\)\(\tilde{H}\)\(n\) \(m\)\(\tilde{H}\)\(\tilde{I}\)\(r\)\(l\))\(^{13}\) is an example of phonological
metricality of sounds within morphemes ('chicken' and 'Mc'). 'CRISPY CHICKEN', though
not an instance of phonological metricality, is a visual alliteration, troping upon the
parallelism with 'Crispy' by way of the stereotypical sound of the written symbol "C."
Note that those names which do not utilize phonological metricality typically deviate in
some other fashion from canonical names, either by using the prefix "Mc______", or in
the case of 'Big Xtra!' by the use of an exclamation point and the misspelling of 'extra.'

The descriptions of the products also show inter- and intra-lexical phonological
metricality: "fantastic fun freshness", "big beefy", "creamy cool", and "Taste the
tantalizing..." Note that the intersection of these two loci of phonological metricality
(name and description) leaves no product not showing alliteration either in the name or
the description.

However, the effect of 'latching on' to the consumer by the catchiness of the
name/description is not reducible to simple alliteration. This is not surprising insofar as
consumers, as reflexive agents, do not use catchiness as the sole criterion for purchasing.
As this analysis will show, it is not the isolated instances of metricality that are of
interest, or that 'attempt to' create the desired effect (getting the consumer to buy the
products); rather, it is the superposition of the different modalities of metrical patterning
(that are themselves metrically patterned) that give rise to the effect(s) of the
advertisements. Phonological metricality is simply one among many.

3.2.3 Semantic metricality

So far we have looked at how equivalences (and non-equivalences) are created by
metrically patterning the signs in the advertisements regardless of their semantic content.
In this section I want to further expand this discussion, and note how the skeletal
framework created by phonological, syntactic, and spatial layout is 'filled out'
semantically in a way whereby these equivalences are made distinguishable and
meaningful. Moreover, I will show how this 'filling out' involves the schematization of
the products by their connection to either specific types of consumers (personae) or specific interests of consumers.

First, note the absence of "the" from any of the names. This marks them as proper names, and not as instances of some other more abstract(able) category. Further, it also makes the product stand out as a unique entity—that is, it has a proper name and thus, in American language ideology, corresponds to some "thing/concept" (cf. Silverstein 1996)—which has a transcendental form that is equally applicable to all tokens of its type. For example, contrast the use "Man appeared one day" vs. "The man appeared one day." Looking at the names themselves, we notice that all of the names trope in some way, either on the product itself or on some aspect to which the product is directly linked. Thus, some of the names contain the prefix "Mc", onomally indexing "McDonald's"; for example, "McFlurry" and "Chicken McGrill." Others utilize phonological metricality (see section 3.2.2 for discussion). Others simply deviate from standard spellings and typical noun phrase formation, such as "Big Xtra!" This exclamation point indicates, not the status of the writing qua sentence (what the exclamation point typically does), but the explosive or exciting nature of the product, as well as emphasizing that the product is 'over the top' in terms of its semantic content: i.e. big and extra. The replacement of "-ex" with "X" also aligns 'Big Xtra!' with the notion of 'Generation X' (a large part of McDonald's market). This falls into the same class of names such as 'X-Treme Sports' on ESPN, whose name indexes their new, unorthodox, innovative, and exciting status. Note that this emphasis on fun and excitement can be read as a double articulation: an appeal to the hedonistic consumer looking for pleasure and the self-controlled (health conscientious) modern ascetic (also note the Cartesian-esque emphasis on control, cf. Bordo's discussion of the trope of "control" in advertisement); that is, it is a reflection of the commodification of that which is anti-consumption (Turner 1984). This commodification of non-corporeal hedonism through products which are simultaneously constructed as non-consumptive ascetic is a common theme throughout the McDonald's discourse on the McSalad Shaker as well as in other commodities (these are discussed in further detail in Chapter 5 section 5.5.0).

Combinations of tropisms are also possible, such as "McSalad Shaker." Also to note concerning the McSalad Shaker is its usage of the suffix '-er', which equivocally connotes either the container of the 'McSalad' (used to shake), or the eater of the 'McSalad' while ostensibly only labeling the product itself qua product (in parallel fashion with the products). The nominalization of the verb 'to shake' ("Shaker") seems to imply that the McSalad Shaker is the essence of this verb of action (or at least definable by it). That is, McDonald's 'captures' the active dynamic quality of the verb 'to shake' into an actual concrete entity (the noun "Shaker"). By this duality the nominalized verb provides a concrete way to embody this essence of the motion, in effect commodifying it. The referential ambiguity and the nominalized verb form (which acts as an idiom-like non-transparent proper name) connects/equates the consumer with the product with the properties of the product. This active, dynamic "on-the-go" customer is explicitly constructed by the press releases analyzed in section II.

As discussed (section 3.2.2 and this section), all of the names trope in some way. The less-canonical tropisms (misspellings, unconventionally used exclamation points, ambiguous nominalizations, and "Mc" prefixes) of the names stand in stark contrast with the descriptions of the items, which do not have misspelling or grammatical irregularities
(though they phonologically trope, and, as we will see, semantically trope). This is partly a function of the pragmatic aspect of the advertising. That is, the name is not supposed to cohere as ‘proper’ English, but rather it is meant to stick in the mind of the consumer. It simply must be accessible when purchasing time comes around. In comparison, the descriptions are meant to connect the properties of the food, labeled by the name, to the food. Thus, in the advertisements, the name is functions as a ‘latching-on’ device, though it latches not to the descriptions of the food or to the food-as-physically-experienced-object per se (though it may indeed do these things), but to the food-as-nameable-object. Thus, from the ads, we recognize the object ‘Big Xtra!’ not as “Taste the big beefy flavor”, but as ‘Big Xtra!’ (the named object), which has some set of associations (‘big beefy flavor’). This is not to say that we cannot directly connect the picture/visual-visceral experience with the slogan, but to say that the name is what mediates the two.

Thus, the metrically driven co-occurrence of the object (picture), the description (sentence), and the label (the name) serves to interlink each aspect in this way, providing a name, a referent, and its properties neatly into one package (though this packaging is achieved only in the context of multiple products). The role of the spatial and syntactic layout was described precisely as bringing each of these into perceptually contiguity via spatial contiguity and metrical patterning, thus motivating such an interlinkage. Schematically, we can think of it in the following way (figure 1.4), where, for the sake of example, product B is ‘zoomed in’ on (though an arrow to products A and C is implied):

![Metrical patterning of products diagram]

Note that the properties of the product themselves are constructed, in part, by the syntactic and semantic metricalities of the advertisements.

Next I would like to consider the relationship of the names to the descriptions. The name of each product is connected to the properties of that product via the descriptions.
located to their right/left by means of semantic overlap. Thus, ‘Big Xtra!’ is described as ‘big’ and ‘beefy’, ‘Crispy Chicken’ is characterized by its ‘crispeness’, ‘Chicken McGrill’ is described as having a ‘grilled’ flavor, ‘Breakfast Bagel’ has a ‘good morning flavor’, ‘McFlurry’ (an ice cream) is ‘cool’ (like snow). The one possible exception is the ‘McSalad Shaker’, whose description is not explicitly linked to its title. However, this is illusory. The connection is actually quite robust and relies on the cultural connection between salad and fresh ingredients. In the corpus of McDonald’s texts, this also takes the form of the idiom ‘fresh salad’ (related to ‘freshly tossed salad’) (see McDonald’s press release [4/12/00 and 5/08/00] in appendix). This notion of fresh salad (and vegetables in general) has deep roots in our more recent history (cf. Evelyn 1699, Simmons 1796, Harris 1926, Ainsworth 1931, Corn Products Refinery Company 1949, see Shapiro 1986 on discussion of ‘freshness’ in domestic science) and is still with us today, as shown by the McDonald’s reference to it. In summary, the name of each product somehow captures its ‘essence’, and distinguishes it from the other products. This distinguishability (of ‘essences’) is taken further in the descriptions.

We noted in previous sections the use of the verb ‘taste’, as well as the syntactic and phonological composition of its object noun phrase. Now, I would like to discuss the semantic constituents of these noun phrases in relation to each other. These relationships constitute a ‘whole world’ in a sense, whereby significance is anchored both to the context (other pictures/names/descriptions), as well as to the reader insofar as the reader identifies himself/herself as the ‘hearer’ of the advertisement (see n. 11).

First, “Taste” is an imperative only applicable to animals (organisms with a nervous system), and in this case, is predicable of only humans. This immediately anchors us to the domain of consumption, of foods and eating. However, as I will show, whether eating in this case connotes ‘sophisticated and refined sensorial appreciation’ or ‘corporeal and uncontrollable visceral devouring’ is not determinate until it is ‘fixed’ by this object noun phrase in relation to the other object noun phrases. That is, the meaning of “Taste” depends on “the Z” (see section 3.2.1).

Looking at the noun phrases of the descriptions we note several patterns which are not isolatable within each product, but which, when taken together, serve to create a different schema of consumer for each product. I would like to start with the last word of each description (Table 1.4):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>product</th>
<th>last word of description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘Big Xtra!’</td>
<td>“… flavor”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Chicken McGrill’</td>
<td>“… flavor”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Breakfast Bagel’</td>
<td>“… flavor”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘McFlurry’</td>
<td>“… refreshment”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Crispy Chicken’</td>
<td>“… crispness”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘McSalad Shaker’</td>
<td>“… freshness”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We immediately notice the relatively frequent use of “flavor”, not surprising since the verb of the sentence is “Taste.” That is, we taste flavors. However, I argue that there is another implied meaning which emerges when we compare “flavor” to the other last words, viz. “refreshment”, “crispeness”, and “freshness.” All three are noun forms of either an adjective (‘fresh’ and ‘crisp’) or a verb (‘refresh’, which is formed from the adjective ‘fresh’). These three suffixed nouns are abstract nouns. Moreover, they are abstract nouns which can be glossed as “the essence of X”, where X = {fresh, refresh, or

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crisp}. That is, they are the transcendental forms of some set of characteristics of the adjective. In this way, they are like the transformation of ‘to shake’ into “shaker”; the transformed word somehow captures the semantic essence, though in the case of “freshness”, “crispness”, and “refreshment” the trajectory is from concrete to abstract rather than dynamic to static. Note that ‘crispness’ is ‘crisp’ + ‘ness’, and is different from ‘crispness’, which has a different set of connotations. ‘Crispness’ is the transcendental essence of crisp things (e.g. fresh vegetables), while ‘crispness’ connotes a class of foods that are crispy by the virtue of their being fried. The connotation of crispness (e.g. vegetables) is different from crispiness (e.g. fried chicken), and thus moves this sandwich more in the direction of ‘healthiness.’

How does this comparison (i.e. this co(n)text) affect the meaning of “flavor”? ‘Flavor’, like ‘freshness’, ‘refreshment’, and ‘crispness’ is linked to the adjective preceding it (for example, “big beefy flavor”, where flavor is composed of “big beefy”), and is thus the abstraction of those preceding adjectives themselves. That is, rather than saying (the awkward) “Taste the big beefiness”, the adjectives preceding “flavor” are collapsed into “flavor”, and thus make abstract the noun phrase (with its head ‘flavor’) via that collapsing, again linking the food product with some transcendental form. Thus, “flavor” is both transcendently constructed and uniquely fitted to each product (via its description). Note that it does not refer to the conventionalized sweet, sour, bitter, salty tastes. Rather “flavor” is defined by the unique characteristics associated with the (read: unique) products, whose palpable experience is only accessible in the act of eating that product. The intersubjectivity grounded by the description is not one of taste-experience (i.e. we all agree on what ‘sweet’ means, but do we all agree what ‘crispness’ tastes like?). As I argue, the intersubjective understanding of the description (which the advertisement hinges upon at some level) is based upon, not the tastes per se, but the qualities of personhood constructed as transcendently locatable within the food products.

The question arises then, why not use “flavor” for the other descriptions? (i.e. “creamy cool refreshing flavor” instead of “creamy cool refreshment”?). For ‘McFlurry’ and ‘McSalad Shaker’ it is clear that such an addition would ruin either the rhythm of the descriptions or their alliteration. However, this cannot be the case for “tantalizing crispness.” I argue for a different, more parsimonious, explanation. The modification of ‘fresh’, ‘refresh’, and ‘crisp’ into noun form does the following: it makes focal what the central characteristic of the product is, that is, it collapses the previous adjective(s) into it. Thus, the ‘McSalad Shaker’ has the taste of freshness, which is equated to its fantastic and fun qualities. Instead of the [taste of McSalad Shaker] = [fun + fantastic + fresh], we have the [taste of the freshness of McSalad Shaker] = fun and fantastic. Thus, the essences are first asserted and then themselves defined. The question, “what is the taste of freshness?” is answered within the format of the sentence: it is fun and fantastic in addition to being fresh. This explanation is equally applicable to the other cases.

Also note that these characterizations of the “tastes” of these foods are so far abstracted (and unique/idiosyncratic to the products) that their actual palpably experienceable taste is not conveyed very explicitly via their description. That is to say, what does fantastic fun freshness taste like? The answer to the question of course lies in the actual experience of eating one of these foods and not in the description. What is intersubjectively recognizable about the taste from the descriptions however is that they
are positively valorized. As we will see, this valorization is consumer and context specific. Thus, the idea is that the description is not simply a description of the taste of the product, but of the non-food qualities associated with the product as well. These properties are iconically aligned, as subsequent discussion will show, with the consumer of the product.

Now that we see that the ‘taste’ of each of the products is abstractly linked to some transcendent (essentializing) realm, we can ‘flesh out’ exactly what realms the products are being connected to. That is, in what trajectory does each description align itself with?, whereby that trajectory is, in one way or another, a linkage between the localizable experience of tasting/eating the product with the decontextualizable essence of that food (which is iconically applicable to desirable personas). This rhetorical connection, whatever it may be for each individual product, allows the description to connect all people to a single product while only actually (in any one instance) connecting through one person. This is done by projecting a homogenous transcendent state which captures the decontextualized essence of the product and connects it directly to an individual in some instance of reading. The question can be reformulated in the following way: who are we and what do we become (if we consider self-hood as requiring performance and constant maintenance, cf. Goffman 1967) as consumers of these products?

One trend we notice in many of the descriptions is the use of use of words denoting states unique to personhood such as “fantastic fun” (“fantastic fun freshness”: McSalad Shaker), “big” and “beefy” (“the big beefy flavor”: ‘Big Xtra!’), and “cool” (“the creamy cool refreshment”: ‘McFlurry’). These descriptions, in addition to delineating the properties of the product, personify it. Expanding this, we observe that certain words index personhood in the sense that certain types of people consume certain types of products, and, thus, by using words to describe those types of products, types of personhood are indexed. For example, words such as “tantalizing” (indexing self-indulgence) and “savory” (indexing appreciation of sensual aspects of taste, i.e. one who savors) connect the reader with the food by describing one through describing the other (i.e. if a food is savory then one who savors food will appreciate it). The only anomalous description (in terms of dually indexing the product and the consumer) is the ‘Breakfast Bagel’, whose description is “Taste the good morning flavor.” However, like the other products, this description presupposes the ‘Breakfast Bagel’ as a product which brings about a transformation for its consumer via its consumption. That is, the pragmatic aspect of the ‘Breakfast Bagel’ is such that it is usable to transform any morning into a good morning by virtue of its “good morning flavor” which the consumer can literally internalize.

The descriptions are connected to the world ‘out there’ by virtue of the creation of a world ‘in here’ (“here” being the McDonald’s advertisements on these product packages) along several axes. I will now analyze, in depth, these different axes, and show how the meanings of the products are created by: a) the connections between products (advertisement intrinsic), and b) between the products and the consumer (advertisement extrinsic). That is, I will show how these products are organized along different dimensions/axes in a systematic fashion, whereby the distinguishable and unique position that each product assumes in relation to the others negatively implicates the significance of the others (in de Saussure’s (1959 [1915]) sense of the word
'signification'). Thus, we can locate the 'coordinates' of each product along some set of abstracted criteria (the axes) (Table 1.4.0):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRODUCT</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>Reference to the food’s properties</th>
<th>Corporeality (reference to the body-sensual experience)</th>
<th>Pragmatic Use</th>
<th>Descriptors of Personhood</th>
<th>Deictic Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Big Xtra!</td>
<td>big beefy flavor</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crispy Chicken</td>
<td>the tantalizing crispness</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicken Grill</td>
<td>savory grilled flavor</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McFlurry</td>
<td>creamy cool refreshment</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+/-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McSalad Shaker</td>
<td>fantastic fun freshness</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breakfast Bagel</td>
<td>good morning flavor</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In each case it should be stressed that the food product is used to (re)produce or affirm some reality through its properties of 'foodness' (i.e. the flavor, its texture, its crispness, its freshness/quality, its size, etc.). That is, the food is either used to perform some type of personhood via consumption (i.e. someone with a big appetite eats a 'Big Xtra!'; also note the sexual connotation), or to transform some reality by using the product to some end (e.g. 'Breakfast Bagel'). Thus, the 'McSalad Shaker' can be used to have fun, the 'Breakfast Bagel' to have a good morning, and the 'McFlurry' to cool down and be refreshed.

Most products are tied to a type of person: a) explicitly, indicated by a + in the "descriptors of personhood" column (Table 1.4.0); for example, "big beefy", "cool", "fantastic fun", or b) indirectly, indicated by a +/-; for example, a person who succumbs to the "tantalizing crispness" is indulgent, in touch with his/her body, etc. and a person who savors "the grilled flavor" is in touch with his/her sense of taste and their sophisticated appreciation for food. The 'Breakfast Bagel' is the only exception, though its description of "good morning" implies that it can be used to achieve a good morning, which is assumed to be desirable. Indeed, the idea of having a bad morning vs. a good morning is one that presupposes certain cultural schemata (people who are "morning people" vs. people who are not) and scripts18 (that the morning, especially Monday morning, can be a difficult time of the day). In this sense, we could classify the Breakfast Bagel as +/- on the descriptors of personhood axis. Also note that the Breakfast Bagel is the only product that is temporally anchored in name ('Breakfast') or description ('morning'). Indeed, this temporal reference to time of day presupposes that the product can/should only be eaten at this time of day (i.e. it is a breakfast food). Accordingly, McDonald's only offers this product in the morning. The other products, in contrast, are not as time constrained19, and it is not in the interest of McDonald's to do so. That is, why would they limit the appropriate consumption of the food products when they can be marketed as consumable at lunch and/or dinner? The Breakfast Bagel is an exception precisely because it is aimed for a specific time frame by virtue of, in part, its ingredients (bagel, eggs, sausage) which are stereotypical morning foods. By mirroring the ethnodiетetic categorization wherein there is a relative non-overlap of breakfast food vs. lunch/dinner food, McDonald's creates a whole new class of customers (breakfast consumers) which demographically overlap with lunch/dinner consumers.
In addition to specifying the ‘coordinates’ of each product as ‘corporeal’/‘non-corporeal’, we can also arrange the products along a corporeal continuum (degree of reference to the body), from highest to lowest based on the descriptions: ‘Big Xtra’, ‘Crispy Chicken’, ‘Chicken McGrill’, ‘McFlurry’, ‘McSalad Shaker’, and ‘Breakfast Bagel’. Thus, ‘Big Xtra!’ is described as big and plentiful (it is “Xtra”, read: more than normal, almost too much), ‘Crispy Chicken’ is tantalizing (indulgent, tempting), and ‘Chicken McGrill’ is savory (in tune with taste sensation and appreciation of taste). Following these, we have ‘McFlurry’, which can be viewed in multiple ways: with “creamy” describing its texture, alluding to the creamy appearance of snow (also motivated by its name, “McFlurry”), or with “creamy” referencing the rich and creamy texture of ice cream, a food associated with indulgence and temptation (Bordo 1993). This rather indirect reference to the body relies on a connection of creamy to fatty to the body, which is not necessarily unmotivated give current negative valorizations of fat. However, this connection is much more indirect than the others mentioned above. Following the ‘McFlurry,’ we have the ‘McSalad Shaker’ and the ‘Breakfast Bagel’. Neither references the body particularly, or the act of eating at all. As described above however, the non-corporeality of the ‘Breakfast Bagel’ is directly related to its unique niche in that it is a breakfast food, and is not in any competition to be distinguished from the other products in some instance of ordering food. However, why the ‘McSalad Shaker’ is described as a-corporeal is not quite clear at first glance. I argue that this a-corporeality derives specifically from the fact that McDonald’s is marketing a food for those individuals who want to eat low-fat/calorie meals, i.e. those on a diet. Though this is never explicitly marked in either the ads (or the press releases), it is strategically alluded to. As reactions to the McSalad Shaker indicate, as well as other McDonald’s texts, the diet aspect is central to the McSalad Shaker.

Thus, the ‘McSalad Shaker’ (invisibly) marks itself as non-food. It makes no mention of the body or of the act of eating (in contrast to the other lunch/dinner products), outside of having a ‘taste.’ Even this taste’s description is completely devoid of conventional reference to taste; rather, notions of fun (not a description of taste per se) and freshness (which is a quality of the ingredients and not of salad per se) are invoked. The non-foodness of the ‘McSalad Shaker’ will be discussed and elaborated on in later sections of the chapter.

Another support of this cline of corporeality vs. non-corporeality (or foodness vs. nonfoodness) is that when the products in competition to be bought at the same times (lunch/dinner) are arranged by number of calories, the product order (high calorie to low calorie) is the same as the previous semantic analysis (high corporeality to low corporeality). That is, there is a one-to-one correspondence (for the dinner/lunch entrees) between the corporeality cline and the number of calories the products contain (Table 1.4.1):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Calories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘Big Xtra!’</td>
<td>710 (810 w/cheese) calories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Crispy Chicken’</td>
<td>550 calories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Chicken McGrill’</td>
<td>450 (340 without mayo) calories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘McSalad Shakers’</td>
<td>100-300 calories (range including dressing)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ‘McFlurry’ is 570-630 calories, and the ‘Breakfast Bagel’ is 550-700 calories. Thus, we note that for the total set of products there is not a perfect correlation between
calories and semantic corporeality. However, note that the two outliers (‘McFlurry’ and ‘Breakfast Bagel’) are categorically different. One is a breakfast food while the other is a dessert. Thus, their existence as possible choices within an actual ordering setting are either non-overlapping with other products (‘Breakfast Bagel’) or orderable with any meal choice (‘McFlurry’).

Also note that the ‘Chicken McGrill’ is offered as a ‘healthy’ sandwich. That is, it can be ordered without mayonnaise in order to reduce calories, fat, and cholesterol, increasing its healthiness (see n. 25). Moreover, the description of the ‘Chicken McGrill’ is less corporeally referencing than that of the ‘Crispy Chicken,’ which also contains mayonnaise but without the ‘hold the mayo’ option. This semantic relation corresponds directly with the number of calories the foods contain as well as to the degree of ‘health’ flexibility that each product has. The ‘Crispy Chicken’ is an interesting product because it is simultaneously aligned with its health qualities (e.g. crispness instead of crispines) and its corporeal qualities (it is tantalizing). This is because of its liminal nature, existing between the ‘Big Xtra!’ and other ‘health’ products (‘Chicken McGrill’ and ‘McSalad Shaker’). It is chicken (thus ‘healthier’ than beef), but it is also not as ‘healthy’ as the ‘Chicken McGrill.’ This ambivalent description places it between the ‘Big Xtra!’ and the other ‘healthier’ products. This correspondence between calories and description applies equally for the ‘McSalad Shaker’ and the ‘Big Xtra!’.

I would also like to mention the connection between the size of the product container (LFF, MFF, and SC) and the items advertised on them. This observation, however, should be taken with caution as my sample of containers was not exhaustive. It should be pointed out that the large soda cup and the large French fry holder both contain the more “corporeal” main dishes, while the smaller French fry holder contains the ‘McSalad Shaker’ (a ‘light’ option23, ideal for lunches24), the ‘Chicken McGrill’ (also marketed as a low-fat alternative25), and the ‘Breakfast Bagel’ (which is not a dinner or lunch food, but a breakfast food). This stands in contrast to the more corporeal foods, the ‘Big Xtra!’ ‘Crispy Chicken’, and ‘McFlurry’26 located on the larger serving sizes. Thus, it can be argued that McDonald’s uses the size of the holder to presuppose the type of customer, and thus advertises accordingly.

4.3 Conclusions and comments on metricality and meaning

Since a customer qua brand-loyal devotee is something that must be constantly renewed (the customer on his next turn may buy another product at another restaurant), the dialogue between customer and company is continual, though the locales, the persons, and the messages are never determinable before any specific interaction, nor is the dialogue ever reducible to any one interaction comprising the communication as a whole. Thus, by definition, this advertisement-based communication has already secured a channel; that is, the ‘reader’ is already a customer. This is a major factor in determining what stance the company takes in attempting to align itself with the customer. Additionally, due to physical space constraints, the context of communication (often low-concentration reading), and to the previously mentioned constraints, the language employed must maximize the memorable, succinct, and communicatively dense (that is, laden with meaning) aspects of the message (form). It must connect the signs on the advertisement to the customer effectively such that the now-customer will remain a customer27. The McDonald’s advertisements analyzed attempt to do this by creating a
series of intertwined multi-modal metrical structures whose patternings converge upon a set of foregrounded meanings. In sections 3.2.0-3.2.3, I showed the multiple levels and modalities by which these foregrounded meanings were formed. These foregrounded meanings are not decomposable to any one sign or sign-modality, and are comprised of spatial, phonological, syntactic, and semantic metricality.

Within this patterning of equivalences run several trends of non-equivalence. I used the metaphor of the skeleton (the metrical equivalences) being fleshed out (the non-equivalences) to describe this relationship. These non-equivalences relied upon symbolically dense signs, which via their iconism with possible alignments of the customer were indexically connected (or projected) as possible inhabitable ‘selves’ of the customer formed through a number of culturally valorized discourses on personhood. By systematically ordering the signs in this way, a world of signification (in de Saussure’s sense) was created, generating meanings crucially dependent on and solely emergent from the advertisement’s poetic systematicity. This lamination of multiple metricalities, each indexing the others, foregrounded a set of very palpable meanings to which customers would (hopefully) remember the next time they got a hunger pang. That is, by heavily grounding each component of each individual product to each other (the picture to the name to the description), by addressing the description in the most general terms (deictically referring to any reader, also see below), by defining the product in decontextualizable and transcendental terms, and by metrical patterns, the advertisement provides easily decontextualizable units, which are just as easily recontextualizable within the context of eating at any future point in time, increasing their chance of replicability in later discursive interactions and thus increasing the likelihood of their purchase.

Additionally, each item was coupled with some persona that potentially typified a consumer or some aspect of any consumer (the voracious eater in us, the health-minded individual, our sweet tooth, etc.) via this highly effective and memorable poetic structure. For the McSalad Shaker, this was linked to the absence of the physical body and an emphasis, not of taste per se, but on the quality of the food, and the connection between the food and the person (as performer of a healthy self). That is, the McSalad Shaker, given the larger cultural context, is a usable sign imbued by the advertisement for the performance of modern asceticism. What is of interest was not how advertisements make things desirable per se, but rather how it is that companies use advertisements in culturally specific ways to (re)produce social realities and schemas of personhood semiotically; that is to say, connecting objects, personae, and cultural values in order to change previous conceptions of McDonald’s and offer usable signs for the construction of social reality. The introduction of the atypical McSalad Shaker was one insight into this meta-semiotic process.

Section II. The Press Releases
3.4 Introduction

Section II will analyze the McDonald’s press releases from April 12th, 2000 and from May 8th, 2000 (in appendix) about the introduction of the then new ‘McSalad Shakers.’ These press releases conform to a different set of semiotic constraints than the advertisements (section I), based both on the medium of communication as well as the intended addressee(s); however, despite these differences, McDonald’s uses each
medium to create an ‘inhabitable space’ that ‘readers’ can occupy. In the press releases, this space depends, as we will see, on who the reader is at some point in a speech chain (Agha 1999). In contrast to the advertisements, the press releases create two inhabitable spaces (reporter and media consumers), which are aimed differentially, not by virtue of different denotational content but by the different presuppositions made by ‘readers’ of the press release as well as a different context of experiencing the press release. For the journalist, the inhabitable space created is that of journalist reporting the press release; for the reader of the press release as reported in news media, the inhabitable space is of potential customer.

Through these shiftings of ‘speaker’ and ‘hearer,’ the McSalad Shaker in imbued with meaning, making it a potential sign for performing a certain kind of persona. Like the persona constructed by the advertisements discussed in section I, the persona constructed by the press releases is aligned with a modern (aesthetic) asceticism. This is accomplished in the press release by identifying the McSalad Shaker with rationality, values of time commitments over personal (bodily) pleasures, and upper class status (thus presupposing the triadic value equation of thinness, health, and beauty). This persona, as we will see, is constructed somewhat differently.

3.5 Characteristics of press releases qua speech genre

Jacobs (1999) identifies several important (metapragmatic) aspects characteristic of press releases. These metapragmatic aspects—third person self-reference, self-quotiation, and explicit semi-performatives—all serve to preformulate the press release for its reproduction in news media, thus disseminating the ‘news’ of the press release (Jacobs 1999). The ‘McSalad Shaker’ press releases conform to Jacob’s metapragmatic framework. In addition there are several other tropes employed by the McDonald’s press release to make them more effective: convergence of ‘independent’ expert testimonial to the greatness of the McSalad Shakers, and the employment of expert titles and jargon like language use (i.e. language registers).

Press releases perform the reporting of some news event, indexing some event in the linguistic universe set up in the press release. By pointing to that universe the press release sets up an icon of a hypothetical reporter (an inhabitable space), hoping to motivate the inhabitance of that space. However, if we take the point of view of the hearer of the recirculated press release (the reader of a newspaper for example), the news event is not that of the hypothetical news event being reported (the press release), but the recontextualization of the press release in the news. That is to say, each of these metapragmatic devices serve to recruit the journalist to take on the role (presupposed by readers of news media) of objective reporter on some piece of news. Of course, this ‘news’ occurs only insofar as it ‘taken up’ by the reporter, that is, ventriloquated through the objectifying lens of news media. These metapragmatic devices act to make the press release easily decontextualizable, and thus easily recontextualizable, increasing its ability for wide dissemination. Like the advertisements (see section 3.2.0), the construction of the discourse simultaneously acts to obscure the constructed aspects of the discourse, thereby naturalizing the discursively constructed meanings within (cf. Geertz’s 1973 discussion of ritual: 131). Thus, we see that the devices used by the press releases differ from the advertisements of section I. However, as I will show, both serve to commodify the salad by connecting it with similar cultural discourses.
3.6 Notions of personhood

In this section I will show how these texts act as meta-semiotic discourses, imbuing the McSalad Shaker with valorized meanings by way of invoking social personae that readers of the recirculated text can come to inhabit. Thus, we are looking at the secondary discourse which is embedded denotationally within a (meta)pragmatic structure whose addressee is the journalist. This journalist, if (s)he moves into the inhabitable position of the metapragmatic structure, recontextualizes the pragmatic and denotational content as a news report, creating a secondary inhabitable space, addressed to the readers of the recontextualized text (the news media reader/McDonald’s consumer).

3.6.0 Properties of the McSalad Shaker

First, notice the titles of the different McSalad Shakers: the ‘Chef McSalad Shaker,’ the ‘Garden McSalad Shaker,’ and the ‘Grilled Chicken Caesar McSalad Shaker.’ Each name tropes on a conventional type of salad. Additionally, the ‘Garden McSalad Shaker’ conjures up imagery relating to its fresh qualities by reference to the source of its ingredients: the garden. The imagery of fresh herbs and vegetables (read: natural) collected on the spot and freshly tossed before consumption is immediately invoked33. The ‘Chef McSalad Shaker,’ unlike the other two, refers to the individual who prepared the salad. However note that the title is ‘Chef McSalad Shaker’ and not ‘Chef’s Salad’ (another famous type of salad). That is, though the McSalad Shaker wasn’t prepared by a chef (though it may have been invented by a “corporate chef”), the use of “Chef” in the title invokes the persona of a high status chef. This preparation by a ‘high status chef’ implies a high status customer; that is, a high status chef cooks at high status restaurants where high status customers eat. By invoking one, the others are invoked, and thus, inhabitable.

In the press releases the McSalad Shaker is explicitly described by: a) its innovative, convenient, fun, and exciting qualities, and b) how those qualities relate to its consumption and the people that consume it. Thus, “people...can enjoy a salad in an exciting and different way” (4/12/00), i.e. through the McSalad Shaker, which is “an innovative and convenient approach to eating salads like never before” (4/12/00). It is offered as a “new, exciting lunch option for customers” (5/08/00), and is an “innovative addition to its menu” (5/08/00). A. Feldman is quoted saying that “the McSalad Shaker is among the first of several new food items” which represent how “McDonald’s continues to lead the industry by offering our customers great-tasting, innovative products, at a good value and that suit their busy lifestyles” (4/12/00). G. Tomlinson goes on to say that “The revolutionary packaging concept makes eating a McSalad Shaker easy and fun” (4/12/00). These virtues of “the delicious new McSalad Shakers” are why United picked up the “tasty, fresh lunch option” (5/08/00). Additionally, the McSalad Shaker is made up of “great-tasting, fresh ingredients from top to bottom” (4/12/00 and 5/08/00). Thus, these descriptions conjure images of desire/lust for food (“like never before”) in addition to their pragmatic aspect (“convenient”, “good value”); in total, the message is that you can have it all.

The frequent mention of “freshness” is consonant with the image of the salad presented in the advertisements of section I. Unlike the advertisements however, the
salad in the press releases is somewhat bodily oriented, though more on the side of taste (sensuality) than on the corporeal (cf. the “big beefy flavor” of the ‘Big Xtra!’). This occurs primarily because the McSalad Shaker is not juxtaposed against other products, and thus its niche doesn’t need to be clearly demarcated. That is, in the advertisements, the position of the salad is threatened by the contamination of the stereotypical “fast food” (unhealthy) meanings contained by the other foods. In contrast, in the press releases, the salad can be framed both as healthy and tasty. That is, the constant reference to its delicious taste is permissible, and, in fact, necessary insofar as people perceive airline food to be terrible tasting. However, notice that the taste of the McSalad Shaker is not corporeally linked beyond the descriptors of “tasty” and “delicious.” This is consonant with the notion that the taste/meaning of the salad is without the vocabulary to be described as corporeal given its history and current status as non-food.

The frequent mentions of the great taste, health, and value are not surprising in that these are key to the success of a modern restaurant. More interesting, is the frequent mention of novelty and innovativeness. These however are just as key for a new product. That is, is it that makes this salad stand above all the rest? McDonald’s anticipates this question by offering a novel packaging of the salad which we are told is convenient and, more importantly, fun. It makes eating vegetables fun on top of being tasty, healthy, and cheap. Besides simply describing that it is fun (a denotational description), the text also describes how it is fun (a pragmatic description): “Served in a tall, clear, plastic cup with a domed lid, customers pour on their choice of dressing then shake it up, spreading the dressing evenly and neatly inside the cup” (5/08/00, my emphasis), “The revolutionary packaging concept makes eating a McSalad Shaker easy and fun” (4/12/00, my emphasis). These action descriptions prescribe the actual programming of body motions through which the ease and fun emerge: ‘shaking it up’ which the names tropes upon (‘shaking it up’ as a continuous present verb formation is made into a noun phrase by the addition of the suffix ‘-er’; see discussion in section 3.2.1). This action prescription provides the transformative process whereby the consumer transforms the food from normal to extraordinary, and thus by isomorphism, the average (read: mediocre) consumer to extraordinary consumer (McSalad Shaker= food= consumer= fun + excitement). The same meta-semiotic label and pragmatic descriptions apply to the ease of its use. The customer can “pour on their choice of dressing... spreading the dressing evenly throughout” (4/12/00 and 5/08/00, my emphasis), as well as just being “easy and fun” (4/12/00).

Thus, we see how the McSalad Shaker is described as desirable for individuals. However, who are these individuals? The schematization of the potential customer occurs in two ways in these texts: a) presupposition, and b) explicit description.

By presupposition it is simply meant the ways that the text mentions the virtues of the products assuming that the reader actually cares about these virtues. For example, it is assumed that people who want to eat salad value novelty, ease of eating, excitement, fun, and health. Not bad assumptions for fast food customers, with the possible exception of ‘health.’ However, this is the whole point of the McSalad Shaker ad campaign: to open a new market- the health conscious individual who eats fast food. Notice that, like the advertisements analyzed in section I, many of the explicit descriptors of food are not only implicit descriptors of qualities that people want from their food, but
also descriptors of *people themselves*. Thus, words such as “fun”, “exciting”, “different”,
and “innovative” all apply to human referents as well.

A second way in which the customer is indexed is through the instantiation of a
lexical register relating to the preparation of foods. That is, by using words that only
people who are food connoisseurs use. Some of these are non-transparent, such as
“julienne ham” and “julienne turkey.” This term (“julienne”) actually appears in “A
dieter’s guide to salad-menu jargon”, an article by Holly Garrison in Parents Magazine
(1993)34. Others are not opaque, but nonetheless seem to index a type of customer.
Thus, the area of chicken is specified: the “chicken breast”, i.e. white meat which has less
fat, as opposed to the leg or thigh which has dark meat (higher in fat). This chicken is
“grilled” and not fried and thus is not unhealthy but rather lean and healthy (see section
1). Additionally, it is not cheddar cheese and Monterey Jack cheese but a “cheddar and
jack cheese *blend*” (4/12/00, my emphasis).

In addition to implicit descriptors, the to-be customer is also constructed by more
explicit methods. Thus, the customer is of the type that “requests... a tasty, fresh lunch
option” (5/08/00). Additionally, the customer cares about seeing “great-tasting, fresh
ingredients from: top to bottom” (5/08/00). That is, they are fickle about what they eat,
they care about the quality of the food, and about enjoying (4/12/00) the taste. For them,
“seeing is believing.” The McSalad Shaker customers are also concerned about “a good
value” and food choices that “suit their busy lifestyles” (4/12/00). These people are *not*
idle. They are “on the go” (4/12/00). This on-the-go persona becomes fleshed out
through the metaphor “on the fly” which is in both press releases. This trope is discussed
in section 3.6.1.

3.6.1 *The upward bound McSalad Shaker consumer*

One explicit way in which the McSalad Shaker is imbued with meaning is by the
use of the metaphor “On The Fly.” This metaphor invokes a cluster of associations when
deployed which are iconic with the to-be customer. This iconism is ambiguous in that it
refers both who the customer is, and more importantly, who the customer *can be*. Thus,
the McSalad Shaker is dually imbued with the capacity to (re)assert some pre-existing
persona or to create/inhabit some persona.

The motivation for the use of this metaphor is driven by the ad campaign, in
which McDonald’s “teamed up” (5/08/00) with United Airlines in order to offer the
McSalad Shaker on flights. Customers of United Airlines are (by this partnership)
customers of McDonald’s. Therefore, through the ad campaign, McDonald’s constructs a
context wherein customers are *literally on the fly*. That is, people are eating McSalad
Shakers when in flight on airplanes. This literal context, punning on the
conventionalized metaphor “on the fly”, creates a bifurcation into two distinct and related
(through the metaphor) levels of meaning: 1) the schema of the literal customers on the
fly (the schema of the businessman), and 2) the figurative schema of the busy person.
“On the fly” (idiom *qua* literal expression *qua* trope) is used as a hinge upon which these
two levels are made to be parallel, each an icon of the other. Via this hinge, meaning can
‘percolate’ or move freely, between the represented customer (in the press release), the
invoked schema of persona (associated with the represented customer in the press release
and by the other linguistic constructions described above) and the actual customer
(consumer/reader).
The literal persona invoked is the business-person who travels frequently. This person is on the move, constantly busy, and important. In sum, a high-class individual who is on their way ‘up’ (literally and figuratively) is indexed. The figurative persona is also someone who is very busy. Alan Feldman, the McDonald’s USA president, explicitly connects the two, when he says “McDonald’s continues to lead the industry by offering our customers great-tasting, innovative products, at a good value and that suit their busy lifestyles” (4/12/00; my emphasis). Like the business-person on the plane, the McDonald’s customer values their time and their money. Though they may not be on planes, they are “on the go” (4/12/00). This class of person is not idle, they are not lazy, slovenly, ‘going nowhere’, or on a ‘downward slide.’ Rather, they are going somewhere (upwards), and wherever that somewhere is, it is convenient and preferable to have a McSalad Shaker. That is, they can “enjoy a McSalad Shaker at the airport or carry it with them for a later meal just about anywhere--on their flight, in a taxi or back at home” (5/08/00). Recall our discussion of the nominalization of the verb ‘to shake’ in forming the name “McSalad Shaker” (section 3.2.1). This essentialization of an active verb (forming the noun) is iconic with the trope “on the fly,” where a noun (food/person) is described by its/this (constant) movement. Also note the semantic overlap with (and thus indexing of) another trope of the high class busy business man: “a mover and shaker.”

Note that, as A. Feldman tells us, the McSalad Shaker is a part of their lifestyle. Thus, the McSalad Shaker is not simply a food, a fad, or a product anymore. It is a component of a lifestyle, a way of being, a way of living and breathing. The McSalad Shaker fits quite neatly with this desirable upper-class lifestyle (‘of the rich an famous’ perhaps?), and via this meta-semiotic construction of the McSalad Shaker, individuals can quite literally purchase this lifestyle. Through the McSalad Shaker they can lead it. Note that the vocabulary to describe the McSalad Shaker, within this metaphor of “on the fly,” are verbs of action, both in the press releases and in our own capacity to gloss it (to lead a lifestyle, upward bound, on-the-go, etc.). In fact, the description of the McSalad Shaker in the press releases in general involves verbs of action, specifically of choice. Customers can choose where to eat it (4/12/00), which variety to eat, and what dressing to use (5/08/00). Eating it also involves active verbs: “shaking it up,” “to see our great-tasting, fresh ingredients” (i.e. to inspect for quality), and to “to pour on their choice of dressing.”

We should note that McDonald’s clearly distinguishes between the person who is too busy to eat well, and the person who is busy but demands quality healthy food, aligning itself with the latter. In popular discourses the ‘on the go’ diet/lifestyle is often portrayed as being at odds with ‘healthy’ eating:

“Your life is overscheduled to the max- you gulp down something at your desk, if you even have time to eat lunch at all. Because you’re always on the run, you gravitate toward fast food, vending-machine goodies, and other unhealthy fare that you can grab on the go.”

McDonald’s, through the introduction of the McSalad Shaker wants to combat this stereotype. Thus, the McSalad Shaker is what individuals can purchase when they don’t have the time to sit down at a meal, but still want to eat healthy:

“When you have practice, school, work, family and friends vying for your attention the day’s menu is likely to include the phrase “drive-thru.” Next thing you know, you’re wolfing down greasy fries and wondering why swimming laps feels like mucking through quicksand. It doesn’t have to be this way. For those times when you just have to eat on the run, here’s a game plan for ordering up fast food that won’t slow you down.”
This article quoted above goes on to say that when at McDonald’s we should “Skip This”: “Quarter Pounder with Cheese, Large Fries, McFlurry”, and “Try That”: “Garden Salad Shaker, Fat-free Herb Vinaigrette, Vanilla Reduced Fat Ice Cream.” This combating of McDonald’s unhealthy stereotype is also made explicit by J. Northcott, who says that McDonald’s “wanted to respond to…passengers requests for a tasty, fresh lunch option” (5/08/00), which the anti-thesis of “wolking down greasy” food.

By troping on a conventionalized trope, McDonald’s is able to draw an equation between a type of desirable person and customers of McDonald’s. Conveniently, the criterion by which McDonald’s customerhood is defined is much easier to fulfill than the criteria of the type of person indexed; it is easier to buy a McSalad Shaker than to start a successful business. This is specifically the point: the McSalad Shaker confers less to the business person (since (s)he is already a business person, though it may be convenient, delicious, etc.) than it does carry meaning to ‘Mr. Everyman’ who can (ostensibly) move one step closer to that personhood by fulfilling the simple criterion that McDonald’s has so beautifully constructed: consuming the McSalad Shaker regularly (remember, this is a lifestyle!). This movement of meaning (from lower to higher status) is key since the market for non-business people is larger than the market for business people. This not to say that McDonald’s excludes them, for this product also opens the market to these individuals as well. However, it is to say that by including this demographic, McDonald’s opens a bridge to semiotically connect individuals from different levels of society without ever requiring their actual involvement as individuals. It is simply by the deployment of signs that McDonald’s can affect individuals’ concept of self by drawing on these shared cultural meanings.

Section II showed how the press release, as speech genre (Bahktin 1986), is a preformulated discourse (Jacobs 1999), whose metapragmatics attempt to control later recontextualizations of itself. These metapragmatics partially constrain the object discourse. Within this speech genre the meaning of salad is projected through the conventions of the press release and by devices idiosyncratic to these press releases. These idiosyncrasies are partially motivated by the presupposition of the cultural meanings of salad, tropes of those presuppositions, as well as the iconic alignments deployed within the press releases between potential readers and the personae constructed by the press release. The total effect is purely an emergent semiotic phenomenon.

III. Conclusions: What is the commodified salad (token)?

The question ‘What is the commodified salad?’ is not simply answerable from these texts (advertisements and press releases) alone. However, as meta-semiotic discourses which construct a set of meanings for the salad, they can be seen as one token of a cultural type. This token, as noted in this chapter, is constrained by the interests of the ‘speaker’, by the (conventions of the) speech genre, and by the addressivity and dialogicality of the texts. More generally though, the following can be argued: the formulation of a text, by its very existence and circulation, reformulates, or comes to reproduce, the conditions by which it achieved its construability in the first place (a la Giddens’ (1984) ‘duality of structure’). That is, the presuppositions of these different texts are criteria by which we can judge the validity of the constructed meanings of the salad. In fact, analysis of the McSalad Shaker as cultural token of the salad qua cultural
type shows exactly the process through which: a) discourses provide the substratum from which knowledge is emergent/intelligible, and b) how this knowledge is precipitated into a specific embodied form.

In summary: the salad is a usable sign (iconically, indexically, and symbolically) in the performance of personhood. Personhood within a late capitalist (postmodern) society is itself commodified through these performable signs. In addition, because the self must be constantly worked upon (Goffman 1980, Falk 1994, Glassner 1990) companies, in order to ‘hook’ customers as brand-devotees, constantly bombard customers with advertisements of this sort, with the aims to routinize the use of their product as part of an individual’s self. Thus, the salad is marketable as an inhabitable space which can be (routinely) purchased by the consumer and used for self-definition. The salad, as commodified persona alignable with the reader is an upper-class ‘on-the-go’ health-conscientious individual who is concerned with issues of quality and taste. This persona, both by implication and by implicit linguistic construction, is most likely thin (acorporeal) and not subject to his or her temptations (i.e. in control). Thus, the salad is part of a set of signs used in (the performance of) self-discipline; that is, the salad is part of a panoply of commodified techniques to alter the body qua material and the body qua image (cf. Turner’s 1994 discussion). This persona/commodified salad exhibits each of the discursive axes discussed above: aesthetic asceticism, medicalized morality, appeal to nutritional discourse, and Cartesian mind-body dualism.

This persona-construction is motivated by the meanings of the salad itself (their iconic relationship). The salad, like the person, is non-corporeal. It exists in the liminal space between food and non-food. It is fun, fresh, and fantastic (there are, perhaps, no better words to express this). It is tasty and fun yet healthy, as well as innovative and convenient. It is, thus, to a large extent, a modernist food: rational, disembodied, innovative/moving towards progress, in control/controlled, and made convenient through technology. It is also, in the case of the McSalad Shaker, manufactured by the modernist Americana institution par excellence: McDonald’s (Budra 2000).

Simultaneously however, the McSalad Shaker, like the salad in general, is a postmodern food. It is the commodification of modernism, with a new, essentially ascetic (also modernist), spin. It is an image personified as potential lifestyle. Moreover, it fits within the larger discourse of the plurality of inhabitable selves and realities (cf. plastic surgery and diet discourses). Within this discourse on the self-constructive powers of the self on the self, the salad is a sign used to achieve such a (trans)formation of the self. The salad is the vehicle for living that life that reflects the ‘real you.’ This chapter has shown how this is done semiotically within a consumer capitalist context.

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* Thanks to Asif Agha, Anastase Nakassis, Carmen Nakassis, Dimitri Nakassis, Tamara Black, and the Registers of Language class for their invaluable comments relating to this chapter and its earlier drafts.
1 That is, a conflation of beauty, health, fitness, and thinness.
2 See Nietzsche’s (1967 [1887]) discussion of asceticism.
3 SC contains, from top to bottom: a photo of the ‘Big Xtra!’ hamburger on the left, with the phrase “Taste the big beefy flavor” on the right. Below the sandwich, the title (‘Big Xtra!’) is written. On the level below, the pattern is reversed, where the phrase accompanying ‘Crispy Chicken’ is on the left of the picture (the picture is on the right hand side). The accompanying phrase, “Taste the tantalizing crispness”, is directly above the title of the sandwich, ‘Crispy Chicken.’ Directly below this title is the picture of the third product, ‘Chicken McGrill’, with its accompanying phrase to the right of the picture, “Taste the savory grilled flavor.” The name of the sandwich is located below the picture.
LFF follows the same spatial layout as SC, however the order of the products, from top to bottom, is 'Big Xtra!' (phrase is the same as SC), followed by 'McFlurry' (phrase: "Taste the creamy cool refreshment"), 'Crispy Chicken' (phrase is the same as SC), and finally by 'PrePaid Calls' (phrase: "Over 200,000 prizes from AT&T PrePaid-You could WIN 10 Free Minutes in U.S. Calls"), which is not on SC.

MFF, like the other two, follows the same layout, with 'McSalad Shaker' on top (phrase: "Taste the fantastic fun freshness"), followed by 'Chicken McGrill' (same phrase as before), followed by 'Breakfast Bagel' (phrase: "Taste the good morning flavor"), and finally by 'PrePaid Calls' (same phrase as before).

These products were released relatively recently (though the 'McFlurry' is somewhat older than the rest) with a new McDonald's advertisement campaign: "We Love to Make you Smile." I will consider each product individually, though as part of a greater structure/pattern, insofar as these products show a large degree of continuity/parallelism in form. It should be noted, to avoid confusion, that each item is not necessarily experienced by consumers in (spatial/temporal) contiguity with all the other products since each holder (SC, MFF, LFF) contains only a subset of the total product set studied (at most four of six).

However, as we will see, each holder does contain the same structure, whose meaning is construable, isolated from the total set of products, because each product co-occurs with (at least two) other products. This is also not to say, however, that an individual could not be exposed to all the products at the same time, nor to say that an individual, upon habitual frequenting of McDonald's, could not come to recognize these products as related to each other. This is certainly possible, and often happens when individuals get 'meals', which typically include a sandwich, drink, and French fries. However, either way, in isolation or all together, the argument that will be presented stands. This argument is made clear upon the analysis of all three holders together, and thus, at times, analysis will proceed accordingly. The SC, MFF, and LFF are part of a McDonald's game to win prizes from game-pieces attached to the holders. MFF and LFF differ from SC in that the prizes and the food ads appear together on MFF and LFF, while in SC they are spatially separated. In SC the winnable products are listed on the opposite side of the product advertisements. This is why the 'PrePaid Calls' are part of the advertisement schemes of MFF and LFF, while not part of SC, where 'PrePaid Calls' is listed with the winnable prizes on the opposite side of the cup. Also see section 3.2.0.

The atypicality of this food at McDonald's is based on the stereotype that McDonald's is an unhealthy place to eat and that the salad is a healthy food. An example of this stereotype is that McDonald's is often used as a baseline upon which unhealthiness can be gauged. Thus, in a TV news story, a comparison between McDonald's food vs. Airline (Delta) food was made in order to show how unhealthy airline food is (Channel 12 News at Five, "Fast food vs. airline food", WKRC-TV, 6/5/00). The atypicality of the McSalad Shaker is also shown by the New York Times article (May 28th, 2000) "McSalad Campaign Starts This Week", whose first sentence is: "It may seem incongruous to order a salad at McDonald's..."

All three containers (SC, MFF, and LFF) have a similar layout and thus comments apply to all unless specifically noted. First, considering the advertisement section (where the products appear) in relation to the rest of the container (the cup and the French fry containers), we see that the advertisements are chromatically separated from the rest of the container, thus drawing our attention to the spatial location of something of importance: the advertised products. The space age-esque appearance of the advertisement areas seems to iconically conjure up the image of a webpage, or at least index the look of new technology; that is, the products are framed as innovative and novel.

Within the advertisement area there is a top-down, left-right ordering of the items in the displays. Starting from the top-left hand corners, a picture of some food is displayed, with a descriptor to the right of it, while the name of the product is underneath it. This is followed by another product below it, with the picture and descriptor on the right side and the name of the product still below and on the left side. The third product, like the first, has a picture and descriptor from left to right respectively, with the name below (left side). In the French fry containers there is an accompanying phone card ('PrePaid Calls') which follows the same layout as the second product. Thus, we can see the following pattern (Table 1.1.0):
**Table 1.1.0**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>P</th>
<th>D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*D</td>
<td>*P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*N</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*P= picture, D= description, N= name, {a,b,c,d}= different products for example, P= picture of product 'a'

*only on MFF, LFF

We can see this as an alternating ABA(B*) structure, with an oscillation of left vs. right [Left-Right-Left-(Right*)] alternating picture/description sequence]. These patterns are framed by a gray border, which periodically extends into the display itself with 'bars' within which are the names of the products. These highlight the writing in the bar as different, thus foregrounding the writing within as the name, while simultaneously separating each product from the one below and above it. The names are also in a bolder black font while the descriptions are in a smaller white font with a thin black outline. The fonts are also different; the 'name' font has thicker letters that are less curved and more angular, while the 'description' font is thinner and more curved/rounded. Thus, the writing has the following pattern (Table 1.1.1):

**Table 1.1.1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>P</th>
<th>wh</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bl</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wh</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bl</td>
<td>wh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>wh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bl</td>
<td>*wh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*</td>
<td>*P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*</td>
<td>*Bl</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

P= picture
wh- smaller white font (descriptions),
Bl- larger bold black font (names),
{a,b,c,d}- products
bold- in gray border extension

*only on MFF, LFF

Thus, the string of letters that we gloss as 'names' are indexed as the names of the products by: its larger different font, its different color, the extension of the border within which the writing is placed, the capitalization of each word of the product name (for example 'Breakfast Bagel'), and the non-sentence form of the name (it is a noun-phrase, contra the descriptors which are sentences, see section 3.2.3). Additionally, many of the names have either a trademark™ or ® symbol to the right of the name, or a "Mc" prefix. That we recognize each as the name is not reducible to any of these factors, though the metrical patterning of each, juxtaposed against the others highlights what the names of the products are, making it fairly obvious to the reader.

Note that 'PrePaid Calls' is distinctly different than the food products, both by its class of object (i.e. it is not food)—indexed by its name and its picture—and by its longer description. All the products on MFF and LFF are ones that we can "Win Instantly!" (MFF and LFF have a heading at the top that says "Win Instantly!") in the McDonald's 'Taste Trials Games' (this is an allusion to the co-temporaneous Olympic Games in Sydney that McDonald's was using to piggy back publicity (cf. 09/07/00 press release [see works cited]). "Taste Trials" puns on 'time trials' allowing "customers to participate in the fun and competition [of the Olympics] at home through the McDonald's Taste Trials promotion", thus.
"participating in their own 'taste trial'" (09/07/00 press release). Customers could win prizes "instantly" from McDonald's foods. However, the food products exist in the dual capacity as products that you can also buy at McDo na d's and whose availability will last beyond the Olympic-themed advertisement campaign. Thus, the food products' presence in this display is obvious to the reader, it need not be explicitly justified as it is assumed by McDonald's to be obvious to the consumer. Because 'PrePa id Calls' is categorically different from the other products it will be omitted from subsequent discussion unless explicitly mentioned. It is not as obvious what 'PrePaid Calls' is doing on a McDonald's product, and thus its name/picture is accompanied by a longer description; that is, it actually has the meta-game statement "You could WIN..." within its description. This meta-game description is implicit (and thus unstated) for the food objects. In SC, which has no calling card, the heading of the advertisements is "Great Tastel", telling us that these are buyable food products and not things to be won per se; the things to be won are on the opposite side of the cup (accompanied by the heading "Win Instantly!"). Additionally, 'PrePaid Calls' differs from the other food products in that it is listed at the bottom of the holder, thus never breaking the rhythmic and thematic continuity of the other food products. Thus, 'PrePaid Calls' is set in opposition to the other products both spatially and linguistically. Its categorical difference is such that it is accompanied by a meta-commentary justifying why it is placed in the same metrical structure as food products while being spatially separated from those products. In other words, McDonald's isn't really pushing 'Pre-Paid Calls' in the same way it is pushing the other products. Note that the categorical difference from the other products cannot be so divergent that 'PrePaid Calls' conflicts with the projected McDonald's image.

At the bottom of the display, the McDonald's emblem and the Olympic Games emblem are conjoined. The McDonald's emblem makes explicit that the above are McDonald's products. Its attachment to the Olympic rings implies that McDonald's, in some way, (officially) sponsors/represents the Olympics. Note that the Olympic rings are not trademarked though the McDonald's emblem is and there is no mention of the Olympics qua institution anywhere on the product (in comparison to AT&T, Pontiac, and GMC). This is not to say that McDonald's is not in some capacity an 'official' (US) sponsor of the Olympics, but that it is not semiotically ratified (except for the signs' juxtaposition and the meta-semiotic gloss below the conjoined emblems: "Proud Partner") on LFF, MFF, or SC. Thus, one cannot know from this sample if McDonald's was or was not an official sponsor. This, however, is irrelevant, in that McDonald's says they are, and thus, in a very real way are, insofar as they do invoke the Olympics as a reason for the "Games", using "Taste Trials" as a trope refashion of "Time Trials" [see above]. This association provides a motivating context for: a) the trope name of the contest "Time Trials", and b) the contest itself. Additionally, by literally aligning McDonald's with the Olympics (by the conjoined emblems), McDonald's iconically equates McDonald's with the Olympics, McDonald's with American patriotic spirit (insofar as the Olympics represent that), and most importantly, the Olympic athlete with the McDonald's consumer (both winners?).

10 Analysis of the 'PrePaid Calls' will be omitted from this section for reasons specified in section 3.2.0.

11 The one exception to this pattern is the description of 'Crispy Chicken': "Taste the tantalizing crispness." The reason for the omission of a second adjective is not completely deducible from the linguistic form in isolation or from the physical properties/form of the advertisements. I offer the following reasonable explanation for the omission: adding another adjective to description would cause a deviation from the general rhythmic pattern of the descriptions. The number of syllables of "tan-ta-li-zing crisp-ness" (six) is basically equivalent to its co-occurring products in SC and LFF: "big beef-y fla-vor" (five), "sa-vor-y grilled fla-vor" (six), and "cream-y cool re-fresh-men-t" (six). The addition of another adjective would make the sentence cumbersome and would disrupt the rhythm of the advertisement.

12 Of course we should note that this is within limits. For example, the form described above could hypothetically read in a way that indexes when it was written (i.e. it is 'dated'), and thus aligns itself to a (hypothetical) reader of that time period and not to the reader (of some future time period). Additionally, the transcendent temporal aspect of the linguistic form is rendered dated if it is known by the reader that the products do not exist anymore or if the linguistic form is of a different code, register, dialect, etc. which in some way presupposes that the reader is not addressed.

13 Alliteration is the one commonly used form of phonological metricality defined as: "1. The repetition of the same consonant sounds or of different vowel sounds at the beginning of words or in stressed syllables" (American Heritage Dictionary 1992, also see Fabb's 1997 discussion). Rhyming is another common form of phonological metricality.
13 The bold underlined letters in ‘Chicken McGrill’ (\textit{\textup{t\textipa{H}\textipa{n} \textipa{m\textipa{H} g\textipa{l}}}) correspond to hard “\textipa{k}” (‘\textipa{k}’) sounds.

14 By less canonical I am not making an assertion about their frequency in usage per se; rather, I am identifying a class of tropes with which the standard register does not have a vocabulary to deal with (though more technical registers might, see Halliday 1988, Quinn 1993).

15 Figure 1.4 illustrates graphically the point discussed above, though it is not a diagram that is organized in a one-to-one correspondence between the spatial layout of the diagram and the spatial layout of the advertisement. It is simply a heuristically useful visual depiction, and not a ‘literal’ transposition of the written text into spatial form.

16 No other animals eat at McDonald’s officially.


18 I am using ‘script’ in the sense that it is used in social psychology (Sahini 1995), as a stereotyped memory for the temporal aspects of actions/events in some schematized context.

19 Though note for example that one cannot order a hamburger during breakfast hours.


21 http://www.mcdonalds.com/countries/usa/nutritionist/nutritionist.html


23 See http://www.mcdonalds.com/countries/usa/nutritionist/nutritionist.html; this page is titled ‘Nutritionist- McDonald’s USA.’ It has a Question and Answer format. If we look at question six “I’m looking for a ‘light’ lunch or dinner. What is recommended?” (quotations on “light” in original), we see that its answer directs the customer to the ‘McSalad Shakers.’

24 See 5/08/00 press release, in appendix.

25 See http://www.mcdonalds.com/countries/usa/nutritionist/nutritionist.html; If we look at the second question “I’m on a low fat diet... what can I eat at McDonald’s?”, the answer offers a “Chicken McGrill Sandwich without mayo” as fitting within a low fat diet.

26 Note that ice cream is marketed as an indulgent food, marked as luxurious (Bordo’s 1993).

27 The success of the products remains to be evaluated, not to mention that we could not simply reduce their success to this small sample, though to be sure, it is a crucial part of it.

28 The argument of section I assumes, and relies upon, the following: \textit{metricality matters}. This is not to say that people need consciously attend to and reflect upon the metrical patterns involved. We can be sure that often they do not; if they did we might think that they would actually reject the advertising as manipulative, insulting to their intelligence, etc. (See Parmentier (1994) for other reasons why they might not). This assumption rests on the idea that people actually do process such metrical patterns at some level such that metricality does actually increase the memorability of meaning as well as creating meaning-generating potential. This is ultimately an empirical question, and requires careful analysis, which is outside the scope of this chapter. However, I can offer the following bodies of evidence and lines of thought to support such an assumption: 1) This type of linguistic usage (poetics, metrical structures) is heavily used by advertisers, politicians, musicians, writers (Jakobson 1987 [1960]), and in everyday conversation (Silverstein 1998) and thought (Lotman 1990) increasing memorability and generating meaning. 2) Cross-culturally, metrical patterns (though they need not take the same form as those in English) are highly employed in religious services, ritual, and magic (Rosaldo 1975, Fitzgerald 1975, Galaty 1983 among others) to the effect of (re)producing social realities. 3) We can consider metricality in the context of the following research in cognitive science and psychology (Anderson 1995, Craik and Lockhart 1972, Chase and Ericsson 1982): (a) information which fits in with previous schemata are more easily remembered, (b) mere repetition can increase one’s belief that the repeated is true (the ‘illusory truth effect’, Schacter and Scarry 2000), (c) information which is hierarchically organized is more easily remembered (an extension of (a)), (d) depth of processing and the degree of interconnectedness to other information increases memory of that information, and (e) the network model of memory and activation energy. Thus, the metrical structuring of linguistic
and non-linguistic information in the McDonald's advertisements does several things: (i) it indexes (activates) other information to which the new information is related to, (ii) it creates in real time a hierarchically organized structure by which information is processed and generated, as well as creating a (real-time) schema whereby previous information and anticipated information (either via syntactic rules or stereotypical associations of signs used) is fit into, (iii) locally activates certain 'nodes' within some semantic network (Collins and Quillian 1969), whereby the manipulation of signs in within the metrical pattern creates equivalences and non-equivalences, thus increasing the 'weights' of connection between these activated nodes (which weren't necessarily there before) such that subsequent parallel structures (that is, further instantiation of the metrical pattern in real-time) occur more quickly and are accessed more easily due to already current activation of content and structure, and (iv) creates meaningful associations which increase reflection and processing of the information, thus increasing its memorability. These metrical structures, not only are more memorable, they are often taken to be true.

29 Note that the reader of the press release is not only the journalist, but the 'reader' of the news media if the press release gets reported.

30 The 'speech chain' is defined as "a historical series of speech events, linked together by the permutation of individuals across speech-act roles in the following way: the hearer of the (n)th speech event is the speaker of the (n+1)th speech event" (Agha 1999: 9, single spaced pagination).

31 Jacobs (1999: 27) defines 'metapragmatics' as "indicators of the language user's reflexive awareness in a usage event" (quoting Verschueren 1995: 367). These aspects are labeled 'metapragmatic' because their usage implies speaker knowledge that the form used affects present and/or future interaction (qua instances of usage). The metapragmatics of press releases, as we will come to see from subsequent discussion, is evidence of the dialogicality (Belkitt 1986) of the press release speech genre.

32 These speaker titles also serve to legitimately enregister the information presented. Take the 4/12/00 press release as an example: the president of McDonald's USA (Alan Feldman) speaks about the "McDonald's 2000 menu strategy", as well as "leading the industry" and the "debut" of "new food items...at McDonald's restaurants in the U.S.", while a "corporate chef" (Gerald Tomlinson) talks about the "revolutionary packaging concept" (my emphasis on words part of the food industry registers). Though we may consider the voice of McDonald's to be singular, each speaker with his/her high-sounding and technical name is assigned to their specific area of expertise, making the information appear to be more true. This truth is confirmed by the quasi-technical register used (cf. use of words like "menu strategy", "food items", packaging concept", as well as meta-institutional words which reference enregistered idioms such as 'leading the industry'). These titles make legitimate the use of these jargons by their technical sounding names. Thus, because G. Tomlinson is not just a chef, but a corporate chef, he can speak about "revolutionary packaging concepts" without sounding like he is trying to sound 'smart.' These relatively opaque titles (what is a "corporate chef"? (4/12/00), what is a "director of menu management"? (5/8/00)) serve three purposes (none of which is to accurately describe the job): 1) to sound technical and authoritative, 2) to index the general field upon which this technical expertise lies, and 3) make inappropriately technical sounding jargon appropriate.

33 See Harre et al. (1999: 38-39) for their discussion of the imagery of the garden.

34 Parents Magazine (June 1993) "Salads make the meal: a low-fat diet means fewer calories and less cholesterol." By Holly Garrison, vol. 68, no. 6.

35 "Manic Muncher" Good Housekeeping
http://goodhousekeeping.women.com/gh/diet/scopes/a0man111.htm

Part II. Eating Disorders

Chapter 4
The body, the self, the salad, and eating disorders

4.0 Introduction to Part II

Chapters 2 and 3 outlined the social construction of the salad. Chapter 2 analyzed the salad as a cultural type, that is as social semiotic, by attending to a number of discourses critical for its (modern) meaning: a) the body qua sign, from religious asceticism to aesthetic asceticism, b) the discourse on morality, from the religious to the medical, c) discourses on the constitution of food, health, and the body, from humoralism to nutritional science, d) Cartesian mind-body dualism, and e) discourses on gender, specifically on the Natural state of women. It was argued that to understand the salad is to understand how these discourses affect and are affected by the others. Chapter 3 expanded this analysis of the salad by putting the salad qua cultural type into the context of (post)modern consumer capitalism. The semiotic analysis of the texts generated by McDonald’s about the McSalad Shaker exhibited how the consumer capitalist process of commodification of cultural schemata of personhood precipitated cultural tokens of the type. The meanings attached to the McSalad Shaker were shown to be those discussed in Chapter 2.

Taken together, these chapters show the salad (and its embodied tokens) to be, in essence, non-food. That is to say, through the social valorization of asceticism (presupposing a Cartesian dichotomy valorizing the mind over the body) coupled with the ideal of the thin aesthetic body the salad was defined, through nutritional discourse, as a food which disavows the corporeal elements of food. Thus, it was shown how the salad offers a semiotic bridge between food and non-food, whereby both are edible, yet the latter is connected with (aesthetic) ascetic ideals of non-consumption. This meaning of salad, in turn, was also shown to have a high affinity to the construction of gender through time. That which is constructed as naturally base (in women), essentially the corporeal: appetite, sexuality, passion, is thus controllable through the salad, which represents the opposite of their Otherness. Thus, the salad is one such way (for women) to performatively control (their) Nature, and thus was inexorably connected to the ideal(ized feminine). Within the consumerist cultural milieu, even products such as the salad, whose meaning is anti-consumption, are commodified and connected with inhabitable personae. Thus, the salad, in a society where the body serves as window to the soul (morally and aesthetically), becomes part of the self’s toolkit. The salad qua sign acts in the performance of personhood. In sum, Chapters 2 and 3 offer a methodology for the analysis of how cultural forms are constructed and infused with meaning, embodied and commodified, and used by individuals in the creation, maintenance, and performance of selfhood.

4.1 Food, the routine, and the culture of seeing

Thus, we see how food acts as a semiotic medium (Chapters 2 and 3). Through the semiotic inbuelement of food and diet, food as a (literally) consumed sign-vehicle acts as an integral part of social life. Part II expands this discussion by showing how the discursive construction of a material object such as salad and the discursive construction
of (categories of) selfhood (i.e. individuals with eating disorders) are related. One obvious connection is that food is one of the primary loci of semiosis for eating disordered individuals, and in fact forms the universe of meaning definitive of their condition. As one recovering eating disordered individual divulges: “Food was everything to me” (Vogler 1993:145). To note is that at no point am I making the argument that eating disorders and salad are causally related. As will become clear, the same principles (and discourses) involved in the construction of salad are crucially necessary to understand the construction, experience, and emergence of eating disorders.

Before discussing eating disorders I would like to outline some general issues. Implicit in the discussion of Chapters 2 and 3 was the notion that modern power, in the Foucauldian sense, necessarily involves the routine (Foucault 1977b, 1965, also see Giddens 1984 and Goffman 1967 for discussion of the role of the routine from a non-Foucauldian framework). Indeed, the rationalization of modern life in the West has crucially involved the instantiation of self-monitoring routines (Turner 1984). It is in this context that we can most meaningfully understand diet (cf. Turner 1982a, 1982b, 1984). That is to say, diet is one of the routinized points of contact through which discourse is connected to individual bodies, and through which power is (self-)enforced upon individuals. However, diet is also a productive technique used by individuals in the achievement of desires (e.g. beauty, sexuality) and the avoidance of fears (e.g. disease, obesity). We observed that it is with: the exporting of monastic asceticism to all individuals (Turner 1982a, 1982b), the emergence of nutritional discourse (Chapter 2, Falk 1994, Turner 1984), the emergence of the ‘inner self’ represented through the body (Foucault 1977b, Lelwica 1999, Falk 1994), and the rise of the thin body aesthetic (Bordo 1993) that food and diet have taken on this (central) role in modern life.

In addition to being the point of contact between discourse and the formation of ‘docile bodies’, food and diet are also in direct control of the body as site of meaning (Hornbacher 1998). That is to say, with the emergence of the ‘inner self’ represented through the body (Foucault 1977b, Lelwica 1999, Falk 1994) the body becomes the site and sight of personhood; thus, take for example, modernity’s preoccupation with the Gaze (Leppert 2000, Falk 1994), including painting, sculpture, photography, television, cinema, and the Internet, as well as disciplines such as psychiatry/psychology which ‘look into’ the inner self/psyche (Foucault 1977b). Modernity’s fetishization of the visual, as shown by Leppert’s (2000) analysis of art from the 17th century on, also involves the reflexivity of signs; i.e., the sign gazes back at the Gaze itself. Thus, bodies are not only looked at and constituted by looking, they look back and communicate, i.e. the represented body also acts to form other bodies through its reflexive quality.

Though we may still live in a culture of seeing, the ways of seeing have changed since the 17th century. As Giddens (1984) notes, the information medium directly influences the nature of the social relations that it helps organize. In the 20th and 21st centuries, we find that the proliferation of visually based media, supplemented by print, have disseminated a new iconography from which normativity and beauty are to be gauged. For example, as Nichter and Nichter (1991: 256) point out:

“It has been estimated that an average person sees between 400 and 600 ads a day, amounting to between 40-50 million ad exposures by the time a person is 60 years old. Downs and Harrison (1985) estimate that one in every 11 commercials includes a direct message about beauty.”

Thus, the modern condition involves not only the performance of self through commodified signs, but the commodification of selfhood itself qua representation as
attainable through those signs. Personhood is, more than ever before, linked to the vision of bodies, which not only provides information, but gazes back to provide guidelines for one’s own body. That is, the entailments of these icons of the body and self index (with other textual support as well as we will see) routines, most notable of which is diet, through which one’s body can be brought ‘into line’.

4.2 Body techniques and technologies of the self

Within this framework we can combine: a) Mauss’ (1979: 97) “body techniques”: “the ways in which from society to society men know how to use their bodies”, and b) Foucault’s (1982: 110) “technologies of the self”: “[the] techniques that permit individuals to affect, by their own means, a certain number of operations on their own bodies, their own souls, their own thoughts, their own conduct, and this is in a manner so as to transform themselves, modify themselves, and attain a certain state of perfection, happiness, purity, supernatural power.” We see that for both Mauss and Foucault the body is not simply pre-given, but is culturally, and thus discursively, constituted. Moreover, it is a locus of change, not simply of bodily constitution, but transitively the constitution of the person himself. These techniques and technologies are thus simultaneously psychological, sociological, and physical (Mauss 1979: 120), and thus represent those ways in which the body is transformable through discourse.

‘Body techniques’ and ‘technologies of the self’ act to form bodies in the most literal sense. These bodies, as semiotically imbued through discourse and visual media, are thus also signs themselves (cf. Goffman’s work 1955 [1955], 1980, Turner 1994, 1992, 1984, Finn and Dell 1999). One example from previous discussions is the slender body as index, or proof, of health (Kirk and Colquhoun 1989) and self-control (Lelwica 1999), and as an icon of beauty (Bordo 1993, also see Chapter 2 section 2.5.1 for discussion); the converse is also true, the fat body is an index or proof of unhealth, lack of self-control, and ugliness (Kirk and Colquhoun 1989, Turner 1992, Crawford 1984, Nichter and Nichter 1991, see Chapter 2 section 2.5.2).

Thus, as discussed above, the modern body presupposes and stipulates the existence of the ‘inner self,’ or soul. This soul is the product of the signs which themselves purport to represent that ‘inner space’ (Falk 1994: 55), thus making the body the medium par excellence for that soul. This connection between body and soul allows the control of one through the control of the other. As discussed above, this control qua routine, is embodied through diet. In sum, we see that the body is the sight and site of interest for social theory, especially in a (post)modern consumer society whereby the body is window to the self/soul and the point of contact between the discursive and non-discursive. Diet is one way in which the body is semiotically made meaningful.

4.3 An introduction to eating disorders

4.3.0 Preliminary definitions

It is within this context that we can meaningfully discuss the issue of eating disorders. We can take as a tenuous starting point the definitions given by the DSM-IV (The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Psychiatry, edition 4). The reasons why this definition is tenuous will become clear with more discussion. The DSM-IV (1994: 539) defines the diagnosis of anorexia nervosa as:

*Item A. Refusal to maintain body weight at or above normal weight expected, or failure to gain weight during a period of growth, leading to a body weight less than 85 percent of normal.*
Item B. Intense fear of gaining weight or becoming fat even if the person is currently underweight.
Item C. Disturbance in the way in which one’s body weight or shape is experienced; undue influence of body weight or shape on self-evaluation; minimization or denial of the seriousness of current low body weight.
Item D. In most postmenarchal females, amenorrhea, i.e., the absence of at least three consecutive menstrual cycles.”

Bulimia nervosa involves:
“binge eating and inappropriate compensatory methods to prevent weight gain. In addition, the self-evaluation of individuals with Bulimia Nervosa is excessively influenced by body shape and weight” (DSM IV 1994: 545).

Thus, bulimia involves both items B and C from the ‘anorexia’ diagnosis coupled with binge eating and purging (fasting, laxatives, vomiting, exercise, diuretics, etc.). Both involve the routinization of ‘disordered’ behavior. However, neither can simply be reduced to the behavioral or corporeal but must take into account meaning, that is to say, (excessively negative) self-evaluation of one’s own body. Bruch (1988) identifies the intense fear of (perceiving) oneself as fat and the relentless pursuit of thinness (Turner 1984) as criterial to eating disorders. Thus, we can schematically characterize eating disorders as involving aberrant attitudes towards one’s body, and correspondingly towards the body as the causal effect of eating. These attitudes are then enacted in a number of ways: either through not eating or through eating and ‘compensatory methods.’ Despite a large literature on these disorders there are no successful treatments3 (Bordo 1993, 1597, Vogler 1993, Benveniste 1999, Robertson 1992).

4.3.1 History of the psychiatric label
Anorexia predates bulimia as a medical category, and indeed much of the characteristics of bulimia were first observed in anorexia, making them to a large extent, of the same kind (Girard 2000). Like any nosological label, it has its own history. Hepworth and Griffin’s (1990) discursive analysis of the rise of the medical label argues that to understand the rise of anorexia as a medical label in the 19th century involves attention to: a) the discourse on femininity (the nature of women as irrational and hysterical), b) the emergent scientific inquiry into the psyche (the ‘psychological turn’) as pathological and the classification of individuals as normal or pathological, c) the medicalization of morality. Thus, we see that from the start eating disorders are relegated to a pathology of the feminine.

Giddens’ (1984) notion of the “double hermeneutic”4 and T. Habermas’ discussion of ‘labeling theory’5 (1992) posit that the emergence of a nosological category for diagnosing individuals as anorexic in some ways creates, or contributes to, the creation and experience of eating disorders, and thus the reality of eating disorders (Hepworth 1999, Vogler 1993). Habermas’ (1992) empirical analysis of the popular and medical recognition of bulimia partially confirms this effect: the nosological category (in medical and lay discourse) increases the incidence of the disorder (and not just the diagnostic frequency). However, it is also critical to realize that eating disorders cannot simply be reduced to this one-way labeling effect, as Habermas himself shows, since eating disorders emerged decades before their classification as medical diagnostic entities. Thus, we must attend to a different set of discursive events which serve to form eating disordered individuals independently of a discourse constructing eating disorders as a historically emergent phenomena attributable to a diagnostic category.
4.3.2 The history of eating disorders as a ‘community’

In this section I will briefly analyze the historical emergence of eating disorders as a community of individuals who share certain key characteristics. That is to say, at what point did eating disorders, as we know them today, emerge? Historically there have long been individuals who have engaged in eating disorder-esque behaviors, from the self-starvation and ascetic practices of what some have termed ‘holy anorexics’ to those who have binged and purged (cf. Roman vomitaria). However, can we consider these individuals as of the same kind as the modern anorexic or bulimic; that is to say, did these individuals engage in these dietary routines with the ultimate aim of achieving thinness and avoiding fatness? As Habermas’ (1989) study of past possible cases of anorexia and bulimia informs us, we cannot (also see discussion in Girard 2000, Lelwica 1999, di Nicola 1990 part II). For these ascetic individuals the logic of self-starvation involved the denial of the self in order to achieve a salvatory effect leading to the after-life. For modern aesthetic ascetics (including those with eating disorders) self-starvation is (partly) motivated, crudely put, by the desire to achieve a certain (thin) body size. This body aesthetic is independent of the desire for salvation.

The first cases of ‘real’ anorexia as we know it occur around the turn of the 19th century (Habermas 1989, di Nicola 1990 part I and part II), though in very low numbers (compared to current prevalence). Bulimia does not emerge until the 1930-40s (Habermas 1989). While Girard (2000) identifies the historical origin of eating disorders with the “competitive dieting” between Sisi, the wife of Emperor Franz Joseph, and Empress Eugenie of France, whenever the origin of eating disorders was (if it can even be conceptualized as such), the question of interest, to be analyzed by this paper, is ‘what are the conditions under which eating disorders can emerge during the turn of the 19th century and proliferate in the 20th century?’ And indeed, eating disorders have proliferated since World War II (Mennel et al. 1992, Bordo 1993), both in Caucasian and minority populations (Le Grange et al. 1998b, Bordo 1997, 1993, Cooks and Descutner 1993), as well as in non-Western countries (Becker 1995, Cooks and Descutner 1993). All in all however, eating disorders have traditionally been confined to affluent white populations in Western countries, comprised of 90-95% women (Lelwica 1999, Malson 1995, Bordo 1993). As noted above, however, this has been changing (Bordo 1997).

4.4 Different approaches to eating disorders and their problems

4.4.0 Problems with psychological explanations

Almost by definition, psychological explanations look primarily to locate the cause of eating disorders through the analysis of individuals’ psychological states. That is, for the eating disordered patient, though causal elements may (conceivably) be locatable outside of the individual (e.g. in the family, the physical environment, the genome) the unit of analysis by and large is the eating disordered individual. Thus, because eating disorders necessarily involve attendance to meaning and cognition, psychological approaches to eating disorders must deal with the psychological ‘problem of calibration’; that is, how do we calibrate subjective meanings such that we can answer the question ‘what makes individuals differentiable such that some are pathological while others are not?’ This necessarily involves the questions ‘What is pathological?’, and ‘What is normal?’ This problem of calibration thus seeks to classify and differentiate
individuals such that these two categories (the pathological and the normal) are unproblematically separable, and thus identifiable and treatable.

However, such approaches, which aim to pathologize some individuals while not others, make a logical error insofar as such approaches ignore the role of discourse. The logic is something as follows: because Culture is something which is homogenously shared we cannot reduce individual pathology to discursive events insofar as all individuals are exposed to the same discourses. Thus, the location for analysis to solve this problem of calibration involves looking in at the psychological states of individuals in order to locate pathological differences. Besides the faulty assumption that the cultural is universally distributed, there is a deeper error which involves the following: even if individuals are pathological independently of attending to the wider cultural milieu, the role of discourse still cannot be neglected. That is to say, given that individuals vary, it is only through an appeal to discursive phenomena that we can hope to understand the cultural and historical boundedness of eating disorders. Moreover, by attempting to differentiate the pathological from the normal, such endeavors obscure similarities and differences attributable to discursive phenomena. This is not to disregard or dismiss the psychological project, for it is crucial to an understanding of eating disorders. However, it is to say that the psychological must always be paired with the analysis of discourse if a complete understanding of culture bound phenomena such as eating disorders are ever hoped to be understood.

Indeed, psychology’s pathologization project, as insensitive to sociological and cultural issues, creates several effects that impede the understanding of eating disorders. The assumption of “the core self” (Hepworth 1999: 100) upon which psychology is based, coupled with the problem of calibration (in addition to psychology’s intimate connection/competition with medicine) results in the pathologizing of eating disorders qua disease states. That is, they are posited to involve, in essence, an injury to or disorder with the mind or body (cf. attempts to locate the genetic loci of eating disorders 7). This pathologizing mystifies larger sociological explanations (Malson 1999, 1997, Lester 1997, Hepworth 1999, Lelwica 1999). Moreover, the medicalization of this phenomena naturalizes it as a decontextualizable entity and thus objectifies the discursively constructed aspects of eating disorders (rendering them non-discursive). Thus, note how Bruch (1988) takes the family and individual as the pathological units independent of any sociological factors (also see Vogler’s 1993 work in an eating disordered clinic and Lelwica’s 1999 discussion). Moreover, these psychiatric discourses (cf. Bruch’s 1988) construct the eating ordered individual qua pathological as irrational. That is to say, psychological explanations of eating disorders deny the logic of the eating disorder a priori, therefore denying the continuity and systematicity of the eating disordered individual’s cognition/behavior/affect with respect to cultural discourses, and thus silencing her voice and the ‘voice’ of the discourses constructing the eating disorder (qua discourses causally related to the eating disordered condition). This pathologizing functions much in the same way the prison does to hide the fact that we live in a carcereal society (McGuigan 1999). Lay discourse about eating disorders reflects this pathologizing of eating disorders as the mystification of the role of discourse in the disorders themselves (Benveniste et al. 1999).
4.4.1 Problems with 'deep-meaning' approaches

While much of the psychological literature takes a very literal-medical (e.g. epidemiological) view of eating disorders, often limiting its purview to demography and the description of cognitive 'distortions', many approaches which attempt to 'explain' eating disorders, including the psychotherapeutic and psychoanalytic (cf. Bruch 1988, Ripa di Meana 1998, and Burke 1991) in addition to many feminist readings of eating disorders (cf. Orbach 1994 [1978], Turner 1984, Lelwica 1999), seem to be preoccupied with 'reading out' the 'deeper' meanings of eating disorders. As Girard (2000) points out, often these approaches gloss over the simple and literal 'facts' of eating disorders in order to (romantically) uncover the deeper Truth of the eating disorder. It is almost as if these approaches cannot believe that the eating disordered individual actually wants to be thin for thinness sake and not for some other unconscious (not necessarily in the Freudian sense) reason.

That is not to say that such approaches are incorrect or invaluable. However, there exists, regardless of the deeper meaning waiting to be interpreted by the insightful therapist/researcher, a different task which logically comes first and is foundational with regards to the hermeneutics of eating disorders. This project, as I will show by example, is more empirically rooted (and intersubjectively ratifiable) than 'deep meaning' approaches. The primary task at hand must be to determine the conditions necessary: a) for eating disorders to be embodied, and b) for the behavior pattern and logic driving it to take on a particular type of meaning. That is, what are the conditions under which eating disorders as a routinized phenomenon can become intelligible for eating disordered individuals (and to/for non-eating disordered individuals as well). Thus, by focusing on the 'meaning' of the eating disorder, which in deep meaning approaches by definition is unknowable to the eating disordered individual, 'deep meaning' approaches mystify and obscure: a) how it is that eating disorders are even construable as meaningful in the first place, b) how they come to grip bodies, and c) the connection between individuals as consumers of discourses and discourse itself.

And this is truly the core of the matter. What is most robust about eating disordered individuals is the routinized everyday instantiation of a specific logic about the body which exerts power over that body. The question thus becomes ‘what allows this routine to emerge at all?’ From this point-of-view it is not just meaning which is at hand but the role of para-meaning structures, i.e. routines such as diet. Bruch (1988: 9) insightfully states (though perhaps with a different meaning in mind) “that understanding [eating disorders] can be gained only by careful listening to what the patient has to say, rather than by speculations or attempts at fitting her problems into a definite theory.” Though Bruch indeed does not attempt to fit all anorexics into the same mold (though the label in fact does this anyway), it is ironic that her brand of ‘listening’ in fact only takes “what the patient has to say” as a sign of some other more important (unconscious) meaning. Even if there was a deeper meaning to be read, as ‘deep meaning’ approaches presuppose, that logically assumes that there are characteristics of that sign which makes it readable, systematically motivated in particular (deconstructable) ways. Whether or not we are committed to the ‘deep meaning’ reading of these signs, it should be clear that the first question to be asked is ‘what are the conditions under which these emitted signs can act as a sign in any way?’
It is the argument of Chapter 5 (and this chapter as well) that to answer the above question is to attend to a number of discourses which are not exclusive to individuals with eating disorders, but in fact are part of the cultural landscape at large. Regardless of the pathological psychology of the eating disordered individual, the points of contact, the cultural logic, and the cultural/logical medium through which this community of power-inscribed bodies is formed has a greater distribution than the eating disordered population. As I will show these discourses are relevant for a large portion (if not all) of the culture. It is this sharedness of discourse, which becomes presupposed in deep meaning approaches, that often obscures the power of these (literal) discourses to construct the experiences of eating disordered individuals (and ‘normals’ alike). Thus, to attend to the discursive conditions necessary for the emergence of eating disorders must be answered before any meaningful ‘read’ of eating disorders can be made. The aim of Part II is to develop an understanding of the ‘discursive substratum’ which become presupposed in eating disorders, thus both constraining and allowing their meaning to emerge. This logically precedes the meaning itself. This discursive substratum also motivates those emergent meanings, though it does not determine them. It is only after this project (to ‘excavate’ the discursive substratum) fails to explain the phenomena of eating disorders in a satisfactorily complete way that we must appeal to a deeper reading of eating disorders (following Occam’s Razor). In this way, this study of eating disorders is a very literal analysis. It approaches the problem from the ‘outside-in’ rather than from the ‘inside-out.’

4.5 A return to the definition of eating disorders

As we noted, there are problematic aspects to the definitions provided by the DSM-IV. Most lacking is a sophisticated understanding of the relationship between the psychological, the sociological (the textual/discursive), and the physical (that is, the embodied nature of eating disorders). The preliminary discussion has emphasized that to understand eating disorders is to attend to a number of different domains: the routine as the unit of power and as the connection between the discursive and the non-discursive, and the role of discourse in allowing any meaning to emerge, that is, for something to be “within the true” (Foucault 1972: 224).

It has been recognized, quite rightly, that discussion of eating disorders must take into account the sociological and cultural. Thus, we can meaningfully discuss eating disorders as an example of a ‘culture bound syndrome’ (Swartz 1985, di Nicola 1990 part II, Turner 1984, Lelwica 1999, Iancu et al. 1994, Malson 1995, Bordo 1988, Becker 1995). That is to say, the incidence of eating disorders is a culturally mediated phenomenon and as such requires the analysis of culturally situated discourses. As I will argue, the circulation of these culturally situated discourses are not simply restricted to the population of eating disordered individuals but are a product of, and reflect more generally, the population at large. That is to say, there is a need to resist a pathologizing approach to eating disorders (cf. psychological/medical approaches) in favor of a continuum-based approach. This approach is logically argued for by numerous authors (Malson 1997, Mennell et al. 1992, Malson 1995, Malson and Ussher 1996a, Girard 2000. Turner 1984, Lelwica 1999, Becker 1995, Robertson 1992, Bordo 1993), and has been empirically shown through comparisons between: a) anorectic’s and ‘normals’ discourse on food and the body (Chesters 1994), b) questionnaire results between eating
disordered individuals and 'normals' (Button and Whitehouse 1981), and c) the continuity of techniques of body management between eating disordered individuals and texts addressed to 'normals' (Eskes et. al 1998).


4.6 The significance of the study of salad for the study of eating disorders

In this chapter I have tried to lay out some of the general issues related to the study of eating disorders. I have argued that to understand eating disorders is to study the relationship between the discursive and the non-discursive while maintaining a relative proximity to the literal discourse of eating disordered individuals. Moreover, it has been argued that: a) before any 'deep meaning' project can be attempted, the discursive substratum upon which meaning itself emerges with regards to eating disorders must be studied first, and b) attention must be paid to the continuity between eating disordered individuals and the discursive context predicative of the cultural at large (i.e. 'normal').

We can rephrase the project of this study in terms of key insights by two profound (and antithetical) thinkers: Freud and Foucault. Freud's insights include that the pathological is an extension of the normal, i.e. that they are of essentially the same kind, and that to understand the psychological is to contend with the actual discourse of individuals (i.e. the 'dialogue with Unreason', see Whitebrook 1999). Foucault's insights include that discourse and historical forces produce and presuppose power/knowledge (see Chapter 1), and that modern power/knowledge emerges not from the creativity of great individuals per se (Foucault and Chomsky 1997) but in the circulation of discourses and the networks of relations through which power 'flows'. It is this network-like quality of power/knowledge through which the rationalization and routinization of everyday life (as a function of power/knowledge) inscribes itself upon those bodies rendering them 'docile' (Foucault 1977b). These insights provide the point of departure for studying eating disorders.

In Chapter 5 I aim to deconstruct the discursive substratum that allows the intelligibility of eating disorders to emerge. The methodology to be used will run in direct parallel with that employed in Chapters 2 and 3. Both eating disorders and salad hinge upon discourses constructing the ideal diet, body, and self: salad as a part of a diet and performable persona (the thin, in-control individual), while eating disorders as the application of some diet as part of a 'body technique'/'technology of the self' with the aims of performing some persona through becoming that (type of) persona. The affinity between these personas will become clear through the analysis of Chapter 5. Thus, I will show that an analysis of eating disorders requires attention to: a nutritional discourse used as part of a technique/technology to embody a gendered aesthetic form through a self-denying ascetic lifestyle, thus presupposing a Cartesian mind-body duality which emphasizes the control of the (female) body by the (masculine) mind and a moral
investment in the body as well as a moral investment in the abiding/transgression of the aesthetic ascetic regimen. Moreover, these discursive axes (nutritional discourse, medicalized morality, aesthetic asceticism, Cartesian dualism, and gender) are also part of a consumer cultural context which acts to disseminate these discourses through their commodification, precipitating text tokens of these discourses.

It cannot be emphasized enough that this argument does not make the claim that there is any kind of causal connection between the salad as semiotically imbued object and eating disorders as semiotically intelligible community of individuals, but rather that both can only emerge as they exist in (post)modern social life within a discursive field wherein Knowledge about them can be constructed (meaningfully) and disseminated successfully.

1 Foucault (1977a) makes a similar observation that the reflexivity of the eye, or gaze, and by extension the sign as object of gaze as reflexive exists in a seemingly infinite recursion with each other, resulting the stipulation of the (abstract) inner space of the subject. That is, “the eye is mirror and lamp” (Foucault 1977a: 45).

2 I am limiting my discussion of eating disorders to anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa. Also included under the label ‘eating disorders’ in the psychiatric literature are obesity and compulsive eating. Though the argument put forth in this paper is applicable to these disorders I focus attention more on anorexia and bulimia since these disorders have more in common with each other than with obesity and compulsive eating in that they involve the intense desire for thinness and correspondingly include techniques to achieve that end.

3 That is not to say that eating disordered individuals do not get better or never cured, but that there exists at this point no treatment that replicably, across large numbers of individuals, works successfully like, for example penicillin and syphilis.

4 Giddens’ insight (what he calls the ‘double hermeneutic’) is that the embeddedness of social theory in social life entails that social theory affects the subject matter which it attempts to explain. Thus, social theory must incorporate past social theoretical discourse; this is precisely the issue of the pathologizing of the individual which contemporary theory on eating disorders must account for.

5 ‘Labeling theory’ posits that the labels attached to those that are labeled provide a social schema which they inevitably inhabit not independently of the label itself.

6 This community of eating disordered individuals is a unique one insofar as it consists of a group of individuals who need not have any are contact with each other and yet are linked through co-existence within a discursive field embodied in discursive speech chains (Agha 1999). That is, these individuals share an intimate connection only by virtue of their connection to each other through discursive events which need not involve each other. Rather, these ‘interactions’ occur purely through (similar) textual experience(s) and through their instantiation and presupposition of certain cultural forms/discourses.


8 ‘A culture-bound syndrome is a constellation of symptoms which has been categorized as a dysfunction or disease. It is characterized by one or more of the following:

(1) It cannot be understood apart from its specific cultural or subcultural context.
(2) The etiology summarizes and symbolizes core meanings and behavioral norms of that culture.
(3) Diagnosis relies on culture-specific technology as well as ideology.
(4) Successful treatment is accomplished only by participants in that culture.

Corollaries:
(1) The symptoms may be recognized and similarly organized elsewhere but are not categorized as the same dysfunction or ‘disease.’
(2) Treatment judged as successful in one cultural context may not be understood as successful from another perspective.
(3) The fact that biomedicine does not include culture in its basic explanatory model leads to:

(a) a failure to recognize culture-bound within Western cultures and within the biomedical system;
(b) a redefinition of syndromes from other cultures into biomedical terms so that potentially important cultural patterns (may) become irrelevant to diagnosis or treatment" (Swartz 1985: 726)

9 In this case 'subculturally' simply refers to differences between minority groups within the United States, especially the black population, as well as between differences between occupations (cf. dancers, models, and athletes).

10 This is the same phenomenon in cosmetic surgery, whereby the ritual transformation of self does not occur unless it is actually gone through with (Huss-Ashmore 2001).
Chapter 5
The discursive substrata of eating disorders

5.0 Introduction

This chapter deconstructs the discourses which grip the lives of eating disordered individuals. The analysis will provide an empirical grounding for the cultural logic that allows and motivates the emergence of eating disorders, a logic employed by these individuals in their daily routines. Data will be taken from discourses produced by eating disordered individuals as well as media discourses, which though not labeled as disordered as such, fall within the scope typically typified as eating disordered, and which also construct the eating disordered experience.

This approach differs from the discursive analysis of the semiotic imbuenment of the salad in that it must attend to different levels of discourse. The analysis of salad only needed to take into account those discourses which acted upon the salad since the salad is a non-conscious object. However, in the analysis to follow, we see that the object of interest includes the discourse produced by those subjects whom discourses inscribe themselves onto. Note that this does not commit us to the view that eating disordered individuals need read Descartes, for example, to be exemplary Cartesians. That is, though a historical continuity between (embodied) discursive phenomena is drawn, it is not to say that individuals require a conscious knowledge of that historicity to be affected by it (Bordo 1988). Insofar as the discourses to be discussed are pervasive in modern culture, it is sufficient to say that eating disordered individuals, like most everyone else, are participants in the instantiation and presupposition of those discourses in everyday social life. In addition to eating disordered discourse, there is another level at which we can discuss discourse and eating disorders: discourses that mediate the experiences of eating disordered individuals, e.g. mass media, psychiatric discourse, self-help discourse, etc. This chapter will mainly focus on discourse produced by eating disordered individuals though these other discourses will be discussed as pertinent. Note that the discourses to be discussed are by no means the only discourses relevant to eating disorders; however, they are the most prevalent and robust and thus, regardless of the number of other relevant discourses, these will be given priority.

Chapter 2 provided the groundwork for an analysis of the salad as well as documenting the emergence of the nutritional discourse, (moral) discourse on the body as aesthetic asceticism, discourse on the gendered individual as a Cartesian dyad, and consumer capitalism. It is the argument of this chapter that these same discourses are critical for an understanding of eating disorders. Thus, it is through the analysis of these discourses and how they involve power over individuals that this paper will ground an understanding of eating disorders. As will become clear, the interrelatedness of these distinguishable discourses often precludes us from talking about one without the others. It is truly only at the intersection of these discursive axes that we can hope to anchor any analysis of eating disorders.

5.1 Nutritional science

In the discussion of the salad (Chapters 3, 4) we noted several phenomena of incredible importance regarding the individual’s experience of food and diet: 1) the rise of an empirically replicable method for atomizing food, 2) the emergence of a fuel driven
metaphor for understanding the connection between the body and food, 3) the emergence of a new nutritional vocabulary, imbued with the rhetorical force of Science, which allowed individuals to classify all foods based on their energetic contribution, 4) the direct connection between this vocabulary and bodily effects, most notably gaining and losing weight. This medicalization of eating and weight (Vogler 1993), 'nutritional science', provides an arithmetically based logic for the understanding of food, the body, and weight. That is to say, within this discourse the body is constructed as requiring a certain amount of energy to function 'normally' and (more important) 'healthily'; excess calories cause weight gain (unhealthy) while too few calories cause weight loss. Moreover, different types of food units (e.g., fats, carbohydrates, protein, etc.) are convertible into caloric amounts, and thus different food units can be given different 'weights.' For example, we noted the heavy emphasis on fats qua unhealthy and undesirable (Chapter 2, section 2.5).

Note that the eating disordered individual has an intense desire to lose weight and an equally intense fear of gaining weight. Thus, the logic of nutritional discourse is quite clear: eat fewer calories than required for weight-maintenance. Corollaries to this include: a) foods that contain fats and complex carbohydrates are likely to contribute (holding density and mass constant) more calories than simple carbohydrates, fibrous foods, etc., b) exercise, as a practice which 'burns' calories, can be used to decrease the number of incoming calories, thus increasing weight loss (cf. Button and Whitehouse’s case reports: 515-16), c) diuretics, vomiting, and laxatives, as devices to purge the food from the system before it is digested, will decrease the intake of calories. Indeed, these are the techniques used by eating disordered individuals. And in fact, what we call 'dieting' always presupposes precisely this classification and appropriation of foods through this nutritional discourse. This discourse thus is central to the experience of eating disorders and its construction (i.e. its intelligibility).

However, a survey of studies involving eating ordered individual's discourse (for example Bruch 1988, Ripa di Meana 1994, Malson 1995, 1997) often seems to slight the important role of nutritional discourse of for the anorexic and bulimic. Why? First, studies of this sort are concerned with finding a deeper meaning to eating disorders (see Chapter 4 section 4.4.1), and as such are not concerned with the quotidian aspects of eating disorders, i.e. the everyday routines through which power is laid upon eating disordered individuals. That is to say, the deep meaning view takes the stance that concern with nutritional categories is entirely presuppositional insofar as these individuals are concerned with fat and weight, and thus it is not of interest. Because the logic of this nutritional discourse is entirely ubiquitous in the population at large (cf. any fitness magazine, any processed food [RDA]), it is not pathologically distinctive of eating disorders and therefore is of peripheral concern to the psychological (and the deep-meaning) approaches. There is also a second reason: anorexics, which have received the most attention in the eating disorders literature, are dead-set on weight loss through self-starvation. That is to say, there is a general (and often complete) refusal of food (Krasnow 1993), and thus any (over-)sensitivity to classification of food through nutritional discourse is obscured. Thus, the calculus made through nutritional discourse concerning what is acceptably edible vs. non-edible is erased since food units are not their primary interest per se, but all food qua caloric itself. However, the motivation for not eating (as it can be fattening) presupposes nutritional discourse (which imbues food
as caloric) even if not reflected in eating disordered discourse. For the bulimic, there is an alternation between self-starvation and bingeing, in which bingeing, almost by definition, involves the consumption of large quantities of food often without regard to nutritional content.

Despite the lack of attention to the role of nutritional discourse in the eating disordered individual there is reason to believe it is quite important. For example, in her memoir on her eating disorder, M. Hornbacher (1998: 245) indicates that the ‘good’ and ‘pure’ foods are motivated by nutritional information and media information. Ripa di Meana (1999: 112) does mention, from her study of eating disordered individuals, that “[anorexic/bulimics] put their trust in numbers, that is to say in the obsessive calculation of their own weight or of the calories they have consumed, to perform the ontological task of indicating fullness or emptiness, presence and absence.”

Thus, food choice, when made by the “calorie phobic” (Girard 2000) anorexic/bulimic, is often made along the lines of foods known to contain low numbers of calories:

“I’d sit in class and plan my meals (if you could call them that) and figure out exactly how many calories were in every bite I put in my mouth each day...I was so obsessed with [food] that I thought about it every second. I thought that I couldn’t eat anything or I’d gain a pound an ounce. If I did splurge and eat some extra mushrooms on my salad, I’d plan two hours of exercise to work it off” (Twenhofel 1993: 199)

“If there was food, I was conscious of it. There were times when I consciously ate great bowls of vegetables and I knew it was only X amount of nutrition or whatever. I wanted to make it as simple as possible...As it turned out, I got so streamlined that I just about streamlined myself out of existence” (Bruch 1988: 141).

“The bathroom scale became my sanctuary...I devoted all my thoughts and energy to food, or the lack thereof. By the end of the week, I had dropped to 95 pound, now adhering to 600 calories a day, tops. My days were spent with eyes fixed on the clock, anxious for my next permitted meal. In raving pursuit of thinness, I stopped chewing gum as a dessert after learning it had eight calories a stick” (Sender 1993: 29)

“I was so obsessed with controlling and limiting what I ate that my life revolved around counting and restricting calories...Losing sixty-five pounds was not my original goal; but as I lost more and more weight I began not to have any goal at all: I just continued dieting and losing—until I weighed about eighty-five pounds” (Levkin and Lorton 1993: 217)

“I carefully counted every calorie I ate, as well as every calorie I burned. My limit was 1,000 calories, countered by a burning of 1,600-2,300 calories. I measure a successful day by an empty and growing stomach when I climbed into bed, safe from further temptation. A super-successful day meant I burned at least a thousand more calories that I consumed” (Levkin and Lorton 1993: 221).

Interestingly, consider the following excerpt from a male anorexic’s memoir:

“I had developed some unusual habits, which I still follow. The five most prevalent were (1) refusal to eat any low-calorie or diet foods...” (Krasnow 1996: 19)

Going on to discuss this strange habit, Krasnow (ibid.) explains:

“Many anorexics will allow themselves to fill up on low-calorie foods (diet sodas, salads, etc.) so that they will not be hungry. To me, this demonstrates a lack of willpower. I will not let myself fill up on these foods. Abstinence is the key to my feelings of self-control and being all-powerful—almost as though restricting my intake is a challenge.”

Thus, Krasnow does make an appeal to nutritional discourse for determining food choice, but in this case he turns it on its head. Those foods typically used by other eating
disordered individuals reflect that they are not-as-in-control as he. However, it is only through this nutritional discourse that Krasnow is even able to turn the whole thing on its head.

We also see that the foods feared or desired by eating disordered individuals can be systematized only through an appeal to nutritional science. One of Bruch’s (1988: 148) recovering patients says:

“I have programmed my mind, there are things that I don’t want to eat ever again, ever. For instance, bread. I have restricted myself to only ‘good’ things, like vegetable and fruit. And I didn’t eat, and still don’t eat, bread or cake or cookies or chocolate.”

Similarly, Leilwica (1999: 82) quotes one eating disordered individual:

“I even felt better when I would eat only fruits and vegetables, even when hungry. Pretty soon I was able to convince my mind and my body that such feelings of purity were much better than any fattening food....I believed that the kind of food that went into my body had the power to absorb or disgrace me, and I would feel these feelings depending on what I had ingested” (Leilwica 1999: 82).

The obsession with nutritional calculation and weight often manifests itself through routine and obsessive weighing:

“It was at Westwood that I first became focused on the weight (number of pounds) itself. At one point, I was weighing myself hourly or every other hour” (Krasnow 1996:15, also see Button and Whitehouse 1981: 545-516, and Bordo’s 1993 discussion).

“The number on the scale became my totem, more important than my experience—it was layered, metaphorical, metaphysical, and it had bewitching power. I thought if I could change that number I could change my life...I would weight myself with foreboding, and my weight would determine how went the rest of my day, my week, my life” (Tisdale 1994: 17).

Thus, the eating disordered discourse reflects and uses nutritional discourse. However, “normal” and “pathological” discourses overlap greatly on this axis. The issue at hand is the logic, and the pragmatic implementation of that logic, by individuals on themselves in order to bring their bodies in line with some body type. Thus, the self-disciplining technologies such as self-monitoring weighing, classifying foods as low/high-calorie, high/low fat, complex/simple carbohydrates in order to minimize caloric intake, and the body techniques used to purge foods (diuretics, vomiting, laxatives, exercise) are all defined through nutritional science:

“Whenever I deviated from my planned meals by as much as a bit, or felt the slightest bit too full, I simply downed a handful of laxatives and waited for them to clean me out. What the resultant emptiness usually triggered, however, was the desire to eat again. I reasoned that I hadn’t retained any of the calories so I could afford to eat again. It was an ugly catch-22 situation out of which I couldn’t find my way” (Miller 1988: 17-18).

And for eating disordered individuals often these ‘planned meals’ are designed from techniques of self-discipline which aim to increase self-awareness of food and diet (personal communication). Self-awareness can range from the implicit availability of food information (cf. RDA labels) to texts which provide explicit instructions for the inculcation of the self-surveillance Foucault so eerily discusses in the contexts of prisons in Discipline and Punish (1977b). And like information on food, these techniques are easily available. Take for example the recent article on the ‘Clif Bar’ website (2001) entitled “A Food Log-A Tool For Evaluating Your Diet and Breaking Bad Habits.” The article states that

“a great way to make your self aware of your food habits is by keeping a food log or diary. Grab a notebook, journal, planner or even some group of bound pages to help you keep track of your daily food choices. Having a written record of the foods that you have eaten helps you recognize
trends, pinpoint problem areas, and then execute the change process. When a bad habit is so ingrained in your daily routine that you aren’t conscious of it, a food log can bring these negative patterns to light. Writing down everything you eat will help you to confront your daily dietary choices. A food log makes you stop and think before you bite.”

Thus, this article provides a method for self-awareness with the aims of self-discipline and the “goal of getting optimal nutrition in a well-rounded diet.” This diet is of course defined through a low-fat framework. As we see, the logic and techniques for weight-loss, used by the eating disordered individual in their quest, are locatable not just in the pathological eating disordered individual but more generally in discursive phenomena aimed at the population at large.

As mentioned above, the information necessary to achieve such weight/diet related results are quite easily attained, and in fact a mandatory part of everyday social life; for example, RDA labels on all processed foods provide every individual with: a) a normative (i.e. “recommended” for what?) number of calories, fats, sugars, etc. and b) the amount provided by that food. And for those unable to determine what something is nutritionally made of (i.e. for raw foods or foods from restaurants) one can consult online caloric calculators or, again, media dedicated to the subject (Good Housekeeping regularly includes caloric calculators, such as the “Barbecue Calculator-How much did you eat this weekend?”). Additionally, exercise and fitness magazines offer the best workouts (see Eskes et al. 1998) and diets (see Good Housekeeping articles2) in order to lose weight. Thus, note that the eating disordered individual’s cognition regarding this matter is in no (principled) way pathological.

Discussion of exercise in magazines is also quite similar in eating disordered individuals and the ‘normals’ who are the topic of discussion in the magazine:

“Paying Mark $75 per hour for this transformation, Malissa works out ‘seven days a week, two hours a day, with a break from weight training on Sundays’ and eats a strict diet, so strict that the editors write: ‘This diet was designed specifically to maintain lean muscle tissue and reduce fat in a very short period of time. We do not recommend it. For a diet plan that works for you, consult your doctor or nutritionist’...due to questionable dietary practices, the editors felt compelled to attach the note referred to above and, in addition, when Mark asks Malissa how she feels about the use of laxatives to purge the final pounds off her body, submit this warning: ‘We strongly advise against taking laxatives or dehydrating yourself as part of a regular exercise and nutrition program. We also advise against embarking on a rigorous new exercise routine without first consulting a doctor’” (Eskes et al. 198: 328; my emphasis).

Though the magazine does provide a warning, the whole point of the article is to laud Malissa for transforming herself into a “perfect body” (ibid.); thus, for those willing to dismiss the waning and follow Malissa’s example, the icon for self/body-improvement is set. Additionally, for those keeping score, exercise machines predominantly used for weight loss (e.g. cardiovascular machines) typically include a ‘calories-burned’ readout at the end of the workout. Indeed, many are keeping score; more than a majority of women are dieting and counting calories (Burden 1989, Mennel et al. 1992. Lelwica 1999), which is not surprising given that a majority of women also perceive themselves as “too fat” (Lelwica 1999). Thus, we see that both eating disordered individuals, as well as the rest of the population, are bound within a nutritional scientific logic, which is disseminated by scientific studies and government discourses (cf. USDA 2000), news reports (New York Times Sunday 5/28/00), magazines (cf. Good Housekeeping, Men’s Health, Prevention, Shape, Self, Fitness), and other media (television, Internet, gymnasiums, food companies, etc.), all of which also provide extra-nutritional methods for self-monitoring and controlling the body. These controls are used exclusively to
bring the body in line with some type of ideal shape (Chapter 2 section 2.5.1, section 5.2 this chapter).

Thus, though nutritional discourse cannot explain the emergence of eating disorders alone, it is critical in that it offers both a logic and a method for controlling one's body. That is to say, it empowers the diet as a routine of self-control. Though eating disordered individuals are (overly) obsessed with food and the power of food there is in no way a principle by which we can differentiate them on this axis, for as we have seen, for both eating disordered individuals and non-eating disordered individuals the experience of food, phenomenologically and textually, is mediated through nutritional science. However, how can we explain to what end nutritional science is put towards? To answer this question we must attend to discourses on aesthetic asceticism (section 5.2), Cartesian mind-body dualism (5.3), and the medicalization of morality (5.4).

5.2 The aesthetic asceticism of the ascetic aesthetic

In Chapters 2 and 3 I outlined and discussed the transformation from monastic asceticism to capitalist asceticism and finally to aesthetic asceticism. Briefly put, we can conceptualized aesthetic asceticism as the use of ascetic practices in the achievement of a thin body aesthetic.

In any of its forms, asceticism always involves acts of desire: the desire for the afterlife, the desire for temptation, the desire for suffering, or the desire to look a certain way (Gans 2000, Girard 2000, Krasnow 1996, Turner 1984, Falk 1994). Thus, the self-denial of the ascetic is not mutually exclusive with the achievement of states of desire; rather, it requires it. Asceticism always involves the denial of one thing for the achievement of another, even if that achievement is self-denial itself. In the case of the aesthetic ascetic there is another component, related to the modern culture of the Gaze (see Chapter 4, Girard 2000). This is the desire to be a body which is desired (for aesthetic and moral reasons), a body which looks back at those looking at it. In section 5.1 I discussed how nutritional discourse is instrumental in this visual-corporeal achievement.

The trend of emphasis on increasing thinness qua aesthetic in the United States in the last century has been relatively well documented (see Lelwica 1999, Borzekowski et al. 2000, Bordo 1993, Girard 2000, Nichter and Nichter 1991 for discussion), as well as the recognition that such discourses on female thinness are along a continuum with pathologies such as anorexia and bulimia nervosa (Bordo 1997, Bordo 1993, Bordo 1988, Lelwica 1999, Malson and Ussher 1996a, Mennell et al.1992, Chesters 1994, Hepworth 1999, Kleinman 1991, Lester 1997, Nichter and Nichter 1991). That is to say, we can place and track the emphasis on the thin body through time alongside the increasing prevalence on eating disorders. For example, Haiken (1997) in the context of cosmetic surgery, discusses the transformation of the Victorian notion of beauty, of reflecting the ‘inner-self’, into the modern aesthetic form emphasizing the outer body. This transformation occurred contemporaneously with the first cases of modern eating disorders (turn of 19th century). However, as discussion in 5.4 shows (also see Chapter 4), the ‘inner-self’ has not been completely abandoned. Thus, it is not that eating disordered individuals are super dieters for example (Malson and Ussher 1996), but rather that the value of the thin body type is integral for the motivation of eating disorders for both ‘inner’ and ‘outer’ reasons.
Much work in the ‘deep meaning’ tradition has in fact ignored this motivation in favor of less ‘shallow’ explanations. However, if we take the discourse produced by eating disordered individuals (and non-eating disordered individuals as well) at face value we cannot deny the influence of such an aesthetic. Some examples will suffice: Mira, a forty-year-old married woman, had begun to be concerned with weight during adolescence. Before she got married in her thirties she severely restricted her food intake and lost weight, ‘to be more attractive’” (Bruch 1988: 38)

“It was all tied up with the image that it was good to be slim and you’d attract the boys if you were slim” (Malson 1995: 89).

“You are depriving yourself—you are starving to death—and you tell yourself it is beautiful... You are always preoccupied with food—but also how you look... You have done deny yourself food. You can’t say ‘I want to be skinny’, not really, so you have to come up with a reason for everybody else. So you say you are full. It is easy to say ‘I can’t eat that much’” (Bruch 1988: 80-81).

“I could go into a store and say ‘I want a size 1,’ and everybody would just look around. It was like the whole store, everybody standing around, would go, ‘Golly, you are thin—that must be nice.’ And everybody, ‘Oh, that’s great—you can find all these clothes, and everything is made for slender people nowadays, and how wonderful it must be to be thin’” (Bruch 1988: 149).

“One day, after a binge and purge, I went to the gym in search of a scale. Seventy. I got off the scale. I took off my belt and my shoes and got back on. Sixty-seven. I stood sideways, naked in the mirror, and realized that I literally had almost no flesh left. Where my rear used to be was a pointed bone. All of my ribs stuck out; I thought it was perfectly beautiful” (Hornbacher 1998: 170).

Regardless of whether the population at large would consider any of these individuals attractive is to miss the point. What is of interest is that these women are in pursuit of some ideal, which not coincidentally is in line with the aesthetic form currently in vogue, cf. ‘the waif look’ (Bordo 1997, 1993). The two are not unconnected, i.e. we do not find any substantial community of individuals in the modern West striving to be the largest possible for aesthetic reasons. Moreover, as Button and Whitehouse (1981) show, many individuals who start dieting for cosmetic reasons develop eating disorders. Additionally, we would not expect to find the similarity across (and within) eating disordered and normal populations regarding body parts most obsessed about (e.g. thighs, stomach) if this were not the case (Ekes et al. 1998, also see Krasnow 1996, Bruch 1988).

The converse of this aesthetic asceticism is the fear of being ugly, that is, overweight:

“I can’t make myself eat, even if I’m hungry. I’m afraid to gain weight and then I hate the way I look” (Bruch 1988: 92).

“If I eat without vomiting, I look at myself in the mirror, and I seem fat, disgusting, deformed, ridiculous” (Ripa di Meana 1999: 45).

In contrast with the desire to achieve an intersubjective beauty standard (though still in the same trajectory), often anorectic discourse explicitly rejects other people’s opinions of attractiveness (i.e. if they gained some weight then they would be more attractive):

I’d rather die than have people tell me, ‘you’re pretty, you’re better now, you’ve finally put on a little weight...’ If anyone tells me that, it’s a catastrophe. I immediately become obsessed: I have to assure myself nothing has really changed, that I haven’t even put on even one gram, otherwise...I’d rather die!” (Ripa di Meana 1999:45).
“She tried to eat only foods that would not make her gain weight. ‘I want my body back. But I’m scared of the weight. If anybody said ‘You are putting on weight’ or even ‘You look better,’ it would kill me. If you would say it, I would jump right out of this window’” (Bruch 1988: 193).

If we are committed to the notion that eating disordered individuals are affected by the discourse on aesthetic asceticism how is this explainable? We notice that these women make an assumption, ‘you look better’= ‘you are fatter.’ In fact, they realize that their notion of too-fat or too-thin is not the same as other people’s. Thus, for some eating disordered individuals, the focus has ceased to be on the beauty of the body per se, but on the issue of weight and fat. To reconcile this glaring inconsistency is to realize that: a) as above, eating disordered individuals need not agree with the masses on correct weight (by definition) to be motivated by the same discourses, and relatedly b) the discourse on attractiveness is not simply a discourse on beauty, but also a discourse on the persona attached to that beauty; i.e. all that beauty gets you, what Malson (1995: 89) calls the “romantic discourse”:

“H [interviewer]: Like personality characteristic or I mean do you think it’s portraying anything other than slimness to you or?

=Zoe [anorexic]: Yeah, oh sure. It seems like yeah they’re (fashion models) [sic] beautiful. There’s no doubt they have the perfect lives like, you know everything’s cool, like great, like what more could you ask for, that sort of thing.”

H: Right, uh so the kind of happy-ever-after scenario with the=

=Zoe: Yeah, right, yeah. Yeah” (ibid., original emphasis).

“I, as many you women do, honest-to-god believed that once I Just Lost a Few Pounds, somehow I would suddenly be a New You, I would have Ken-doll men chasing my thin legs down with bouquets of flowers on the street, I would become rich and famous and glamorous and lose my freckles and become blond and five foot ten” (Hornbacher 1998: 54).

“Cathy: If you’re slim then you’re successful, you’re intelligent, beautiful, you get the man of your dreams, /HM: right/ dream children, dream house, money, whatever” (Malson and Ussher 1996a: 27).

Conversely, a thin ideal provides a schema for all the bad that fatness causes:

“Zoe: Like I felt like um guys didn’t like me or guys never paid any attention to me as much as they did to like my roommates who were like gorgeous. And I, and I just felt ignored, like no, like they didn’t look at me because I was fat” (Malson and Ussher 1996a: 272: original emphasis).

“Emma: And if I fell fat and ugly /HM: mmm then that’s why I’m failing in the relationship. And if I wasn’t fat and ugly then there wouldn’t be a problem” (Malson and Ussher 1996a: 272).

Thus, the romantic discourse, involving the ‘cool’ and successful persona (Bordo 1993), is intimately connected to the thin aesthetic, independently of the group consensus on attractive body weight. Additionally, the overweight individual, the social pariah, is avoided as much as the thin ideal is pursued. However, as we will see, these personas are not only formed through the discourse on beauty, but necessarily are part of medicalized morality discourse and the value-asymmetric mind-body duality (sections 5.3, 5.4). Moreover, these discourses are gender-skewed. That is, this aesthetic discourse overwhelmingly involves the ideal female body (Malson 1999, Bordo 1993, Lelwica 1999). As with nutritional discourse, the aesthetic ascetic discourse produced by eating disordered individuals is the same as that produced by ‘normal individuals’ (Chesters 1994). That is to say, there is no in principle way along these dimensions to differentiate the eating disordered individual’s discourse and the normal individual’s discourse.

Thus, we see that taken at face-value, the discourse produced by eating disordered individuals and non eating disordered individuals is focused upon the attaining of a
certain aesthetic form, often for its own sake, though also in that the beautiful thin body is connected with a desirable romantic discourse. In the remainder of this section I would like to discuss how it is that such a desire becomes imprinted upon the body. That is to say, we just discussed the aesthetic in detail; now I will discuss the ascetic.

In the discussion above we often found the aesthetic desires of eating disordered individuals paired with techniques for achieving that aesthetic: abstaining from eating (i.e. dieting) and calorie-counting, exercise, laxatives, vomiting, avoidance of certain kinds of foods, etc. Implicitly, negative emotions (guilt, shame, self-hate) connected with transgressing those self-imposed regulation also serve to keep the body in line. Again, comparing these techniques with those found in ‘normal’ discourse (cf. Good Housekeeping, see Chapter 2 section 2.5.3 n. 55) we see that they are of the same kind. Other sources of data also support this continuity of aesthetic ascetic practices. All involve denial of some aspect of the body in order to achieve some effect on the body itself contra religious asceticism which achieved some meta-physical effect on the soul. However, as sections 5.3, 5.4 will show, this aspect of religious asceticism remains productive of the eating disordered individual insofar as the body is taken to be a (performable) sign of the inner-self (soul), though again this inner-self is not necessarily concerned with the meta-physical, but rather with mundane things such as ‘feeling good’, ‘feeling young again’, and being ‘self-confident.’ As expected, to achieve these ends individuals must suffer; that is, following the old cliché commonly employed in exercise regimes, “no pain no gain.” Additionally, insofar as men and women who diet deny themselves that which they desire, they necessarily suffer in some capacity. Indeed, self-denial often increases their suffering, cf. “the ugly catch-22 situation” (Miller 1988: 17-18, section 5.1). Thus, in hegemonic fashion, we see how the force of power is not one that simply denies, but in fact produces (Foucault 1980). That is to say, a) the power over the eating-concerned individual is one that produces desires, desires which require self-denial and thus further produce desires, and b) power also produces a body which is desired by others and which is found pleasurable by that body-self. Power in this discourse is not crudely repressive but rather involves the routinization of everyday behavior and cognition (through diet and the perception of food) which necessarily involves the agency (empowerment) of the subject, though of a peculiar kind. Thus, it is through the empowerment of this individual qua self-disciplining subject that power is routinized and made invisible, and thus imprinted upon the subject, by the subject, for the subject. In fact, it is this routinization which acts to make that power simply presuppose and not explicitly stated. For example, in any diet article or in any fitness magazine we find that: a) the value of the aesthetic body is presupposed, b) the values attributed to nutritional units are presupposed, and even c) that the nutritional system as the most accurate way to view the body (and the self) is presupposed. This is not an exhaustive list of course; however, what is of interest is that in order for any meaning to emerge for the individual (for example, ‘This diet is better than that diet’, ‘this food is (un)healthy’, etc.) these presuppositions are made.

Thus, logically prior to any discussion of the meanings of eating disorders, we must, as I have done, attend to the conditions under which these presuppositions are meaningful (Chapter 2, 4). It is through these presuppositions that the eating-disordered individual operates and interprets their universe. These presuppositions, following Giddens’ (1984) notion of the “duality of structure” (see Chapter 2 n. 68), produce and
reproduce the conditions under which they themselves (as eating disordered individuals) are meaningful, and through which power can be exercised over the body. To look past the discursive lens that enables the intelligibility of the slender body is in fact to miss the point. Again, note that the aesthetic ascetic discourse and the presuppositions through which it operates are no different in kind for eating disordered and ‘normal’ individuals, and that the logical entailment of this discourse is completely in line with the discourse of eating disordered and normal individuals alike.

5.3 New age Cartesians: anorexies and bulimics

In this section I would like to discuss one of the more robust aspects of eating disordered individuals, their distinction and severe separation of mind from body. This mind-body dualism was discussed in Chapter 2. Briefly, within this mind-body dualism the mind is associated with the rational inner-self, while the body with the base, passionate, and animalistic. The body within this discourse is a prison, and burden upon the pure rationality of the mind, and as such the body is constructed as Other. It is the role of ascetic self-discipline to subjugate the body through the willpower of the mind, thus liberating the mind.

As we have seen, the body is a site of focus for eating disordered individuals. We have also seen that their quest for thinness and avoidance of fatness involves notions of bodily control, and as section 5.1 showed, this control often takes the form of ascetic self-disciplines defined through nutritional science. That is to say, for the eating disordered individual the issue of (self-)control is crucial. This eating disordered commitment to self-control is also discussed in section 5.4.

Malson (1997: 234) discusses the alien quality of the body for the eating disordered individual in the following way: “Without constant vigilance by the mind/self over the body, the alien body might take over and eat, erupting in a frantic uncontrollable mess.” Malson provides the following piece of discourse from an eating disordered woman as an example:

Emma: “You know everything that you’re forbidden to have and you have to eat it all at once [...] it’s just the franticness that I hate [...] In a way it feels like it’s not me. It feels it take over. (H: Mm). It’s not me saying: oh, you know, do it. (H: Right) It’s something completely (.) something completely dissociated from me (H: right) that just kicks in and says: yeah, do it, you know. But I’m not thinking about it at all. (H: Right) I have to clear up the mess once I’ve done it and sort out, you know, what’s been going on (H: Mm) because I haven’t been there all the time that that’s all been happening. [...] I try and stop it from happening but then without even thinking about it I find myself in the kitchen and it’s going (H: Mm) you know. And once it’s started you can’t stop” (ibid., her emphasis).

Notice how the deictic patterning sets up several oppositions between the body and the self/mind. The switching between the third person deictic “it” to describe the body and the first person deictics “me” and “I” serve to distinguish the two. Additionally, the personified body actually speaks to the self with an imperative command “do it.” Verbs of cognition such as “thinking” are ascribed to the mind’s rational consciousness while verbs describing action are ascribed to the body (“it takes over”, “kicks in”). More explicitly the body is constructed as alien and non-rational in that when it acts the mind is absent: “I haven’t been there all the time”, “I find myself in the kitchen and it’s going on.” Additionally Emma explicitly separates the actions of the body and those of the mind: “It’s not me saying...It’s something completely...dissociated from me...that just kicks in and says”, “I try to stop it”. “it takes over.” However, though schematically
separated, the tension of the conjoined mind-body is realized when Emma switches to the "I" form to describe her spatial location: "...clear up the mess once I've done it."

Hornbacher (1998: 108-109) similarly, though more disturbingly, discusses her experience of her body:

"You cross over from a vague wish to be thinner into a no-holds-barred attack on your flesh. You stop seeing your body as your own, as something valuable, something that tugs you around and does your thinking and feeling for you and requires an input of energy for this favor. You begin seeing it instead as an undesirable appendage, a wart you need to remove. 'I have a body, you are likely to say if you talk about embodiment at all; you don't say, I am a body. A body is a separate entity possessable by the 'I'...' (citing Mairs 1994: 270).

Note that these formulations of the body are completely in line with a Cartesian mind-body dualism.

Thus, for the eating disordered individual, the aim is to eliminate the corporeal, and, through metonymy, the fat both as physical substance and as persona:

"Emma: I want to lose the fat /HM: right/ and that's the only way I ever look at it. [...] It's just I (.) I hate it. I hate it being in me and it feels completely alien /HM: right/ and I just want it away. you know. I want it off [...] It just doesn't feel like it should be part of me /HM: right/ you know. It feels all wrong. /HM: yeah/ And I feel to a certain extent that something I did a few years ago has forced it to be there and now I've got to force it to go away again" (Malson and Ussher 1996a: 274; original emphasis).

Thus, it is the Cartesian mind-body dualism which provides the departure point for the eating disordered individuals quest for self-control. Take for example Krasnow's idiosyncrasy, also discussed in section 5.1:

"Many anorexics will allow themselves to fill up on low-calorie foods (diet sodas, salads, etc.) so that they will not be hungry. To me, this demonstrates a lack of willpower. I will not let myself fill up on these foods. Abstinence is the key to my feelings of self-control and being all-powerful—almost as though restricting my intake is a challenge" (Krasnow 1996: 19)

Also consider the following expression of this dualism:

"The sense of accomplishment exhilarates me, spurs me to continue on and on. It provides a sense of purpose and shapes my life with distractions from insecurity... I shall become an expert [at losing weight]... The constant downward trend [of the scales] somehow comforts me, gives me visible proof that I can exert control" (Liu 1979: 36).

This self-control involves the goal of losing weight, and in the extremes of the eating disordered individual, at eliminating the body completely.

Tricia: I mean at one time I remember feeling (.) I was so up really out of my body /HM: mm/ that I remember sort of (?) looking in a mirror and being actually surprised that I was saw a form in the mirror /HM: right/ and not just a nothingness" (Malson and Ussher 1996a: 275; original emphasis)

"I had no patience for my body. I wanted it to go away so that I could be a pure mind, a walking brain; admired and acclaimed for my incredible self-control" (Hornbacher 1998: 107-108)

However, the mind subjugating the body, and in some instances the mind erasing the body, does not involve a gender-neutral body. As Lester (1997) and Malson and Ussher (1996a) point out, it is the female body that is to be subjugated by the masculine mind.

"Sometimes my body looks so bloated, I don't want to get dressed. I like the way it looks for exactly days each month; usually, the eight and ninth days after my period. Every other day, my breasts, my stomach—they're just awful lumps, bumps, bulges... My body can turn on me at any moment; it is an out-of-control mass of flesh" (Heyn 1987: 213).

"Nicki: It [anorexia] was very specific. It was involved with my periods starting and I hated them /HM: right/ and I was very annoyed and I sort of saw my body as a separate thing, like it wasn't me. /HM: right/ It was a separate thing and I was very angry /HM: right mm/ and I wanted to sort
of distant myself from it. [...] It felt well it felt scary /HM: mm/ cos it felt like I wasn’t secure [...] all of a sudden it was doing something that was out of my control /HM: mm right/ and I saw it as being not me /HM: mm/ and I couldn’t relate to it and I wanted to sort of get rid of it” (Malsön and Ussher 1996b: 513).

Also take Bruch’s now famous discussion of the anorexic’s inner voice, “a dictator who dominates me”, “the little man who objects when I eat.” Bruch observes that almost exclusively this inner voice, the dictator, is male (Bruch 1978, see Leuwica 1999).

This logically follows from Cartesian dualism in that the Cartesian mind/thin-body/fat dichotomy is also not gender-neutral (see Chapter 2 sections 2.3.1.2.0, 2.5). Like the aesthetic ideal, the fat body is gender-skewed towards the woman’s Nature. The affinity between the corporeal construction of women as the Other and the fat as corporeal Other is non-coincidental, and in fact both are intimately related historically (Bordo 1993, Leuwica 1999). Thus, as we saw in the discussion of Cartesian mind-body dualism, the untamed Natural feminine is associated with the irrational body.

Additionally, as discussion from Chapters 2 and 3 made clear, it is the fat which is most closely related (discursively) to the body. Correspondingly, the appetite of the woman, as consumer of foods (especially fatty foods such as red meat), is connected with sexuality and other aspects of the body. The mind is rational, disembodied, and masculine.

It is within this context that we can meaningfully introduce Bordo’s discussion of the double bind women face in modern society to be both feminine and masculine, in control and the subject of passion. Turner (1984) argues that this is a necessary cause of late capitalism which transformed the social structure by redefining the household. Turner argues that capitalism cannot function within a patriarchal society, but rather involves the undermining of patriarchy, replacing it with patriism. In any case, one can readily make the observation that women have increasingly moved into the labor force and thus, through achieving a somewhat more equal status as men in the public sphere, have had to adopt masculine values while still having to be feminine. It is this double-bind, whereby the feminine is discursively constructed as inferior, from which the logical trajectory of eating disordered behavior and discourse is shaped.

Insofar as Cartesian dualism is a prevalent cultural discourse (Turner 1984) we see that the logic presented to and used by the eating disordered individual is of the same kind as non-eating disordered individuals. This is clearly shown by Crawford’s (1984: 70) discussion of lay discourse on control, willpower, discipline, and thinness, as well as Bordo’s (1993) similar discussion of advertisements (also see Chapter 2 for discussion). Again the division between the eating disordered individual and the normal individual is problematized.

Despite the robustness of the Cartesian duality in social life, for those with and without eating disorders, we cannot reduce eating disorders or the concern for control and self-discipline to the mind-body dichotomy for the simple fact that such a dichotomy provides no principle for the determination of the trajectory of that control. For example, we can just as easily imagine obesity as a sign of mind control over body in that it takes a lot of willpower to eat after one is full. To fully understand the eating disorderedness of modern life we must attend to the ascetic, the aesthetic, and the medicalization of morality (section 5.4). Turner (1984) discusses the role of this dualism with regard to ascetic practices by pointing out that religious asceticism liberates the mind from the body by subordinating the flesh, whereby the flesh is associated with desire and eating (gluttony) as hedonistic acts. In contrast but with the same result, in a secularized society
where the thin aesthetic is valorized independently of religious goals, the mind-body dualism involves the subjugation of the body by the mind with the aim of increasing the desirability, and thus the pleasures, of the body. In both forms of asceticism the self-control of the body is motivated towards the thin body as an icon. Additionally, since the female Other qua inferior is associated with the corporeal we see that the ideal body's trajectory is motivated towards thinness rather than fatness since the corporeal is associated with the base feminine. However, there is another crucial discourse which motivates the fear of the fat and the worship of the non-fat slender body: the medicalization of morality. As I will show in section 5.4, the medicalization of morality and the imburement of the body (particularly fat) with moral meanings provide the trajectory that necessarily requires and presupposes a mind-body dualism.

5.4 Medicalized morality and eating disorders

In section 5.2 we saw hints that the aesthetic image desired by eating-disordered individuals and 'normals' alike had another component past the simple desire to achieve a certain aesthetic form. The discourse of eating disordered individuals revealed the intense emotional commitment to achieve one bodily form (thin) while simultaneously avoiding the Other (fat). In this section I wish to explore what this commitment is within the context of an increasingly secularized and medicalized society, whereby morality the domain traditionally governed by religion has fallen under the purview of science and medicine (Turner 1992, 1984, Bordo 1993, Martin 1998, Nichter and Nichter 1991, Foucault 1965), and is disseminated through mass media (Nichter and Nichter 1991), and self-help and psychiatric groups (Vogler 1993). The emergence of medicalized morality was discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.5.2. In that section we saw that the body was site and sight for morality, and that the interpretation of the body was heavily regulated through a medical and nutritional discourse. Correspondingly, food and diet, as functions of the medical body par excellence, have increasingly been medicalized (Vogler 1993), most often confounding notions of health, fitness, diet/lifestyle, and morality (Glassner 1990, Nichter and Nichter 1991, Turner 1992, Crawford 1984).

Ever since the turn of the century we have existed under "the imperative of health: at once the duty of each and the objective of all" (Foucault 1980: 170). Tightly packed into this imperative are highly moral notions, particularly towards the fat, whereby “fat” acts as a (metonymic) pivot between denoting the nutritional component (i.e. lipids) and the persona (i.e. the overweight individual). The other side of this binary opposite is the thin person. As we have seen through eating disordered discourse, both are crucially at play. The desired thin is always counterbalanced, and feared, by the “unbearable weight” of the Other, that is, the fat.

To briefly review the discussion of Chapter 2, the fat has historically been especially connected with the base corporeal aspects of women. The fat represents the debaucherous, immoral, slovenly, lazy/idle, dirty, out-of-control, weak-willed, disrespectful, sexual voracious (in women), unhealthy, indecent, ugly, lower-class, and irrational. The thin, as binary opposite, takes on the opposite meanings: controlled, moral, rational, self-respectful, in-control (sexually and otherwise), attractive, healthy, strong willed, clean, upper-class, and hard working. The medicalization of this binary pair acts to make opaque the moral meanings packed into them, and, as we will see, acts to differentiate the eating disordered individual qua irrational from the rational-scientific-
healthy normal individual, all the while instantiating this medicalized binary pair as a social regularity (independent of the distinction between eating disordered and normal individuals). This social regularity is socialized quite early on in children, both those who eventually become eating-disordered and other (see Chapter 2 for discussion, Martin 1989, Nichter and Nichter 1991, Krasnow 1996, Kirk and Colquhoun 1989).

In a society troubled by diseases not easily cured by biomedicine (Turner 1992), lifestyle and diet have become the loci of the medical gaze, and by extension moral judgment. In sum, health qua medical state has become a moral imperative (Falk 1994, Foucault 1980: 120). Insofar as the fat is the most worried about nutritional unit (it has the most calories and is linked with a number of diseases), as well as being the Other, it is no surprise that the fat is central to anorectic discourse. Following section 5.3’s discussion, eating and diet have become one of the modes through which the gendered logocentric self-control has been expressed. Whether or not we commit ourselves to the interpretation that eating disorders involve the denial and avoidance of femininity (as some deep meaning approaches have, see Leuwica 1999), it should be obvious that self-controlling behavior allows the individual to align him/herself with valorized masculine traits while distancing themselves from the corporeal Natural feminine. Thus, eating becomes the modality from which control is expressed in order to both eschew and achieve femininity (in the performance of a mind/self/soul and the appearance of a body respectively):

I had a problem with being two seemingly opposite things at once. I was supposed to be pretty, frail, quite, selfless, pure and promiscuous. I wanted to be proud, strong, self-sufficient, and smart. Strong meant two things, actual physical strength and control of impulses. Because I was female, I had to fit the first list of modifiers. If I wanted to be respected in society, I had to be the second and the first list of modifiers...The only thing I could do was to control and not control my eating: purging, fasting, and exercising” (Mascia-Lees and Sharpe 1996-7: 176).

Note that this requires a mind-body dualism which is gender asymmetric and shot through with moral meanings.

Thus, to analyze how medicalized morality makes eating disorders intelligible is to attend to different discursive levels: the first, done in Chapter 2, is to analyze the emergence of this medicalized morality, its relationship to gender, and how medical morality is instantiated to make moral claims without ever seeming to do so. The second is to look, as I will do in this section, at how this tropic reformulation of morality is used in eating disordered discourse. It will be shown that the affective component, a mechanism (and not just effect) of self-discipline, so robust in eating disorders, is localizable to this discourse. While the aesthetic ideal provides the motivation and the nutritional discourse the vocabulary and logic, the moral discourse provides the strong (pathological) commitment to enact the ascetic discipline to achieve the aesthetic end. Note that this medicalized morality is articulated through the body as sign of the inner-self (thus presupposing an inner-self), and thus doubly presupposes a gender asymmetric mind-body dichotomy, whereby moral judgment flows from the body to the self.

In the eating disordered discourse there is often a sense of immorality and guilt attached to the fat body. For example, Bruch describes the following cases: “She was discharged from the hospital when her weight had reached 80 pounds, with the agreement that she would be readmitted if she could not maintain her weight above that figure. For the next few months her weight remained marginal. She was seen regularly by her internist, who reported that when there had been a gain in weight she would mutter, ‘I hate it, I hate it,’ and that she felt ‘heavy all over’ and ‘guilty like a robber for breaking the law’” (Bruch 1988:74).
“Lisa had been considered a well-built, somewhat chubby child. At age fifteen, to everybody’s satisfaction, she succeeded in bringing her weight down to 115 pounds. At eighteen, during the year she graduated from high school, entered college, and also had a coming-out party, her weight suddenly dropped to 70 pounds.

From then on Lisa vigorously defended her slenderness as her greatest treasure. She considered eating a gross, shameful, and base activity and felt superior to those who indulged their appetites” (Bruch 1988: 182).

Also consider the following (also discussed in section 5.1),

“I even felt better when I would eat only fruits and vegetables, even when hungry. Pretty soon I was able to convince my mind and my body that such feelings of purity were much better than any fattening food…I believed that the kind of food that went into my body had the power to absolve or disgrace me, and I would feel these feelings depending on what I had ingested” (in Lelewica 1999: 82; my emphasis).

as well as:

“My entire life was ruled by fat with but one desire-to be thin…Unfortunately, my shame gave birth to guilt” (in Lelewica 1999: 83).

Often morality is coded in terms of issues of control (through a Cartesian mind-body dichotomy),

“TERESA Passivity is linked in my mind to being fat and to being indulgent, (H: Right) to being out of control.

ZOE I felt like such a loser because I felt like I couldn’t control my weight because I was overweight. (H: Right) So there must be something wrong with me because you know: oh well, I didn’t have enough self-control” (Malson 1997: 235; original emphasis).

or quite explicitly in terms of good and evil, whereby the body, its weight, and fat are evil:

Jane: I used to think I was really bad and evil person. And I thought the more weight I lost the more evil I could get rid of so /HM: right/ the pers’ (.) the better a person I’d be /HM: mm/ So I just want ‘o get rid of all this weight an’ /HM: right/ () it made me feel I was better ‘cos there was less fat /HM: mm/ as if there was less /HM: mm/ bad” (Malson and Ussher 1996a: 274).

Jane: “And then once a nurse, I was in hospital, I went down to three stone twelve () and she stood me in front of this fell length mirror and said: look at you, for goodness sake. You know, and I stood there and said: but I’ve got to lose another stone ‘cos look at all the fat and the evil in my eyes” (ibid. 275).

Thus, through a splitting of mind and body, it is the moral imperative of the mind to keep the body under control. That is, the Otherness of the body qua fat implies moral laxity and a lack of will-power:

“Nicki: If I didn’t have it [anorexia], if I wasn’t thin/H: mm/ then I wouldn’t have an identity. I’d just be this big bad blob.

H: Right’ run. What sort of identity did you feel it was or it is or whatever?

Nicki: It was um it was very powerful. /H: mm/ It made me feel good and in control” (Malson 1995: 90).

The body is also coded through self-worth, as one recovered Overeaters Anonymous turned therapist states:

“I equated my self-worth with my food intake and my weight. When I was overeating, I felt “bad” and “worthless”…I hated myself…I was sloppy and disgusting” (Vogler 1993: 93)

In sum, we see how the body for the anorexic is a site for moral displeasure and self-hate. This moral displeasure and (self-)hate however is part and parcel of lay discourse as well. Quite nicely, Chesters (1994) compares anorectic discourse (taken from Crisp 1980) and lay discourse side by side showing their similarity:
“My diet is still fairly rigid, finely balanced so that I do not gain any weight. I allow myself an occasional lapse, but not by too much or else I feel guilty” (Crisp 1980: 174-175).
“The guilt that followed these binges was unbearable. It made me lose any confidence I might have had in myself and in my strict self-discipline which was all important” (Crisp 1980: 161-162).

//
“S4: Sometimes if I eat things that I shouldn’t I do feel guilty and feel so guilty afterwards it wasn’t worth the pleasure of eating it.”
S8: I feel really guilty, it would bother me for quite some time...and then you know I’ll either over compensate like...or I’ll get rid of it in some way, usually by throwing it up cos it means that much to me, I feel guilty about it” (Chesters 1994: 45d)

Nichter and Nichter (1991: 255) also show how this moral logic is reflected in lay opinions, in this case of a mother of a college student:

“For my daughter and her friends, becoming fat, not engaging in premarital sex, is sinful and a source of guilt. It used to be said that once a girl had sex there was no way of controlling her, so she should wait. Now it’s all changed. The indulgence kids [sic] are afraid of weight gain.”

Crawford (1984: 70-71) shows how these beliefs are connected to health: “Unhealthiness for me has the connotation of neglect”, “People who are overweight are slovenly. They are unhealthy on purpose.”

In this section I have illustrated how the body is constructed as moral through a mind-body dualism and through nutritional science, presupposing a thin aesthetic. The logic of this morality is only possible through its medicalization, whereby the morality of weight and the body are implicitly coded through terms such as health, exercise, (low)fat, and lifestyle (Crawford 1984, Turner 1992, Girard 2000, Vogler 1993) and given rhetorical force through authoritative institutions such as the government (USDA 2000, see Chapter 2). We saw that this implicit morality is made quite explicit in the eating disordered individual’s experience of their body and diet. In fact, this implicit/explicit difference is often presented as the pathological break between eating disordered individuals and normals. That is to say, the eating disordered individual is irrationally and pathologically obsessed with the body and feels excessive guilt when she transgresses the irrational expectations of her body. Note how beliefs on the Nature of gender are directly in alignment with the pathologizing of the eating disordered individual: irrational, vain, emotional, and corporeal. However, as we saw in section 5.2, these expectations are not irrational nor can they unproblematically be considered pathological (i.e. qualitatively different from the rest of the population). In this section I showed that the morality of the eating disordered individual is also in line with that of the population at large, primarily for the reason that the logic that the eating disordered individual puts into play is derived from a set of discourses which are common to eating disordered individuals and ‘normals’ alike. That is to say, the rhetorical force that nutritional and medical discourse enact to define what is healthy and objectively good for the body operate on the same logic and presuppositions as that of eating disordered individuals. The discursive analysis of both eating disordered individuals and ‘normals’ alike has shown this. Again note that this discursive effect (i.e. the construction and the experience of eating disorder) is not simply localizable in the discourse of medicalized morality. Rather, it necessarily involves a nutritional science to categorize and classify food and the body, an aesthetic asceticism and mass media to disseminate culturally desirable icons of healthiness and fitness, and a mind-body dualism whereby an inner-self can manipulate the body it is trapped within to bring about some effect. Additionally, in
each of these discursive axes, discourses on gender play a crucial role in focusing the
gaze of power upon the female body.

5.5 Consumer capitalism and postmodern culture

Chapter 3 briefly discussed the role of consumer capitalism in the precipitation of
the McSalad Shaker as a cultural token of salad \textit{qua} cultural type. In this section I will
discuss consumer capitalism with regards to eating disorders and argue that to understand
the modern emergence of eating disorders requires attention to the role of consumer
capitalism as well as (aspects of) the modern/postmodern condition.

Consumerism in the 20th century was made possible by a number of factors: post-
World War II increases in wages, improvements in production and distribution of goods,
and an increase in media through which mass advertising could take place (Turner 1984).
It is within a culture of increasing abundance and surplus that desires are presentable as
requirements (Falk 1994), and that eating disorders can emerge as a society-wide
phenomenon \textsuperscript{10} (Vogler 1993, Turner 1992, Bordo 1993). It is within this context that the
discourse of self-improvement is translatable into a commodity-based ‘language.’ As
will be shown, it is this commodification of personhood through mass media technologies
that is central to an understanding of eating disorders. First however, I would like to
discuss the cultural contradiction between the hedonistic consumer and ascetic producer
inherent to cultural capitalism, and its dialectical (partial) resolution.

5.5.0 The hedonist-ascetic dialectic

As discussed in Chapter 3, consumer capitalism engenders a cultural contradiction
between the hedonist consumer and ascetic producer (Falk 1994, McGuigan 1999, Kirk
1993) which is not subject to any sort of division of labor. This cultural contradiction is
specifically embodied in eating disordered individuals, particularly bulimics, whose
binge and purge lifestyle is literally made up of mass hedonistic consumption followed
by ascetic self-denial (Crawford 1984). These cultural archetypes are often played on in
advertising discourses, often directed at women, as Bordo (1993) shows. That is to say, it
is towards women in particular that advertisements advocate both giving into temptation
and the techniques to avoid and absolve it. This is what Ripa di Meana (1999: 27) calls
the ‘impossibility of being.’ It is no wonder then that eating disordered and normal
discourse is constantly peppered with concerns and worries about giving into temptation
and desire, and the emphasis on the need for self-control and self-discipline. This
‘impossibility of being’ is thus left unresolved and is constantly being negotiated in
currency of guilt (often through nutritional units, see Chapter 2.53, sections 2.5.2, 2.5.3)
articulated as the intense fear that giving into temptation. In the eating disordered
individuals case, ‘just one bite’ will lead to cataclysmic events:

“I was convinced I would explode if I gave in and ate” (Bruch 1988: 203).

One individual in a clinic for eating disorders describes it in the following way:

“I do personal inventory every day. But sometimes I can’t see how it’s [the eating disorder] my
fault. And that scares me...It’s my pride. And if my pride gets in the way I’ll go back out and eat
again and I’ll be dead...I really worry about that—all the time. It’s like I’m pulled—a good me
and a bad me. And if I’m not careful all the time, I’m doomed...I worry because even though I’m
doing it right, sometimes I’m just full of fear that the whole thing will just get totally wiped out if I
just do one thing wrong—like one piece of cake...And then I think that’s crazy and I start to doubt
my program. I mean, what’s one piece of cake going to do? And then I know my stinking thinking has control and I get some help right away. Because a piece of cake is poison!” (Vogler 1993: 97, also see Bordo’s 1988 discussion of this phenomenon).

Even this cultural contradiction has been commodified and put into a form where ascetic self-denial can be consumed in excessive (orgiastic) quantities. This commodification of course hinges on the fact that all forms of asceticism involve some form of desire/pleasure (see section 5.2). Thus, take for example, the billion-dollar fitness industry, and the seemingly infinite amount of weight-loss related merchandise/services (Lewica 1999). Thus, it is within a consumer capitalist context that the individual, in particular the woman, is placed at the nexus of desire and restraint and provided with a cultural logic (the discursive field) to negotiate, however painfully, these contradictions, thus precipitating a community of eating disordered individuals.

For the bulimic this results in the iconicity between the consumer capitalist contradiction and her binge-purge lifestyle; for the anorexic this results in the rejection of hedonistic consumption and the (hedonistic-like) consumption of anti-consumption. As shown in Chapter 3, this hedonistic-ascetic dialectic is often resolved in representations through the description of essentially anti-consumption products as fun and exciting, cf. McDonald’s McSalad Shaker.

The hedonist-ascetic dialectic, a predominant cultural theme in modern society, also precipitates an intense obsession with food due to food’s central social role as a need, desire, and social indexical. This is reflected in the pathological discourse of the eating disordered individual as well as in lay discourse, especially in advertising (Bordo 1993). The obsession with food takes its shape from both the constant threat and temptation of transgression (of self-control), as well as from the constancy of self-denial (thus enabling food to act as a reward for being ‘good’, i.e. in control) which transgression engenders. Additionally, consumer capitalism, driven by (economic and statusful) competition, inculcates desires so great that they cannot be satisfied (Turner 1984), often through appeals to the seemingly referent-less and ephemeral ‘goodness’ (Falk 1994). As the consumer capitalist context precipitates the McDonald McSalad Shaker, the consumer capitalist dialectic (hedonist-ascetic) precipitates, in conjunction with a specific cultural logic, the community of eating disordered/concerned individuals. However, analysis of this cultural contradiction is only one way through which consumer capitalism forms this community. It also does so through the language of the body and the commodification of cultural discourses on personhood.

5.5.1 The commodification of the (thin) body as the sign of the (thin) self

As discussed in previous chapters, the body is the sign of the self. With the emergence of the ‘inner-self’ the body took on the role as window to the soul. The visual culture which fixes its gaze on signs which gaze back, coupled with the incresac in mass media technologies which allow the ability to transport in space and time the act of seeing and looking, has involved the domination of the cultural scene with representations and images (Leppert 2000). It is this explosion of representations linked to commodified social schemata of personhood which is crucial to understanding the relationship between discourse, consumer capitalism, and eating disorders.

Turner (1984) discusses this transition from feudal society, where signs of personhood and status were determined through breeding and familial relations, to a capitalist society where discourses on merit and achievement in tandem with the
replacement of land with capital determine a different set of signs reflecting personhood and status. In both cases, of course, the body acts as the distinguisher between class (Falk 1994). However, within an economic system where social mobility is more facile, status as reflected in the body comes to be marked through signs which themselves are buyable (at some market price). The performability of these signs, as opposed to the heraldry of the past, involves face-to-face interaction. What is particularly novel is how these signs are disseminated for large audiences via their commodification.

In this symbolic-interactionist framework (cf. Goffman 1980) the self is created in local instances of interaction, and thus, the body as sign of self requires continual maintenance. Diet, as one set of signs of the self (i.e. what one eats) and as a method to fashion the body into a particular type of sign (e.g. a thin body, a muscular body, etc.), is located at the intersection between the commodifiable sign and commodifiable body technique/technology of the self. And since the body and diet need to be continually ratified (through self-discipline and/or consumption), the performability of the (thin) self is constantly managed through purchase. Briefly put, the construction of the (post) modern self involves the making, maintaining, and purchasing of images.

Thus, in consumer capitalist societies the body, as window to the soul (which is the new focus of the discourse on self-improvement), is itself made a sign through discourses (especially advertising) which semiotically charge objects used to modify/complement the body as a sign (Miles 1996, Malson 1999). McDonald’s McSalad Shaker is one such usable sign. The commodified techniques used to fashion the body (e.g. exercise, diet, etc.), and the objects used in conjunct with/on it (e.g. clothes, cosmetics, etc.), index the body as sign for the self. Thus, as Turner (1992) points out, in postmodern consumer culture, the body is the mark of distinction often through exercise and dress. However, these signs used to construct the body qua self, to use Peirce’s terminology, do not take the self as their (final) interpretant, for the self is something which is the outcome of the performance of those signs (and among other things is not perceivable). Rather, these signs take as their interpretants the meta-semiotic discourses which connect the signs used to construct a body-self to socially valued discourses on personhood and ‘all that is good.’ Thus, the body as the product of semiotic work and as sign for the inner-self is connected to the desires and needs of that inner-self by the presupposing those desires and needs in discursive events (Nichter and Nichter 1991); that is to say, often we didn’t know what we were missing until it is pointed out to us, often through what Girard (2000) calls the “mimetic desire” of/for seen bodies. These presupposing discursive events, through their connection to socially valued discourses, imply their ability to fulfill a void that they themselves stipulated. The thin body qua cultural type is an example of one such commodified sign which indexes a number of valued discourses (self-control, upper class morality, etc.). Thus, the thin body becomes both the object and the subject of desire through discourses which presuppose the desirability of slenderess and offer it as the inhabitable subjecitivity through the consumption of some product or service—for example, fitness regimes (Eskes et al. 1998), weight loss products/services (Vogler 1993), and information sources for weight loss and fitness (cf. Good Housekeeping, see Chapter 2). That is, one can desire (to be[come]) a desirable body, and by extension a desirable self. In essence, insofar as one wishes to be a self in line with the discursive field, to buy a commodified body (is) to
perform a commodified body (which) is to become a commodified body (i.e. an icon for the commodified body type—a walking advertisement).

As stated above, in modern society this desirable body is attainable through a nutritional/medical framework and presupposes a mind-body dualism and a thin aesthetic. Thus, at this intersection of these discourses exists the idealized thin body. The logic of this thinness in a consumer capitalist context necessarily involves the consumption of (self-)discipline (e.g. dieting or low-calorie/fat products) in order to become a thin body. This consumption is often justified and legitimized through the medicalized moral discourse as ‘healthy’ or ‘self-respectful.’ Thus, we see how modernity, through its gaze, defines the body as sign of the soul. This body-soul, immersed in a capitalist context, is itself commodifiable through its connection to a number of socially valued discourses. This commodification occurs only through a discursive lens (i.e. those discourses discussed throughout this paper), which sets both its trajectory (i.e. towards thinness and not obesity) and the ways through which that trajectory is attainable. In turn, within (post)modern culture, the self-body complex is dissociated from a rigid social structure and is constituted instead through the performance of commodified signs (in the attainment of a commodified body type).

However, again note that though the range of possible images in postmodern culture is larger than in previous time periods it is crucially limited by the discursive field whose historical continuity predates postmodernity. That is to say, though postmodernity is characterizable as the loosening of the fixity of selves, and thus allows individuals to inhabit a variety of possible selves, the number of possible selves is still highly constrained by the discourses described in this paper (Chapter 2 section 2.5.4.0). In sum, note how the logic of this commodified thin body type is dependent upon a discursive field which imbeds the cultural form with a certain value and a consumer capitalist context which allows these forms (and the ways to achieve them) to be commodified and purchasable. This cultural form, though its point of contact is the body, takes as its final object selfhood itself. That is to say, the thin body in consumer capitalism is not simply a commodified body, but a commodified self (McGuigan 1999. Gans 2000, see Lebivica 1999. Eskes et al. 1998. Glassner 1990, and Chapters 2 and 3 for discussion and examples of the commodification of the thin self).

This thin-self, as Turner (1984) points out and as has been discussed above, almost paradoxically, involves anti-consumption as its interpretant. It may be pointed out correctly that anorexics may not purchase anything at all. She may simply starve and thus it may seem that the above argument is inapplicable to eating disordered individuals. However, the correctness of this observation (that anorexics need not consume) is incidental to the argument above. First observe that the anorexic is, like everyone else, a consumer of cultural forms. That is, she is aware of the commodification of selves. She may of course choose, or be motivated, to attain that selfhood through non-consumption. Thus, there may be individuals who do not watch TV, do not buy magazines, do not go to gyms, and so on and so forth, and yet are exposed to the discourses which motivate her desire to lose weight. However, the dissemination of such discourses with such a large range and high intensity is only possible through the modern consumer capitalist context. And indeed, it is every other individual who does consume that provides the fuel to maintain the commodification of the anti-consumptive self. Almost inescapably,
consumer capitalism commodifies all aspects of social life, from the body to the discourses that imbue it with meaning. In summary, consumerism by its cultural contradiction (hedonist vs. ascetic) simultaneously requires the notion of individual bodies containing desires and some type of mind-body dualism, whereby the mind is required to calculate and control those desires. As Falk (1994) puts it, following Foucault, the emergence of the modern consuming man involves the internalization of ‘technologies of domination’ (from without), thus making them ‘technologies of the self’ (from within). Additionally, we saw that these technologies, and the selves that they produce, are commodified, in line with a number of cultural discourses. These technologies, because they presuppose both a mind-body dualism and an individual with inner desires, also presuppose the soul. However, because it is commodified, this soul is the product of the signs which purport to represent that ‘inner space’; thus, it is in part the emergence of the concept of the soul that allows the body to become the medium to express that soul (Falk 1994). Thus, as we would expect, texts which discuss ideal body size/appearance appeal both to the inner-self as well as to the outer-self (cf. Eskes et al 1998 and cosmetic surgery advertisements—see Chapter 2 n. 63 and n. 64).

5.5.2 Eating disorders: approaching postmodernity

In section 5.5.1 I showed that eating disorders in consumer society involve the commodification of a culture type (the thin body/self) and the means to attain it. It is within this context that I would like to discuss eating disorders as a postmodern disorder (Malson 1999). By postmodern it is simply (and incompletely given the heterogeneity and indeterminacy of the term) meant the social and cultural condition that has resulted from the problematizing of the modernist endeavor. Postmodernity, then, would include (among other things): a) the questioning of the Enlightenment’s project, that is, the rational project of the 17th century and the meta-narratives of Reason, Science, Humanity, b) the obscuring of the difference between mass-culture and elite-culture, and c) the conflation of the aesthetic and the moral, the image and truth (see Turner 1992, McGuigan 1999). By questioning the singularity of reality, postmodern culture has been characterized by the increase in the number of inhabitable selves through the free play of signs; that is, reality has become malleable, and through commodification, buyable. Thus, the eating disordered individual exists in a cultural milieu from which her subjectivity is not pre-determined, but through the play of signs, is continuously formable. The body becomes only another sign to be used in the construction and modification of (the) reality (of self-hood). However, though postmodernity challenges the modernist project it is crucially constrained by those modernist discourses (as section 5.5.1 showed, as well as Chapter 2 section 2.5.4.0, Chapter 3 section III). It may question modernity, but it cannot transgress modernity. Likewise, eating disorders, though representing one type of inhabitable self/reality, are still rooted and constrained by (and by) modernist values and discourses (cf. Malson 1999). In other words, eating disorders presuppose modernity, but can only flourish in postmodern culture. In this way, we can draw a clear parallel between the salad qua (quasi-)postmodern sign (Chapter 2 section 2.5.4.0, Chapter 3 section III) and eating disorders qua (quasi-)postmodern disorder. Thus, we can consider the salad and eating disorders as the precipitates (or the embodied conclusions) of the logic of modernism in the postmodern milieu.
5.5.3 Mass media and dissemination of discourse

So far I have only briefly mentioned the role of mass media technologies in postmodern consumer culture and the construction of salad and eating disorders. Much of the discussion has presupposed the presence and effects of mass media. Consumer capitalism, for example, requires some type of medium for the dissemination of discourse in order to function maximally. Thus, the discussion of section 5.5.1 regarding the commodification of the thin body and the means to attain it necessarily requires attention to the role of media technology. Primarily, we can conceive of the role of mass media as providing a channel through which discourses on the thin body/self, and discourses which commodify the thin body/self (and thus provide normative icons of that body), are disseminated to different audiences. It is through media such as print, the Internet, television, movies, radio, and billboards that the discursive field which construct the thin body/self and the methods to achieve it (as formulated in the various chapters) can be articulated and disseminated to wide enough audiences such that they can be commodified to make money. This commodification, using Giddens’ notion of the “duality of structure” (see Chapter 2 n. 68), also produces the circumstances through which these discourses are made meaningful through time, across generations. That is, the commodification of culture, within postmodern culture, becomes one of the primary ways that culture is recreated. This commodification, like all cultural processes, requires a semiotic medium, which mass media technology provides (both as a physical medium and through its hand in the construction of other media, e.g. food, the body, fashion, etc.). The difference of course is that (post)modern cultural dissemination: a) is driven by market forces, and b) it reaches larger audiences than other methods of discourse circulation, and thus, for example, in the case of eating disorders, is able to form a community of individuals, and thus a cultural type, independently of the members’ knowledge of, or communication with, each other. Thus, in the case of eating disorders, icons of ideal femininity, as well as other culturally valued discourses, are enabled through the visual orientation of much of modern media technology as the implicit and opaque instantiations of signs (i.e. the actual body of a thin body/self is an icon for the thin body/self qua cultural type\textsuperscript{12}) which provide models, or icons, for the self. That is, they engender what Girard (2000) calls “mimetic desire”, where desire looks outwards in order to look inwards. In sum, not only does the precipitation and blossoming of eating disorders depend upon mass media technology (for allowing commodification in the first place) but it also shapes the ways in which that commodification occurs (see Chapter 4 section 4.1 for discussion as well).

Not only does the experience and formation of eating disorders depend on media technology for the dissemination of discourses (and other forms of semiosis, such as iconography), so does the demographic and epidemiological makeup of eating disordered populations. That is, we can think of the changing frequencies of eating disorders over time, space, and populations as a function of the changing distribution/dissemination of discourses. In other words, though eating disorders appeared at the same time as the discursive field from which they draw their cultural logic and meaning (i.e. nutritional science, medicalized and secularized society, aesthetic asceticism, within a capitalist context), their dramatic increase in prevalence in the modern West did not occur until the emergence of a postmodern consumerist culture, which itself relied upon a media
technology with a certain range of discourse dissemination. Thus, for example, the dissemination of discourse and the opening of new markets, directed at men and minorities within modern Western nations, has contributed to the increase in eating disorders for both (Bordo 1993, 1997, Le Grange 1998b, Cooks and Descutner 1993). And as expected, as it is culturally mediated, the experience of eating disorders in various populations differs; for example, it seems that Black populations are more likely to experience bulimia rather than anorexia versus White populations (Le Grange 1998b, French et al. 1997). We also see the same phenomenon occurring in non-Western countries co-occurring with modernization, the opening of new markets, and the dissemination of Western discourses (Becker 1995).

In the West itself, with the increase in eating disorders, the coverage of and interest in eating disorders has increased the size and range of discourse on eating disorders, which in turn has also increased their prevalence (Habermas 1992, Swartz 1985) insofar as eating disorders represent a positively valorized disorder in line with culturally valued discourses, thus spawning ‘imitation’ (Habermas 1992, Cooks and Descutner 1993). In summary, an integral part of understanding eating disorders in postmodern consumer culture is to attend to: a) the connection between mass media technology and its effect on the distribution of discourse, and b) the relationship between the commodification of culture and discourse and mass media.

5.5.4 Conclusions
5.5.4.0 A return to the body, discourse, and power

As discussion has shown, the methodology employed in Chapters 2 and 3 is critical to understanding how eating disorders are intelligible in the (post)modern cultural topography. It is only by attending to a number of discourses and their interrelationships that we can understand how individuals experience their body (e.g. in eating disordered ways) and the objects that surround them (e.g. the salad). It is these meta-semiotic discourses which act to imbue meaning into objects and construct cultural personae that provide a cultural logic through which to act in the world. Eating disorders are simply one particular way to understand this phenomenon. The social persona created and commodified through these discourses (and their existence within a consumer capitalist milieu) are created primarily through the modality of food and diet, which as Chapters 2 and 3 showed, are in turn embodiments of the same cultural discourses which provide the logic for their intelligibility. Thus, food as meaningful affects the body and transforms it. This is particularly robust in the case of eating disordered individuals. Additionally, insofar as the body is sign of the commodifiable and commodified self (e.g. the slender body, the too-cool person, etc. see Girard 2000 and Turner 1984 for discussion of the conspicuous non-consumption characteristic of the slender body/self) the body serves as the point of contact between cultural discourses on personhood and the performance and inhabitation of these personas (i.e. the motivation for normals to ‘become’ slender bodies or to become eating disordered individuals). Thus, following Foucault’s insight into the relationship of discourse, power, and the body (Foucault 1977b, 1980) we see that at all times and in all spaces the body is shot through with meaning (knowledge) and is implicated in power relationships; the body is knowable and knowing, inscribed upon and (through “mimetic” desire) an icon for the inscription upon others.
As shown, the grip of power/knowledge upon bodies is a discursive phenomenon as well as an embodied effect. This embodiment necessarily involves the routinization of the body in everyday life. It is these micro-powers (nutrition, exercise, diet) through which the body, as routinized sign/self, is fashioned. And insofar as this routinization involves the exact same modalities (nutrition, exercise, diet) and meanings/logic (aesthetically, morally) for consumers of cultural discourse (typified as pathological or normal) we cannot understand eating disorders except as part of a continuum. Thus, as we see, it is not through an appeal to the deeper meaning, or unconscious intent, that this understanding is fully knowable, but only through an analysis of the discursive phenomena which allow the ‘meaning’ of eating disorders, whatever we may consider it to be, to even become knowable in the first place. This paper has shows why this must be the case logically and empirically. In Foucauldian terms, it is the application of power relationships through and on the body which produces the knowledgability of that power-inscribed body. In our case, it is the discourses involving nutritional science, medicalized morality, aesthetic asceticism, Cartesian dualism, and gender which act upon the body, forming it such that the categorization ‘eating disorders’ can be made. It is from these discourses that the gaze of deep-meaning-preoccupied-individual can turn, producing knowledge and interpreting the meaning(s) of eating disorders.

Within a consumerist culture these modernist discourses provide the raw material for the production of commodities. It is the routinization and rationalization of eating through which a self-repressing regimen can be coupled, seemingly without any paradoxical residue, with notions of agency, empowerment, and fun, all with the aims of producing a desired and desirable body (what Turner 1984 calls “calculating hedonism”). As was shown, not only are these technologies of the self commodified, so is the self that these technologies offer to us. Thus, it is useful to approach eating disorders both as the commodification of cultural discourses on personhood as well as the use of these discourses to motivate a cultural logic, which not coincidentally, has a high affinity for the commodified cultural discourse. That is to say, eating disorders involve both schemata for social personae as well as a cultural logic to perform and achieve that personae. The salad, as it was shown, was one sign part of that constellation of social personae in that it was fashioned through the same logic/discourses.

From this point of view we must understand the eating disordered individual, not as an irrational and pathological individual (cf. Bruch 1988), but rather as a rational agent (Bordo 1993, Girard 2000, Lester 1997, Hepworth 1999). The construction of the irrational eating disordered individual simply mystifies the cultural discourses within which eating disorders make sense, and naturalize the existence of eating disorders as decontextualizable disease entities. And it is their particularly strong affinity with culturally valued discourses which make eating disorders particularly peculiar. Unlike most other psychological disorders (cf. Goffman 1963), most of which also hinge upon the irrationality of the subject, the eating disordered individual is not the target of stigma. Rather, for many, their disorder and their body is a matter of pride:

“**HM:** What is it that you are feeling you’re achieving [through anorexia]?
**Jackie:** Well, in some ways it’s being different from other people. () **HM:** Right.
**Jackie:** mm/ It’s you know it’s something that was my, this is what I find quite difficult now. It’s something that’s my own.
Lynn: In the end I did like the label [anorexia]. I thought that’s something that’s me, that’s mine” (Malson 1999: 147).

“I could go in[to a store] and say ‘I want a size 1,’ and everybody would just look around. It was like the whole store, everybody standing around, would go, ‘Golly, you are thin—that must be nice.’ And everybody, ‘Oh, that’s great—you can find all these clothes, and everything is made for slender people nowadays, and how wonderful it must be to be thin’” (Bruch 1988: 149).

This is not the reaction typical of the obese for example, where it is shame of one’s body that is often felt and ‘supposed’ to be felt (within lay discourse and the cultural logic of the discursive field, see Nichter and Nichter 1991, Crawford 1984). It is because the eating disordered individual conforms to and is formed by culturally valued discourses that it is (in their own experience of themselves at least) fashionable and glamorous. Krasnow (1996: 15) states:

“Dr. B was the first person to whom I ever mentioned feeling fat. When I did this, he told me it was a characteristc of anorexia nervosa. ‘What’s that?’ I asked. When he explained the condition, I automatically labeled myself as anorexic. It’s hard to explain, but it almost seemed ‘glamorous’ to me...I was special. The anorexia gave me an identity and made me an individual.”

Bruch (1988: 3-4) makes a similar statement: “Once the original discovery of isolated tormented young women, it [anorexia] has now acqured a fashionable reputation, becoming something to be competitive about.” It is this competition Bruch argues that has spawned the “me too” anorexics, i.e. bulimics (Habermas 1992, also see section 5.3.3). And to be sure, the bulimic is lower on the totem pole than the anorexic for precisely the reason that the bulimic embodies some of the stigmatized aspects of the cultural discourses that construct them (i.e. the lack of self-control, bodily pleasures, bingeing):

“I distinctly did not want to be seen as bulimic. I wanted to be an anorectic. I was on a mission to be another sort of person, a person whose passions were ascetic rather than hedonistic, who would make it [sic], whose drive and ambition were focused and pure, whose body came second, always, to her mind and her ‘art’” (Hornbacher 1998: 107).

In sum, an analysis of eating disorders and salad strike to the core of our understanding of culture: that is, how is it that the discursive and non-discursive are fused and interrelated such that meanings and embodied objects and subjects are precipitated? That is, how is discourse connected to power and the body, to meaning and action, to cognition, affect, habit, and subjectivity (the self). In the final section I would like to draw some interesting parallels between salad and eating disorders, calculatable from the discourses which produce both of them. This discussion will tie together the main concepts which this study has brought to light.

5.5.4.1 In a culture of seeing; amazing disappearing acts

As discussed in previous sections, to understand eating disorders is to understand the fetishization of the visual in modern culture. The postmodern free play of signs, and yet their very real and concrete connections to ‘reality’ and modernist discourses, is one seeming paradox in (post?)modern society. Just as paradoxical, at the heart of eating disorders is its “conspicuous non-consumption” (Girard 2000: 188). At the core of the eating disorder is the disappearance of the body. As Hornbacher (1998: 129) points out, “a disappearing act, the act of becoming invisible is, in fact, a visible act, and rarely goes unnoticed.” This is central to the eating disordered experience, as well as to the commodification of it. It is precisely because this erasing indexes the values which
motivate it that the disappearing body brings attention to itself. Thus, the eating disorder, in essence, involves the non-body. It is within the logic of Cartesian dualism, that the 'residue' of this disappearance is the pure mind and self:

"NICKI: It's a way of like trying to disappear (H: Mm) and trying to be in control and feel pure. (H: Right) It's just the perfection (H: Mm) thing [...] You just want to get smaller and smaller" (Malson 1997: 240).

"H: What did slimness mean to you when you started to become anorexic? Layla: Uh (short laugh) um (. ) first of all (. ) having no tummies or no great bottoms" (Malson and Ussher 1996: 275; my emphasis).

"I had no patience for my body. I wanted it to go away so that I could be a pure mind, a walking brain, admire and acclaimed for my incredible self-control" (Hornbacher 1998: 107-8).

Thus, the anorexic body is the non-body (while the bulimic body strives towards that non-body). It is corporeal and yet it performs non-corporeality. Recall, this too is the exact meaning and performative effect of the salad: it is 'non-food.' It is food, and yet, when put into play it is usable as non-food. It is the embodiment of anti-consumption (Turner 1984). And like the eating disordered body, the salad is intimately tied to the visual in that the salad is the performable sign which is itself usable to project and to become a thin and healthy self. It is, through its indexical and material/physiological effects, a tool for the inhabitation of the non-body. The anorexic’s motivation, and the motivation of the salad’s meaning, are therefore intimately related, though not through a cause-effect sequence. Rather, both their meanings are formed through the same discourses to have similar meanings and effects, albeit embodied and usable in different ways. In Peirce’s terms, the anorexic body and the salad are icons and indexes of the pure, in-control self, simultaneously indexing her body as ironic with the socially valorized discourses that construct her body/the salad (aesthetic asceticism, mind-body dualism, nutritionally/medically mediated morality, i.e. self control and will-power), thus 'iconizing' her body with those discourses. Through its discursive logic, the anorexic body and the salad are rheumatic symbolic legisigns; that is, both the anorexic community and the salad qua cultural form are rule-based calculuses (regularities of cultural habit) derived from the discursive field. These discursive constructions are made ‘real’ (culturally palpable) through their contact with their objects; that is, to return to Foucault (1972), the discourse forms the Object of which it speaks. And the principle through which these contacts are made is governed both through the discourses themselves (i.e. what they take as their points of contact; the body, the soul, diet, etc.) and through the consumer capitalist system (i.e. what is commodified and commodifiable), presupposing (the effects of) a mass media for the wide dissemination of these commodified bodies/selves. I have hoped to show that to understand how it is that subjectivity is created, and how objects are constructed as compliments and tools to achieve those subjectivities, is to attend to socio-historical discursive phenomena that are inseparable from the analysis of power and the media through which discourses are disseminated. I have hoped to expand Foucault’s insights into the nature of power upon the body through discourse by providing a methodological principle from which the points of contact of power, the differential circulation of discourse, and the hierarchical logic entailed through the differential ‘strengths’ of those power relations can be applied to some object of inquiry. I have hoped to shift focus from the mystifying observation that ‘power is everywhere’ to questions of what are the points of contact through which power is
articulated and how is power differentially distributed. As I have argued, salad and eating disorders are (one way to get) at the heart of the matter.

1 ‘Clif Bar’ is a health-food company.
2 The Good Housekeeping webpage has a section entitled “Eat Well/Stay Well.” In this section of the webpage (http://goodhousekeeping.women.com/gh/eatwell/health/00head221.htm), there are two sections: “General Health” and “Nutrition and Diet.” Of the articles in “General Health,” 8 out of 32 involve food and diet in some way. In the “Nutrition and Diet” section 14 out of 16 involve a diet regime to lose weight. Of the two not about dieting, one is an article about exercise.
3 For example, “You know, right now to me it [food] is the whole world” (Bruch 1988: 42), “Food has too much significance. It is like a monster standing there waiting to attack me. It says ‘I dare you to eat me.’ Food speaks to me: ‘I’m going to make you fat’” (Bruch 1988: 93).
4 Note that we may want to include in this body aesthetic the emergent athletic aesthetic (Bordo 1993, 1997, Eskes et al 1998) which draws more heavily on the masculine body as its archetype and often rejects the ultra-thin ‘waif’ look. However, insofar as the athletic aesthetic involves the same self-disciplining technologies as the thin aesthetic body we can consider both, for the purposes of the discussion, as being the same. One interesting difference though is that this emphasis on the athletic aesthetic asceticism has a higher affinity towards the male body, and thus the corporeally normative Gaze which has long been fixed on the feminine is now expanding to include the masculine, cf. the increase in body-image/eating disorders in men (Bordo 1997).
5 Contrary to my approach of connecting the unattractiveness of the anorexic to a thin ideal, the anorectic’s grossly emaciated body has also be ‘read into’ as a protest against the rigidity of attractive body types for women (Turner 1984). However, note that this interpretation presupposes that some thin body type is valued in the first place. Thus, regardless of the anorectic’s ‘real’ wishes, we are left with the simple fact that eating disorders necessarily rely upon some form of aesthetic asceticism.
6 To take a simple example, survey data indicate that dieting is the norm (Nichter and Nichter 1991, Lebowica 1999).
7 Also note the affinity and parallelism of this double bind with the hedonistic-ascetic dichotomy (see section 5.5.0, and Chapter 3 section 3.11)
8 i.e. for purely aesthetic reasons or for reasons related to capitalist production (cf. Turner 1984).
9 In the case of capitalistic productive forces, self-denial acts in two ways, only one of which is related to the pleasure of the body; the first (not related to the pleasure of the body) is to create a productive work force, while the second involves self-denial in the present with the aims to increase pleasure at a later time.
10 Though note, as discussion in Chapter 2 pointed out, that neither eating disorders nor the thin aesthetic are reducible to this factor (cf. Girard 2000).
11 Falk’s (1994) discussion of advertising’s tendency to connect products to the vague and seemingly referent-less ‘all that is good’ can often be viewed more productively as the process through which schemata of personhood are implicitly indexed through those material objects.
12 Note that the type/token distinction must be made since it is not any particular thin body that represents the thin self/body for all women, but rather the cultural type, which is only localizable through attending to a number of discourses which have no palpable/perceivable form independently of embodied textual instances (e.g. individual bodies, actual salads).
13 Thus, we see that aesthetic asceticism as a commodified social personae transcends the mere aesthetic form which the aesthetic ascetic desires, therefore itself becoming an icon and an index of that social personae. We could term this transformed discourse the ascetic aesthetic. That is to say, the aesthetic ascetic discourse, insofar as it is connected with discourses on socially valorized personae will, through a metonymic relationship also be an ascetic aesthetic discourse. The ascetic aesthetic is thus the after-image of aesthetic asceticism insofar as by definition aesthetic asceticism is socially valorized and connected with cultural schemata of personhood. An example of the ascetic aesthetic is the ‘too-cool’ model (see Bordo 1993, 1997, Girard 2000. section 5.2).
14 That is, making it iconic with.
Part III.
Appendix
Figure 1.01 McDonald’s Soda Cup (SC)
Figure 1.02 McDonald's Large French Fries (LFF)
Figure 1.03 McDonald’s Medium French Fries (MFF)
McDonald’s Press Release: 4/12/00


Press Releases

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04/12/00

Fun, Easy and Convenient McSalad Shaker™ Salads Arrive At McDonald’s Nationwide

Consumers "on the fly" can enjoy a FREE McSalad Shaker at LaGuardia airport

Oak Brook, IL (April 12, 2000) — Beginning April 21, people throughout the U.S. can enjoy a salad in an exciting and different way. McDonald’s is introducing the McSalad Shaker at restaurants nationwide — an innovative and convenient approach to eating salads like never before. The McSalad Shaker is served in a tall, clear cup with a domed lid that allows customers on the go to pour on their choice of dressing and shake it up, spreading the dressing evenly throughout.

"As part of McDonald's 2000 menu strategy, the McSalad Shaker is among the first of several new food items to debut at McDonald's restaurants in the U. S.," said Alan Feldman, president, McDonald's U.S.A. "McDonald's continues to lead the industry by offering our customers great-tasting, innovative products, at a good value and that suit their busy lifestyles."

"The revolutionary packaging concept makes eating a McSalad Shaker easy and fun," said Gerald Tomlinson, corporate chef, McDonald's. "It's very portable and the clear packaging allows our customers to see the fresh ingredients from top to bottom."

To celebrate this exciting addition to its menu, McDonald's will be shaking things up at LaGuardia airport by giving travelers on the go their choice of a fresh Chef, Grilled Chicken Caesar or Garden McSalad Shaker. From 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. (EDT) today, in the US Air terminal, people can meet Ronald McDonald® and enjoy a McSalad Shaker at the airport or carry it with them for a later meal just about anywhere — on their flight, in a taxi, hotel room or back at home.

McSalad Shaker salads are currently available, at participating McDonald’s restaurants, in three meal choices, including Chef, Grilled Chicken Caesar and Garden. The Chef McSalad Shaker contains a green salad mix, julienne ham, julienne turkey, a cheddar and jack cheese blend, chopped eggs, chopped tomato and green onions. The Chicken Caesar McSalad Shaker is made of a green salad mix, sliced grilled chicken breast and shredded parmesan cheese. The Garden McSalad Shaker contains a green salad mix, a cheddar and jack cheese blend, chopped eggs, chopped tomato and green onions.

The recommended prices are $1.89 for the Garden McSalad Shaker, $2.29 for the Chicken Caesar McSalad Shaker and $2.59
for the Chef McSalad Shaker; however, prices may vary by restaurant.

McDonald's is the largest global foodservice retailer, with nearly 27,000 restaurants serving over 43 million people each day in 119 countries. Approximately 85 percent of McDonald's U.S. restaurants are owned and operated by independent franchisees.

More on McSalad Shakers
McDonald's Press Release: 5/08/00

United Airlines Customers Can Enjoy McDonald's® Grilled Chicken Caesar McSalad Shaker™ "On The Fly"

Fun, Fresh-Tasting and Convenient McDonald’s McSalad Shaker Salads Board United Airlines For Lunch

Oak Brook, IL (May 8, 2000) - Beginning today through June 7, select United Airlines flights outbound from Chicago’s O'Hare Airport will be offering a new, exciting lunch option for customers - McDonald’s Grilled Chicken Caesar McSalad Shaker. To celebrate this innovative addition to its menu, McDonald’s has teamed up with United Airlines to offer this delicious product to travelers in the skies.

"We’re delighted to be showcasing McDonald’s newest addition to its world-famous menu," said Janice Northcott, Manager - North America Product Planning, United Airlines. "We wanted to respond to our passengers requests for a tasty, fresh lunch option. What better way to satisfy our customers than to team up with McDonald’s to provide one of their delicious, new McSalad Shakers."

"We're pleased our partners at United have chosen our Grilled Chicken Caesar McSalad Shaker to offer passengers," said Wendy Cook, Director of Menu Management, McDonald’s Corporation. "Our unique packaging makes eating a McSalad Shaker fun, convenient and portable. The clear packaging makes it possible for customers to see our great-tasting, fresh ingredients from top to bottom."

The Grilled Chicken Caesar McSalad Shaker is made of a green salad mix, sliced grilled chicken breast and shredded parmesan cheese. It is currently available at participating McDonald’s restaurants nationwide and joins two other McSalad Shaker varieties - Chef and Garden. Served in a tall, clear, plastic cup with a domed lid, customers pour on their choice of dressing then shake it up, spreading the dressing evenly and neatly inside the cup.

McDonald’s is the largest global foodservice retailer, with nearly 27,000 restaurants serving over 43 million people each day in 119 countries. Approximately 85 percent of McDonald’s U.S. restaurants are owned and operated by independent franchisees.

As the largest carrier in the world and the largest majority employee-owned company, United offers 2,444 flights each day on a network that spans the globe.

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