generational, longitudinal research, the book's relevance extends much further than its particular substantive topic. The data will surely become even more valuable as the investigators continue to study the families and the children, some of whom have already become teenage parents, as they make the transition to early adulthood.

JEYLAN T. MORTIMER
Department of Sociology, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN 55455

A Partly Social Disorder

Fasting Girls. The Emergence of Anorexia Nervosa as a Modern Disease. JOAN JACOBS BRUMBERG. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 1988. x, 366 pp., illus. $25.

From the medieval period in European history to the contemporary United States, young women have regularly refused to eat. This fasting, which we call anorexia nervosa and which is perhaps the most common psychological ailment among young women in the United States today, has had a long and complex history. In *Fasting Girls*, Joan Brumberg traces this history. Her particular focus is on the 19th and 20th centuries, on the varying medical treatments employed during this time period, and on the social matrices behind the illness.

It was not until the 1870s that anorexia nervosa was identified as a specific illness and given its present name. Even then, Brumberg argues, the treatment employed was largely wrongheaded. Rather than attempting to assess patient motivation, doctors infantilized their youthful charges and focused on ending their physical symptoms. Confinement and forcefeeding were the first techniques employed; after the First World War glandular and then hormonal therapies were added. Even when psychological techniques were introduced in the 1930s, the treatment revolved around curing presumed physiological sexual malfunctionings. These varying treatments, Brumberg argues, drew from prevailing medical vogues. They focused on physical symptoms stemming from the fasting, and their originators failed to realize that these symptoms were in reality partly reflections of underlying psychological malfunctions, not only within the patient but also within her family and within the larger society.

Brumberg does not discount the possible importance of physiological and hereditary factors in causing anorexia. But her stress is on those social influences which she thinks doctors in earlier ages slighted. In the 19th century the particular culprit, in her view,

The "first published photo of an anorectic in an American medical journal" (*New England Journal of Medicine* 207, 5 Oct. 1932). "By the 1930s there were three essential techniques in the management of anorexia nervosa: change of environment, forced feeding, and psychotherapy. Severe cases were generally treated in private psychiatric hospitals." [From *Fasting Girls*; courtesy of the *New England Journal of Medicine*]

was the Victorian family. Within its narrow confines, young women were raised to conform to rigid gender requirements, and they were encouraged to regard themselves as spiritual, not physical, beings. This Victorian family type was structured around possessiveness, both of material objects and of its human members, and the giving or withholding of food was often used both to discipline and to praise children. Thus for young women food became an analogue of the self, and not eating became a way both of adhering to Victorian family expectations and of rebelling against them. In more recent times, Brumberg thinks that the vogue of dieting and the commercialized cult of thinness bear primary responsibility for what is in actuality a vast increase in the incidence of the illness.

Such arguments may seem to stress obvious cultural forces. But what is important about Brumberg's analysis is her demonstration that these differing forces produced differing symptomatologies. In particular, hyperactivity has become a regular new feature of the illness. This symptom was not present 75 or 100 years ago. For in present times the body for women is no longer considered to be an object that should express spirituality. Rather it has become an object of competition, a means for women to express that overwhelming urge to excel over others that lies at the heart of modern capitalism. One can never be, the adage goes, too rich or too thin.

That illness can function as a cultural metaphor and that cultural factors can dictate the nature of illness are realities long noted by social historians of medicine. In *Fasting Girls*, Brumberg has richly documented this truth in the case of anorexia nervosa. Social historians might quibble with some of her periodizations and wish that she had paid more attention to the literature on fashions in physical appearance. What responsibility modern families play in the etiology of the illness via-à-vis their Victorian counterparts ought to have been more fully explored. She might have profited by a closer reading of Hillel Schwartz's recent book on dieting (*Never Satisfied: A Cultural History of Diets, Fantasies, and Fat*, Macmillan, 1986), and especially by his argument that dieting in the United States was first voguish among men. Nonetheless, Blumberg's book is written with verve and grace, and it makes an important contribution to the literature on the history of medical treatment and on the nature of women and of the society in which they live.

LOIS W. BANNER
Department of History and Program for the Study of Women and Men in Society, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA 90089–0034

Responses to Automation

Workers, Managers, and Technological Change. Emerging Patterns of Labor Relations. DANIEL B. CORNFIELD, Ed. Plenum, New York, 1987. xxii, 362 pp. $37.50. Plenum Studies in Work and Industry.

For over a decade social scientists have been debating the assertion made by Harry Braverman in his classic study *Labor and Monopoly Capital* (Monthly Review Press, 1974) that new technologies simultaneously increase managers' control of workers and reduce the latter's skills. For a far longer period labor unions have been debating whether, to put it baldly, they should accept or resist new technologies. The essays published in this volume, which consider the relationship of technological change and labor relations across 14 industries in the United States, offer a useful collective vantage point from which to view and review both debates. What conclusions emerge?

Most striking is the finding that unions, with some exceptions, have decided not just to accept new technologies but in fact to encourage them. In his introductory chapter Daniel Cornfield examines the labor movement's shift from its traditional policy of