

Oedipus and the Devil

Witchcraft, sexuality and religion
in early modern Europe

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London and New York

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1

Introduction

I

In 1686, Appolonia Mayr, a jilted servantwoman, confessed that she had murdered her newborn baby. The Devil had promised that if she killed her child, her lover would marry her. She had strangled the infant at a little hill beyond the Lech bridge, just before the small town of Friedberg. She still knew the place and could find it. There was a tree not far away and she had walked into the fields, and it was midday that it happened.¹ Describing the birth and murder, she said ‘The Evil Spirit left her no peace. It was only a moment, the Devil touched it [the child] as if he were a midwife, it happened quite quickly that the child came out. She strangled it immediately with the hand, and she felt no pain in the delivery.’² Then Appolonia walked on: ‘She left it lying quite naked, uncovered, and unburied.... The Devil did not go with her, but remained staying by the child, and she did not look back.’³

What do we make of such a cultural fragment? Here a woman is apparently committing infanticide as a kind of love magic, in a crazed and hopeless attempt to force her lover to marry her. Alone on the path between the fields and the village, she has walked beyond human habitation—the sole tree which marks the spot is the only distinguishing mark of the landscape. She bears the child without female assistance. The Devil acts as midwife, and it is he who remains standing over the child. Appolonia herself hardly acts at all—she barely strains to give birth, she leaves the child uncovered in the bushes and keeps on walking. All the more stark is her single deed: the strangling of her newborn child with her hand. Appolonia Mayr was burnt as a witch. She lived in a world in which the Devil was a character one might meet on any lonely pathway, who might whisper whom to kill, how to control others.

How does one understand such a world? There has been a long line of attempts to do so, from the judges who first interrogated such criminals, to the publishers of broadsheets who turned such horrible cases into entertainment, to the nineteenth-century practitioners of cultural history,⁴

to historians of our own day. Then as now, much of this interest is animated by fascination with a foreign, yet familiar world. Such cases pose puzzles about our own identity, teasing us to specify in what the historical consists. They present us with a time which was apparently innocent of our notion of the person, when moral categories had a different shape, when the relation between the natural and supernatural was differently conceived. To analyse such a world, we have borrowed many tools. We have learnt from anthropology and from literary criticism to read our texts with an eye for symbol and ritual, to decipher kinship structures and, above all, to stress the otherness of early modern society.⁵ Such an approach has enabled us to measure the distance which separates us from that other world, to make it 'historical' by reconstructing the collective nature of early modern society, viewing subjectivity itself as culturally constructed.

How will historical approaches based on these assumptions help us interpret Appolonia Mayr's story? One might see her as an exemplar of mid-Counter-Reformation womanhood, tormented by the sexual guilt imposed on her through Catholic re-education and social discipline. Her story about the Devil might be read as the hackneyed script which Baroque culture required women guilty of any female sin to recite. Like a good seventeenth-century Catholic, conscious—as historians would lead us to expect—of her religious confessional identity, Appolonia describes how she searched for 'Catholic people' in Augsburg at whose inn she might give birth.

But there is something which is deeper and more disturbing in her behaviour. When Appolonia returned to the city of Augsburg some months later, it was her demand to the Franciscan friars that they give her the baptismal certificate for her dead baby which set the whole case in train. In her first interrogation, Appolonia hotly denied having killed her baby, telling how 'nearly one hour after the birth she desired to see her child', only to be informed that it was already dead after having been taken to the Franciscans for baptism. The lost record of the infant's baptism—proof that it had eternal life—comes to stand for the loss of the child itself. As Appolonia put it, 'she just wanted to see her child again; she could not live thus any more'.⁶ There is a suicidal desperation in her attempts to obtain the piece of paper: her search for it ensnared her in the web of bureaucracy which would inevitably uncover her crime and expose her tissue of lies about its death. This speaks not so much of confessional identity and sexual guilt—Appolonia made no secret of her pregnancy—as of the sheer agony of the loss of her baby, pain which is not the product of Counter-Reformation religiosity. The various, indeed inconsistent, accounts she offered of where and how she gave birth make the historian (and her interrogators) despair of ever uncovering the 'truth', but they may tell us other things.

Appolonia's fantasies about the Devil have little to do with ritual. They are so tangibly located and speak of such individual misery that it is inadequate to speak of collective beliefs and symbols. The process by which Appolonia came to describe her pain through talking about the Devil is far more complex than a mere recapitulation of cultural stereotypes. It is certainly true that the plausibility of her testimony to both her interrogators and herself depended on a shared belief in the powers of the Devil, but Appolonia created her own story about motherhood and guilt. And it was a story with its own sacrilegious, Marian inflection: as she told it first, she spoke of how, as a stranger, she asked to be taken in at an inn, and how she gave birth in a lonely room with a bed of straw.

It was stories such as that of Appolonia Mayr which first began to make me uneasy with the way I had been constructing the relationship between individual subjectivity and culture. In this book, I want to argue against an excessive emphasis on the cultural creation of subjectivity, and to argue that witchcraft and exorcism, those most alien of early modern social phenomena, or courtship and ritual, those seemingly irreducibly collective early modern social events, cannot be understood without reference to their psychic dimension. My claim is that early modern people had individual subjectivities, characterized by conflicts which are not entirely unfamiliar. I am not claiming that there is no historical gulf between our time and the early modern period: that would be absurd. But I want to suggest that the supposed gap between ourselves and the past, which we use to justify a particular way of dealing with that past world, is less complete than we sometimes suppose, and that the assumption of difference is not always a useful heuristic tool. Indeed, I think it has hampered our understanding of the complexity of early modern people as individuals.

This book has three implicit preoccupations: first, the importance of the irrational and the unconscious in history; second, the importance of the body; and third, the relation of these two to sexual difference. The subjects with which it deals are the nature of masculinity and femininity, the cultural impact of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation and the central role of magic and witchcraft in the psychic and emotional world of the early modern period and in what we take to be 'rationality'. These chapters document a shift on my part away from the conviction that gender is a product of cultural and linguistic practice, towards the view that sexual difference has its own physiological and psychological reality, and that recognition of this must affect the way we write history. The task with which I have been engaged is how to write a cultural history of early modern Germany in which sexual difference will not just be added on as an afterthought, a further variable, but will be genuinely incorporated. This means that courtship, the history of motherhood, witchcraft, possession and masculinity—all fields in which gender is at issue, and where the

relation of psyche and body are at stake—are central cultural areas. It means that, far from being an incidental matter, sexual difference, both as physiological and psychological fact and as social construction, is part of the very stuff of culture. This consequence is still only haltingly acknowledged in early modern cultural history, which largely continues to treat the issue of gender as if it were a question of women's participation—or lack of it—in popular and élite culture.

Yet, central as I believe sexual difference is to conceiving of culture, I found I could no longer simply apply the tools which I had acquired from feminist history to the study of early modern Europe. As I shall go on to argue, along with other feminists writing now, I have come to think that feminist history, as I and others used to practise it, rested on a denial of the body. These chapters represent an attempt—often not fully articulated—to think out a different route towards understanding the body, culture and subjectivity

II

For historians, the problem of subjectivity in the past has primarily presented itself as a question of explaining how large movements of historical transformation (the rise of capitalism, the Reformation, the development of the state) altered individuals' self-perceptions. Here, the work of the sociologists Max Weber and, later, Norbert Elias has been deeply influential, particularly among those who study Europe in the period 1500 to 1800. Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*⁷ still shapes the way we see the early modern period, even as historians dispute its empirical detail. We owe to Weber the vision that the changes connected with the rise of Protestantism were linked with the origins of capitalism because these transformations valued new qualities in lay people, promoting the rational, calculating, disciplined individual, a kind of person who could cope with the regimen of the market. Luther's doctrine of the 'calling' was new because of its 'valuation of the fulfilment of duty in worldly affairs as the highest form which the moral activity of the individual could assume', giving 'everyday worldly activity a religious significance'.⁸ 'Rational conduct on the basis of the idea of the calling'⁹ was thus born of Protestant asceticism. Norbert Elias's work offers the prospect of linking psychoanalytic insight with historically informed sociology.¹⁰ As his ideas have been taken up by historians of the early modern period, they have tried to show how such abstract, general historical transitions as the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, or the growth of bureaucracy and the state, had effects not only on politics but on those much less tangible dimensions of human history, the constitution of human subjects themselves, their emotions, perceptions, behaviour and even their gestures. And recently, in a powerful philosophical synthesis,

Charles Taylor has argued that the origins of the modern western sense of individualism and identity are to be located in the rise of what he terms 'inwardness' in the wake of the Protestant Reformation. This was accompanied by a move away from an older, magical world-view in which the boundaries between oneself and the natural world were essentially permeable. As he puts it, 'Disenchantment was driven by and connected with a new moral/spiritual stance to the world.... It was connected to a new piety, and what we see emerging is a new notion of freedom and inwardness, which this piety fostered,' By contrast:

The decline of the world-view underlying magic was the obverse of the rise of the new sense of freedom and self-possession. From the viewpoint of this new sense of self, the world of magic seems to entail a thralldom, an imprisoning of the self in uncanny external forces, even a ravishing or loss of self. It threatens a possession which is the very opposite of self-possession.¹¹

Such syntheses have the merit of opening up new areas of human experience to historical investigation. However, illuminating as these accounts of the relation between historical change and psychology are, I want to argue that they are based on a problematic account of subjectivity, and that when historians draw upon Elias or Weber, we run the risk of schematizing the experience of historical subjects. Following Weber, the early modern period is often held to see the birth of the ideal of the rational, economic man, or, as Taylor might put it, of the rise of a new sense of 'self-possession', of individual identity. But, as the challenge of psychoanalysis to models of rational behaviour might suggest, human behaviour is not solely determined by conscious consideration, and identity is not a secure possession but a piecemeal process of identifications and separations. So far from ushering in the birth of the rational ascetic individual, the early modern period saw a renewed interest in magic and the irrational, and this is a central component of the subjectivity which we now like to view as 'rational' or 'modern'. Magic and the irrational are integral to it, and not mere teething problems concomitant with a 'crisis arising in the transition between identities'.¹² Our own attachment to the story of the rise of individualism and rationality is, I think, part of the reason that we so often associate the witch-craze with the intolerance and so-called irrationality of the middle ages, even while we know that witch-hunting was an early modern, not a medieval phenomenon.¹³ As such, its history belongs to our own era.

Elias's narrative of the rise of civilization seems at first to offer greater respect to the irrational and to those areas of human experience which elude the familiar categorizations of historical narrative. And his work has indeed been enormously fruitful for historians of early modern Europe.¹⁴

Elias presents an account of the rise of *civilité*, the progressive disciplining of the unruly body, a curbing of natural human drives, and shows how these processes are linked to social and political change. The human being learns to control the natural functions through the fabric of manners, while 'society is gradually beginning to suppress the positive pleasure component in certain functions more and more strongly by the arousal of anxiety'.¹⁵ During the sixteenth century, Elias argues, people of the aristocracy gradually acquired a new set of manners and began to hedge their natural drives about with social taboos and inner discipline, a process which was mimicked by their social inferiors. The court society of Louis XIV saw the culmination of this discipline of the body, which was a crucial component of the development of absolutism:

During the stage of the court aristocracy, the restraint imposed on inclinations and emotions is based primarily on consideration and respect due to others and above all to social superiors. In the subsequent stage, renunciation and restraint of impulses is compelled far less by particular persons; expressed provisionally and approximately, it is now, more directly than before, the less visible and more impersonal compulsions of social interdependence, the division of labour, the market, and competition that impose restraint and control on the impulses and emotions.¹⁶

This is a conception of human psychology strongly influenced by early Freudianism, with its emphasis on the power of the drives.¹⁷

Elias's debt to psychoanalysis, however, has taken a particular form. In his work, the psychic is seen to be socially variable and historically contingent, since there is a 'connection between social structure and personality structure'.¹⁸ The organization and balance of the different elements within the psyche is not held to be universal nor ahistorical. Thus Elias claims that in the later middle ages control over the drives was less assured: it was a world in which 'people gave way to drives and feelings incomparably more easily, quickly, spontaneously, and openly than today, in which the emotions were less restrained and, as a consequence, less evenly regulated and more liable to oscillate more violently between extremes', so that their 'drive controls' 'were not of the same degree as in later periods, and they did not take the form of a constant, even almost automatic self-contror'.¹⁹ Indeed, 'because emotions are here expressed in a manner that in our own world is generally observed only in children, we call these expressions and forms of behaviour "childish"'.²⁰ Throughout his work, civilization is counterposed to instinct, and the body is conceived as an anarchic collection of drives which civilization, even in its most 'advanced' form, keeps under tenuous control. In much historical writing influenced by Elias, this view of the period before the rise of the bourgeois,

disciplined individual finds its counterpart in a picture of the free, undisciplined culture of pre-Reformation carnival, a vision which owes much to the work of the Russian cultural theorist Bakhtin on the writings of Rabelais.²¹

As a result, it becomes possible for historians to employ theory which historicizes the unconscious while at the same time paradoxically evading the challenge that psychoanalysis poses to a traditional historical perspective. (Similarly, when historians write about the history of gesture, clothing or cleaning, they appear to be writing about the body but are actually often writing about discourse about the body; an important subject in itself, but, as I shall argue below, one whose formulation as discourse precisely takes the sting out of the problem of subjectivity as both a corporeal and psychic phenomenon.) Despite its radical potential, this psychoanalytic incorporation of the irrational, derived as it is from Elias and others, is essentially Weberian in form: it harnesses the rise of the modern subject to the rise of the rational, the 'adult', tying subjectivity to the rise of the modern. For Charles Taylor, it is also the 'disenchantment of the world', the loss of the magical world-view, which is the precondition for the rise of the sense of self as we know it in the modern world.²²

In the historical common sense which has developed around this issue, there is a simple transparency about the move from a rowdy, carnival, Bakhtinian culture to a modest organization of the disciplined person: historical transformations occur, and individual subjectivity follows suit. But it is far from clear that this is the appropriate way to conceive of how social change interacts with individual subjectivity. When, for instance, we can identify a movement of moral reform or a project of disciplining, this does not tell us what its effects may be on the psyche or the body it is meant to historicize. As the French theorist Michel Foucault has taught us, such movements may undermine rather than bolster the values they uphold. A different deployment of psychoanalysis would enable us to see the dynamic between repression and libido as crucial to the modest comportment of the bourgeois citizen. At the same time, the licence of the Bakhtinian subject has its own superego formations. The Rabelaisian literature which, translated by the Calvinist Johann Fischart, became such an important part of sixteenth-century German writing, cannot be understood as pure carnival. It is a product of Latinate, literate, moralist culture. The carnivalesque is not a survival of an older, more libidinous, rustic era, caught in Fischart's writing like a fly in amber. Or, as Horst Bredekamp has shown, when fifteenth-century Florentine followers of Savonarola burnt images on the carnival bonfire of vanities, repudiating a society they believed to be a political tyranny, their own moralist destruction of art itself took on the character of a fetish.²³

This becomes particularly apparent if we think about repression itself, the notion so fundamental to historical work based loosely on Elias's

psychological theory. It would be possible to view discipline ordinances as a gigantic project of repression, and, indeed, this is largely how they have been viewed. Protestants, so this line of argument might run, became ‘confessionalized’ as prostitution was banned, dancing cleaned up, rowdy behaviour brought under control and the family learnt to pray together. Sexual modesty increased and sexual behaviour became more subject to restraint. Making rules, however, does not guarantee conformity. Behavioural prohibitions, as Foucault has stressed, can create, even in their advocates, their own compulsions and transgressive possibilities. When Protestant divines preached vigorously against the evil of dancing and fulminated against the erotic temptations of touch in dance, their ornate rhetoric also helped to sexualize what they termed ‘venereal dancing’. Instead of seeing repression as a simple imposition of control, we need to see it as an active part of the formation of sexual identities. The unconscious is not a kind of inefficient psychic sewer for negative urges, which eventually fills up and starts to pollute the clean upper reaches of the mind. We need rather to employ a dynamic model of the unconscious—the vision which can also be found in Freud’s mature work—so that we can see the constant interaction between desire and prohibition.²⁴

The underlying difficulty here is that neither Weber nor Elias offers a satisfactory explanation of the way social change affects individual psyche. Indeed, we still lack such a theory. In the meantime, as historians, we often write as if social change impinges directly and uniformly upon the individual’s mental structure, as if the psyche were a kind of blank sheet for social processes to write upon. This is partly why sexual, racial or class differences are not the key dialectic in Elias’s work—changes tend to trickle down from the upper to the lower classes and popular culture lacks dynamic—and why the state shoulders such a weight in historical explanations influenced by Elias’s ideas. Changes in the structure of the state become the explanatory black box, the reasons for changes in manners, social comportment, even perception. Ironically, such history restores the primacy of the political to historical explanation, precisely at the moment when social and cultural history are seeking to establish their independent legitimacy.²⁵ And the political history on which it draws is often based on the old abstractions such as ‘absolutism’ which current revisionist historians are increasingly jettisoning. At the same time, historical work which attempts to deal with subjectivity finds it hard to allow space for the irrational or for fantasy in the subject: if for no other reason, the illogic of the unconscious offends against our own sense of what makes for rationally persuasive, satisfying explanation. A rationalist account of subjectivity can only be partial; yet the imperative of historical synthesis pushes us to simplify, to ‘present the conscious rationalizations of the subject, or to produce a clear, sketch-map psychology in which the logic of political change provides the contours of narrative.’²⁶

The dilemma is not Elias's alone. Any use of a psychoanalytically-influenced theory faces the difficulty of how to apply to an entire society a model which is designed to uncover the unconscious mental processes of an individual. This is why psychoanalytic insights have fared better in biography.²⁷ Whereas psychoanalysis can show the infinitely varied, imaginative use individuals can make of the materials of their predicaments, creating their own symbolic language and symptoms,²⁸ psychogenetics of the Elias type proposes a historical, but identikit kind of psychology in which individual psychic creativity has little place. A historically useful application of psychoanalysis, however, must allow for individual agency and the possibility that individuals can think and feel against the social grain—a goal that is easier to specify than to achieve.

III

So far, we have considered how approaches influenced by Elias and Weber have dominated the way subjectivity is conceptualized for the early modern period. But there are other traditions which have also dealt with the issue of the historical formation of subjectivity, taking their cue from post-structuralist discussion of the death of the subject. The work of the French thinker Michel Foucault, with its emphasis on the power of language and the importance of discourse in the constitution of the individual subject, has proved enormously influential.²⁹ It has enabled us to explore the construction of sexual desire through language, broadly interpreted, and it has opened the way to a far more sophisticated and varied understanding of the body and sexuality.³⁰ For historians of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, however, Foucault's work places them in something of a quandary. Foucault, whose project was a pessimistic re-evaluation of the rationalist legacy of the Enlightenment, locates the major historical transitions in the eighteenth century.³¹ But the ambivalent effects of sexual regulation about which Foucault wrote so persuasively can be dated well back before the eighteenth century. As a result, writers who are influenced by Foucault but whose period is the early modern era use methods adopted from Foucault while frequently resting their narrative on a historical scheme which is borrowed from Elias.

Even among approaches which attempt to question theories of the subject based loosely on Weber or Elias, however, and which turn instead to a creatively eclectic use of anthropology or to discourse theory, the concept of subjectivity with which we are presented is often a determinedly collective one. This collective subjectivity is then inscribed on the individual. Consequently, the dimension of the psychic is missing here, as, indeed, it is in the work of Foucault. Some of the appeal of, for instance, Natalie Zemon Davis's *The Return of Martin Guerre* is the way it teases us with the possibility that the imposter Arnaud du Tilh might indeed have

succeeded in passing himself off as Martin Guerre had not the ‘real Martin’ unexpectedly returned from the wars: in what more, then, does identity consist than in the sum of the collective testimonies and expectations of the villagers?³² Or in Robert Darnton’s *The Great Cat Massacre*, where it is the world of the journeymen we are asked to enter, their consciousness is a group product; strangely enough, one which can be read, not from what they say, but from a literary product of one of their number. As Harold Mah has argued, the semi-fictionalized autobiography of Nicolas Contat on which Darnton draws for his description of symbolic life in the printers’ workshop is a highly literary production, structured around neat narrative reversals.³³

In a similar vein, I think the current fascination with the history of perception—of time, of the senses, of the materiality of daily life—both further strengthens us in the conviction of the absolute otherness of the past, and allows us, when we think about the consciousness of early modern people, to substitute the level of immediate sensory perception for that of the psyche. It is as if, once we grasp that early modern people heard and smelt things differently, or inhabited a ‘visual culture’ (as we do not?), we know what makes them different from ourselves. There is a host of current German syntheses of early modern ‘daily life’, a genre which is almost totally absent from AngloAmerican historiography, in which the culture of the ‘little people’ is presented by means of analysis of popular ritual and festival.³⁴ These constitute attempts to restore the common people to history, and to burst the bounds of what we term culture: to write about weddings and carnival, gossip and slander, attitudes to time and the calendar instead of the ‘high’ culture of the élite alone. This has immeasurably enhanced our understanding of early modern culture and has helped us imaginatively to recreate the sensory as well as the discursive, and to think about the detail of early modern life, the objects people used, the habits of their daily lives.³⁵ But so far as people’s psychic lives are concerned, there is a danger that such studies may present a cast of rustic characters whose simple mental lives are all the same, a history where the sensory substitutes for the psychic and, with it, a history which, despite its ambition, sometimes serves to reinvoke the historical condescension towards *das Volk*, the common people.

In much of the writing influenced by Foucault, by contrast, which does claim an interest in the individual and the atypical, psychoanalysis is viewed as yet another regulatory narrative, a discourse produced by a particular concatenation of late nineteenth-century developments which constituted yet another deployment of power through a new fascination with sex. The conviction that psychoanalysis could not therefore have anything to say about a pre-Freudian world has been very strong in early modern history.³⁶ Even when psychoanalysis is drawn upon to dredge the murkier waters of Renaissance writing, a post-structuralist-tinged

conviction of the death of the subject is used to guarantee historicity. So, subjectivity, in Stephen Greenblatt's work, rests on articulation. In Greenblatt's view, language is not the medium of the self but is its fabric, and language's permeability to convention and power is the prism of the way in which the self can never be free.³⁷ In a brilliant article, Greenblatt argues that psychoanalysis proposes at some level a notion of the self which is simply foreign to Renaissance culture, and, in consequence, psychoanalysis itself testifies to the distance which separates us from early modern understandings of the self.³⁸ In other words, we know that we are dealing with early modern, historical subjects because they do not evince a concept of the individual—this is what their historical distance consists of—and yet it is the post-structuralist critique of the subject and of psychoanalysis which is drawn upon to read our evidence in this manner.

Indeed, this is the supposed location of the early modern world's otherness: its characteristic cultural collectivity and the absence of the concept of the individual self. Symbols, rituals, collective corporations—these are the early modern historian's stock in trade. The use of anthropology, which allows us to stress the exoticism of this society, enables us, oddly enough, both rationally to grasp the otherness of this world, while furnishing us with a written guarantee of the modernity of our own time. There is of course a circular argument here. The means we use to interpret the society also allow us to shunt off all that puzzles us about early modern society into the realm of the 'pre-modern' while using the very concept of the peculiarity of the early modern to deny the usefulness of psychic categories. As a result, early modern people can threaten to become dancing marionettes, tricked out in ruffs and codpieces, whose subjectivities can neither surprise nor unsettle.

At the same time, the literary turn creates particular problems for cultural history. It is striking that Greenblatt in *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, one of the roundest portraits we have of early modern subjectivity, should find it possible to write only about men—a strategy into which he is forced by his understanding of self-identity as consisting of what can be expressed in one's own written words. But early modern Europe was still an oral culture, a culture which, as the work of Norbert Schindler shows, offered peasants, beggars and vagabonds a host of complex forms of expression and cultural creativity. In an extraordinary essay on nicknames, Schindler is able to bring to life the merciless inventiveness of oral culture's creation of public personae; in a reconstruction of the mental world of Salzburg boy beggars accused of witchcraft, he shows how the impossible longings of one boy were expressed in his fantasies of a *Zauberer-Jackl* who would fulfil his deepest wishes, teaching him to read, write and shoot.³⁹

The literary, moreover, was predominantly a male culture. Even when, for instance, we try to reconstruct the mental world of the peasant woman

Bertrande de Rols, wife of Martin Guerre, we are actually reliant upon the text of the male lawyer Jean de Coras who chose to write about the case. It is his wry, sophisticated reflections on certainty and the nature of wifely fidelity which ultimately prove more riveting and more nuanced than the subjectivity of the inscrutable Bertrande. Despite all our intentions, the feminine is once again of interest in so far as it illumines what men thought about it.⁴⁰

Considerations about the distinctively collective nature of early modern culture, and the foreignness to it of our notion of the person, go some way, I think, towards explaining the particular reluctance early modern historians have expressed towards using psychoanalysis more directly. Psychoanalysis, it is often argued, is a product of the nineteenth century, a world characterized by the nuclear family of the Viennese upper middle class. But the claim is stronger than simply the recent origins of the theory: it is that ‘family’ as we now know it, the unconscious and individuality are so radically different that this precludes the use of psychoanalytic categories altogether. Consequently, the claim that psychoanalysis cannot be used to study early modern societies reaches to the very heart of what makes the study of early modern Europe distinctive. It touches the constitution of our field itself. It concerns the extent of historical change, the concept of the subject, the role of religion and ritual; in short, the justification for our rejection of terms such as ‘family’ and ‘individual’ to apply to the early modern world. In these essays, by contrast, these are precisely the terms I have found myself drawn to use in order to approach an understanding of early modern people which does more than treat them as colourful psychic primitives from a carnival world; which takes individual subjectivity seriously enough to be able to pose the difficult question of what, precisely, is historical in subjectivity.

In this sense, the project of this book is somewhat different from the ways in which psychoanalysis has more often been used. Where psychoanalysis is deployed in discursive analyses within history, the relationship is more often a flirtation than a marriage. Linguistic analysis is combined with psychoanalytic insight to support a view of human personality as intrinsically contingent, changing as language changes. The problem with this account is that there is no compelling explanation in psychological terms as to why these contingent changes should take the form they do: the explanatory claims of psychoanalysis are simply set aside. By contrast, from the moment of its own original self-understanding as a science, psychoanalysis claimed to offer a universal account of human psychological functioning. It thus seems inimical to any historical account of subjectivity.

Let me summarize the dilemma which seems to confront us. On the one hand, psychoanalysis is itself an antique, a historical creation of the nineteenth century. On the other, psychoanalysis makes universalist claims

about human psychological functioning which seem irreconcilable with the study of history. However, I think we simply need to refuse this apparent dilemma. All theories have their histories, and psychoanalysis, like Marxism, another child of the nineteenth century, is constantly changing. It does not endanger the status of the historical to concede that there are aspects of human nature which are enduring, just as there are aspects of human physiology which are constitutional.⁴¹ The hard part—as much a subject of debate within psychoanalysis itself—is to specify what precisely is historical about subjectivity. What I want to avoid is a developmental account of collective subjectivities which turns individuals into mere exemplars of a narrative of collective historical progression. What sets this project apart from many of the uses which have been made of psychoanalysis is that I want to take the explanatory claims of psychoanalysis seriously, so that it provides a way of accounting for meaningful behaviour and individual subjectivity in particular historical circumstances.

IV

For many historians, feminists and non-feminists alike, ‘gender’ was the category through which it looked as if women’s history might have the potential not only to enter history as a respectable historical field, but to reshape the historical narratives themselves. The axiom that gender identity was not a biological given but a historical creation was immensely liberating: the historian’s task was to lay bare the precise historical meaning of masculinity and femininity in the past, thus relativizing the content of these constructs in the present. We were able to show, for instance, that early modern men delighted in fashion and clothes, that medieval women were to be found working in practically all sectors of the economy, that motherhood, when infants were sent to wet-nurses, must have constituted a different bond from the relationship we know today.

At the same time, the anthropology of early modern societies cried out for some incorporation of a female perspective. One only has to turn to a classic text such as Clifford Geertz’s analysis of the Balinese cockfight to be confronted with the absence of women from the cultural theatre.⁴² Partly because discourse theory, psychoanalytic ideas about masculinity and anthropology are woven together into an apparently seamless whole, women’s restriction to walk-on parts gives us more of a jolt. Most accounts of popular culture are actually about men’s culture, often about courtship ritual in another guise. The rage to which this kind of exclusion gives rise—the worse because it is a true mirror of the society which produced this culture—has led to some powerful feminist work of reconstruction. It has also enabled feminists to insist on a cultural anthropology which will include women. But how is this to be done?

The problem here is very deep and its origins lie within cultural history itself. Because cultural history traditionally sought to create a unified object of study for itself, it naturally inclined to see culture as uniform within a particular bounded group and as shared. This is as true of Sebastian Franck's wonderful sixteenth-century ethnography of regional identity⁴³ as it is of the work of the great nineteenth-century cultural historians and sociologists. It is no accident that *Gemeinschaft*, that hardly translatable term of shared cultural and communal identity, should have been such a crucial term for German nineteenth-century attempts to grasp pre-modern societies, just as the equally elusive sixteenth-century term, *Gemeinde*, ambiguous between church congregation, communal unit and group of subjects, was to prove such a powerful mobilizing term in the Peasants' War.⁴⁴ But nearly always, the leading ideas of this shared culture are those of men. The terms on which women have access to this culture are either as a cultural resource or else as creators of a separate, female culture. This latter view, however, undermines the idea of culture—or indeed of language—as a unified whole, and challenges the terms on which the project of cultural history might be possible.

When the so-called new cultural history broke with the idea of linear narratives, disrupting the unity of culture, it seemed to offer a new space for feminist history. If our cultural heritage was necessarily fragmented, if the fiction of a unified culture could be surrendered, then women were guaranteed a voice in the story. (Paradoxically, in fact, some of even the new cultural history does rely in the end on a unity of culture, based on the shared nature of language: a solution which simply replicates the problem of women's relation to culture at another, more intractable level.)⁴⁵ For feminist historians, the lure of cultural anthropology and discourse theory was its organizing power. If gender was created through discourse, or through social behaviour and interaction, the substance of sexual difference was historical—and therefore, it was something we could change. Gender as a concept consequently seemed to offer a way of giving feminists access both to anthropological history and to discourse history. Joan Scott's 1985 article resoundingly affirmed not only that gender *was* a historical category but that it was a category of historical analysis.⁴⁶ Deconstruction allowed feminists to juggle with the reversals and inversions, hidden meanings and endless contradictions of sexual difference—as if sexual difference were no longer a prison from which one could not escape but an ethereal substance, an endless play of light and shadow in which the intellect could delight.

Applied historically, however, deconstruction has the tendency to reproduce its own tricks and paradoxes. The contradictions of femininity in sixteenth-century Germany bear an uncanny resemblance to those of twentieth-century Britain. Indeed, Scott herself remains tantalizingly vague about the sense in which gender *is* a historical category. For while we have

learnt to discern the effects of gender in politics, war and business history—all the historical territories which historians once used to believe to be the preserve of real male history—what remains less clear is how gender itself effects historical change. Instead, we borrow from the state-and class-based narratives of historical transformation, leaving it vague what causal difference gender makes. Gender appears more often to be a matter of key, transposing the old familiar historical songs into soprano or bass registers: the tunes, however, remain the same.

If gender is to be a category of social explanation, it must bridge the gap between discourse, social formation and the individual sexed subject.⁴⁷ Just as cultural anthropological approaches and discourse theory seemed, in the end, to offer a somewhat flat account of subjectivity, so also, feminist history, because of its symbiotic critical relationship with these intellectual developments, remained caught in the limitations of the terms it criticized. In the final analysis, gender, for all its splendid play of discursive variegation, remains a category whose content proves elusive, and whose causal claims are a cypher.

Recently, feminist writers, too, have rejected the comfortable orthodoxy of the distinction between sex and gender.⁴⁸ Judith Butler has pointed out that the sex/gender distinction naturalizes sex, itself the product of culture, while reinstating the very binary distinction between nature and culture which we need to question.⁴⁹ This move robs historians of the sociological tools we once used to present sexual identity as a historical and social product. It turns out that the part of sexual identity which could once be neatly isolated as social creation, distinct from the ‘givenness’ of biological sex, reveals itself to be no more a creation than sex itself. ‘Gender’ as a sociological category is an illusion created by the terms of its own delimitation.

Yet history has not been done out of a job by post-modernism. Ironically, history and historians are very important to post-structuralist sceptics. For if sex, the person and sexual identities are contingent creations, not just at the level of detail, but as ontological categories, then it becomes crucial that there be ‘other worlds’ in which these categories did not organize experience. History seems to offer both such other possible worlds and an account of how we came by the categories with which we now live. Butler’s demolition of ‘sex’ and ‘person’ proceeds by demonstrating the contingency of those very categories and their embeddedness in the binary divisions they seek to critique. But it is an irony of her position that she introduces the very same pattern at the historical level, as she aims to ‘expose the contingent acts that create the appearance of a naturalistic necessity’.⁵⁰ There is an implicit historical ‘before’ and ‘after’, defined by the presence or absence of the binary oppositions her argument reifies; the moment *before* ‘the category of “women”, the subject of feminism, is produced and restrained by the very structures of power through which

emancipation is sought'.⁵¹ Historians, who are equally complicit in the search for grand moments of transformation around which to create narrative suspense—how, after all, do you organize a gripping history of emotion if you have no historical epochs around which to group your chapters?—then often reach for the chestnuts: it must be the Renaissance, the Reformation or Absolutism which explains change. The problem with this kind of work is that too much is made to follow from the historical. That a distinction looks different in different historical periods does not show that it is entirely contingent. History itself plays too great and yet too little a role in this kind of work: too much, because an overemphasis is placed on the degree to which human beings change; too little, because the stress on discursive creation oversimplifies subjectivities and foreshortens the range and complexity of historical determinants.

Surrendering the distinction between sex and gender has certainly brought gains. There have been explorations of the history of biological sex itself. Thomas Laqueur has argued that until the eighteenth century, a one-sex model of the body predominated in which sexual difference was a matter of degree, not of two distinct sexes.⁵² This is a powerful synthesis, which challenges our most basic assumptions about the naturalness of sexual distinction. Yet what Laqueur is actually describing is the discourse of medical theory. It is not apparent that it was by means of such theory that early modern people understood their bodies. Rather, their culture rested on a very deep apprehension of sexual difference as an organizing principle of culture—in religion, work, magic and ritual. It is a far easier task to investigate literate discourse on sexual difference than it is to get at the way early modern people actually conceived of sexual difference, because such structures are not fully conscious, and cannot be articulated with the same transparency as medical theory. Randolph Trumbach has argued for the rapidly shifting nature of the relation between the categories of sex and gender: eighteenth-century Londoners, he claims, had a model of three sexes—man, woman, hermaphrodite—and three genders, the third 'illegitimate gender' being 'the adult passive transvestite effeminate male or molly who was supposed to desire men exclusively'. By the late nineteenth century there were two sexes and four gender roles, 'man, woman, homosexual man, and lesbian woman'.⁵³ In much of this writing, sexual identity becomes a kind of masquerade for which the early modern period is the theatre; as if to have a sexual identity in early modern Europe was to participate in a permanent cross-dressing party. Indeed, by a curious sleight of hand, cross-dressers and transsexuals are often the examples to which historians turn when they consider the problem of individual subjectivity in general in early modern Europe.⁵⁴

The challenge of the history of the body to discourse theory is that it confronts discursive creationism with the physical, with a reality that is only in part a matter of words. So, for instance, while Londa Schiebinger's

fascinating account of the development of the science of anatomy in the eighteenth century is able to show how gendered notions became written into perceptions of skeletal difference, one wonders naggingly whether there may not actually be differences between the skeletons of the two sexes which are not a creation of eighteenth-century science.⁵⁵ It is of course true that we experience the body through mediations of various kinds, and, because we want to emphasize the way notions of the body are constructed, the temptation is to write as if there were nothing *but* a historically constructed body. Our own terminology does not help: ‘the body’, after all, is itself an irritatingly non-physical abstraction.

Sexual difference is not purely discursive nor merely social. It is also physical. The cost of the flight from the body and from sexual difference is evident in what much feminist historical writing has found it impossible to speak about; or indeed, in the passionate tone of the theoretical work which most insists on the radically constructed nature of sexual difference. In my own work, this gap is most evident in the oldest of these essays, on will and honour. It is an essay about the social construction of gender through language and social practice—but its sources tell another story about the pain and pleasure of love. At its heart there is an absence: bodies. How indeed can there be a history of sex which is purely about language and which omits bodies?

I do not think I was untypical in seeking to escape femininity by a flight from the body and a retreat to the rational reaches of discourse. The pain, the frustration and the rage of belonging to the sex which does not even yet have its own history, and which is so often in the role of outsider in any intellectual context, make it tempting to deny sexual difference altogether—or to attempt to design one’s sexual identity in any way one chooses. This is a wild utopianism. As Barbara Taylor has shown, it has its roots in the very beginnings of feminism, in the passionately ambivalent, even misogynist rhetoric of Mary Wollstonecraft, for example, about the failings of ‘systematically voluptuous’ women.⁵⁶ It is also a deeply creative force. It has enabled both men and women to envisage new ways of organizing relations between the sexes, and new fields of action for women and for men. Yet when utopianism becomes intellectual, and loses its imaginative relation to the givenness of bodies, it does so at great cost. We need an understanding of sexual difference which will incorporate, not fight against, the corporeal.

V

These concerns are preoccupations of our own time; indeed, of a very particular moment in the history of feminism when we have had to part with some illusions about what can be made anew. But they are also issues with which early modern people were passionately engaged. The

Reformation, as I have argued elsewhere, drew much of its strength from its moralizing redeployment of an older, household-based utopianism, which had clearly defined roles for men and women, old and young.⁵⁷ By allowing and encouraging clergy to marry and form their own households, Protestants put the issue of the body firmly on the agenda. Was holiness incompatible with sexual expression? If the body were God's creation, what sin attached to sex within marriage? What were the distinct offices of men and women?

The first generation of reformers faced the question of the difference between the sexes in their daily lives, with little help from their libraries to make sense of what it was to be a married priest. It was not that clerics had not lived with women or were not infamous as womanizers, quite the reverse. But marriage meant that the first generation of Protestant clergy had to reach a conscious, articulated accommodation with sexual difference, shaped no longer by the ideal of a single-sex monastic community. Consequently, sexual difference emerged as an explicit theme in their conversation and writing, and sometimes in a disarmingly concrete sense of the disturbance that living with the opposite sex entails, as when Luther describes the shock of seeing a pair of plaits in bed beside him.⁵⁸ Sexual difference was, of course, anything but a new intellectual theme, but Protestant clergy had to develop a literature about marriage and womanhood which did more than align women with Eve and sexual temptation. The public estate of matrimony necessitated an accommodation with sexual difference—difficult as the monastic heritage of sexual suspicion was to overcome, and much as it still cast its shadow over what they wrote.

In what did sexual difference consist? It would be tempting to dismiss Luther's views on women as little more than the rantings of a particularly rabid patriarch, and regard Protestantism as the heir of his rigid sexual conservatism. But this would be to miss the peculiar tone of early Protestant understandings of sexual difference and the body, and to fail to catch its utopianism. For Luther, whose earthy rhetoric still has the power to take one's breath away, sexual difference was material, the stuff of the body itself. So he says, in a passage which earns its place in every anthology of misogyny, that

Men have broad shoulders and narrow hips, and accordingly they possess intelligence. Women ought to stay at home; the way they were created indicates this, for they have broad hips and a wide fundament to sit upon, keep house and bear and raise children.⁵⁹

Sexual difference is natural fact, God's creation, and it dictates female fate: one follows from the other so directly that there is no intervening symbolic realm. Woman and house belong together not as metaphor but as fact. For

Luther, the substance of womanhood was maternity, an equation so powerful that as early as 1520 he proposed that a woman whose husband could not give her children should have the right to sleep with another.⁶⁰ The same collapsing of femaleness and maternity is evident in his homily that women who die in childbirth are saved: 'Let them bear children to death; they are created for that.'⁶¹ What Luther is doing here is reclaiming the process of birth from the realm of the powers of darkness and evil, arguing against the idea that women giving birth were under the power of the Devil and that if they died giving birth, should not be buried in consecrated ground.⁶² By pulling all aspects of female existence into the light of the Protestant idea of the calling, Luther linked fate, corporeal difference and creation to form a powerful, materialist vision of sexual difference.

This is important because Luther and other sixteenth-century thinkers, radicals and orthodox, were working within a different intellectual framework while dealing with issues which are still very much our own concerns. We may be able to think these through differently if we allow ourselves to be surprised by what Luther, Catholic exorcists or radical Anabaptists—who all understood the relation between body and soul differently—had to say. Recovering sixteenth-century thought should not consist in castigating Luther for his misogynist errors. The heritages which after all have shaped us deserve more than correction and dismissal, for to do so would be to fail to take our own past sufficiently seriously.

But a history which analysed Luther's thought alone—or indeed, that of the first generation of reformers—would be far from providing a gendered cultural map of early modern Germany. One of the heuristic axioms that feminist history has made part of our methodology is always to ask: how did women see this? But when we pose this question in an oral culture, where the written sources we have are nearly always by men, we draw a blank. If we work only with these sources, gender history threatens to become a reinterpretation of the thought of powerful thinkers, a history of ideas read against the grain, to be sure, but a history that reinstates the old canon and denies individuals' capacities to make their own meanings.

Here it seems to me that witch-trials offer an opening. Witches were not always mere consumers of male discourse, providing witchcraft fantasy on order. They used the elements of their culture to create narratives which made sense of their lives: of their unbearable hatreds, agonies, jealousies. These came from the Devil, an explanation which did not rob women of agency—for they listened to the Devil's voice. Witchcraft confessions have often been understood as the projections of a male-dominated society. But this is to ignore the creative work which the witch herself carried out, translating her own life experiences into the language of the diabolic, performing her own diabolic theatre. The fantasies she wove, though often forced from her through torture, were her own condensations of shared

cultural preoccupations—like the Host one witch swept neatly together having trampled it on the floor, a rite of dishonouring the Host as old as the ritual murder trials against Jews, and yet as mundanely her own as her broom; or like the vision of the Devil which Appolonia Mayr evokes, standing over the child's corpse, localized on a precise path and field, with a tree behind in the background, yet resonant with fantasies about the Devil as child-stealer. Their judges and scribes noted all this with fascinated attention. And in this way witches themselves carried out cultural work, creating the narrative of the witch anew, making sense of emotions and cultural process. Willing or not, witchcraft trials are one context in which women 'speak' at greater length and receive more attention than perhaps any other.⁶³ In the European west, women could be evil: always more than nature, they were not just projections of male fantasies of evil but active embodiments of it.

VI

I have been arguing that both social constructionism and linguistic constructionism short-circuited the realm between language and subjectivity, as if there were no space here to be bridged. Language, by means of its social character, simply impressed a social construction of gender upon the wax of the individual psyche. Or, in the social constructionist version of this theory, collective rituals, performances, habits of work or sociability are seen to imprint themselves upon the individual psyche. When the variable of gender is added, the effect is barely more than to inflect the kind of subjectivity the group mediates: masculinity and femininity themselves are both collectively created. Theories of these kinds link individual and collective psychology. They supply an account of subjectivity which is inherently, though superficially, historical; for as social conditions change, so also will individual consciousness. And as discourses become transformed, so too must the linguistic expressions of the individual be transformed.

But one further consequence of this vision of the subject and the social is to reinstate the division between the mental and the corporeal. For the early modern period this ought to make us pause, for this was the period *before* our familiar vision of the division between between mind and body—our Cartesian heritage—was articulated. An engagement with pre-modern society, with its magical world-view and its belief in the demonic, with its assumption that emotions can cause harm in others or its conviction that sanctity can be seen and felt in the uncorrupted body of the saint itself, offers us the chance of rethinking our own habitual classifications of mental and corporeal. Our nineteenth-century heritage is a conception of the rational which banishes witchcraft, spells, the demonic and the popular to the margins of society, the underworld or the rural. Or,

as one might caricature this, it was as we grew enlightened that the world became disenchanted.⁶⁴ But looking at the early modern world can allow us to suspend the distinction between the rational and the irrational, thus helping us to understand our own intuition of the mind-body relation in new ways. As these essays argue, magic, exorcisms and sexual utopianism, so far from being exotic manifestations of the pre-modern, were central to early modern society—and, as Eva Labouvie has demonstrated in a suggestive reconstruction of the logic of early modern peasant sorcery, to rationality itself.⁶⁵ It is in the arena of the magical, the irrational, in witch-trials that—paradoxically enough—the individual subject of the early modern period unfolds.

Bodies have materiality, and this too must have its place in history. The capacity of the body to suffer pain, illness, the process of giving birth, the effects on the body of certain kinds of exercise such as hunting or riding—all these are bodily experiences which belong to the history of the body and are more than discourse. We are familiar with the idea that culture shapes how we experience bodily events, and we have learnt from Norbert Elias how social structure impacts on bodily comportment—we are less ready to admit, or to explore historically, how particular patterns of movement, clothes, illnesses in turn influence culture and subjectivity.

Bodies are not merely the creations of discourse. What we have is a history of discourses about the body; what we need is a history that can problematize the relation between the psychic and the physical. Indeed, the beginnings of psychoanalysis lie in the fascination with the juncture between the physical and the psychic. In Freud's essay on *Senatspräsident Dr Daniel Paul Schreber*, it is the physical dimension of Schreber's paranoid illness which captures Freud's attention: Schreber's retention of his faeces or his belief that his body was turning into that of a woman.⁶⁶ Psychic disturbance takes physical form; distorted body-images are among the most important features of the illness and offer the clues to its healing. In part because of its interest in sexuality, the paradigmatic area where imagination and physiology coincide, psychoanalysis has offered a powerful way of understanding how bodily experience must of necessity be connected with mental life. One might argue that there can be no experience of the body which is not also psychic, no way of grasping the body without the mediation of mental representations and, therefore, no 'body' which is not historically constructed. But this is only half the story.

What we lack is a fully developed theoretical account of how the physical flows back into the psychic. In Freud, the physical is supplied through a partially biologicistic understanding of the drives, but this is about physical functioning rather than bodies themselves. In the work of the psychoanalyst Melanie Klein, bodies dissolve into body images, as if there is nothing that holds together the disembodied breasts, penises and corporeal interiors which populate the psychic imagination.⁶⁷ Because of

the importance of articulation in psychoanalysis, the so-called ‘talking cure’, psychoanalysis can sometimes seem to be itself a kind of drama involving the production of a certain kind of text, so that the connection between psyche and body can seem to be just discourse. But this would be to leave out the interconnection between the psychic and the somatic, the problematic which animates so much of Freud’s writing and which was the source of many of the theoretical breakthroughs as well as many of the splits within the psychoanalytic movement in its early years. Indeed, it still today remains a vexed area.

The body as we experience it is more than the sum of tactile and kinetic impressions. Our experience of the body is organized by body images. These are in part culturally created, and to that extent they have a collective history. We gain access to these only partially through language, and it is misleading, I think, to equate them with discourse or language.⁶⁸ In searching for the body images of the sixteenth century, I am looking for something more than the ways the body was talked about; I want to delineate the only partially conscious images of the body which lie below the surface of language. Body images, bodily malfunction or even what the psychoanalyst Joyce McDougall calls somatic expression, can be a kind of mute communication, a prelinguistic resource to which we resort when language dries up in inexpressible psychic pain.⁶⁹ The body rears its head, so to speak, often only when we are ill, or in agony—a restriction of bodily expression to the pathological. But bodily expression can also be integrated in positive experience, for example, in the pleasure of dance or in sexual delight. And since we are our bodies (more so than we like to admit), bodily symbolism belongs to the deepest religious tools we have.⁷⁰ It can convey what we find impossible to put into words.

This was particularly so in the sixteenth century. It is no accident that it should have been the issue of communion which so inflamed passions and divided early modern people. Communion, after all, is far more than a metaphor. Taking communion is a physical process, and the ingestion of the Host, the drinking of the wine, was a physical act through which community and the relationship with God was consummated. Theologically, the issue for reformers was how to understand Christ’s incarnation, for the ritual posed the question of the relationship between the divine and the human. The issue around which battle was joined was not only how one should understand the corporeality of the divine, but how this ritual should be carried out: should both elements or only one be received? Should one receive the elements from the hands of the priest? Could one touch the Host? That is, the question of the body, and the boundaries between human and divine, lay at the very heart of the Reformation.⁷¹

How did early modern Germans visualize the body? What conscious and unconscious imagery lies beneath their language? Although I did not realize

it, the preoccupation with this question is what relates this series of essays to one another. Early modern German culture furnishes a variety of ways of grasping the body. In the literature of excess, the body is imagined as a container for a series of processes: defecation, sexual pollution, vomiting. Fluids course about within the body, erupting out of it, leaving their mark on the world outside. The body is not so much a collection of joints and limbs, or a skeletal structure, as a container of fluids, bursting out in every direction to impact on the environment.⁷² This vision of the body as a container of evil fluids is reminiscent of what the psychoanalyst Melanie Klein has to say about the child's conceptualization of the mother's body as a vessel containing evil and dangerous substances,⁷³ or what the French theorist Julia Kristeva describes as 'abjection', a state which is also related to the tie with the maternal body.⁷⁴ But what is different is that the accent is not so much on the badness of the fluids contained in the body as in the pleasure of release. What in Klein and Kristeva is viewed as a negative, pathological imagination—to be sure, part of the psychic heritage we all share—is in this writing a source of pleasure. This is a particular way of eroticizing bodily openings—mouth, anus, penis—as if the operation of the muscles could be simply enjoyed, as if there could be a world where no inhibitions operated to curb the free exchange of fluids between inner and outer, as if the enjoyment of simple release, simple expulsion, is the transgression—a conception which derives its imaginative pull from the literature of repression, of muscular control. This is a world which recalls that of the infant who does not have to control his or her defecation or excretion. And it is also a state in which the boundaries between the self and others, the bounded self and the fluids which spill into the surrounding world, have become melted, as if one could approach the state in which there is no longer distinction between self and world, mother and baby. Yet the literature of excess is anything but a regression *tout court*. Its preoccupations were highly literate, framed within a Latinate, written culture, and it constituted a linguistically sophisticated, controlled cultural creation.⁷⁵

The matching half of this imagistic set is to be found in the literature of discipline: the sets of ordinances, proclamations and mandates which secular authorities promulgated with increasing elaboration from the late fifteenth century, reaching a first full expression in the years of the Reformation, and continuing well into the seventeenth century. This is a literature which crosses the Catholic/Protestant divide. And it was accompanied by a moralist literature, reaching its high point in the Devil books of the mid-sixteenth century. This, too, conceives of vices as a kind of inner fluid, constantly threatening to burst the bounds of discipline. It is as if the individual is a shapeless collection of active sins constantly threatening to burst through the musculature of morals. Discipline is a kind of 'fence', to use the metaphor of the Augsburg councillors, which has but

little strength against the untameable brute force of the lusts within.⁷⁶ This literature cannot best be understood, I think, on the repression/release model, for once again, the body is conceived of as a kind of vessel barely able to contain the forces inside it, all of which are imagined in highly active terms as physical activities: gluttony, fighting, fornicating, blaspheming. Even the house, the basic unit of social organization, is conceived of as a skin so thin that it can hardly hold its murderous denizens together: the master patriarch, most likely to fall prey to every kind of vice, the mistress, only too ready to surrender herself to concupiscence, the children, servants and apprentices, naturally inclined to disorder and disrespect for parental authority. A vision of the house, then, which conceives of *disorganization*, anarchy rather than articulation as the natural state.

Another corporeal map, this time a Catholic one, is evident in exorcism, a practice which enjoyed a renewed vogue in the second half of the sixteenth century as Catholics aimed to prove the superiority of their religion over Protestants.⁷⁷ Here again, the *insides* of the body are of crucial importance, for it is in the bodily interior that the demons are housed. The demon must be brought out of the body and into the light, expelled from the bodily cavity, if the sufferer is to be cured. This time, however, the expulsion is an unmistakably good thing, while the passage of demons out of the body is painful not pleasurable, producing bodily writhings and contortions. The openings of the body take on especial significance: the devils often leave via the mouth, and bodily orifices such as the ears and nose play an important role. Unpleasant sensual experience plays a powerful role in exorcism: the audience smell a foul, diabolic sulphurous stench, as if we are not very far from the man of excess, the audience are riveted by sounds, by the utterances of the hidden devils speaking from within the body of the possessed woman, sometimes with a man's voice, the hum of prayer and invocation which, like repeated formulae, comforts through sensual rather than linguistic means, through touch, as the audience hold the possessed woman in their laps, grasp her and can feel for themselves the strength of the diabolic forces which thrust her about.

There is certainly a sexual undertow in this imagination. It is no coincidence that exorcisms took place on beds, nor that the spectacle involved the woman rolling about on the ground, her dress askew and her shame uncovered. Nor was it an accident that exorcisms also demonstrated the honour due to Mary, who is at once both mother and virgin. If we ask what map of the body Mary might represent on this grid, then we can speculate that although as a mother, she might potentially be a container of all these terrifying and dangerous substances that inhabit maternal bodies, sexually she is a sealed body, pierced only by the Holy Ghost. She might thus represent a femininity which is safe and impossible. In terms of bodily imagery, it may be that, imaginatively, Mary offers a counter-resolution to

the spectacle of possessed femininity as the exorcist frees the victim with her aid. But it is a resolution which provokes the repetition of the drama, precisely because the resolution is impossible.⁷⁸

The sexual fantasies of witchcraft draw on similar visions of a body which can lose its organization, and in which liquids within the body become poisonous, killing instead of nourishing. The most common form such fantasies took was apparently to cluster around the ideas of feeding and nourishment of babies in the first six weeks of life. Sexual fantasies to which witches give voice often also display a similar vision of a disorganized body: in English witch fantasies, teats appear not confined to the breast, but all over the body as the Devil's mark; they are often to be found near the anus or vagina, as if the bodily orifices had become interchangeable.⁷⁹ Sexual activity, when it takes place at the witches' sabbath, is imagined as an orgy in which 'sodomy', that medieval catch-all, becomes an imprecise term for every kind of unorthodox sexual coupling, imprecise because what it refers to cannot quite be named or imagined. That is to say, I do not think that sexual intercourse at the witches' sabbath is just a 'reversal' of normal sexual behaviour, an inversion which 'turns the world upside down' for a moment, but which leaves its categories intact.⁸⁰ Rather, what we encounter here is a disordered imagination in which anal and oral sex *don't* reinstate the heterosexual norm of which they are the inverse, but dissolve the categories of the discrete, functioning body altogether. Something much more primary is at work here, fantasies to do with sex and death, with non-reproductive intercourse, sexual union as an engulfment which destroys the identity, and behind this, the horror of sex with the mother herself, the return to the death of the womb. In this sense, I think the fantasies of witchcraft are heir to these earlier visions of the body, but now their maternal content becomes much more manifest. They, too, give voice to very primitive kinds of mental distress, to the moment when distinctions between oneself and others seem to elide, when the shape of the body seems to blur and utter helplessness and terror result.

It is easier to delineate the kinds of semi-conscious imaginings of the body that are at work here than it is to explain, historically, why they should have proved particularly compelling at certain historical moments. If I were to hazard a chronological chain of imaginative connection, I would speculate that the image of the excessive body which constantly breaks out of its own boundaries—the preoccupation with the processes of excreting—and the fascination with muscular control acted in vortex fashion, pulling some kinds of imagination back towards earlier scenes from childhood. The transition from a vision of the body which was primarily of a male body, but which could also be applied to female bodies (the grotesque excessive comic figure Grobian had his female equivalent Grobiana⁸¹), to a concentration on the female body alone, which we find in

images of witchcraft, is important.⁸² Fascination with boundaries, control and the substances within the body allowed one to imagine and indeed experience the loss of boundaries altogether, the filling of the body with evil substances and the elision of the gap between one's own body and the maternal body. These terrifying spectres nourished the corporeal imagination of the witchcraze. Why and how these spectres seized the minds of individuals and groups of people at some times and some places will require a detailed compilation of social factors, and an exploration of the relation between judicial process and political power—an explanation which it is beyond the scope of this book to give. But I am claiming that part of the answer must lie in the psychic and corporeal realms, and that we neglect these at our peril.

VII

I have been advocating an approach to early modern subjectivities which will recognize the collective elements of culture without trivializing individual subjectivity. I have been arguing that gender cannot be understood as the social acquisition of an unproblematic sexual identity. Sexual difference has a bodily dimension. Sexual identity can never be satisfactorily understood if we conceive it as a set of discourses about masculinity or femininity. Nor can the individual subject be adequately understood as a container of discourse—a conception which evacuates subjectivity of psychology. We are very far from knowing how such discourses relate to people's own sexual identities, which nearly always lack the coherence—or even the comforting contradictions—of discourse. Understood as a discursive creation alone, gender is not a category of historical analysis because, lacking an account of the connections between social and psychic, it cannot adequately conceptualize change.

It is far easier to insist on the need for a history of early modern culture which will incorporate the subjective, the psychic and the corporeal than it is to show how that history will look. This volume records my own movement towards this position, and it is thus inevitable that the book represents a journey, not an arrival. But I am convinced that unless history and cultural anthropology—and we ourselves—can learn to admit the psychic and the corporeal, we shall never truly encounter the past.

NOTES

- 1 Stadtarchiv Augsburg (hereafter cited as StadtAA), Urgichtensammlung (hereafter cited as Urg.), 1686, 23 March 1686, Appolonia Mayr; and see on infanticide in general in this period, Richard van Dülmen, *Frauen vor Gericht. Kindsmord in der Frühen Neuzeit*, Frankfurt am Main 1991; Otto

Ulbricht, *Kindsmord und Aufklärung in Deutschland*, Munich 1990; Alfons Felber, *Unzucht und Kindsmord in der Rechtsprechung der freien Reichsstadt Nördlingen vom 15. bis 19. Jahrhundert*, Bonn 1961.

- 2 StadtAA, Urg., 13 May 1686, Appolonia Mayr, qu. 150:

der böse habe Ihr kein frid gelassen. es seie nur ein Augenblick gewesen, der Teuffel habs angeruhrt, als wan Er ein hebam were, seie gar bald geschehen. das dz kind heraus gewesen. Sie habs auch gleich ertrosselt mit der hand, vnd sie habe im bringen kein schmerzen gespührt.

- 3 'Ja sie habs also gantz nackent ligen lassen, vnbedeckt, vnd unbegraben.' StadtAA, Urg., 4 April 1686, qu. 113; 'der Teuffel seie nicht mit Ihr gegangen, sondern beym kind stehen bliben, sie habe weiter nicht vmbgesehen' (qu. 114).
- 4 Most famously, Jules Michelet, *La Sorcière*, Paris 1862; or see also J.Janssen, *Geschichte des deutschen Volkes seit dem Ausgang des Mittelalters*, vol. 8, ed. and rev. Ludwig Pastor, Freiburg im Breisgau 1894, for example pp. 459–62 on criminality, and part 3 chs 7 and 8 on witchcraft as part of the volumes on culture; Gustav Freytag, *Bilder aus der deutschen Vergangenheit*, vol. 2, part 2, 7th edn, Leipzig 1873, pp. 358–74, extensive discussion of a possession case from Frankfurt as part of cultural history.
- 5 The last few years have seen a quantum leap in the sophistication with which such approaches have been applied to early modern Europe, especially in German historiography. See, in particular, the pioneering use of anthropology in Bob Scribner, *Popular Culture and Popular Movements in Reformation Germany*, London 1987; David Sabeau, *Power in the Blood. Popular culture and village discourse in early modern Germany*, Cambridge 1984; and Norbert Schindler, *Widerspenstige Leute. Studien zur Volkskultur in der frühen Neuzeit*, Frankfurt am Main 1992. Excellent examples of the historical-anthropological approach are collected in the ongoing series edited by Richard van Dülmen, *Studien zur historischen Kulturforschung*.
- 6 'Fast Ein stund nach der geburth habe sie begert Jhr kind zu sehen', 'Sie wolle halt ihr kind wieder sehen, kenne also nicht mehr leben', StadtAA, Urg., 1685, 16 Nov. 1685, Appolonia Mayr.
- 7 Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parsons, New York 1958.
- 8 *ibid.*, p. 80.
- 9 *ibid.*, p. 180.
- 10 Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process: Sociogenetic and psychogenetic investigations*, trans. Edmund Jephcott, 2 vols, Oxford 1978, 1982 (first published Basle 1939): vol. 1, *The History of Manners*; vol. 2, *State Formation and Civilization*; *idem*, *The Court Society*, trans. Edmund Jephcott, Oxford 1983 (first published Darmstadt and Neuwied 1969).
- 11 Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self. The making of the modern identity*, Cambridge 1989, p. 192.
- 12 *ibid.*, p. 192.

- 13 The modernity of its techniques, too, and, in particular, the importance of printing in the witch-craze, has been pointed out by Walter Rummel, 'Gutenberg, der Teufel und die Muttergottes von Eberhardsklausen. Erste Verfolgung im Trierer Land', in Andreas Blauert (ed.), *Ketzer, Zauberer, Hexen. Die Anfänge der europäischen Hexenverfolgungen*, Frankfurt am Main 1990.
- 14 Among the many examples see Günther Pallaver, *Die Verdrängung der Sexualität in der frühen Neuzeit am Beispiel Tirols*, Vienna 1987, which regards the Catholic church as having been instrumental in the process of 'disciplining' through its use of the confessional in the period after the Reformation and explicitly draws on Elias; Heinrich Richard Schmidt, 'Die Christianisierung des Sozialverhaltens als permanente Reformation. Aus der Praxis reformierter Sittengerichte in der Schweiz während der frühen Neuzeit', *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung*, Beiheft 9, 1989, pp. 113–63; Roger Chartier (ed.), *Passions of the Renaissance* (=G. Duby, *A History of Private Life*, vol. 3), trans. Arthur Goldhammer, Cambridge, Mass. 1989; Georges Vigarello, *Concepts of Cleanliness. Changing attitudes in France since the Middle Ages*, trans. Jean Birrell, Cambridge 1988; for a textbook on early modern European history inspired by Elias, see Pieter Spierenburg, *The Broken Spell. A cultural and anthropological history of preindustrial Europe*, London 1991; for a history of health and the body influenced by Weber and Elias, Alfons Labisch, *Homo hygienicus: Gesundheit und Medizin in der Neuzeit*, Frankfurt am Main 1992; for an interesting use of some of his themes in Martin Dinges, 'Der "feine Unterschied". Die soziale Funktion der Kleidung in der höfischen Gesellschaft', *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung*, 19, 1992, pp. 49–76; and Stephen Mennell, *All Manners of Food: Eating and taste in England and France from the Middle Ages to the present*, Oxford 1985; and for a thoughtful, thoroughgoing application of Elias's ideas by a scholar influenced by both psychoanalysis and sociology, see Michael Schröter's work, including "Wo zwei zusammenkommen in rechter Ehe". *Sozio-und psychogenetische Studien über die Eheschlussvorgänge vom 12. bis 15. Jahrhundert*, Frankfurt am Main 1985, and 'Zur Intimisierung der Hochzeitsnacht im 16. Jahrhundert', in Hans-Jürgen Bachorski (ed.), *Ordnung und Lust. Bilder von Liebe, Ehe und Sexualität in Spätmittelalter und Früher Neuzeit*, Trier 1991. For a critique of Elias, see Hans Peter Duerr, *Der Mythos vom Zivilisationsprozess*, 3 vols, Frankfurt am Main 1988, 1989, 1992: vol. 1, *Nacktheit und Scham*; vol. 2, *Intimität*; vol. 3, *Obszönität und Gewalt*.
- 15 Elias, *A History of Manners*, p. 142.
- 16 *ibid.*, p. 152; and his brilliant account of court rituals in *The Court Society*.
- 17 Elias trained in England as a group therapist. See Michael Schröter (ed.), *Norbert Elias über sich selbst*, Frankfurt am Main 1990, pp. 81–4 where, in interview, Elias mentions his own orthodox Freudian analysis and his work with group analysis; Karl-Siegbert Rehberg, 'Form und Prozess. Zu den katalysatorischen Wirkungschancen einer Soziologie aus dem Exil: Norbert Elias', in Peter Gleichmann, Johann Goudsblom, Hermann Korte (eds), *Materialien zu Norbert Elias' Zivilisationstheorie*, Frankfurt am Main 1977, p. 105; and note Elias's comment in a letter: 'I think that probably Freud's

- ideas had a greater influence on my thinking than those of any theoretical sociologist', in J.Goudsblom, 'Responses to Norbert Elias's Work in England, Germany, the Netherlands and France', in P.Gleichmann, J.Goudsblom and H.Korte (eds), *Human Figurations. Essays for Norbert Elias*, Amsterdam 1977, p. 78.
- 18 Elias, *A History of Manners*, p. 201.
 - 19 *ibid.*, pp. 214, 215.
 - 20 *ibid.*, pp. 200–1.
 - 21 Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Hélène Iswolsky, Cambridge, Mass. 1968; and see also Norbert Schindler, 'Karneval, Kirche und verkehrte Welt. Zur Funktion der Lachkultur im 16. Jahrhundert', in *idem*, *Widerspenstige Leute*.
 - 22 Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, pp. 185–98.
 - 23 Horst Bredekamp, 'Renaissancekultur als "Hölle": Savonarolas Verbrennungen der Eitelkeiten', in Martin Warnke (ed.), *Bildersturm. Die Zerstörung des Kunstwerks*, Munich 1973.
 - 24 See Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*, London 1986, pp. 5, 22, for a slightly different statement of this point. However, in the end, their reliance on the Elias model of historical change does, I think, commit them to a similar model of historical progression of the psyche.
 - 25 Chartier (ed.), *Passions of the Renaissance*, esp. pp. 15–17, and 'Introduction' to the volume by Philippe Ariès, pp. 4, 9.
 - 26 For a critique of this interest in the symbolic and the irrational, a feature of much of the new cultural history, see Raphael Samuel, 'Reading the Signs', *History Workshop Journal*, 32, 1991, pp. 88–109.
 - 27 See, for example, the excellent psychoanalytic biography of Louis XIII by Elizabeth W.Marvick, *Louis XIII: The making of a king*, London 1986; and *idem*, *The Young Richelieu: A psychoanalytic approach to leadership*, Chicago, Ill. 1983; Elizabeth Young-Breuhl, *Anna Freud: A biography*, New York 1988; the classic Erik H.Erikson, *Young Man Luther. A study in psychoanalysis in history*, London 1959; or the looser use of psychoanalysis in Ray Monk, *Ludwig Wittgenstein: The duty of genius*, London 1990.
 - 28 See Joyce McDougall, *Plea for a Measure of Abnormality*, Paris 1978, New York 1980, London 1990; *idem*, *Theatres of the Mind: Illusion and truth on the psychoanalytic stage*, New York 1985; *idem*, *Theatres of the Body. A psychoanalytic approach to psychosomatic illness*, London 1989.
 - 29 Among historians the most influential works of Foucault include: Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish. The birth of the prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan, Harmondsworth 1977; *idem*, *Madness and Civilisation. A history of insanity in the Age of Reason*, London 1967; *idem*, *The History of Sexuality*: vol. 1, *An Introduction*, London 1979; vol. 2, *The Use of Pleasure*, New York 1985.
 - 30 On the late reception of Foucault's work in Germany, see Peter Schöttler, 'Historians and Discourse Analysis', *History Workshop Journal*, 27, 1989, pp. 37–65, first published in Jürgen Fohrman and Harro Müller (eds), *Diskurstheorien und Literaturwissenschaft*, Frankfurt am Main 1988. For excellent recent work on the history of the body see, among others, Barbara

- Duden, *Geschichte unter der Haut. Ein Eisenacher Arzt und seine Patientinnen*, Stuttgart 1987; *idem*, *Der Frauenleib als öffentlicher Ort. Vom Missbrauch des Begriffs Leben*, Hamburg 1991; Esther Fischer-Homberger, *Medizin vor Gericht. Zur Sozialgeschichte der Gerichtsmedizin*, Darmstadt 1988; Ludmilla Jordanova, *Sexual Visions. Images of gender in science and medicine between the eighteenth and twentieth centuries*, Hemel Hempstead 1989; Roy Porter and G.S.Rousseau (eds), *Sexual Underworlds of the Enlightenment*, Manchester 1987; Edward Shorter, *A History of Women's Bodies*, New York 1982; Francis Barker, *The Tremulous Private Body*, London and New York 1984; Arthur E.Imhof (ed.), *Leib und Leben in der Geschichte der Neuzeit* (Berliner historische Studien 9), Berlin 1983; Ilsebill Barta-Fliedl and Christoph Geissmar (eds), *Die Beredsamkeit des Leibes. Zur Körpersprache in der Kunst*, Salzburg 1992; August Nitschke, *Körper in Bewegung. Gesten, Tänze und Räume im Wandel der Geschichte*, Stuttgart 1989; Kathleen Adler and Marcia Pointon (eds), *The Body Imaged. The human form and visual culture since the Renaissance*, Cambridge 1993; Michael Feher, Ramona Naddaff and Nadia Tazi (eds), *Fragments for a History of the Human Body*, Cambridge, Mass. 1989.
- 31 Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1.
- 32 Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre*, Cambridge, Mass. 1983; Robert Finlay, 'The Refashioning of Martin Guerre', *American Historical Review*, 1988, pp. 552–71; Natalie Zemon Davis, 'On the Lame', *American Historical Review*, 1988, pp. 572–603. Davis herself proposes a much more complex, nuanced notion of the self in early modern Europe and places stress on the role of memory as a guarantee of selfhood: *ibid.*, p. 602. And see also Natalie Zemon Davis, 'Boundaries and the Sense of Self in Sixteenth-Century France', in Thomas C.Heller, Morton Sosna and David E.Wellbery (eds), *Reconstructing Individualism. Autonomy, individuality, and the self in western thought*, Stanford, Calif. 1986.
- 33 Robert Darnton, 'The Great Cat Massacre of the Rue Saint-Severin', in *idem*, *The Great Cat Massacre and other Episodes in French Cultural History*, London 1984; Roger Chartier, Texts, Symbols, and Frenchness', *Journal of Modern History*, 57, 1985, pp. 682–95; Robert Darnton, 'The Symbolic Element in History', *Journal of Modern History*, 58, 1986, pp. 218–34; Dominick LaCapra, 'Chartier, Darnton and the Great Symbol Massacre', *Journal of Modern History*, 60, 1988, pp. 95–112; James Fernandez, 'Historians Tell Tales: Of Cartesian cats and Gallic cockfights', *Journal of Modern History*, 60, 1988, pp. 113–27; Harold Mah, 'Suppressing the Text: The Metaphysics of ethnographic history in Darnton's Great Cat Massacre', *History Workshop Journal*, 31, 1991, pp. 1–20.
- 34 See Anna Davin, 'Women, the Everyday and History', forthcoming in Heide Dieckwisch, *Alltagsgeschichte*, who points out that a similar tradition of the history of everyday life did exist in 'amateur' Anglo-American historiography of the 1930s and 1950s.
- 35 For some excellent examples of this approach, see Bernd Roeck, *Lebenswelt und Kultur des Bürgertums in der frühen Neuzeit* (*Enzyklopädie deutscher Geschichte*, ed. Lothar Gall with Peter Blickle, vol. 9), Munich 1991; Richard van Dülmen, *Kultur und Alltag in der frühen Neuzeit*. 16. bis 18.

- Jahrhundert*, 3 vols: vol. 1, *Das Haus und seine Menschen*, Munich 1990; vol. 2, *Dorf und Stadt. 16–18. Jahrhundert*, Munich 1992; Paul Münch, *Lebensformen in der frühen Neuzeit*, Berlin 1992.
- 36 There are, however, some notable exceptions: Marvick, *Louis XIII*; Lynn Hunt, *The Family Romance of the French Revolution*, London 1992; John Demos, *Entertaining Satan. Witchcraft and the culture of early New England*, Oxford 1982; Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History*, trans. Tom Conley, New York 1988; and *idem*, *The Mystic Fable: vol. I, The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, trans. Michael B. Smith, Chicago, Ill. 1992.
- 37 See, esp., Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, Chicago, Ill. 1980.
- 38 Stephen Greenblatt, 'Psychoanalysis and Renaissance Culture', in *idem*, *Learning to Curse: Essays in early modern culture*, London 1990.
- 39 Schindler, 'Die Welt der Spitznamen. Zur Logik der populären Nomenklatur', and 'Die Entstehung der Unbarmherzigkeit. Zur Kultur und Lebensweise der Salzburger Bettler am Ende des 17. Jahrhunderts', both in *idem*, *Widerspenstige Leute*, p. 301.
- 40 But see Davis, 'Boundaries and the Sense of Self'.
- 41 As Sally Alexander has put it, "The subjectivity of psychoanalysis does not... imply a universal, human nature, it suggests that some forms of mental functioning—the unconscious, phantasy, memory, etc.—seem to be so," Sally Alexander, 'Women Class and Sexual Differences in the 1830s and 1840s. Some reflections on the writing of feminist history', *History Workshop Journal*, 17, 1984, pp. 125–49; and also *idem*, 'Feminist History and Psychoanalysis', *History Workshop Journal*, 32, 1991, pp. 128–33. See also here the fascinating article by Norbert Elias on the emotions: 'On Human Beings and Their Emotions: A process-sociological essay', *Theory, Culture and Society*, 4, 1987, pp. 339–61.
- 42 Clifford Geertz, 'Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese cockfight', in *idem*, *The Interpretation of Culture*, London 1975.
- 43 Sebastian Franck, *Weltbuch, speigel vnd bildtniss des gantzen erdtbodens*, Tübingen, V. Morhart 1534.
- 44 See, on the resonance of *Gemeinde*, the work of Peter Blicke, *The Revolution of 1525: The German Peasants' War from a new perspective*, trans. Thomas Brady and Erik Midelfort, Baltimore, Md 1981; *idem*, *Gemeindereformation: Die Menschen des 16. Jahrhunderts auf dem Weg zum Heil*, Munich 1985; Sabean, *Power in the Blood*; and Lyndal Roper, 'The Common Man, the Common Good, Common Women: Gender and language in the German Reformation commune', *Social History*, 12, 1987, pp. 1–22; John Theibault, 'Community and Herrschaft in the Seventeenth-Century German Village', *Journal of Modern History*, 64, no. 1. 1992, pp. 1–21.
- 45 See, for instance, David Sabean's path-breaking *Power in the Blood*.
- 46 Joan W. Scott, 'Gender: A useful category of historical analysis', reprinted in *idem*, *Gender and the Politics of History*, New York 1988.
- 47 Here see Sally Alexander's important exploration of this point in 'Women, Class and Sexual Differences'.
- 48 See, in particular, Denise Riley, 'Am I that Name?' *Feminism and the category of 'Women' in history*, London 1988.

- 49 Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble. Feminism and the subversion of identity*, New York and London 1990.
- 50 *ibid.*, p. 33.
- 51 *ibid.*, p. 2.
- 52 Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex. Body and gender from the Greeks to Freud*, Cambridge, Mass. 1990; and for different views, see Evelyne Berriot-Salvadore, 'The Discourse of Medicine and Science', in Natalie Zemon Davis and Arlette Farge (eds), *A History of Women in the West*, vol. 3, *Renaissance and Enlightenment Paradoxes*, Cambridge, Mass. 1993; and Gianna Pomata 'Uomini mestranti: somiglianze e differenze fra i Sessi in Europa in età moderna', *Quaderni Storici*, 79, 1992, pp. 51–103.
- 53 Randolph Trumbach, 'London's Sapphists: From three sexes to four genders in the making of modern culture', in Julia Epstein and Kristina Straub (eds), *Body Guards. The cultural politics of gender ambiguity*, New York and London 1991, pp. 112, 113; 'Sex, Gender and Sexual Identity in Modern Culture: Male sodomy and female prostitution in Enlightenment London', in John C. Fout (ed.), *Forbidden History: The state, society, and the regulation of sexuality in modern Europe. Essays from the Journal of the History of Sexuality*, Chicago, 111. 1992.
- 54 Rudolf Dekker and Lotte C. van de Pol, *The Tradition of Female Transvestism in Early Modern Europe*, trans. Judy Marcure and Lotte C. van de Pol, Basingstoke 1989.
- 55 Londa Schiebinger, 'Skeletons in the Closet: The first illustrations of the female skeleton in eighteenth-century anatomy', in Catherine Gallagher and Thomas Laqueur (eds), *The Making of the Modern Body. Sexuality and society in the nineteenth century*, Berkeley, Calif. 1987. I am grateful to Peter Lake for pointing this out.
- 56 Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, London 1992, introduction by Barbara Taylor, p. xxiv.
- 57 *The Holy Household. Women and morals in Reformation Augsburg*, Oxford 1989. On the origins of sixteenth-century humanist ideals of the household in Xenophon's *Oeconomicus* see Lorna Hutson, *The Usurer's Daughter*, London forthcoming 1994.
- 58 'Primus annus coniugii macht eim seltzame gedanken. Sedens enim in mensa cogitat: Ante solus eram, nu bin ich selbs ander; in lecto expergiscens sihet er ein par zopffe neben yhm liegen, quas prius non vidit', *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe. Werke*, 60 vols, Weimar 1883–1983, *Tischreden*, vol. 3, p. 211, no. 3178 a.
- 59 'Männer haben eine breite Brust und kleine Hüften, darum haben sie auch mehr Verstandes denn die Weiber, welche enge Brüste haben und breite Hüfter und Gesäss, dass sie sollen daheim bleiben, in Hause still sitzen, Kinder tragen und ziehen', *D. Martin Luthers Werke* (Weimar edition), *WA Tischreden* vol. 1, p. 19, no. 55 (1531), and see also *Luthers Werke*, *WA TR*, vol. 2, p. 285, no. 1975 where Luther makes the comparison cruder: in women, the place where the dung comes out is larger and so they have a lot of shit and little sense. Quoted in Julia O'Faolain and Lauro Martines (eds), *Not in God's Image. Women in history*, New York 1973, p. 209.

- 60 Luther, *De captivitate Babylonica ecclesiae praeludium*, 1520, *D.Martin Luthers Werke*, vol. 6, pp. 558–9.
- 61 *Luthers Werke*, WA, 10, part II, p. 275, Vom ehelichen leben (1522) p. 296: instead of praying to St Margaret in childbirth, the woman is exhorted thus: ‘Gib dir das kind her und thu darzu mit aller macht, stirbstu drober, sso far hyn, wol dyr, Denn du stirbist eygentlich ym edlen werck und gehorsam gottis.’ Quoted in Merry Wiesner, ‘Women’s Response to the Reformation’, in R.Po-Chia Hsia (ed.), *The German People and the Reformation*, Ithaca, NY and London 1988, p. 151.
- 62 See, on the effects of the Reformation on churching, Susan C.Karant-Nunn, ‘A Women’s Rite: Churching and the Lutheran Reformation’, in R.Po-Chia Hsia and B.Scribner (eds), *History and Anthropology in Early Modern Europe. Papers from the Wolfenbüttel conference 1991*, forthcoming; and on women and Protestantism, Heide Wunder, *Er ist die Sonn’, sie ist der Mond. Frauen in der Frühen Neuzeit*, Munich 1992, esp. pp. 65ff.
- 63 The opposite view is maintained by Claudia Honegger, ‘Hexenprozesse und “Heimlichkeiten der Frauenzimmer”’: Geschlechtsspezifische Aspekte von Fremd- und Selbstthematization’, in Alois Hahn and Volker Kapp (eds), *Selbstthematization und Selbstzeugnis: Bekenntnis und Geständnis*, Frankfurt am Main 1987: she claims that the (misogynist) assumptions of the interrogators make it impossible for women to speak as anything other than mere instantiations of their sex. This seems to me, however, to overstate the extent to which interrogators influence what they wish to hear, a constraint which is after all shared to some degree by every conversation.
- 64 For a powerful critique of this view, see Bob Scribner, ‘The Reformation, Popular Magic and the “Disenchantment of the World”’, *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 23, 1993, pp. 475–94.
- 65 Eva Labouvie, *Zauberei und Hexenwerk. Ländlicher Hexenglaube in der frühen Neuzeit*, Frankfurt am Main 1991; *idem*, *Verbotene Künste. Volksmagie und ländlicher Aberglaube in den Dorfgemeinden des Saarraumes (16.–19. Jahrhundert)*, St Ingbert 1992.
- 66 Sigmund Freud, ‘Psychoanalytische Bemerkungen über einen autobiographisch beschriebenen Fall von Paranoia (Dementia paranoides)’, *Sigmund Freud. Studiewusgabe*, Frankfurt am Main 1969–75, vol. 7, pp. 133–203.
- 67 Melanie Klein, *Love, Guilt and Reparation and Other Works 1921–45*, new edn, London 1988; *idem*, *Envy and Gratitude and Other Works 1949–63*, new edn, London 1988; *idem*, *Narrative of a Child Analysis*, new edn, London 1989; *idem*, *The Psychoanalysis of Children*, London 1989.
- 68 Compare, here, Barbara Maria Stafford, *Body Criticism. Imaging the unseen in Enlightenment art and medicine*, Cambridge, Mass. and London 1991, on what she terms ‘nondiscursive articulations’ in the eighteenth century (p. 6), and see Sharon Fermor, ‘Movement and Gender in Sixteenth-Century Italian Painting’, in Adler and Pointon (eds), *The Body Imaged*.
- 69 McDougall, *Theatres of the Body*.
- 70 See Caroline Walker Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption. Essays on gender and the human body in medieval religion*, New York 1992, esp. the introductory essay, ‘History in the Comic Mode’.

- 71 Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi. The Eucharist in late medieval culture*, Cambridge 1991; de Certeau, *The Mystic Fable*, pp. 79ff.; Natalie Zemon Davis, 'Missed Connections: *Religion and Regime*', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 1, 1971, pp. 381–94; and Guy Swanson, 'Systems of Descent and Interpreting the Reformation', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 1, 1971, pp. 419–46.
- 72 On the 'bodiliness' of early modern culture, see Norbert Schindler, 'Karneval, Kirche und verkehrte Welt. Zur Funktion der Lachkultur im 16. Jahrhundert', in *idem*, *Widerspenstige Leute*, esp. pp. 159–67.
- 73 Melanie Klein, *The Psychoanalysis of Children*, trans. Alix Strachey, rev. edn, London 1989 (originally published 1975).
- 74 See, for example, Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror. An essay on abjection*, trans. Leon S.Roudiez, New York 1982; *idem*, *Desire in Language. A semiotic approach to literature and art*, ed. Leon S.Roudiez, trans. Thomas Gora, Alice Jardine and Leon S.Roudiez, London 1980.
- 75 Michael Screech, *Rabelais*, London 1979; Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis. The representation of reality in western literature*, trans. Willard Trask, Princeton, NJ 1953, pp. 262–84; see also Maria E.Müller, 'Naturwesen Mann. Zur Dialektik von Herrschaft und Knechtschaft in Ehelehren der Frühen Neuzeit', in Heide Wunder and Christina Vanja (eds), *Wandel der Geschlechterbeziehungen zu Beginn der Neuzeit*, Frankfurt am Main 1991; Pia Holenstein, *Der Ehediskurs der Renaissance in Fischarts Geschichtsklitterung. Kritische Lektüre des fünften Kapitels* (Deutsche Literatur von den Anfängen bis 1700,10), Berne, Frankfurt am Main, New York and Paris 1991.
- 76 Roper, *The Holy Household*, pp. 57ff.
- 77 See H.C.Erik Midelfort, 'Sin, Melancholy, Obsession: Sanity and culture in 16th century Germany', in S.L.Kaplan (ed.), *Understanding Popular Culture*, Berlin 1984; and on Protestant understandings, Stuart Clark, 'Protestant Demonology: Sin, superstition, and society (c. 1520–c. 1630)', in Bengt Ankarloo and Gustav Henningsen (eds), *Early Modern European Witchcraft. Centres and peripheries*, Oxford 1990.
- 78 Marina Warner, *Alone of all Her Sex: The myth and cult of the Virgin Mary*, London 1976.
- 79 See Jim Sharpe, 'Witchcraft and Women in Seventeenth-Century England: Some northern evidence', *Continuity and Change*, 6, 1991, pp. 179–200; and Marianne Hester, *Lewd Women and Wicked Witches. A study of the dynamics of male domination*, London 1992, esp. pp. 161–97.
- 80 On inversion in witchcraft, see the classic article by Stuart Clark, 'Inversion, Misrule and the Meaning of Witchcraft', *Past and Present*, 87, 1980, pp. 98–127.
- 81 Friedrich Dedekind, *Grobianus und Grobiana*, trans. C.Scheidt, Frankfurt 1567.
- 82 Exorcism is interesting here, since both men and women may be possessed. Midelfort shows that women predominated in the possession stories contained in Martin Delrio's *Disquisitionum Magicarum Libri Sex* (1599–1600), as well as in Weyer's *De Praestigiis Daemonum* (1583) (Midelfort, 'Sin, Melancholy, Obsession', pp. 139–40), when possession cases first

grasped confessional imaginations. However, by the last two decades of the sixteenth century, there were approaching as many men as women individual possessions and more male than female cases in the first half of the seventeenth century. Midelfort, 'The Devil and the German People: Reflections on the popularity of demon possession in sixteenth-century Germany', in Steven Ozment (ed.), *Religion and Culture in the Renaissance and Reformation* (Sixteenth-Century Essays and Studies, 11), Kirksville, Mo. 1989, p. 110.