

Oedipus and the Devil

Witchcraft, sexuality and religion
in early modern Europe

Lyndal Roper



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9 Witchcraft and fantasy in early modern Germany

In January 1669, Anna Ebeler found herself accused of murdering the woman for whom she had worked as a lying-in-maid. The means were a bowl of soup. Instead of restoring the young mother's strength, the soup, made of malmsey and brandy in place of Rhine wine, had increased her fever. The mother became delirious but, as the watchers at her deathbed claimed, she was of sound mind when she blamed the lying-in-maid for her death. As word spread, other women came forward stating that Ebeler had poisoned their young children too. The child of one had lost its baby flesh and its whole little body had become pitifully thin and dried out. Another's child had been unable to suckle from its mother, even though it was greedy for milk and able to suck vigorously from other women: shortly after, it died in agony. In a third house, an infant had died after its body had suddenly become covered in hot, poisonous pustules and blisters which broke open. The baby's 7-year-old brother suffered from aches and pains caused by sorcery and saw strange visions, his mother suffered from headaches and the whole household started to notice strange growths on their bodies. And a fourth woman found her infant covered with red splotches and blisters, her baby's skin drying out until it could be peeled off like a shirt. The child died most piteously, and its mother's menstruation ceased. All had employed Ebeler as their lying-in-maid. Anna Ebeler was interrogated six times and confessed at the end of the second interrogation, when torture was threatened. She was executed and her body burnt on 23 March 1669 – a 'merciful' punishment practised in place of burning in the humane city of Augsburg. She was aged 67. Just two months had elapsed since she was first accused.¹

Anna Ebeler was one of eighteen witches executed in Augsburg. As many more were interrogated by the authorities but cleared of witchcraft; others faced religious courts and yet further cases never reached the courts. Augsburg saw no witch-craze. Unlike its south German neighbours, it executed no witch before 1625 and its cases tended to



Plate 9.1 The case of Anna Ebeler, 1669, *Relation Oder Beschreibung so Anno 1669... von einer Weibs/Person...*, Augsburg 1669

Note: These images might be used and reused for different cases. Thus, some of the same scenes are to be found in *Warhafft Historische Abbild: und kurtze Beschreibung, was sich unlängst in (...) Augspurg (...) zugetragen (...), Augsburg 1654; und Warhafft Beschreibung des Urthels (...), Augsburg 1666.*

come singly, one or two every few years after 1650.² Witchcraft of an everyday, unremarkable kind, the themes of the cases can tell us a great deal about early modern psyches. For Ebeler's crimes were not unusual. It was typical, too, that of her accusers all except one should have been



Plate 9.2 A: Anna Ebeler is abducted from a dance by the Devil and led to her house

women, and that her victims were young infants aged up to about six weeks and women who had just given birth.

One dominant theme in witch-trials in Augsburg is motherhood. Relations between mothers, those occupying maternal roles and children, formed the stuff of most, though not all, witchcraft accusations in the town.³ To this extent, early feminist works which focused on birth and midwives in their explanations of witchcraft were making an important observation.⁴ But though the trials were concerned with the question of motherhood they were not, it seems to me, male attempts to destroy a female science of birth nor were they concerned with wresting control of reproduction from women. What is striking is that they were typically accusations brought by mothers, soon after giving birth, against women intimately concerned with the care of the child, most often the lying-in-maid and not the midwife.

Many investigations of witchcraft proceed by trying to explain why women should be scapegoated as witches or what other conflicts may have been at the root of the case – conflicts involving issues with which we are more comfortable, such as struggles over charity, property or political power. However, I want to argue that the cases need to be understood in their own terms by means of the themes they develop. As historians, I think we may best interpret them as psychic documents which recount particular predicaments. Witchcraft cases seem to epitomize the bizarre and irrational, exemplifying the distance that separates us from the past. What interests me, however, is the extent to which early modern subjectivities are different or similar to ours. I shall argue

that unless we attend to the imaginative themes of the interrogations themselves, we shall not understand witchcraft. This project has to investigate two sides of the story, the fears of those who accused, and the self-understanding of people who in the end, as I shall argue, came to see themselves as witches.

Our perplexity in dealing with witchcraft confessions derives in part from their epistemological status. In a profession used to assessing documents for their reliability, it is hard to know how to interpret documents which we do not believe to be factual. But witchcraft confessions and accusations are not products of realism, and they cannot be analysed with the methods of historical realism. This is not to say that they are meaningless: on the contrary, they are vivid, organized products of the mind. Our problem is not that early modern people had a different ontology to our own, believing in a world populated by ghosts who walked at night, devils who might appear in the form of young journey-men, severed arms carrying needles or wandering souls inhabiting household dust. Rather, all phenomena in the early modern world, natural and fantastic, had a kind of hyper-reality which resided in their significance. Circumstantial details were ransacked for their meaning for the individual, and for what they might reveal about causation and destiny. Causation, which could involve divine or diabolic intervention in human affairs, was understood in terms both moral and religious. Consequently, we need to understand confessions and accusations as mental productions with an organization that is in itself significant. This means analysing the themes of witchcraft not to tell us about the genealogy of magical beliefs – the approach taken by Carlo Ginzburg in his recent book⁵ – but to tell us about the conflicts of the actors.

In the cases I have explored, witchcraft accusations centrally involved deep antagonisms between women, enmities so intense that neighbours could testify against a woman they had known for years in full knowledge that they were sending her 'to a blood bath' as one accused woman cried to her neighbours as they left the house for the chancellery.⁶ Their main motifs concern suckling, giving birth, food and feeding; the capacities of parturient women's bodies and the vulnerability of infants. This was surprising, at least to me: I had expected to find in witchcraft a culmination of the sexual antagonism which I have discerned in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century German culture. The idea of flight astride a broom or pitchfork, the notions of a pact with the Devil sealed by intercourse, the sexual abandonment of the dance at the witches' sabbath, all seemed to suggest that witchcraft had to do with sexual guilt and attraction between men and women, and that its explanation might lie in the moralism of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation years, when Catholics and Protestants sought to root out prostitution and adultery, shame women who became pregnant before marriage and

impose a rigorous sexual code which cast the women as Eve, the temptress who was to blame for mankind's fall.⁷

Some of the cases I found certainly dealt with these themes, but the primary issue in what we might term a stereotypical case of witchcraft was maternity. The conflicts were not concerned with the social construction of gender but were related much more closely to the physical changes a woman's body undergoes when she bears children.⁸ While these clearly have a social meaning and thus a history, the issues were so closely tied to the physical reality of the female sex and to sexual identity at the deepest level that they seemed to elude off-the-peg explanations in terms of female roles and gender conflict. The stuff of much of the accusations made by the mothers was not femininity or genital sexuality, but was pre-Oedipal in content, turning on the relationship to the breast and to the mother in the period before the infant has a sense of sexual identity.⁹ The primary emotion of the witchcraft cases, envy, also originates in this early period of life.¹⁰ Witchcraft accusations followed a pattern with a psychic logic: the accusations were made by women who experienced childbirth and their most common type of target was a post-menopausal, infertile woman who was caring for the infant. Often, as in the case we have just explored, she was the lying-in-maid.

Here it might be objected that witchcraft interrogations and confessions cannot be used to give us insight into early modern psychic life in this way. They are stereotyped products, it might be argued, not of those interrogated but of the minds of the interrogators. These men wanted to know about witches' sabbaths, sex with the Devil and cannibalism and they forced this information out of the women using leading questions and even outright promptings, resorting to torture to gain the confession they needed to convict the woman. However, such an objection does not recognize the cultural attitude to pain nor its place in the dynamic of interrogation in early modern society. Witches were women who could not feel pain as normal women could. They were unable to weep and they did not sense the witch-pricker's needle.¹¹ A measure of physical pain, so the interrogators believed, was a process of the body which enabled the witch to free herself from the Devil's clutches, weakening her defences against the admission of guilt. The amount of pain had to be finely judged by the executioner, a scientist of the body. Using his knowledge of the victim's frailty, and in consultation with the council, he calculated the precise grades required at each stage of the process (from exhibition of the equipment, stretching on the rack without attaching weights, through to attaching weights of increasing size) so that the witch's integral, diabolic personality might be stripped away by the application of pain to uncover the truth.¹² Like a kind of medicine of salvation, it assisted her travail to return to the Christian community in contrition so that she might die in a state of grace. Torture was part of an understanding, shared by the witch and her persecutors, of the

interrelation of body and soul: the skin of the outer person had to be flayed away to arrive at psychological truth. Those who did not crack under torture were set free despite the seriousness of the accusations against them, because they were said to have proven their innocence: they lacked a diabolic interiority of this kind.

Pain had a religious significance too. By experiencing the pain of flagellation, or participating in the procession of the Twelve Stations of the Cross, a ritual which reached its final form in the Counter-Reformation in Augsburg,¹³ one could come closer to Christ by physical imitation of His sufferings. Maternity involved pain. Mary herself had borne Jesus in suffering, and the seven swords of grief piercing the suffering Madonna were a powerful Baroque image. Luisa Accati has written of the importance of the Madonna in agony to Baroque understandings of both Marian piety and motherhood.¹⁴ Soothsayers told of spells in which they appealed to 'the suffering of Mary as she lay on her martyr-bed of straw'.¹⁵ The witch, the woman whose capacity to feel pain was impaired, was thus an unmaternal woman, alienated from the realm of pain so manifestly experienced by the new mothers who accused her of sorcery. Devoid of maternal affection, the witch was incapable of feeling pity for her victims.

Moreover, the system of confession also rested on a measure of collusion between witch and questioner. The witch had to freely affirm her confession after it had been given, in the absence of torture. This was a requirement of the Imperial Law Code of Charles V of 1532, and it was certainly not honoured all over the empire.¹⁶ But in a place like Augsburg which did not experience mass witch-hunts, the credibility of the phenomenon of witchcraft rested on the ultimate truth-telling of the witch. Witches could and did modify their confession: so, for instance, Anna Ebeler, who had confessed to having sex with the Devil a countless number of times, insisted at the last that she had only rarely had diabolic intercourse, a disclaimer incorporated in her final public condemnation. Witches were commonly supposed to have renounced God, Jesus, Mary and the saints, but Ebeler was able to maintain that she had never forsworn the Virgin, who had comforted her during diabolic assaults, and that she had never desecrated the Host as she had earlier confessed she had.¹⁷ Another who firmly denied that she was a witch was not described as such in her denunciation, even though she was executed for having used witchcraft.¹⁸

This freedom was in some sense apparent rather than real: witches who confessed and then revoked their confession embarked on a long and hideous game of cat and mouse with their interrogators, as they were reinterrogated and tortured until their narrative was consistent. But interrogators knew when a confession was simply a result of torture or its fear, and they noted this. Crucial to their own understanding of their task was the belief that, by repetition and forcing the culprit to describe and redescribe the minutiae of the crime, checking with wit-

nesses, the truth would eventually be uncovered. That truth took on a kind of talismanic quality, as the witch was forced to tell and retell it in up to ten sessions of questioning, making it consistent. Her statements were then read out in full to the assembled council before condemnation could be agreed; a summary of her crimes was recorded in the Council's Punishment Book and read out before her execution; and this material formed the basis for the broadsheets and pamphlets that were written about the case.¹⁹ The reiteration fixed the details until there could be no doubt about the narrative. It was a truth which the witch herself freely acknowledged and for which she alone had provided the material. For despite the power of the stereotypes in the witch's confession, these do not explain the particular inflections individual witches gave to them, as they described how they went to a sabbath that was held just by the gallows outside Augsburg, or how the Devil appeared to them in a long black coat, dressed for all the world like a merchant.²⁰

There is a further collusive dynamic at work in interrogation, that between witch and torturer. Torture was carried out by the town hangman, who would eventually be responsible for the convicted witch's execution. Justice in the early modern period was not impersonal: the act of execution involved two individuals who, by the time of execution, were well acquainted with each other. Particularly in witch-trials, torture and the long period of time it took for a conviction to be secured gave the executioner a unique knowledge of an individual's capacity to withstand pain, and of their physiological and spiritual reactions to touch. In a society where nakedness was rare, he knew her body better than anyone else. He washed and shaved the witch, searching all the surfaces of her body for the tell-tale diabolic marks – sometimes hidden 'in her shame', her genitals. He bound up her wounds after the torture. On the other hand, he was a dishonourable member of society, excluded from civic intercourse and forced to intermarry among his own kind. His touch might pollute; yet his craft involved him in physically investigating the witch, a woman who if innocent was forbidden him. He advised on the mode of execution, assessing how much pain the witch might stand, a function he could potentially exploit to show mercy or practise cruelty.²¹ In consequence, a bond of intense personal dependence on the part of the witch on her persecutor might be established. Euphrosina Endriss was greatly agitated when a visiting executioner from nearby Memmingen inspected her. She pleaded that 'this man should not execute her, she would rather that Hartman should execute her, for she knew him already'.²²

Once the torturer's application of pain had brought the witch to confess, she knew she faced execution, and she knew her executioner. In the procedure of interrogation itself, carried out in the presence of council interrogators, scribes and executioner, there is an unmistakable sado-masochistic logic, as the witch, in response to pain, might reveal

details of her crimes only to deny them subsequently; or as she proffered scattered scraps of information about diabolic sex only then to tantalize her questioners with contradiction or silence. In this sadistic game of showing and concealing, the witch forced her persecutors to apply and reapply pain, prising her body apart to find her secret. Once it was found, she might herself identify with the aggressor: so, at the conclusion of her final confession as a witch, when it was plain she faced death, Anna Ebeler fell at her persecutors' feet in tears, asking for a merciful execution. 'She begged my lords for forgiveness for what she had done wrong. She thanked them for granting her such a good imprisonment and treatment.'²³ Masochism, however, has its twin in sadism. Even in death, the resolution of the game, the witch herself was believed able to retaliate against her tormentor. One hangman found his hands suddenly crippled after he executed two witches in 1685, and his colleague had to execute the third. Just before Barbara Fischer was executed, so one chronicler noted, a powerful rainstorm struck as if everything must drown: this witch, the writer observed, had shown no signs of contrition.²⁴ At every stage, the trial progressed through a combustion of sadism, retaliation and masochism, in which each actor might in fantasy veer from persecutor to victim to tormentor.

How can the historian make use of material generated in such circumstances? In spite of the geographical specificity and precision of detail we noted earlier in the confession material, witchcraft confessions certainly do possess a stereotypical aspect. There are elements, like the diabolic pact, the sabbath, the powder the Devil gave them to do harm, which appear in most confessions. But the basic psychic images of any society are usually the stuff of cliché. It is their commonness which makes these images seem banal, yet enables them to give form to inchoate, shared terrors and common predicaments. It is undoubtedly true that the pressures of interrogation and pain caused accused witches to shape their accounts of their own emotions and present a narrative of their psychic worlds in a particular way – the language of witchcraft forced them to present the Devil as their seducer and the ultimate cause of their fall. But narratives in which people try to make sense of their psychic conflicts usually involve borrowing from a language which is not at first the individual's own. We might say that coming to understand oneself can involve learning to recognize one's feelings in the terms of a theory, psychoanalytic or diabolic, which one might not originally have applied to oneself, and it can also entail a kind of violence.

What was the substance of the witches' crime? The grief and terror of the witnesses concentrated on the bodies of those who were the victims of witchcraft. Their bodies bore the signs of their martyrdom. As one mother put it, her dead child was covered in sores so that he looked like a devotional image of a martyr.²⁵ Strange signs were seen: nipples

appeared all over the body of one infant, erupting into pussy sores. The legs of another were misshapen and bent.²⁶ Repeatedly, witnesses stress the physical character of the victim's agony, incomprehensible suffering which cannot be alleviated by the onlookers or by the mother, and which excite hatred, revenge and guilt feelings in part because of the sufferer's innocence. In emotionally-laden language, the witnesses describe the 'piteous' way a child died, and their own failure to get the child to thrive. It is in this collective world of gossip and advice that the rumours of witchcraft first began, in the grief and guilt of the mother at the loss of the tiny baby, and as the women around them sought to identify the cause of this inexplicable, unbearable suffering. Such gossip could be deadly. It was her employer's tongue, her 'wicked gob' as Barbara Fischer put it, using the term applied to animals' mouths, which caused one lying-in-maid to retaliate against her maligner by poisoning her.²⁷

The themes of the injury are not only pitiful but frightening. These terrors circle around nourishment and oral satisfaction, evoking powerful pre-Oedipal feelings. The breast, milk and nourishment were its key images. The food the witch gave the mother was sprinkled with white or black diabolic powders or the soups she was fed were poisonous, and these of course influenced the milk the infant received in a very immediate way. Attacks on the mother's food were thus attacks on her infant as well. When the witch killed, she often used poison, perverting the female capacity to nourish and heal. So one grandmother was interrogated three times and tortured because her young grandson suspected witchcraft when he felt queasy after drinking an aniseed water tonic she had given him.²⁸ The witch could be a kind of evil mother who harmed instead of nourishing her charge. The flow of nourishment could be disrupted so that the child dried out and died. In one case, the witch was accused of literally reversing the flow of the maternal fluids, herself sucking the infant dry and feeding on it. Its mother described how

its little breasts had been sucked out so that milk had been pressed out from the child's little teats contrary to nature, . . . and from this time on the child had lost weight so that it looked as if hardly a pound of flesh remained on it.²⁹

Another baby was found to be covered with a myriad of tiny teats as if it had become a mere drinking vessel for the thirsty witch; yet another baby's teats produced 'a little drop of white watery liquid'.³⁰ The signs that sorcery was afoot were clearly written on the infant's body. Its skin dried out for lack of fluid, or else erupted in sores as if evil fluids within its body were forcing their way out. Its entire little body might become 'red and blue, all mixed up, and rigid and hard, like a plank of wood'.³¹ The infant might be unable to drink from its own mother, yet when given to another woman, be 'so hearty in sucking that it made her weep'.³² (These themes could also emerge in cases which did not



Plate 9.3 B: Ebeler's night ride with the evil one; C: Ebeler at the witches' dance; D: The witches' assembly and the diabolic feast

correspond to the classic accusation against a maid: so Regina Schiller denied that she had had sex with the Devil. He had tried to seduce her but instead 'had come to her breasts, and had tried to give her a little powder so that she could harm people, especially children'.³³ Here, too, a woman was thinking of herself as a witch who was the possessor of a poisonous breast, harming children, again working the images of pre-Oedipal nourishing rather than exploring fantasies of sex with the Devil.) In all these cases, the infant's feeding had been disrupted so that no satisfactory nourishing could take place and the relation between mother and child was destroyed. Feeding had been reversed and the infant's young rosy flesh was wasting away while the old witch thrived.

These beliefs rested on a whole economy of bodily fluids. A post-menopausal woman, the old witch was in a sense a dry woman who, instead of feeding others well, diverted nourishment to her own selfish ends. Older widows were believed to have the power to ruin young men sexually, and youths were warned against marrying such women because they were sexually ravenous, and would suck out their seed, weakening them with their insatiable hunger for seminal fluid and contaminating them with their own impurities.³⁴ The old witch's fluids did not flow outwards. Often her magic was directed against fertility, making women barren.³⁵ As was well known, witches could not weep, and old widows could neither menstruate nor suckle children. Instead, so the science of demonology explained, she was nourishing the Devil. The warts for which the executioner searched her naked body were the diabolic teats on which the Devil sucked. Witches were also believed to communicate without confessing, and to secrete the Host in their mouths, taking it home to trample upon and dishonour. In doing so they were not only misusing holy food but maltreating a child, the infant Jesus whose saving death provided the Bread of salvation, squashing him

and making him suffer pain. This motif is clearly taken from the older myth of Jewish ritual murder, the belief that Jews were stealing the Host and torturing it to make it bleed, and that they stole Christian children so that they could use their blood in secret rituals.³⁶ Yet even this hoary fantasy was incorporated into the fabric of daily life: Anna Schwayhofer confessed to this crime in the apocalyptic year 1666, and described how, housewife to the fingertips, she had afterwards swept the crumbs of the desecrated Host off the floor of her lodgings with a broom.³⁷

Witches were women who did not feed others except to harm them. Failed exchanges of food typified a witch's interactions with her neighbours. So one woman, suspected of being a witch, offered two sisters who lived in her house a dish of Bavarian carrots. Yet this was a two-edged peace offering. The woman insisted the sisters eat the food, and sat with them until it was all consumed. One of the two was pregnant, and the dish made her ill.³⁸ The witch said the food would strengthen the child within her, yet this wish for the child's health actually meant its opposite. Like the fairies of fairytale who are not invited to the baptism, the old woman's evil 'wishes' for the infant's future blighted its life. And this could happen in a trice, even without the witch's intention: Maria Gogel explained how 'if a person ate plain milk, peas, meat or cheese, and chanced upon a child and merely said "Oh, what a beautiful child" immediately it is bewitched'.³⁹

Witches' other means of harming was by 'trucken', pressing down on the infant or its mother. The verb may also refer to the effort of pushing down in labour. In witchcraft it is used in at least three different contexts: to describe the way the Devil forces one woman to do evil, the smothering of an infant, and a mysterious kind of oppression felt by the woman who has just given birth. Georg Schmetzer's wife complained of feeling that something was coming to her at night, lying on her and pressing her so that she suffered from pain down one side. She suspected the lying-in-maid of coming to her bed in the evening and lying on top of her – a fear strengthened by the maid's unorthodox suggested remedy for her backache that she should undress and lie on top of her in a kind of all over massage.⁴⁰ Anna Maria Cramer believed a witch was coming to her at night and lying on her, pressing down on her pregnant body.⁴¹ Another woman heard a mysterious voice crying 'druckdich Madelin, druckdich' (be pressed down, Maggie, be pressed down) and she felt something trying to bite her neck. Her lying-in-maid Euphrosina Endriss was finally brought to confess that she had 'pressed' the baby she carried about with her, squashing its skull so that it died.⁴² The themes here do not appear to be directly sexual. Rather, what is described is a kind of heavy, deadly embrace, again typified by an ambiguous mixture of love and hatred which might kill the infant with a kind of excess of maternity. The mother's feelings have more to do with extreme depression, immobility and passivity. In all these cases, the mother



Plate 9.4 E: Ebeler's interrogation and confession of witchcraft; F: Ebeler perverts two innocent children, a boy and a girl

seems to suffer from a kind of lassitude, unable to move or act to protect herself and her child beyond screaming for help – she cannot fight back, and the oppressive sensation of smothering symbolizes her inaction and the diffuse nature of the threat to herself and her child, causing harm not from within her own body but in a kind of anonymous pressure from without. As with the disturbances of nourishment, the violence is indirect, its source unclear and retaliation impossible.

Why should it have been motherhood which engendered these murderous antagonisms between women? Mothers in the early modern period spent the first few weeks of their child's life 'lying in', recuperating from the birth. These six or so weeks were set apart from normal life as the woman retreated into the lying-in-room, resting in the bed from which the husband would be banished. There she was the centre of the house, and there, lying in bed, she would entertain her female friends who had supported her during the birth, holding a women-only birth party with wine and delicacies to celebrate her delivery. If she could afford it, she would employ a lying-in-maid, whose job it was to care for both mother and child. During this period when her life was predominantly lived in the world of women, she could not leave the house and some believed her to be under the power of the Devil.⁴³ Evil influences might make their presence felt; ghosts might appear. At the end of this time she would go to church for the ceremony of purification or churching, which marked her return to marital cohabitation and public life, and the lying-in-maid would be dismissed. Today the attendant psychic conflicts of this period of the mother's life might be described as relating to the loss of the pregnant state and the ending of the unity of mother and child. Together with the incessant demands on time and energy that the new infant makes, these might be related to

maternal depression and to a mixture of feelings towards the infant which may extend to anger, envy or even to wishing harm to the child.

What seems to emerge from these cases, however, is a different set of historically formed psychic mechanisms for dealing with this predicament. The time of separation of mother and child was clearly marked in ritual terms.⁴⁴ The mother's re-entry into society as a single being, uncontaminated by what can – if she bears a male child – seem to be the bisexuality of pregnancy, was celebrated in churching, a ritual which remained an important ceremony despite the Reformation's attempt to curtail it. These few weeks were also full of danger for mother and child. According to English figures, a woman had a 6 to 7 per cent chance of dying in childbed, and while this figure may seem low, it was an ever-present terror, doubtless added to by the stories passed around by her women visitors.⁴⁵ In the first few weeks of life the child was at its most delicate, as feeding had to be established, either with the mother, a wet-nurse or else by hand. Interestingly, it was during this period or else immediately after the lying-in-maid's departure that the child began to ail. But instead of seeking the source of her ills in post-natal depression, within herself, as we would, the mother's anxieties about the child's fate and her own ability to nourish it were directed outwards, so that harm to either mother or baby was believed to have been caused by another. Here we might make use of what Melanie Klein says about splitting, which allows intolerable feelings of hostility and malice to be projected on to another, so that the mother recognizes only benevolence in herself, projecting the evil feelings about herself on to the 'other' mother.⁴⁶ The lying-in-maid was thus destined for the role of the evil mother, because she could be seen to use her feminine power to give oral gratification to do the reverse – to suck the infant dry, poison the mother and her milk and, in the most extreme form of witch fantasies, to kill, dismember and eat the child at the witches' sabbath. At a time when the new mother's experience of giving birth and caring for an infant might raise memories of her own infancy, recalling the terrifying dependence on the maternal figure for whom she may have experienced unadmitted, intolerable feelings of hatred as well as love, there was another person playing the maternal role to hand. We might say that during the new mother's period of feeling complete inertia, 'pressed down upon', she finally gained the strength to retaliate, resolving her state by accusing the witch of harming her child. In this sense, so far from being a simple expression of misogyny, early modern society can be said to have taken the fears of the mother seriously, supporting her search for the culprit instead of describing her as suffering from post-natal depression or attributing a kind of madness to her – women today may attempt to use the defence of post-partum psychosis to argue that they were not legally responsible for crimes committed during the first few weeks after giving birth.

The lying-in-maid was almost over-determined as the culprit, should

witchcraft be suspected. Old, no longer capable of bearing a child herself and widowed, she was a woman who housed alone and was a transitory member of the households of others. No longer at the heart of a bustling household of her own, she was a hired member of the family for whom she worked, privy to the most intimate physical secrets of the bodies of those she tended. An interloper, she was never accorded a real place of her own – one even had to share a cramped bed with a servant which was so narrow that she fell out of it in the night.⁴⁷ The lying-in-maid undermined the settled hierarchies of the household at a time when the new baby's arrival overturned the workshop's rhythm. For the six to eight weeks after the mother had given birth, she alone carried out the duties of a mother, dandling, washing and swaddling the baby, and caring for its mother, giving her nourishing soups. Just as she had no place in the house she might call her own, so also her work life left her humiliatingly dependent on others: on the midwife, who trained her, recommended her and from whom she might hear of her next job; on her employer, the mother, who might choose not to re-employ her and who could blacken or enhance her reputation by gossiping with other mothers about her. She lacked the midwife's qualifications and official status as an employee of the council, nor did she have the luxury of the midwife's official retainer to tide her over slack periods. Often, it was her very insecurity which was turned against her. One woman who went down on her knees to plead with her accusers only made them the more convinced that something was amiss; frightened people were likely to be caught in the Devil's snares.⁴⁸

But she was also invested with awesome power. She had her particular recipes for strengthening soups, she had her methods for bringing up young infants, she 'alone cared for the child, and it was in no one's hand but hers' as one lying-in-maid accused of witchcraft put it.⁴⁹ She was strong at a time when the new mother was ill and weakened, and she was fulfilling her tasks. The new mother, sleeping alone in the marital bed, was not 'mistress of the household' in sexual terms: old, infertile and unhusbanded as the lying-in-maid was, she represented a double threat to the mother, standing both for the mother's own future and sometimes representing a sexual threat as well. If the husband were 'up to no good', the lying-in-maid, who in many cases had borne illegitimate children, might be suspected.⁵⁰

The lying-in-maid dealt with the waste products of the body, she had access to the afterbirth and to cauls and she had the care of the infant's body.⁵¹ One lying-in-maid was accused of purloining the afterbirth, burning it at night under her bed in a bid to harm mother and child, and it was only with great difficulty that she managed to persuade the judges that she had merely been attempting to clean a pewter bowl.⁵² Another was foolish enough to accuse the midwife of hiding a baby's caul. Taking the 'little net' to the child's father in the hope of gaining a

handsome tip for her trouble, she not only antagonized the midwife but led people to suspect that she had her own nefarious purposes for the caul.⁵³ Through the waste products of the body, things invested with their owner's power – hair, nails, afterbirth – the sorcerer could control the individual to whom they had belonged. These substances could be used to direct the emotions, causing the bewitched person to fall in love, and they could be used to harm. In this cosmology, emotions were highly sensitive to manipulation of the body. Emotions, like physical pains, could be the result of external events and could readily be ascribed to other people, their source sought outside rather than in the self.

As any mother knew, to antagonize a lying-in-maid was to court disaster. 'I gave her good words until she left the house', so one young mother said.⁵⁴ Many of the witnesses mention the time when the lying-in-maid was 'out of the house', a phrase which captures the element of menace the maid was thought to represent. Only then might an accusation be safely made, because then the maid could not revenge herself by bewitching the child. (One seer refused to help an ailing child until the maid had gone: then she succeeded in restoring its rosy flesh, but it began to waste away again when the maid returned shortly after to collect money she was owed.)⁵⁵ So fraught was the moment of the maid's departure that her formal relinquishing of responsibility could also become a test of whether the child had thrived. One woman repeated the ambiguous rhyme she had spoken on parting from the child:

My dear little treasure, now you are well recovered
Look master and mistress
Now I depart from the child
Whatever may happen to him now
I will not be held to blame⁵⁶

Such a jingle, with its careful divestment of responsibility, has a menacing tone. It is a double-edged wish. An attempt to free the speaker of blame, it carries the implied threat that something *will* happen to the infant, and it prophylactically points the finger at someone else, by implication the mother, who now assumes the maternal role alone. Indeed, harm often came to the child after the lying-in-maid had departed. 'It was the first night . . . that the lying-in-maid was out of the house', one mother remembered, that strange things began to happen; it was just after the maid had left, another mother noted, when her child had suddenly sickened.⁵⁷ Something of the uncertain nature of the relationship between mother and lying-in-maid is caught in the way one maid kept referring to the presents she had received, listing them and naming their giver, in a fruitless attempt to determine the relationship as one of goodwill – yet even the mothers she thought had valued her care were now willing to testify against her conduct.⁵⁸ Her behaviour was always indeterminate, its meaning open to a subsequent hostile reinterpretation.

Above all, it was the lying-in-maid's maternal role which placed her in the role of suspect. Sometimes this might lead to straightforward conflicts over upbringing – Euphrosina Endriss was blamed for molly-coddling a child, giving it too many warm cushions.⁵⁹ Midwives and mothers suspected maids of bathing the child in water that was too hot, or of swaddling its limbs too tightly so that it might become deformed.⁶⁰ Injuries inflicted in the first few weeks of the infant's life might not manifest themselves for years: the failure of one child to speak, harm to one girl's reproductive organs, were all blamed on the lying-in-maid.⁶¹ 'Why must it always be the lying-in-maid who is to blame?' asked one accused woman.⁶² A woman who could not be trusted, a woman unable to bear children herself, she was tailor-made for the role of the ultimate evil mother. The very intensity of the bonds between her and the child, as the person who enjoyed a primary attachment to the baby in its first weeks of life, were also the reason to suspect her. As with all witchcraft, it was the powerful ambivalence of feeling which nourished witchery: witchcraft was to be feared not from those indifferent to you, but from those whose relationship was close and whose intimate knowledge of your secrets could be turned to harm. Consequently, every good wish a suspected woman might make for the health and well-being of an infant was charged with its opposite. So one young mother feared the frequent visits the lying-in-maid made to her infant's cradle, standing over it. She later discovered a knife underneath its crib.⁶³

68 And the lying-in-maid had a motive: envy. Envy was the motor of witchcraft as seventeenth-century people understood it. One of the seven deadly sins, it was a feeling which could have material force. It is also an emotion which, according to Melanie Klein, first develops in the early months of an infant's life and is deeply connected to feelings of love and hate. Envy involves wishing harm towards an object. In the logic of sorcery, where emotions might be externalized on to things outside the person and where feelings had active force, the emotion itself was the wellspring of injury. Circumstances conspired to make the lying-in-maid appear a likely sufferer from envy and hatred. As seventeenth-century people saw it, she was poor and single; her employer had a workshop and was comfortably off. Infertile herself, she tended a mother who was surrounded by the love, attention and presents of other women, and who had a baby. By contrast her own children had been conceived illegitimately or had died in infancy. So Barbara Fischer had been raped by her stepfather twenty years before she found herself accused of witchcraft. The child of their relationship had died just a few days after birth. At the time, she had begged the council to let her marry, blaming her stepfather's refusal to let her wed for her own fall into sin with him. But the council had punished her by confining her inside the house for her shame, and, two decades later, she explained her fall into witchcraft as the consequence of not being



Plate 9.5 G: Ebeler is led to execution and branded with burning tongs

allowed to marry and become a mother.⁶⁴ Interestingly, her diabolic lover appeared to her in the form of a journeyman dyer, the trade her stepfather had followed. Admission of the envy she felt for the mother she tended was, in her case as in many others, the first step in her interrogation towards a full confession.⁶⁵ The witch, too, fully believed that to feel envy for a woman was to wish to harm her, and in this emotional world, where things were invested with meaning, emotions could also act directly. Anna Schwayhofer explained she had summoned the Devil when, conscious of her own sins, she despaired of God's mercy: she had taken communion without confession, and she felt 'great envy, resentment and enmity to various persons'.⁶⁶

To this point I have been exploring the psychic world of those who made the accusation, arguing that it is best understood as invoking deep emotions from the early period of the mother's own infant life. She and those around her are able to crystallize her own ambivalence towards her infant by projecting intolerable feelings on to the lying-in-maid. I am not arguing that this always happened: in the vast majority of cases, the childbed was concluded happily and the maid was dismissed with mutual goodwill. But I am claiming that the social organization of mothering practices allowed this to happen, so that a certain kind of psychic dramatic script was available should things go wrong.

But the witch herself had an understanding of her own behaviour. Its main element concerned her own admission of envy. This was the breaking point which then catapulted her into a range of other confessions about the Devil. These form a distinct layer of testimony, elicited under torture and often given with a considerable degree of reluctance. In other contexts, however, where children were not the target of malice, the Devil could be a dominant theme: so the young Regina Schiller baffled authorities all over southern Germany for over a decade with

her bizarre physical contortions and extravagant confessions, telling the authorities about her lurid pacts with the Devil and showing the written contract for so many years and so many days, the number indicated with little strokes of blood because she could not count so far.⁶⁷

By contrast, the witches whose fates we have considered here were chary of admitting even to flying or attending the witches' sabbath, and when they did so they presented themselves as outsiders, women who hung at the edges of the wild assemblies, without finding friends among the fellow witches. One witch recalled that the others came from elsewhere, they wore masks and spoke with accents she could not understand, and they were well dressed, not of her class. She did not dance, and at the feast, few people sat at her table.⁶⁸ This was certainly a means of cutting down their involvement and guilt and yet the strong sense of being outsiders which their words convey suggests that the fantasies mirrored their current experience of isolation, socially marginal and shorn of friends who might succour them. Their relations with the Devil were distant and unsatisfactory. Even when conviction was a certainty, these accused witches still tried to minimize the extent of their sexual involvement with the Devil, Dorothea Braun insisting at the last that, contrary to her earlier confessions, she had never had sex with the Devil and had always resisted him; Anna Ebeler saying that she had told the Devil she was too old for such things; Anna Schwayhofer firmly denying that intercourse had ever taken place.⁶⁹ Indeed, Braun presents the Devil as a kind of peremptory employer, a master whose whims she was condemned never to satisfy. She was too slow learning the craft, she explained, and so the Devil beat her.⁷⁰ Their accounts usually give only the merest description of the Devil – he came as a journeyman, or dressed in black, he was a disembodied arm – and they try to argue that their bodies remained intact. Diabolic invasion presents a taboo from which they wanted to shield themselves. But genital sexuality is seldom their own explanation of what they do, even though the sexual narrative would excuse their deed with the culpability of Eve. Instead, dirt and degradation feature. This is most evident in the names of their diabolic lovers, which had names such as Hendirt, Gooseshit and the like, names which combine animality with excrement.⁷¹ Common to almost all is the acknowledgement of the feeling of hatred and the sense of being deserted by God, exiled from the community of fellow Christians. Yet their deeds are projected on to the Devil: he whispers what they should do, he gives them the powder, he forces them to harm the children. In this way their hostile emotions (apart from the first feelings of hatred) could be projected on to the Devil and dissociated from themselves, in a kind of splitting characteristic of witchcraft at every level.

But if I am right that witchcraft could involve conflicts between women that have to be understood in psychic terms, we still need to explain why such conflicts were open to expression through witchcraft at a particular

historical moment. After all, even in the town we have been considering here, there were witchcraft cases which followed this pattern or drew on these motifs for only a little over a century, and they were concentrated in the years from 1650 to 1700. After 1700, we can notice a dramatic inversion of the pattern. Now, children rather than their mothers became the objects of suspicion. Between 1724 and 1730, thirty-one child witches were locked up,⁷² while after the death of one suspected witch in custody in 1699, no older women were condemned.⁷³ This reversal suggests to me that the dynamics of much witch-hunting have to be sought in the relationship between mother and child which, after a certain point, switched to the child rather than its mother. I suspect that witch-hunting in the seventeenth century must in part be related to the idealization of motherhood in Baroque society. This is not simply a matter of misogyny: after all, it was because the state took the fears and accusations of suffering mothers seriously that cases could be prosecuted. Germany in the later seventeenth century was a society recovering from the ravages of the Thirty Years' War. In Augsburg, the population had halved: small wonder that people feared attacks on fertility.⁷⁴ Here the widow played a double role. On the one hand, attacks on old, post-menopausal women are a staple of misogynist tract from the late sixteenth century onwards. But on the other, the widow, I have been suggesting, was merely the mother's mirror image, a woman who could be the repository of all the fears about evil mothers. Maternal hostility and fears about evil mothers could not easily be expressed directly in a society where Mary was revered by both Catholics and Protestants, and where the image of the suffering Madonna was ubiquitous. Hence, too, the tendency in folk-tale to populate a story with evil stepmothers who alone can represent the bad mother, keeping pure the image of the good, dead mother.⁷⁵ Here it is no coincidence that this period also saw a dramatic increase in executions of the ultimate evil mother, the woman who commits infanticide: such women had to be executed. This rise occurred from the early seventeenth century onwards, even though the Imperial Law Code of 1532 had paved the way for such executions three generations before. Together with witchcraft, this accounted for the vast bulk of women executed in Augsburg in the seventeenth century.⁷⁶ The themes of much witchcraft, I would argue, are to be found not in a simple sexual antagonism between men and women, but in deeply conflicted feelings about motherhood. At this level, we can talk about misogyny: one trouble with modern psychoanalysis, I think, as with seventeenth-century witchcraft, is that in the end, a mother, or a figure in a maternal position, is made responsible for our psychic ills.

What I have been trying to do here is to explore the themes of early modern witchcraft not so much in order to explain that phenomenon, but in order to see, in the one area where we do have detailed documentation, whether early modern subjectivities were radically different from



Plate 9.6 H: Ebeler is executed and her body burnt to ashes

our own. That is, I have been asking whether and how there is a history of mind and emotion. It might be objected that I have used psychoanalytic categories in order to explore past mental phenomena, and to that extent, my argument is circular, but I think this conceptual difficulty is inherent in the productive use of ideas. One current problem is whether a body of theoretical work like psychoanalysis, designed in a particular historical period, can possibly do justice to the mental lives of people in quite a different time. It is certainly true that psychoanalytic theory can be used to reduce all symbolic worlds to the same meaning, so that everything speaks of phallogocentrism, or betrays the Oedipal complex. I do not think testimony should be read reductively in this way. In the material I was reading, basic psychic conflicts which did not accord with what I expected to find were emerging from witness statements. It seems to me that there are some primary areas of attachment and conflict – between those in maternal positions and children – which are pretty fundamental to human existence, but the form those conflicts may take and the attitude societies adopt to them may change.⁷⁷ This, it seems to me, is the territory of the historian. If historians declare the effects of primary emotions of this kind to be unknowable, they will be condemning us to use of a 'common-sense' model of psychological explanation which makes no sense at all because it leaves out of account the extent to which irrational, deep and unconscious feeling can determine human action – and it is hard to see how any history of witchcraft or even of religion can be satisfactory without exploring this dimension.

NOTES

- 1 Stadtarchiv Augsburg (hereafter cited as StadtAA), Urgichtensammlung (hereafter cited as Urg.), 28 Jan. 1669, Anna Ebeler.
- 2 StadtAA, Staßbücher des Rats, 1563–1703. For the indispensable, path-

breaking study of witchcraft in Bavaria, see Wolfgang Behringer, *Hexenverfolgung in Bayern. Volksmagie, Glaubenseifer und Staatsräson in der Frühen Neuzeit*, Munich 1987, pp. 431–69: there is one unclear case from 1563; one woman died under arrest in 1591 (p. 157), and another in 1699 (Straßbuch des Rats, 1654–99, 24 Sept. 1699, Elisabeth Memminger). See also Bernd Roeck, *Eine Stadt in Krieg und Frieden. Studien zur Geschichte der Reichsstadt Augsburg zwischen Kalenderstreit und Parität* (Schriftenreihe der Historischen Kommission bei der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften 37), Göttingen 1989, esp. vol. 1, pp. 113–16, 445–54; and vol. 2, pp. 539–52 on the witch-trial of 1625; and on the cases of 1654, see Wolfgang Wüst, 'Inquisitionsprozess und Hexenverfolgung im Hochstift Augsburg im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert', *Zeitschrift für Bayerische Landesgeschichte*, 50, 1987, pp. 109–26. On witch-hunting in the region as a whole, H.C. Erik Midelfort, *Witch Hunting in Southwestern Germany 1562–1684. The social and intellectual foundations*, Stanford, Calif. 1972.

- 3 Three of those executed were lying-in-maids, and a fourth was a failed midwife. Four of those heavily suspected were lying-in-maids and most were expelled from the town on other pretexts. Other cases were closely related. One executed witch killed her own child, another committed incest with her own son who later died, while a third had worked as a child-minder. In seven further cases, themes were borrowed from the same paradigm: the executed witches had harmed children for whom they were in some sense responsible.
- 4 Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English, *Witches, Midwives and Nurses. A history of women healers*, New York and London 1973. See also, for a survey of feminist views of witchcraft, Dagmar Unverhau, 'Frauenbewegung und historische Hexenverfolgung', in Andreas Blauert (ed.), *Ketzer, Zauberer, Hexen. Die Anfänge der europäischen Hexenverfolgungen*, Frankfurt am Main 1990. Recently it has been argued that witchcraft accusations were an attempt to destroy a female science of birth control: Gunnar Heinsohn and Otto Steiger, *Die Vernichtung der weisen Frauen. Beiträge zur Theorie und Geschichte von Bevölkerung und Kindheit* (Part A, Hexenverfolgung, Kinderwelten, Menschenproduktion, Bevölkerungswissenschaft), Herborn 1985. However, the cases the authors cite are actually about hostility to children, not about birth control: see, for example, pp. 149–56. For a critique of the Heinsohn-Steiger thesis, see Robert Jütte, 'Die Persistenz des Verhütungswissens in der Volkskultur. Sozial- und medizinhistorische Anmerkungen zur These von der 'Vernichtung der weisen Frauen'', *Medizinhistorisches Journal*, 24, 1989, pp. 214–31. David Harley has argued that there is little evidence for the importance of midwives among those executed in England: 'Historians as Demonologists: the myth of the midwife-witch', *Social History of Medicine*, 3, no. 1, 1990, pp. 1–26; and for a similar argument, Peter Kriedte, 'Die Hexen und ihre Ankläger. Zu den lokalen Voraussetzungen der Hexenverfolgungen in der frühen Neuzeit – Ein Forschungsbericht', *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung*, 14, 1987, pp. 47–71, 60. While it may be true that the absolute figure of midwives accused or executed was small, they are none the less a recognizable occupational group in the German evidence where only a few other work patterns may be discerned. Their significance might be better related to the involvement of mothers, lying-in-maids and others connected with the care of mothers and infants.
- 5 Carlo Ginzburg, *Ecstasies. Deciphering the witches' sabbath*, trans. Gregory Roberts, London 1990 (first published in Italian 1989): interestingly, one of the effects of Ginzburg's brilliant analysis is that women's predominance as victims in the witch-hunt tends to slip from the explanation.

- 6 StadtAA, Urg., 15 July 1650, Ursula Neher, testimony Sabina Stoltz, 29 July 1650. Anna Ebeler screamed that her persecutors were sending her 'to the butcher's slab', 'to the raven stone': StadtAA, Urg., 28 Jan. 1669, Anna Ebeler, testimony of Catharina Mörz, and Anna Ebeler, 24 Jan. 1669.
 - 7 See, on the sexual themes of images of witchcraft, Charles Zika, 'Fears of Flying: Representations of witchcraft and sexuality in early sixteenth-century Germany', *Australian Journal of Art*, 8, 1989-90, pp. 19-48; and on the themes of witch fantasy and their historical elaboration, Richard van Dülmen, 'Imaginationen des Teuflichen. Nächtliche Zusammenkünfte, Hexentänze, Teufelssabbate', and Eva Labouvie, 'Hexenspek und Hexenabwehr. Volksmagie und volkstümlicher Hexenglaube', both in Richard van Dülmen (ed.), *Hexenwelten. Magie und Imagination vom 16.-20. Jahrhundert*, Frankfurt am Main 1987; Robert Rowland, '"Fantastical and Devilish Persons": European witch-beliefs in comparative perspective', in Bengt Ankarloo and Gustav Henningsen (eds), *Early Modern European Witchcraft: Centres and peripheries*, Oxford 1990. On the project of sexual regulation in sixteenth-century Germany, Lyndal Roper, *The Holy Household. Women and morals in Reformation Augsburg*, Oxford 1989; and R. Po-Chia Hsia, *Social Discipline in the Reformation, Central Europe 1550-1750*, London 1989, pp. 122-73.
 - 8 See Estela V. Welldon, *Mother, Madonna, Whore. The idealization and denigration of motherhood*, London 1988, for an illuminating attempt to deal with the issues of female psychosexual identity.
 - 9 John Demos has also noticed the importance of pre-Oedipal themes in Salem witchcraft: *Entertaining Satan. Witchcraft and the culture of early New England*, Oxford 1982, esp. pp. 116ff, 179ff.
 - 10 Melanie Klein, 'Envy and Gratitude' (1957), in *idem, Envy and Gratitude and Other Works 1946-1963*, London 1975.
 - 11 See, for example, StadtAA, Urg., 20 Dec. 1685, Euphrosina Endriss, 6 March 1686, final observation that Endriss had often looked as though she were going to cry but not a single tear escaped from her; Urg., 28 Jan. 1669, Anna Ebeler: at the interrogation of 11 March 1669, Ebeler noted that the Devil had not allowed her to cry properly, but, as the scribe noted, she then began to cry heartily and to pray the Lord's Prayer, the Ave Maria, and deliver a 'beautiful' extempore confession. Urg., 11 Feb. 1666, Anna Schwayhofer, 15 March 1666, interrogators noted that she apparently felt no pain from the thumbscrews, a fact which the executioner explained by saying this was a mild form of torture. The executioner pricked a suspicious looking mark on Anna Elisabeth Christeiner but it disappeared, strong proof, he thought, of the Devil's work: Urg., April 1701, fourth interrogation, 3 Aug. 1701.
 - 12 See Edward Peters, *Torture*, Oxford 1985; on the executioner, often a key figure in the generation of a witch-hunt, Helmut Schuhmann, *Der Scharfrichter, Seine Gestalt - Seine Funktion* (Allgäuer Heimatbücher 67), Kempten 1964; Ch. Hinckelty, *Strafjustiz in alter Zeit*, Rothenburg 1980; Werner Danckert, *Unehrliche Berufe. Die verfeimten Leute*, Munich 1963; Franz Irsigler and Arnold Lassotta, *Bettler und Gaukler, Dirnen und Henker, Aussenseiter in einer mittelalterlichen Stadt*, Cologne 1984, pp. 228-82. The duration of torture might also be measured by the time it took to say particular prayers, a technique which tacitly invoked divine assistance against diabolic power: see, for example StadtAA, Urg., 30 June 1650, Barbar Fischer, for the use of the Miserere and Lord's Prayer. In some Bavarian trials, torture becomes part of an almost physical struggle against the Devil's power: see Michael Kunze, *Highroad to the Stake*, trans. William E. Yuill, Chicago, Ill. and London 1987; and Wolfgang Behringer 'Hexenverfolgung als Machtspiel', R. Po-Chia Hsia and B. Scribner (eds), *History and Anthropology in Early Modern Europe. Papers from the Wolfen-*
- habüttel conference 1991*, forthcoming. Kathy Stuart has researched the role of executioners and dishonourable people in Augsburg in the early modern period, and she has a great deal to say about the executioner as an expert on the body and its capacity to withstand pain, knowledge which also made his skills as a healer greatly valued: Kathy Stuart, 'The Boundaries of Honor. "Dishonorable people" in Augsburg 1500-1800', Ph.D. diss., Yale University 1993.
- 13 Louis Châtellier, *The Europe of the Devout. The Catholic Reformation and the formation of a new society*, Cambridge 1990, p. 150.
 - 14 Luisa Accati, 'The Larceny of Desire: The Madonna in seventeenth-century Catholic Europe', in Jim Obelkevich, Lyndal Roper and Raphael Samuel (eds), *Disciplines of Faith. Studies in religion, politics and patriarchy*, London 1987.
 - 15 StadtAA, Urg., 2 July 1590, Anna Stauder. I have developed the theme of parallels between spells and Counter-Reformation religiosity in 'Magic and the Theology of the Body: Exorcism in sixteenth century Augsburg', in Charles Zika (ed.), *No Other Gods Except Me: Orthodoxy and religious practice in Europe 1200-1700*, Melbourne 1991.
 - 16 *Die peinliche Gerichtsordnung Kaiser Karls V. von 1532*, 4th edn, ed. A. Kaufmann, Munich 1975, arts no. 48-58, pp. 50-6.
 - 17 StadtAA, Urg., 28 Jan. 1669, Anna Ebeler, interrogations 28 Jan. to 23 March 1669; Verruf, 32 March 1669; and Strafbuch Des Rats, 23 March 1669, pp. 312-14.
 - 18 She also denied intercourse with the Devil. StadtAA, Urg., 20 Dec. 1685, Euphrosina Endriss, 4 March 1686, and condemnation, 16 March 1686; Strafbuch des Rats, 1654-99, pp. 557-8.
 - 19 The procedure is described in Staatsbibliothek München, Handschriftenabteilung, Cgm 2026, fos 1 v-5 r. For pamphlets describing the cases, see, for example, *Warhafter Sumarisch: aussführlicher Bericht vnd Erzählung. Was die in des Heyligen Röm. Reichs Statt Augspurg etlich Wochen lang in verhafft gelegne zwo Hexen/benandtlich Barbara Frölin von Rieden/vnnd Anna Schüßlerin von Etringen . . .*, Augsburg 1654; Relation Oder Beschreibung so Anno 1669 . . . von einer Weibs-Person . . . , Augsburg 1669.
 - 20 StadtAA, Urg., 28 Jan. 1669, Anna Ebeler, interrogation 6 March 1669; Strafbuch des Rats, 1654-99, 7 Feb. 1673, Regina Schiller, pp. 390ff.
 - 21 In 1587 the 'evil custom' of allowing the hangman to carry out torture unsupervised had to be explicitly abolished in Augsburg: Behringer, *Hexenverfolgung in Bayern*, p. 158.
 - 22 StadtAA, Urg., 20 Dec. 1685, Euphrosina Endriss, report of Hans Adam Hartman, 5 Feb. 1686: Hans Adam Hartman, executioner of Donauwörth, was the son of the Augsburg executioner Mattheus Hartman who had been crippled in both hands (see below).
 - 23 'bitt in fine nochmalen fuessfellig vnd mit Weinen vmb Ein gnedig urthel, vnd Meine herrn vmb verzeihung, wass sie vnrechts gethan. bedankt sich auch dass man ihr so ein gute gefangnuss vnd tractament zukommen lassen', StadtAA, Urg., 28 Jan. 1669, Anna Ebeler, testimony of 21 March 1669. Anna Schwayhofer also concluded her final testimony by saying this was the confession by which she wanted to live and die, 'confessing also, that she was a heavy, yes, the greatest sinner, and therefore she would gladly die, only begging hereby for a merciful judgement': Urg., 11 Feb. 1666, Anna Schwayhofer, interrogation 31 March 1666. On sadism and masochism see Joyce McDougall, *Plea for a Measure of Abnormality*, London 1990 (1st edn, French 1978); Sigmund Freud, 'Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality', in *On Sexuality* (Pelican Freud Library 7), trans. James Strachey, ed. Angela

- Richards, London 1977; *idem.*, 'The Economic Problem of Masochism (1924)', in *On Metapsychology* (Penguin Freud Library 11), trans. James Strachey, ed. Angela Richards, London 1984.
- 42 Staatsbibliothek München, Handschriftenabteilung, Cgm 2026, fols 64 v-65 r, 61 r.
- 25 StadtAA, Urg., 11 Feb. 1666, Anna Schwayhofer, testimony of Margaretha Höcht, 19 Feb. 1666.
- 26 StadtAA, Urg., 15 July 1650, Ursula Neher, testimony of Susanna Custodis, 11 July 1650.
- 27 'nur vmb Jhres bösen Maules Willen', StadtAA, Urg., 14 June 1650, Barbara Fischer.
- 28 StadtAA, Urg., 13 May 1654, Anna Zoller.
- 29 StadtAA, Urg., 15 July 1650, Ursula Neher, testimony of Sabina Stoltz, 11 July 1650. See also Urg., 25 Jan. 1695, Barbara Melder, testimony of Judith Wolf, 23 Feb. 1695 who saw Melder, the suspected witch, suck her baby's breast.
- 30 StadtAA, Urg., 15 July 1650, Ursula Neher, testimony of Anna Erhardt, 29 July 1650: at the time, she interpreted this naturalistically and only considered sorcery when Stoltz and Vetter accused Neher.
- 31 'am ganzen leiblen ganz roht vnd blaw durcheinander, auch ganz stärr vnd hart, wie ein holz', StadtAA, Urg., 11 Feb. 1666, Anna Schwayhofer, testimony of Hans Adam Sperl, 19 Feb. 1666.
- 32 'da habe das kind so herzhafft angefallen vnd von Ihr getrunken dass sie Köppin sich geJammert vnd dorüber Weinen müssen', StadtAA, Urg., 28 Jan. 1669, Anna Ebeler, testimony of Anna Maria Kopf, 13 Feb. 1669.
- 33 'Er ihr zu den Prüssten khomben, vnd ein pulverlin geben wollen, damit den Leüthen, vnd sonderlich Khinder zuschaden', StadtAA, Strafbuch des Rats, 1654-99, 7 Feb. 1673, p. 390, Regina Schiller.
- 34 See Fredericus Petrus Gayer, *Viereckichtes Eheschätzlein. Da ist: Die vier Gradus der Eheleute*, Erfurt, Johann Beck 1602, esp. fos C iii r ff. on widows' lust, D vii v ff. and E ii v where the writer warns that young men who marry old widows are likely to pine and die in their youth before their elderly wives do, because these old widows have concentrated impurities in them (presumably owing to the cessation of menstruation) and even have impure, poisonous breath.
- 35 See, for example, Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Jasmin's Witch. An investigation into witchcraft and magic in south-west France during the seventeenth century*, trans. Brian Pearce, London 1987, pp. 25, 43, 59-60: in rural communities in particular, the hostility to fecundity also involves destruction of the earth's fertility.
- 36 See R. Po-Chia Hsia, *The Myth of Ritual Murder. Jews and magic in Reformation Germany*, New Haven, Conn. and London 1988.
- 37 StadtAA, Urg., 11 Feb. 1666, Anna Schwayhofer, interrogation 19 March 1666.
- 38 StadtAA, Urg., 11 Feb. 1666, Anna Schwayhofer, testimony of Anna Corona Cramer, 19 Feb. 1666; 25 Feb. 1666, Anna Maria Cramer; testimony Anna Maria Cramer and Anna Corona Cramer, 13 March 1666; and interrogations.
- 39 StadtAA, Urg., 15 July 1650, Ursula Neher, testimony of Maria Gogel, 29 July 1650.
- 40 StadtAA, Urg., 20 Dec. 1685, Euphrosina Endriss, testimony of Georg Schmetzer, 24 Dec. 1685.
- 41 StadtAA, Urg., 11 Feb. 1666, Anna Schwayhofer, testimony of Anna Corona Cramer, 19 Feb. 1666; 25 Feb. 1666, Anna Maria Cramer; testimony Anna Maria Cramer and Anna Corona Cramer, 13 March 1666.
- 42 StadtAA, Urg., 20 Dec. 1685, Euphrosina Endriss, testimony of Magdalena Hornung, 24 Dec. 1685.
- 43 On churching, see Susan C. Karant-Nunn, 'A Women's Rite: Churching and the Lutheran Reformation', Hsia and Scribner (eds), *History and Anthropology*, forthcoming. See also, for example, Andreas Osiander d. A. *Gesamtausgabe*, eds Gerhard Müller and Gottfried Seebass, Gütersloh 1975-, vol. 5, Brandenburg-Nuremberg church ordinance 1533, p. 128: women who have just borne children should be instructed by the pastor and preacher that they are not under the power of the Devil, as had previously been believed: 'das sie nicht in gewalt des teuffels sein, wie mans bisshere nicht on sundern nachteyl der gewissen dafür gehalten und groeblich daran geyrret hat'.
- 44 For an excellent account of these rituals in England, see Adrian Wilson, 'The Ceremony of Childbirth and its Interpretation', in Valeries Fildes (ed.), *Women as Mothers in Pre-Industrial England*, London and New York 1990.
- 45 Patricia Crawford, 'The Construction and Experience of Maternity in Seventeenth-Century England', in Fildes (ed.), *Women as Mothers*.
- 46 See, for example, Melanie Klein, 'Envy and Gratitude' (1957), 'Some Theoretical Conclusions Regarding the Emotional Life of the Infant' (1952), 'On Identification' (1955), in *idem*, *Envy and Gratitude and Other Works*.
- 47 StadtAA, Urg., 28 Jan. 1669, Anna Ebeler, testimony of Anna Maria Schmuckher, 1 Feb. 1669.
- 48 StadtAA, Urg., 28 Jan. 1669, Anna Ebeler, testimony of Benedict Widenmann, 24 Jan. 1669.
- 49 StadtAA, Urg., 20 Dec. 1685, Euphrosina Endriss, pre-trial testimony of Endriss, 4 Dec. 1685.
- 50 For example, Ursula Neher, StadtAA, Urg., 15 July 1650; Barbara Fischer, Strafbuch des Rats, 1615-32, p. 397, 13 May 1623; tried as a witch in 1650.
- 51 On the different ways men and women used sorcery and bodily products, see Ruth Martin, *Witchcraft and the Inquisition in Venice, 1550-1650*, Oxford 1989; Ingrid Ahrendt-Schulte, 'Schadenzauber und Konflikte. Sozialgeschichte von Frauen im Spiegel der Hexenprozesse des 16. Jahrhunderts in der Grafschaft Lippe', in Heide Wunder and Christina Vanja (eds), *Wandel der Geschlechterbeziehungen zu Beginn der Neuzeit*, Frankfurt am Main 1991; Roper, 'Magic and the Theology of the Body'.
- 52 StadtAA, Urg., 15 July 1650, Ursula Neher, and testimony Hans and Jacobina Vetter, 11 July 1650.
- 53 StadtAA, Urg., 28 Jan. 1669, Anna Ebeler.
- 54 'immerdar guete worth gegeben, biss Sie aus dem haus kommen', StadtAA, Urg., 29 Jan. 1669, Anna Ebeler, testimony of Eleonora Schmidt, 1 Feb. 1669.
- 55 StadtAA, Urg., 15 July 1650, Ursula Neher, testimony of Sabina Stoltz, 29 July 1650.
- 56 StadtAA, Urg., 20 Dec. 1685, Euphrosina Endriss, qu. 47, and testimony of Georg Schmetzer, 4 Dec. 1685: 'mein Schätzle du bist wohl auf, sehet Herr und Frau, iezo gehe ich Von dem Kind, es geschehe ihm was da wolle, so will ich entschuldiget sein'. The next day, the child began to sicken.
- 57 StadtAA, Urg., 28 Jan. 1669, Anna Ebeler, testimony of Juditha Schorr, 13 Feb. 1669; Euphrosina Hayd, 1 Feb. 1669.
- 58 StadtAA, Urg., 29 Jan. 1669, Anna Ebeler, and interrogation, 19 Feb. 1669.
- 59 StadtAA, Urg., 20 Dec. 1685, Euphrosina Endriss, qu. 50.
- 60 StadtAA, Urg., 15 July 1650, Ursula Neher, testimony of Jacobina Vetter, 29 July 1650; testimony of Susanna Custodis, 11 July 1650.
- 61 StadtAA, Urg., 15 July 1650, Ursula Neher; testimony of Adam Schuster, 11 July 1650; testimony of Anna Erhardt, 29 July 1650.

- 62 'was die kellerin vmb solche sachen red vnd antwort geben', StadtAA, Urg., 28 Jan. 1669, Anna Ebeler, interrogation, 19 Feb. 1669, qu. 49.
- 63 StadtAA, Urg., 11 Feb. 1666, Anna Schwayhofer, testimony of Euphrosina Sperl, 19 Feb. 1666: the knife was her husband's but it had been moved.
- 64 StadtAA, Strafbuch des Rats, 1615-23, 13 May 1623, p. 397; and notes of 19 Oct. 1624, 30 Aug. 1625, 22 Nov. 1625, 29 Jan. 1626; Urg., 10 May 1623, Barbara Fischer; Strafbuch des Rats, 1633-53, 23 July 1650, fo. 337 r-v; Urg., 14 June 1650, Barbara Fischer.
- 65 StadtAA, Urg., 14 June 1650, Barbara Fischer, see interrogation of 20 June 1650.
- 66 'gegen vnderschiedlichen Personen grossen Neid, grollen vnd feindschafft getragen', StadtAA, Urg., 11 Feb. 1666, Anna Schwayhofer, interrogation, 31 March 1666; and see also Urg., 28 Jan. 1669, Anna Ebeler, throughout. On enmity and exclusion from community, see David W. Sabeen, *Power in the Blood*, Cambridge 1984, pp. 31-60; for a strict Lutheran interpretation of confession and enmity, *Andreas Osiander d. A Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 7, p. 663, Kirchenordnung Pfalz-Neuburg 1543, no absolution to be granted if someone still bears enmity. On the role of envy and hatred in the bringing of witchcraft accusations see Heide Wunder, 'Hexenprozesse im Herzogtum Preussen während des 16. Jahrhunderts', in Christian Degn, Hartmut Lehman and Dagmar Unverhau (eds), *Hexenprozesse. Deutsche und skandinavische Beiträge* (Studien zur Volkskunde und Kulturgeschichte Schleswig-Holsteins 12), Neumünster 1983, esp. pp. 188-9; Robin Briggs, *Communities of Belief. Cultural and social tensions in early modern France*, Oxford 1989, pp. 7-65, 83-105.
- 67 Staats- und Stadtbibliothek Augsburg, 2o Cod Aug. 288, Schilleriana; Strafbuch des Rats, 1654-99, 7 Feb. 1673, Regina Schiller, pp. 390ff.
- 68 StadtAA, Urg., June 1625, Dorothea Braun, interrogation, 22 Aug. 1625.
- 69 StadtAA, Urg., June 1625, Dorothea Braun, statement, 18 Sept. 1625; Urg., 28 Jan. 1669, Anna Ebeler, interrogation, 23 Feb. 1669. Urg., 11 Feb. 1666, Anna Schwayhofer, interrogation, 26 March 1666; and Strafbuch des Rats, 1654-99, 15 April 1666, pp. 235-6.
- 70 StadtAA, Urg., June 1625, Dorothea Braun, interrogation, 22 Aug. 1625. An older witch also tried to teach her to fly on a cat, but the cat refused to carry her!
- 71 'Hennendreckele': StadtAA, Strafbuch des Rats, 1633-53, 23 July 1650, Barbara Fischer, fo. 337 r-v; 'Gänsdreckh', Strafbuch des Rats, 1654-99, 18 April 1654, Anna Schäffler, pp. 4-7.
- 72 Behringer, *Hexenverfolgung in Bayern*, p. 466; Stadt- und Staatsbibliothek Augsburg, 2o Cod Aug. 289, Acta puncto maleficii et tentationis diabolicae.
- 73 Wolfgang Behringer has noted a general rise in cases of child witches from the last quarter of the seventeenth century onwards. See his 'Kinderhexenprozesse. Zur Rolle von Kindern in der Geschichte der Hexenverfolgungen', *Zeitschrift für historische Forschung*, 16, 1989, pp. 31-47. StadtAA, Strafbuch des Rats, 1654-99, p. 722, Elisabeth Memminger: since she was considered to have been a witch, her corpse was publicly carted out and buried under the gallows. There were two further similar cases: Christina Haber, a lying-in-maid, was interrogated and tortured, 12 Dec. 1699, but eventually let out on recall: Strafbuch des Rats, 1654-99, p. 725. Anna Maria Christeiner and her daughter were accused of abducting and harming children, *Verbrecherbuch*, 1700-1806, p. 31, 20 Aug. 1701; Urg., 3 Aug. 1701. They were severely tortured but eventually freed on recall. By contrast, a case of 1700 to 1703 concerns the plight of the daughter of Hans Georg Groninger, a suspected girl witch aged 14 in 1702, who ate lice and her own excrement: Stadt-

und Staatsbibliothek Augsburg, 2o Cod Aug. 289, Acta puncto maleficii et tentationis diabolicae; StadtAA, Urg., 17 May 1702, Regina Groninger.

- 74 Barbara Rajkay, 'Die Bevölkerungsentwicklung von 1500 bis 1648', in Gunther Gottlieb et al. (eds), *Geschichte der Stadt Augsburg*, Stuttgart 1985; Roeck, *Eine Stadt in Krieg und Frieden*, vol. 2, pp. 775-85, 880-9.
- 75 Bernd Roeck argues that Marian devotion was a line of division between the two confessions, but his evidence from baptismal registers also shows that while Catholics favoured the name 'Maria' for girls, the most popular name choice among Protestants was 'Annamaria'. This name choice combined the names of both the mother of Jesus and her mother, suggesting the centrality of Marian ideals and motherhood to Protestant understandings of womanhood. Protestants also strongly favoured the names 'Maria' and 'Regina' (associated with the Queen of Heaven): Roeck, *ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 847, 862-5. See the rich paper of Marina Warner, 'The Absent Mother, or Women Against Women in the Old Wives' Tale', inaugural lecture, Tinbergen Professor, Erasmus University, Rotterdam 1991.
- 76 StadtAA, Strafbücher des Rats. Between 1633 and 1699 nine women were punished for this offence, six of whom were executed while a further six women and two men were suspected of the crime.
- 77 For a different, path-breaking use of psychoanalysis to study witchcraft in New England, see Demos, *Entertaining Satan*. Demos notes the importance of maternal themes in witchcraft material (pp. 181, 198-206) but then goes on to argue that since mothers are almost universally responsible for the care of children, the prevalence of witchcraft is best explained by general child-rearing practices among early New Englanders which resulted in a weak ego structure and a tendency to engage in a good deal of projective behaviour. He uses psychoanalysis, linked with attention to child-rearing practices, to construct a general pathology of New England society: I am using it rather to elucidate particular conflicts between people and illuminate psychic functioning in a manner which does not derive psychic meaning reductively from child-rearing practices. On psychic creativity, see Joyce McDougall, *Plea for a Measure of Abnormality; Theatres of the Body: A psychoanalytic approach to psychosomatic illness*, London 1989; and *Theatres of the Mind: Illusion and truth on the psychoanalytic stage*, New York 1985. A similar emphasis on projective identification is to be found in Evelyn Heinemann, *Hexen und Hexenangst. Eine psychoanalytische Studie über den Hexenwahn der frühen Neuzeit*, Frankfurt am Main 1986.