10 The line of development of the self is *internally referential*: the only significant connecting thread is the life trajectory as such. Personal integrity, as the achievement of an authentic self, comes from integrating life experiences within the narrative of self-development: the creation of a personal belief system by means of which the individual acknowledges that 'his first loyalty is to himself.' The key reference points are set 'from the inside', in terms of how the individual constructs/reconstructs his life history.

Of all this, of course, there are questions one could ask. How valid are these conceptions? Are they in some sense ideological? Are they more to do with therapy than with any changes which might have affected the self in modern social conditions? For the moment I want to bracket these issues. It seems to me justified to assert that, partial, inadequate and idiosyncratic as the ideas just outlined may be, they signal something real about self and self-identity in the contemporary world – the world of late modernity. How that may be we can begin to see by connecting them up to the institutional transformations characteristic of that world.

Lifestyles and life plans

The backdrop here is the existential terrain of late modern life. In a post-traditional social universe, reflexively organised, permeated by abstract systems, and in which the reordering of time and space realigns the local with the global, the self undergoes massive change. Therapy, including self-therapy, both expresses that change and provides programmes of realising it in the form of self-actualisation. On the level of the self, a fundamental component of day-to-day activity is simply that of *choice*. Obviously, no culture eliminates choice altogether in day-to-day affairs, and all traditions are effectively choices among an indefinite range of possible behaviour patterns. Yet, by definition, tradition or established habit orders life within relatively set channels. Modernity confronts the individual with a complex diversity of choices and, because it is non-foundational, at the same time offers little help as to which options should be selected. Various consequences tend to follow.

One concerns the primacy of *lifestyle* – and its inevitability for the individual agent. The notion of lifestyle sounds somewhat trivial because it is so often thought of solely in terms of a superficial consumerism: lifestyles as suggested by glossy magazines and advertising images.* But there is something much more fundamental going on than such a conception suggests: in conditions of high modernity, we all not only follow lifestyles, but in an important sense are forced to do so – we have no choice but to choose. A lifestyle can be defined as a more or less integrated set of practices which an individual embraces, not only because such practices fulfil utilitarian needs, but because they give material form to a particular narrative of self-identity.

Lifestyle is not a term which has much applicability to traditional cultures, because it implies choice within a plurality of possible options, and is 'adopted' rather than 'handed down'. Lifestyles are routinised practices, the routines incorporated into habits of dress, eating, modes of acting and favoured milieux for encountering others; but the routines followed are reflexively open to change in the light of the mobile nature of self-identity. Each of the small decisions a person makes every day – what to wear, what to eat, how to conduct himself at work, whom to meet with later in the evening – contributes to such routines. All such choices (as well as larger and more consequential ones) are decisions not only about how to act but who to be. The more post-traditional the settings in which an individual moves, the more lifestyle concerns the very core of self-identity, its making and remaking.

The notion of lifestyle is often thought to apply specifically to the area of consumption. It is true that the sphere of work is dominated by economic compulsion and that styles of behaviour in the workplace are less subject to the control of the individual than in non-work contexts. But although these contrasts clearly exist, it would be wrong to suppose that lifestyle only relates to

* The term 'lifestyle' is an interesting example of reflexivity. The *New York Times* columnist, William Safire, suggested that it derives from the writings of Alfred Adler, and from thence was taken up by radicals in the 1960s and, at about the same time, by advertising copywriters. According to Dennis Wrong, however, the main influence was actually Max Weber: 'style of life', as associated with *Stände* in Weberian usage, eventually became 'lifestyle' in everyday language.[14]

activities outside of work. Work strongly conditions *life chances*, in Weber's sense, and life chances in turn is a concept which has to be understood in terms of the availability of potential lifestyles. But work is by no means completely separate from the arena of plural choices, and choice of work and work milieu forms a basic element of lifestyle orientations in the extremely complex modern division of labour.

To speak of a multiplicity of choices is not to suppose that all choices are open to everyone, or that people take all decisions about options in full realisation of the range of feasible alternatives. In work, as in the area of consumption, for all groups which have become freed from the hold of traditional contexts of activity, a plurality of lifestyle choices exist. Naturally, as Bourdieu has emphasised, lifestyle variations between groups are also elementary structuring features of stratification, not just the 'results' of class differences in the realm of production.[15]

Overall lifestyle patterns, of course, are less diverse than the plurality of choices available in day-to-day and even in longer-term strategic decisions. A lifestyle involves a cluster of habits and orientations, and hence has a certain unity – important to a continuing sense of ontological security – that connects options in a more or less ordered pattern. Someone who is committed to a given lifestyle would necessarily see various options as 'out of character' with it, as would others with whom she was in interaction. Moreover, the selection or creation of lifestyles is influenced by group pressures and the visibility of role models, as well as by socioeconomic circumstances.

The plurality of choices which confronts individuals in situations of high modernity derives from several influences. First, there is the fact of living in a post-traditional order. To act in, to engage with, a world of plural choices is to opt for alternatives, given that the signposts established by tradition now are blank. Thus someone might decide, for example, to ignore the research findings which appear to show that a diet high in fruit and fibre, and low in sugar, fat and alcohol, is physically beneficial and reduces the risk of contracting some types of illnesses. She might resolutely stick to the same diet of dense, fatty and sugary foods that people in the previous generation consumed. Yet, given the available options in matters of diet and the fact that the individual

has at least some awareness of them, such conduct still forms part of a distinctive lifestyle.

Second, there is what Berger calls the 'pluralisation of life-worlds'.[16] As he points out, throughout most of human history, people lived in social settings that were fairly closely connected with each other. Whether in situations of work, leisure or the family, an individual usually lived within a set of milieux of a comparable type – a phenomenon strongly reinforced by the dominance of the local community in most pre-modern cultures. The settings of modern social life are much more diverse and segmented. Segmentation includes particularly the differentiation between the public and private domains – but each of these is also subject internally to pluralisation. Lifestyles are characteristically attached to, and expressive of, specific milieux of action. Lifestyle options are thus often decisions to become immersed in those milieux, at the expense of the possible alternatives. Since individuals typically move between different milieux or locales in the course of their everyday life, they may feel uncomfortable in those settings that in some way place their own lifestyle in question.

Partly because of the existence of multiple milieux of action, lifestyle choices and activities very often tend to be segmental for the individual: modes of action followed in one context may be more or less substantially at variance with those adopted in others. I shall call these segments *lifestyle sectors*. A lifestyle sector concerns a time-space 'slice' of an individual's overall activities, within which a reasonably consistent and ordered set of practices is adopted and enacted. Lifestyle sectors are aspects of the regionalisation of activities.[17] A lifestyle sector can include, for instance, what one does on certain evenings of the week, or at weekends, as contrasted to other parts of the week; a friendship, or a marriage, can also be a lifestyle sector in so far as it is made internally cohesive by distinctive forms of elected behaviour across time-space.

A third factor conditioning plurality of choice is the existential impact of the contextual nature of warranted beliefs under conditions of modernity. As noted in the opening chapter, the Enlightenment project of replacing arbitrary tradition and speculative claims to knowledge with the certainty of reason proved to be

essentially flawed. The reflexivity of modernity operates, not in a situation of greater and greater certainty, but in one of methodological doubt. Even the most reliable authorities can be trusted only 'until further notice'; and the abstract systems that penetrate so much of day-to-day life normally offer multiple possibilities rather than fixed guidelines or recipes for action. Experts can always be turned to, but experts themselves frequently disagree over both theories and practical diagnoses. Consider therapy itself. Someone contemplating therapy faces a bewildering variety of schools of thought and types of programme, and must also reckon with the fact that some psychologists discount the effectiveness of most forms of therapy entirely. The same applies in the hardest areas of hard science, particularly since the overall claims of science may be subject to doubt. Thus a person with a particular kind of medical problem may be faced with deciding not just between alternative forms of high-tech treatment, but also between the rival claims of scientific and holistic medicine (of which there may also be an indefinite variety proferring their particular solutions).

Fourth, the prevalence of mediated experience undoubtedly also influences pluralism of choice, in obvious and also in more subtle ways. With the increasing globalisation of media, a multifarious number of milieux are, in principle, rendered visible to anyone who cares to glean the relevant information. The collage effect of television and newspapers gives specific form to the juxtaposition of settings and potential lifestyle choices. On the other hand, the influence of the mass media plainly is not all in the direction of diversification and fragmentation. The media offer access to settings with which the individual may never personally come into contact; but at the same time some boundaries between settings that were previously separate are overcome. As Meyrowitz points out, the media, especially the electronic media, alter the 'situational geography' of social life: 'More and more, media make us "direct" audiences to performances that happen in other places and give us access to audiences that are not "physically present"'.[18] As a result, the traditional connection between 'physical setting' and 'social situation' has become undermined; mediated social situations construct new communalities – and differences – between preconstituted forms of social experience. Although criticisms can be made against Meyrowitz's particular interpretations, the overall thrust of this view is surely correct.

In a world of alternative lifestyle options, strategic *life-planning* becomes of special importance. Like lifestyle patterns, life plans of one kind or another are something of an inevitable concomitant of post-traditional social forms.[19] Life plans are the substantial content of the reflexively organised trajectory of the self. Life-planning is a means of preparing a course of future actions mobilised in terms of the self's biography. We may also speak here of the existence of personal calendars or *life-plan calendars*, in relation to which the personal time of the lifespan is handled. Personal calendars are timing devices for significant events within the life of the individual, inserting such events within a personalised chronology. Like life plans, personal calendars are typically revised and reconstructed in terms of alterations in an individual's circumstances or frame of mind. 'When I got married,' as a basic date within a life-plan calendar, as the discussion in *Second Chances* indicates, may be largely ousted by 'when the marriage broke up' as a more significant psychological marker. Personal calendars very often incorporate elements of mediated experience – as when, for instance, a couple will remember that they got married 'two weeks after President Kennedy was assassinated'.[20]

Life-planning presupposes a specific mode of organising time because the reflexive construction of self-identity depends as much on preparing for the future as on interpreting the past, although the 'reworking' of past events is certainly always important in this process. Life-planning, of course, does not necessarily involve preparing strategically for future life as a whole, although Rainwater's book makes clear that thinking as far ahead as the imagined end of one's life, and about each of the major phases likely to intervene in the interim, is fundamental to self-actualisation.[21]

Lifestyle choices and life planning are not just 'in', or constituent of, the day-to-day life of social agents, but form institutional settings which help to shape their actions. This is one reason why, in circumstances of high modernity, their influence is more or less universal, no matter how objectively limiting the social situations of particular individuals or groups may be. Consider the position of a black woman, the head of a single-parent family of several children, living in conditions of poverty in the inner

city. It might be assumed that such a person could only look on with bitter envy at the options available to the more privileged. For her there is only the drudgery of a daily round of activities carried on within strictly defined limits: she has no opportunities to follow a different lifestyle, and she could hardly plan her life, since it is dominated by external constraints.

Of course, for all individuals and groups, life chances condition lifestyle choices (and we should remember the point that lifestyle choices are often actively used to reinforce the distribution of life chances). Emancipation from situations of oppression is the necessary means of expanding the scope of some sorts of lifestyle option (see chapter 7 below on 'The Emergence of Life Politics'). Yet even the most underprivileged today live in situations permeated by institutional components of modernity. Possibilities denied by economic deprivation are different, and experienced differently – that is, *as* possibilities – from those excluded by the frameworks of tradition. Moreover, in some circumstances of poverty, the hold of tradition has perhaps become even more thoroughly disintegrated than elsewhere. Consequently, the creative construction of lifestyle may become a particularly characteristic feature of such situations. Lifestyle habits are constructed through the resistances of ghetto life as well as through the direct elaboration of distinctive cultural styles and modes of activity.

In such situations, the reflexive constitution of self-identity may be every bit as important as among more affluent strata, and as strongly affected by globalising influences. A black woman heading a single-parent household, however constricted and arduous her life, will nevertheless know about factors altering the position of women in general, and her own activities will almost certainly be modified by that knowledge. Given the inchoate nature of her social circumstances, she is virtually obliged to explore novel modes of activity, with regard to her children, sexual relations and friendships. Such an exploration, although it might not be discursively articulated as such, implies a reflexive shaping of self-identity. The deprivations to which she is subject, however, might make these tasks become an almost insupportable burden, a source of despair rather than self-enrichment.

Life planning is a specific example of a more general phenomenon that I shall discuss in some detail in a subsequent chapter as the 'colonisation of the future'. Rainwater's 'dialogue with time' is certainly carried on in very different ways in varying social contexts and within different social strata. The orientation towards the control of time which she describes (and advocates) generates refusals and temporal dislocations as well as the attempt reflexively to drag the future into the present. A teenager who 'drifts around', who refuses to think about a possible future career, and 'gives no thought to the future', rejects this orientation, but does so specifically in opposition to an increasingly dominant temporal outlook.

Finally, plurality of choice can also be connected directly to relations with others – to the transformation of intimacy.[22] I shall not offer a detailed discussion of whether personal relationships today are significantly different from close interpersonal ties in pre-modern contexts. We know that modern marriage differs quite dramatically from typical marriage institutions in pre-modern Europe, as well as from the generality of non-modern cultures. A parallel observation applies to friendship. The Greeks had no word for 'friend' in today's sense: *philos* was used to refer to 'anyone of one's "nearest and dearest", irrespective of whether they were kin, affines, or other people unrelated by blood'.[23] A person's *philos* network was largely given by that individual's social position; there was only a certain leeway for spontaneous choice. Such a situation is characteristic of many traditional cultures, in which, if a notion of 'friend' exists, it refers mainly to insiders, as contrasted to outsiders – strangers, and potential enemies.

It is characteristic of modern systems of sexual intimacy and friendship that partners are voluntarily chosen from a diversity of possibilities. Of course, proximity is ordinarily necessary for intimate relations to develop, and the extent of real choice varies according to many social and psychological differences. But the lonely hearts column, computer dating and other forms of introduction service demonstrate well enough that plural choice is easy to achieve if one is prepared to shed the last vestiges of traditional ways of doing things. Only when ties are more or less freely chosen can we speak at all of 'relationships' in the sense that term has recently acquired in lay discourse. Reasonably durable sexual ties, marriages and friendship relations all tend to approximate today to the *pure relationship*. In conditions of high modernity, again for reasons to be explored later, the pure relationship