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The Body as Method? Reflections on the Place of the Body in Gender History

KATHLEEN CANNING

In the course of the past decade we have been faced with a veritable flood of books, articles, dissertation proposals and conference panels on various aspects of body history, or bodies in history. Many, even most of these studies merely invoke the body or allow 'body' to serve as a more fashionable surrogate for sexuality, reproduction, or gender without referring to anything specifically identifiable as body, bodily or embodied. In contrast to other keywords in the history of women and gender, such as 'patriarchy', 'class', or 'gender', which have been the subject of intense debate among feminists and across disciplines, 'body' remains a largely unexplicated and undertheorised *historical* concept. Interestingly, the debates surrounding Judith Butler's notable *Bodies That Matter*, for example, have not resounded widely among historians of women, gender or bodies.[1] Despite the deep involvement of many feminists in interdisciplinary arenas of Women's Studies, it is still more common to seek methodological clarity in the pages of another historical study than in a philosophical text like Butler's.[2] So historians grappling with methodological issues raised by 'the body' might be more inclined to turn to more specific case studies of body histories, such as Barbara Duden's imaginative *Woman Beneath the Skin: A Doctor's Patients in 18th Century Germany*, which explores how women 'of a vanished world' perceived and experienced their bodies, to the path-breaking special issue of *Representations*, edited by Catherine Gallagher and Thomas Laqueur, *The Making of the Modern Body*, or to the field-defining volumes *Fragments for a History of the Human Body*.[3]

The first part of this essay explores the current fascination with body histories and ponders the simultaneously unspecific and yet seductive invocation of the body in many recent histories. I contemplate the reasons the body has remained an elusive presence in most of our fields of national or chronological specialisation until recently and reflect on the potentialities and limitations of the concept of the body, on the methodological implications of placing bodies at the heart of historical investigation. The second part briefly explores the conceptual and methodological implications of recuperating and incorporating the body into my own

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project on citizenship and the crisis of nation in Germany after the First World War.

Analysis of the body has offered important new insights into the histories of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, the history of welfare states and social policy, and more recently of imperialism, the First World War, and the rise of fascism. In some historical studies, bodies, as signifiers, metaphors or allegorical emblems, promise new understandings of nation or social formation. In others the body – as a site of intervention or inscriptive surface – specifies and expands our grasp of the processes of social discipline or the reach of the interventionist welfare state, of medicalisation, professionalisation, rationalisation of production and reproduction. The body histories that have left a historiographical mark (in the sense of convincing readers that bodies are significant objects of historical investigation) have sought most frequently to analyse the body as a signifier – of nation or state power, of social formations or dissolutions, of moral or hygienic visions and dangers, as a site of intervention or inscriptive surface 'on which laws, morality, values, power, are inscribed'.[4] From Carole Pateman's incisive delineation of the distinct political meanings of male and female bodies in French Enlightenment thought, to Lynn Hunt's 'family romance' of the French Revolution and her analysis of the many bodies of Marie-Antoinette, to Dorinda Outram's reading of the 'changes in the public presentation and public significance of the bodies of individuals', the history of the body in the Enlightenment and the French Revolution has helped elucidate the transformation of public space, the role of culture in the revolution, and the banishment of women (on the basis of their embodiment, argues Pateman) from the emergent public sphere.[5] Casting a somewhat different light on the relevance of the body to the formation of civil society in Germany, Isabel Hull's recent book *Sexuality, State and Civil Society in Germany, 1700–1815*, regards male rather than female embodiment as a crucial aspect of emergent civil society and of definitions of citizenship in eighteenth-century Germany. 'Whereas collective estate, or *Stand*, had once organized society', she argues, 'the individual citizen now founded civil society. Stripped of social status and regional inflection, the citizen had to be based on universal principles adhering to the only distinguishing feature he had left: his body'.[6]

The study of bodies, particularly symbolic bodies, during the periods of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, has probably yielded the most sophisticated results thus far in a field we can only vaguely call 'body history'. In many other areas of gender history – sexuality, reproduction, labour, and welfare state, four crucial areas of inquiry, as reflected in the pages of this journal during its first decade – bodies have figured more often implicitly than explicitly. In studies of beauty, prostitution, witchcraft, or female circumcision, for example, the body is so obviously present that it often seems unnecessary to comment upon or theorise its presence.

Attempting to trace the place of the body in the gradual shift from women's history to gender history brings us headlong into a confrontation

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with the complex sex/gender distinction, which has significant implications for a conceptual-methodological reflection on bodies in history. As Donna Haraway argued some years ago, 'the political and epistemological effort to remove women from the category of nature and to place them in culture as constructed and self-constructing social subjects in history' caused the concept of gender 'to be quarantined from the infections of biological sex'.[7] In a similar vein, Moira Gatens contends that the perceived 'dangers of biological reductionism' propelled the embrace of gender and the repudiation of sex in feminist analytical vocabulary. In her essay 'A Critique of the Sex/Gender Distinction', Gatens seeks to retain a theory of sexual difference while firmly rejecting the notion that all such theories are plagued by essentialism or biologism. In place of a view of the body as a passive mediator of social inscriptions, which accompanied the sharp demarcation of gender and sex, Gatens asserts that 'the body can and does intervene to confirm or deny various social significances'.[8] Seeking to define femininity and masculinity in relation to female and male bodies, Gatens makes clear why this relationship is anything but arbitrary: 'there must be a qualitative difference', she claims, between the kind of femininity 'lived' by women and that 'lived' by men.[9] Thus the repudiation of sex in favour of gender left sex inextricably linked to body, and body stigmatised with biologism and essentialism. This explains in part the apprehension many feminist historians have shown towards a more explicit theoretical or methodological engagement with the body as a historical concept.

As one outcome of the displacement of sex by gender, the discursive body has figured more prominently in the last decade of gender history than Barbara Duden's 'body as experience'. Yet it is difficult to overlook the fact that the emphasis on the body's symbolic dimensions has also remained superficial in many instances: the symbolic body remains immaterial/dematerialised, as it grows increasingly difficult to conceive of social relations in terms of associations between bodies as specific loci of experience or identity formation. While the embrace of the discursive body might be traced back to the extraordinary influence of Michel Foucault on the study of both bodies and gender, in the field of history there is also a more practical explanation for its prevalence. Sources that chart the discursive construction of male and female bodies at the levels of state, church, social reform, science, medicine, or law are, namely, much more readily accessible than those that might offer insights into the body as a site of experience, memory, or subjectivity.

Another legacy of Foucault is the 'social body', which emerged according to the anthropologist David Horn at the boundary between the economic and the political, the public and the private, the natural and the discursive, in the course of the nineteenth century and was defined in 'that modern domain of knowledge and intervention carved out by statistics, sociology, social hygiene and social work'.[10] Examinations of 'social bodies' therefore often leave obscure the differences between the social bodies of men,

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women and children, the distinct experiences of those who inhabited the 'moral' social spaces and those who inhabited the crowded terrain of 'embodied "others" ... the sick, the criminal, the mad, the unemployed, the infertile'.[11]

If discursive and social bodies have frequently figured as abstractions, studies of individual or collective 'material' or bodily experiences often have the reverse problem: they are often overly concrete, undertheorised or cast too simply in terms of resistance/subjection.[12] Joanna Bourke's *Dismembering the Male: Men's Bodies, Britain and the Great War*, which pursued the relatively new topic of male corporeality in war, unfortunately remains limited within an excessive concreteness, by which 'male corporeality' is defined in the most empirical sense of the 722,000 corpses of British soldiers. Also notable is her disavowal of the symbolics of bodily dismemberment and mass death. With respect to those men maimed or disfigured by the war, Bourke argues that, despite the 'shocking suddenness of wartime disfigurement', a few years after the war had ended, the scars and deformities no longer held a unique significance in British society; rather, 'they joined a wider population of disabled men, women and children'.[13]

The search for the 'material' body reflects, in part at least, an unease with the prevalence of the discursive or Foucauldian body. This unease has led some scholars to pose extraordinarily fruitful questions, for example, regarding the effacement of the specificities of the 'bodies of the disciplined' whose corporealities are ultimately subsumed into 'a universalized body worked upon in a uniform way by surveillance techniques and practices'.[14] N. Katherine Hayles asks, for example, 'how actual bodies, in their cultural and physical specificities, impose, incorporate and resist incorporation of the material practices he [Foucault] describes'. Hayles points out that the Foucauldian body marks the 'absorption of embodiment into discourse' while the hallmark and still influential study by Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain*, emphasises 'that bodily practices have a physical reality which can never be fully assimilated into discourse'.[15] Yet Scarry's main pursuit is the intricate relationship between bodily pain and language or, more specifically, the political consequences of pain's resistance to 'objectification in language'.[16] While Bourke's study of dismembered male bodies sheds light on what Scarry terms 'the most radically embodying event in which human beings ever collectively participate', Bourke's attention to the material body is far less subtle than Scarry's. For Scarry probes how the deep alterations of the bodies of massive numbers of participants 'are carried forward into peace', how 'the record of war survives in the bodies, both alive and buried'. She asks how the soldier's 'unmaking' or deconstruction of himself, his consent 'to empty himself of civil content "for his country"', reverberates in the rebuilding of the nation. Ultimately the body's pain and its silencing through the realm of politics has profound meanings far beyond the individual or collective (material) injured body, namely for 'immaterial culture', for 'national consciousness, political beliefs, and

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self-definition'.[17] Judith Butler's *Bodies That Matter* has persuasively assailed the tendency of feminists to read the body's 'materiality' as that which is irreducible, that which 'cannot be a construction' and offered in its place a highly suggestive examination of the genealogy of materiality by which matter is understood 'not as site or surface, but as a *process of materialization that stabilizes over time to produce the effect of boundary, fixity, and surface we call matter*'.[18]

A final complexity, if one attempts to define a field of 'body history', is that slippage commonly occurs between individual bodies as sites of experience/agency/resistance and social bodies, formed discursively, or between bodies as sites of inscription/intervention and notions of nation, class or race as 'reified bodies'. It is then often difficult to discern how these divergent bodies are contingent and constitutive of one another. Summarising some of these more problematic aspects of body histories in an article provocatively entitled 'Why all the Fuss about the Body?', the historian Carolyn Walker Bynum argues that the current preoccupation with the body operates on the basis of 'totally diverse assumptions' and definitions of the body within and across different fields. In Bynum's view the absence of 'a clear set of structures, behaviors, events, objects, experiences, words, and moments to which *body* currently refers' has rendered current discussions of the body within and across disciplines incommensurate and often mutually incomprehensible.[19]

The work of conceptualising the body is further encumbered not only by the wholly diverse understandings of the body, even among scholars in the same field, but also by the particular valence of the body in popular culture, which infiltrates into our academic discussions and renders the task of defining a conceptual frame or methodology an even more confusing enterprise. Bryan Turner, author of a number of works on the 'sociology of the body', explains the current fascination of social scientists with the body in terms of the shifts in economic and social developments, towards an emphasis on 'pleasure, desire, difference and playfulness which are features of contemporary consumerism' and he also points to the influence of the women's movement and the transformation of the role of women in the public sphere. Others point to the conversion of the 'project of the self, as the principal legacy of individualism, into the project of the body'.[20] The October 1997 issue of *Lingua Franca* carried a short piece, 'Pieces of You', that seemed to confirm these views, declaring 1997 the 'year of the Body Part', referring not only to Paula Jones's legal deposition describing President Clinton's genitals, but also to the publication in the July *New York Times* of an illustrated article entitled, 'The Whole Body Catalogue: Artificial Parts to Mix and Match', which included a shopping list of 'available body parts'.[21] Similarly the January 1997 issue of the intriguing bi-lingual English–Russian magazine *Colors: A Magazine about the Rest of the World* was entitled 'Shopping for the Body' and included similar rubrics on 'extensions' (prostheses), 'maintenance' (cosmetic surgery), 'transformation'

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(electric shock, seaweed packs, working out), 'purification', 'recreation, 'personal hygiene', and 'protection'.[22] Scholarship, the *Lingua Franca* article claims, has been similarly 'driven by a culture fixed on the fragment', by a characteristically postmodern 'rejection of all forms of totality, including the corporeal'.[23]

The incommensurability of representations of the body across the lines of popular culture and academe, across and within the individual disciplines, might appear to reinforce this rejection of totality or to encourage a frivolous embrace of the body (or body parts) as mere adornments in our scholarly projects. Indeed, the recognition that the body is, as Bryan Turner describes it, 'at once the most solid, the most elusive, illusory, concrete, metaphysical, ever present and ever distant thing – a site, an instrument, an environment, a singularity and a multiplicity' makes the question of 'body as method' a particularly daunting one.[24]

Further dilemmas that cannot be resolved within the bounds of this essay include the location of bodies in time and space. Certainly implicit in this discussion thus far has been a presumed but unexplicated 'modern' body, one that requires historicisation and demarcation from medieval or early modern bodies. Barbara Duden has suggested that 'a violent process began in the seventeenth century' by which 'the body as the embodiment of localized social vitality was symbolically broken', for example through witch trials. In the course of the eighteenth century the body as 'the vague corporeality of popular culture' became offensive and in the last third of the century 'the study and cultivation of the body politic' became a matter of state policy. As states, medical professionals, and social reformers began to wield new knowledges of health and hygiene, 'the new body assumed a central place in the self-image of the bourgeoisie'.[25] This is undoubtedly what Isabel Hull means when she suggests that 'a modern person's sense of self … must always have a strong bodily anchor to it', that the imbrication of body and self has a particular salience in the phase of history known as 'modernity'.[26] Locating bodies spatially, nationally, and as inscribed by ethnicity and race, is obviously another critical methodological task. So it may be useful to interrogate the notion or presumption of a nationally bounded body, especially in the wake of a rich and wide-ranging historiography on gender and colonialism/imperialism which, even if not attentive to imagined or lived bodies as framing concepts, has uncovered the body projects of empire and traced the links between domesticity in the metropoles and the conquest of 'the sexual and labor power of colonized women'.[27]

While this brief discussion has highlighted several dilemmas in the theory and practice of body history – bodies that are singularly discursive or abstract, bodies that are excessively material and undertheorised, bodies that are not made visible at all – feminist scholarship in the disciplines of literary studies and philosophy has effectively critiqued the gender/sex distinction, boldly sought to dissolve the divide between discourse and materiality with respect to bodies, and sought to redefine the key words

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agency, subjectivity, and positionality in terms of the body. While on the one hand resisting the allure of biological essentialism, feminist philosopher Elisabeth Grosz for example also refuses the 'process of sanitization, of neutralization, of decorporealization of the concept "body"' that accompanied 'the discursivation of bodies'.[28] The literary scholar Leslie Adelson introduces her *Making Bodies, Making History* with the contention that 'there is an assuredly multifaceted reality of human bodies that does not exist outside discourse and is yet not by any means subsumed by it'.[29] Acknowledging the powerful influence of Michel Foucault on our understandings of how 'power is inscribed on and by bodies through modes of social supervision and discipline as well as self-regulation' and of how bodies are 'moulded by a great many distinct regimes', Elisabeth Grosz nonetheless emphasises that all of those processes that mark the body through specific rituals and practices – punishment, torture, medicalised observations, sexuality and pleasure – denote bodies that represent 'an uncontrollable, unpredictable threat to a regular, systematic mode of social organisation'. Positing a place for agency in the discursively constituted subject, Grosz contends that the body is not only marked by coercive forces, but is 'internally lived, experienced and acted upon by the subject and the social collectivity'.[30] Moira Gatens's notion of the imaginary body also creatively bridges the purported gulf between discursive and material bodies: always socially and historically specific, imaginary bodies are constructed by 'a shared language; the shared psychical significance and privileging of various zones of the body; and common institutional practices and discourses which act on and through the body'. Imaginary bodies, she contends, provide 'the key or the code to the decipherment of the social and personal significance of male and female biologies as lived in culture, that is, masculinity and femininity'.[31]

Indeed, the notion of *embodiment* may be the most promising outcome of these fruitful debates and interventions. Embodiment, which Adelson terms 'crucial to any feminist enterprise', denotes a process 'of making and doing the work of bodies – of becoming a body in social space'.[32] So embodied practices are always contextual, inflected with class, ethnic, racial, gender and generational locations, with 'place, time, physiology and culture'.[33] A far less fixed and idealised concept than body, embodiment encompasses moments of encounter and interpretation, agency and resistance. So, as N. Katherine Hayles has argued, 'during any given period, experiences of embodiment are in continual interaction with constructions of the body'. Embodied practices, she argues, engender 'heterogenous spaces even when the discursive formations describing those practices seem uniformly dispersed throughout the society'.[34] Elisabeth Grosz's notion of 'counterstrategic reinscription' offers a perhaps parallel notion. In her view, the body 'as well as being the site of knowledge-power ... is thus also a site of resistance, for it exerts a recalcitrance, and always entails the possibility of a counterstrategic reinscription, for it is capable of being self-marked,

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self-represented in alternative ways'. The body's recalcitrance, it seems, might be seen as an example of one kind of 'embodied practice' imagined by Hayles. Subjects thus produced are not simply the imposed results of alien, coercive forces; the body is internally lived, experienced and acted upon by the subject and the social collectivity.[35]

Memory represents perhaps another kind of embodied practice, one that is particularly intriguing in that embodied memories are most likely to be both materialised and mediated discursively. Scarry points to Bourdieu's study of 'hidden pedagogies', such as 'cultural manners', passed from one generation to the next, and his contention that 'the principles embodied in this way are placed beyond the grasp of consciousness, and hence cannot be touched by voluntary, deliberate transformation, cannot even be made explicit'. Scarry's own study points to the embodiment of 'political identity', which 'is usually learned unconsciously, effortlessly, and very early, and expressed in gestures, habits, postures and demeanors, which are nearly impossible to unlearn'.[36] The concepts of embodiment, bodily reinscription and bodily memory may help to make more specific the fluid and porous concept of body and to chart historical change in and through bodies which the presumed fixity of 'body' seems to defy. Mapping a conceptual space in which bodies encounter, incorporate, intervene and resist dominant discourses through the notions of embodiment and reinscription should perhaps be accompanied by a rethinking of the term discourse as well. Judith Butler's apt comments on feminist unease with the notion of 'construction' and her suggestion to rethink the prevalent understanding of discourse as that which is always 'artificial and dispensable' should help to elucidate the material outcomes of discursive inscriptions, the ways in which they are materialised and embodied.[37]

In modern German history the body has figured most significantly in the study of the Weimar and Nazi periods, encompassing the highly charged discourses and practices of interwar natalism and sexual reform, the campaigns for birth control and abortion rights, as well as the emergence of the 'new woman', the single 'women of the metropolis' whose bodies became markers for all that the First World War had transformed in the relations between the sexes.[38] The body is an even more explicit presence in recent studies of the Nazi 'racial state', figuring as a signifier of both racial purity (the 'Aryan' body) and racial pollution (the Jewish body, the deformed, handicapped or ageing body) in the Nazis' 'barbarous utopia', as an object not merely of intervention, but of mutilation and annihilation.[39] As Leslie Adelson notes, reference to the six million Jews the Nazis murdered 'signifies in no uncertain terms the ineluctable embodiment of history' (a point that is underscored by the enormous popularity of Daniel Goldhagen's best-selling and intensely graphic account of the 'face-to-face' extermination of Jews by 'ordinary Germans', in which the bodies of both victims and killers are explicitly present).[40] Klaus Theweleit's influential two-volume study of 1978, *Male Fantasies*, offers an intriguing examination of the meanings of

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female bodies for male fascist subjectivities, suggesting that the violent destruction of bodies and disordering of gender during the First World War is crucial to understanding the exterminationist drive of the Nazi state. While Theweleit's text left little dispute about the salience of bodies to fascist fantasies and practices, it left unexplicated the precise links between male fears of engulfment after World War I and the perpetration of Nazi violence and, ultimately, genocide a quarter century later.[41]

Attention to the body as method of reading key moments in the transformations of the war and postwar period uncovers a crisis that went far deeper than the disintegration of political regimes, which implicated the female body in the crises of nation, citizenship, and class that followed the collapse of the Kaiser's rule. In my current project, *Embodying Citizenship: Gender and the Crisis of Nation in Weimar Germany*, I probe the relevance of the body to the ruptures of nation, state, and political culture which occurred at the end of the First World War. Certainly, the body is of particular consequence at this juncture in German, indeed modern European, history. As Eve Rosenhaft has suggested, through the collective experience of mobilisation, unique to this 'total war', the limits of bodily endurance, and the integrity of the material body itself, were tested, stretched, and massively exceeded, both in the trenches and on the home front.[42] The shock of the war's violence towards both national and individual bodies, juxtaposed with the embodied sufferings of those who remained at the home front – hunger, cold, illness, anxiety, and grief – render this historical moment one in which both bodily inscription – by states and armies – and the reinscriptive, embodying responses of citizens and soldiers – through revolution, political violence and social protest – were particularly acute. Indeed, this embodied and violent moment of rupture, spanning the years 1917–24, was seared into the consciousness and history of the twentieth century by the violence it spawned in the late 1920s and early 1930s. The larger goal of this book project is to explore how the ideologies and practices of gender were ruptured, violently, even traumatically, and inscribed in the political culture of the Weimar Republic. Theweleit's unconventional masterpiece of the late 1970s, which suggested that the disordering of gender during the war and the fantasies of 'women, floods, bodies', of rape, murder and dismemberment it produced in male Freikorps activists, remains highly suggestive in this regard.[43] The recent work of Maria Tatar and Beth Irwin Lewis on the 'Lustmord' series of left male artists, such as Otto Dix and George Grosz, suggests that the 'five years of unchained atavistic impulses', described by medical doctor and sex reformer Magnus Hirschfeld, the brutalisation of sex behind the lines (in enemy brothels, for example), and the 'pathological and perverse forms of sex', which Hirschfeld claimed took place in the trenches, spurred fantasies of lustful murder and mutilation even among progressive, not only among pre-fascist, men.[44]

These are among the most dramatic examples of the experiential chasm that probably existed between the war front and home front. In an

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evocative essay, 'Militarization and Reproduction in World War I Germany', Elisabeth Domansky points to the everyday gulf between men, who were to protect the nation against the external enemy, and women, whose task was to protect the 'national body' from internal enemies, that is, disease, physical weakness and immorality.[45] Domansky suggests that the distinct bodily experiences of trenches and home front – dismemberment and death of men at the front; hunger, overwork, illness and immiserisation of women on the home front – created both important commonalities and disparities in male and female subjectivities after the war, from their shared desires to reclaim traditional roles in the family to the ways they positioned themselves in the new arenas of labour and sexual politics during Weimar.[46]

The first part of my book examines the significance of embodiment for the experiences and social identities of citizenship as articulated during a prolonged moment of politicisation – 1918–24 – which drew unprecedented numbers of women into the realm of formal and informal politics. Specifically, I examine ways in which embodied deprivations of the home front fostered protest which ultimately articulated working women's desire for citizenship in the broadest participatory sense. The concept of citizenship provides an interpretative grid for my investigation of the prolonged period of crisis that begins with the strikes, food riots, and political protests on the home front in 1917–18; it spans the collapse of the war effort, the November Revolution and the inception of Weimar as a 'non-nation'; it encompasses the process of casting and enacting women's citizenship in the People's Revolutionary Council and the Weimar National Assembly. Here I focus on the particular salience of male and female embodiment to the visions of citizenship that took shape during the highly contested process of drafting the Weimar constitution. How was female embodiment – motherhood, marital status, wartime service – cast in the debates about female suffrage? In what sense was the new constitution envisioned as a site of resolution and reconciliation of the stark divisions of wartime? How far did the constitution reach in attempting to mend the (embodied) ruptures of both war and revolution?

In the second part of the book I explore the symbolism of the wounded body, not mainly through an examination of the (embodied) cult of the 'fallen soldiers'[47] but in terms of a body that figured conspicuously in the November Revolution of 1918 and that came to signify a traumatic rupture in the founding of Weimar democracy – the body of Rosa Luxemburg. Luxemburg, the 'brilliant and fiery leader' of the prewar Socialist left and founder of the German Communist Party, became the quintessential 'red rifle woman' of Theweleit's *Male Fantasies* when she led the Spartacist Revolt in Berlin in January 1919.[48] Her brutal murder, along with that of her comrade Karl Liebknecht, lived on not only as the ultimate symbol of the indelible division of Socialists and Communists that fractured Weimar democracy, but was also enshrined in the culture of the Communist Left,

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which commemorated their leaders' deaths each January with 'sacred public rituals that consecrated the militant activism ... of the party's founding leaders and succeeding generations'.[49] Although Luxemburg herself disavowed nearly all particularities of women's politics (or bodies), her mutilated corpse, found six months after her murder at the bottom of the Landwehr canal in Berlin, left an explicitly gendered legacy for the political culture of the labour movement during the Weimar Republic. Her body, unlike Liebknecht's, was manifestly female (a Jewish body as well), one whose symbolics attested to the violent anti-Semitism, anti-Communism and hatred of women that was woven together in the ideology of the Freikorps.[50] It will undoubtedly be very difficult to link the symbolism of Rosa Luxemburg's body to the nearly invisible gender politics of the November Revolution, but I approach both as shaped by the violent polarisations of wartime, between people and state, class and nation, trenches and home front, women and men.

In the book's third section I investigate the campaign for expanded maternity protection during the mid 1920s in the context of the discourses of sexual reform, natalism and eugenics that criss-crossed with those of the expanded Weimar welfare state. Launched by the German Textile Workers' Union, which represented over 300,000 women workers during the mid 1920s, the campaign began as an inquiry into the effects of factory work on the pregnant woman's body. Its startling revelation of the high rates of stillbirth, miscarriage and illness among female textile workers soon transformed the inquiry into a vigorous campaign at the level of national parliament for expansion of maternity protection. The photographic representations of the pregnant female body at work, compiled by the socialist physician Max Hirsch, their swollen abdomens pressed up against moving machinery in each photo, transformed what Thomas Laqueur calls 'the statistical body' into 'the lived (female pregnant) body' that now had a bearing on national social policy.[51] This campaign marked a shift in labour politics, at least those of this largely female union, towards the foregrounding of the body in its day-to-day political work, which was visible as well in the demonstrations and conferences female union activists organised in subsequent years on the issues of abortion, pregnancy, birth control and housework. Of particular relevance here is the genesis of this shift: how does this campaign relate to the other, middle-class, social democratic, and communist social movements that mobilised bodies around the issues of sexual reform, birth control, abortion rights during Weimar? To what extent were female union activists the impetus behind these campaigns, exerting pressure from below upon the male leadership, or was this shift instigated by the predominantly male leadership in order to pre-empt or thwart dissent or protest within the union or to incite a new battle against employers or the Christian unions?

This third area of inquiry opens the way to an exploration of the processes of embodiment and reinscription, of the significance of bodily memories of war, revolution and postwar political violence. Here I am

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returning to an endeavour I began in an article of 1994 that suggested that women workers' contradictory experiences of war, revolution, and demobilisation opened the way for the transformations of consciousness and subjectivity during the postwar period.[52] The war represented an indisputable turning point in the body's politicisation: the escalated policing by the pro-natalist military dictatorship of the spheres of work, consumption, and sexuality and women's acute sense that, in Domansky's terms, 'the front was everywhere', that the front was inscribed in their bodies, meant that women experienced their bodies as sites of intensified intervention and regulation (and perhaps also as political weapons) in the aftermath of war, revolution and demobilisation.[53] I hope to follow the traces of those transformed subjectivities into the explosive politics and culture of the early years of the Weimar Republic and to analyse how they were expressed in the numerous skirmishes between men and women in the realm of formal labour politics during the 1920s.

My call for historical specificity in analysing bodies, inscriptions, and embodiment may not instate the body as the stable concept Caroline Bynum desires, one grounded in 'a clear set of structures, behaviors, events, objects, experiences, words and moments', but I hope that it might help us contemplate the very different methods required for reading the body as symbol versus reading the processes of embodiment, inscription and reinscription.[54] I also hope that the body histories I have outlined, even if broken into fragmentary vignettes, make clear the merits of charting the connections and convergences of the material and the discursive that make bodies such difficult objects of historical analysis and such intriguing sites of memory, agency and subjectivity.

Notes

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1. Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'* (Routledge, London and New York, 1993).

2. The same can be said of other provocative feminist texts on female bodies, including the work of Australian feminists Moira Gatens and Elisabeth Grosz. See, for example: Moira Gatens, *Imaginary Bodies: Ethics, Power and Corporeality* (Routledge, London and New York, 1996); and Elisabeth Grosz, 'Bodies and Knowledges: Feminism and the Crisis of Reason', in *Space, Time, and Perversion*, ed. Elisabeth Grosz (Routledge, London and New York, 1995), pp. 25–43. Also see Grosz's *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism* (Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1994).

3. Barbara Duden, *Woman Beneath the Skin: A Doctor's Patients in 18th Century Germany*, trans. Thomas Dunlap (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 1991).

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Although Duden's study relies upon the 8-volume study on the 'diseases of women', compiled by the physician Johann Storch of Halle during the period 1721–40, she makes a compelling case that the bodily experiences of Storch's 1,650 female patients were not 'medically determined', rendering Storch a witness to 'an orally transmitted popular concept of the body'. See pp. 23, 36–7, 66. See also: Thomas Laqueur and Catherine Gallagher (eds), *The Making of the Modern Body: Sexuality and Society in the 19th Century*, special issue of *Representations* (Spring 1986); Michael Feher with Ramona Nadoff and Nadia Tazi, *Fragments for a History of the Human Body*, 3 parts (Zone Books, New York, 1989–91).

4. Elisabeth Grosz, 'Bodies and Knowledges: Feminism and the Crisis of Reason', in *Space, Time, and Perversion*, ed. Grosz, (Routledge, New York, 1995), p. 33.

5. Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract* (Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1988), and Carole Pateman, 'The Fraternal Social Contract', in *Civil Society and the State*, ed. John Keane (Verso, London, 1988), pp. 101–28; Lynn Hunt, *The Family Romance of the French Revolution* (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1992); and Dorinda Outram, *The Body and the French Revolution: Sex, Class and Political Culture* (Yale University Press, New Haven, 1989). See also the recently translated book by Antoine de Baecque, *The Body Politic: Corporeal Metaphor in Revolutionary France 1770–1800* (published in France in 1993; Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1997).

6. Isabel Hull, *Sexuality, State and Civil Society in Germany 1700–1815* (Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1995), p. 5.

7. Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: the Reinvention of Nature* (Routledge, New York and London, 1991), p. 134.

8. Gatens, *Imaginary Bodies*, pp. 3–4, 10.

9. Gatens, *Imaginary Bodies*, pp. 4, 9.

10. David G. Horn, *Social Bodies: Science, Reproduction, and Italian Modernity* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1994), pp. 3–4, 10. See also Martin Hewitt, 'Bio-politics and Social Policy: Foucault's Account of Welfare', *Theory, Culture, and Society*, 2 (1983), pp. 67–84.

11. Here I am both citing and entering into dialogue with Horn, *Social Bodies*, pp. 3, 12. Mary Poovey's brilliant study *Making a Social Body* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1995) suggests that 'social body' is perhaps best understood as an abstraction.

12. These arguments can be traced back to a conversation with Atina Grossmann in a panel discussion, 'Reading the Body in the History of the Weimar Republic', at the German Studies Association's Twenty-first Annual Conference, September 1997.

13. Joanna Bourke, *Dismembering the Male: Men's Bodies, Britain and the Great War* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1996), pp. 27, 35, 251.

14. N. Katherine Hayles, 'The Materiality of Informatics', unpublished paper, p. 9. Prof. Hayles shared this paper with me when we were both fellows at the Stanford University Humanities Center (1992).

15. Hayles, 'The Materiality of Informatics', p. 10; Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (Oxford University Press, New York, 1985).

16. Scarry, *The Body in Pain*, ch. 1.

17. Scarry, *The Body in Pain*, pp. 71, 112–14, 122.

18. Butler, *Bodies that Matter*, p. 9 (emphasis in the original).

19. Caroline Bynum, 'Why all the Fuss about the Body? A Medievalist's Perspective', *Critical Inquiry*, 22 (Autumn 1995), p. 5.

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20. Bryan S. Turner, *The Body and Society*, 2nd edn (Sage, London, 1996), pp. 2–4, 20–21. Here Turner refers to Chris Shilling's *The Body and Social Theory* (Sage, London, 1993).

21. Emily Eakin, 'Pieces of You', *Lingua Franca* (October 1997), pp. 21–2.

22. The editorial offices of *Colors* are located in Paris and its editorial staff appears to be strewn across the world, lending it a global character. The editorial introduction reads: 'The body. Everybody's got one. But when it comes to having sex, cleaning ears, working out or taking a pee, people treat their bodies differently – and with lots of different products. What can you learn about a culture from all these items? To find out, *Colors* went shopping. We browsed beauty salons in Tokyo, street markets in Bogota, and a bionics laboratory in Edinburgh to discover what people buy for their bodies and why. We hope you find something in your size.' The cover photo is of a 'pubic wig', a 'fluffy clump of recycled human hair', known as a 'night flower' in Japan and worn on the vagina. Cost: $270. *Colors*, 18 (December 1996—January 1997).

23. Eakin, 'Pieces of You', p. 21. Eakin points to the recently published studies *Venus Envy: A History of Cosmetic Surgery* (Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1997) and David Hilman and Carla Mazzio's *The Body in Parts: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early Modern Europe* (Routledge, London and New York, 1997).

24. Turner, *Body and Society*, p. 43.

25. Duden, *Woman Beneath the Skin*, pp. 10–11, 13–15.

26. Isabel Hull, 'The Body as Historical Experience: Review of Recent Works by Barbara Duden', *Central European History*, 28 (1995), p. 74.

27. Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (Routledge, New York and London, 1995), p. 3. See here in particular McClintock's ch. 1, 'The Lay of the Land: Genealogies of Imperialism', and ch. 2, '"Massa and Maids": Power and Desire in the Imperial Metropolis', pp. 21–131, and Anne Stoler, 'Making Empire Respectable: The Politics of Race and Sexual Morality in 20th-Century Colonial Cultures', *American Ethnologist*, 16 (1989), pp. 634–60.

28. Elisabeth Grosz, 'Bodies and Knowledges: Feminism and the Crisis of Reason', in Grosz, *Space, Time and Perversion*, p. 31.

29. Leslie Adelson, *Making Bodies, Making History: Feminism and German Identity* (University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1993), p. 2.

30. Grosz, 'Inscriptions and Body-Maps: Representations and the Corporeal', in *Feminine, Masculine and Representation*, ed. Terry Threadgold and Anne Cranny Francis (Allen & Unwin, Boston/Sydney, 1990), pp. 65, 71–2. See also Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*.

31. Gatens, *Imaginary Bodies*, p. 12.

32. Adelson, *Making Bodies*, p. xiii; Turner, *The Body and Society*, p. xiii.

33. Hayles, 'The Materiality of Informatics', pp. 10–12.

34. Hayles, 'The Materiality of Informatics', pp. 11–12.

35. Grosz, 'Inscriptions and Body-Maps', pp. 64–5.

36. Scarry, *The Body in Pain*, p. 110. Here Scarry cites Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1977), pp. 94–5.

37. Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, pp. xi, 4–5.

38. On the history of body and gender during the Weimar Republic, see: Renate Bridenthal, Atina Grossmann, Marion Kaplan (eds), *When Biology Became Destiny: Women in Weimar and Nazi Germany* (Monthly Review Press, New York, 1984). See also Cornelie Usborne, *The Politics of the Body in Weimar Germany: Reproductive Rights*

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and Duties (University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 1992); Atina Grossmann, *Reforming Sex: The German Movement for Birth Control and Abortion Reform 1920–1950* (Oxford University Press, Oxford and New York, 1995); Maria Tatar, *Lustmord: Sexual Murder in Weimar Germany* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1995); Katharina von Ankum (ed.), *Women in the Metropolis: Gender and Modernity in Weimar Culture* (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1997).

39. See Michael Burleigh and Wolfgang Wippermann, *The Racial State: Germany 1933–1945* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1991).

40. Adelson, *Making Bodies*, p. 23; Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (Knopf, New York, 1996). Also see Raul Hilberg's poignant analysis of the popularity of Goldhagen's book, 'The Goldhagen Phenomenon', *Critical Inquiry*, 23 (Summer 1997), pp. 721–8.

41. Klaus Theweleit, *Male Fantasies*, vol. I, *Women, Floods, Bodies, History* (first published in 1977 in Germany; University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, 1987). Vol. 2 is entitled *Männerkörper: Zur Psychoanalyse des Weissen Terrors*.

42. Here I am paraphrasing Eve Rosenhaft's comments on an earlier draft of this paper, delivered to the European Social Science History Conference, Amsterdam, April 1998.

43. Theweleit, *Male Fantasies*, vol. I.

44. Tatar, *Lustmord*, and Beth Irwin Lewis, 'Inside the Windows of the Metropolis', in *Women in the Metropolis*, ed. von Ankum. Hirschfeld is quoted by Lewis, p. 219.

45. Elisabeth Domansky, 'Militarization and Reproduction in World War I Germany', in *Society, Culture, and the State in Germany 1870–1930*, ed. Geoff Eley (University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 1997), p. 455.

46. Domansky, 'Militarization and Reproduction'.

47. George Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (Oxford University Press, New York, 1990).

48. Theweleit, *Male Fantasies*. For a new interpretation of Rosa Luxemburg's role in German communism, see Eric Weitz, *Creating German Communism 1890–1990* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1997).

49. Weitz, *Creating German Communism*, pp. 179–80.

50. Weitz, *Creating German Communism*, pp. 179–80. Weitz does not explore the different ways in which Luxemburg's and Liebknecht's murders were symbolised or commemorated but his discussion of the commemorations led me to reflect on this.

51. Thomas Laqueur, 'Bodies, Details, and the Humanitarian Narrative', in *The New Cultural History*, ed. Lynn Hunt (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1989), pp. 194–5.

52. Kathleen Canning, 'Feminist History After the "Linguistic Turn": Historicizing Discourse and Experience', *Signs*, 19 (1994), pp. 368–404.

53. Domansky, 'Militarization and Reproduction'. This citation is from an earlier version of the essay which was presented to the conference on the Kaiserreich, held at the University of Pennsylvania in February 1990, p. 9.

54. Bynum, 'Why all the Fuss about the Body?', p. 5.

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