MOSHE SLUHOVSKY

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MOSHE SLUHOVSKY is professor of history at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and visiting associate professor at Brown University. He is the author of *Patroness of Paris: Rituals of Devotion in Early Modern France.*

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For James N. Green

&

For Yo'av and Na'aman

Contents

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Introduction

This book is about bodies and souls and the ways early modern people understood the relations between them as much as it is a book about the relations between the divine and the demonic. It is also a book about three quests for truth in early modern Europe: the truth of the encounter with the divine; the truth of interior movements within the soul; and the truth of somatic signs in the body. It is my argument that possession by spirits, be they divine or diabolic, became a major hermeneutic challenge in the period between 1400 and 1700. In their attempts to scrutinize, discern, and make sense of possessions, individual men and women, as well as different Catholic institutions, developed new explanatory frameworks for the relations between the demonic and the divine, the body and the soul, interiority and exteriority, and the natural and the supernatural. These interrogations generated new webs of interconnections between the psychological and the physiological, experience and explanation, and the boundaries between the normative and the extraordinary. For some, these explorations were merely abstract theological or epistemological pursuits; others, however, experienced these questions in practice, inscribed and situated in and on their bodies. Importantly, all of these quests for truth were shaped by assumptions about gender and about men's and women's distinct relations with the divine and the demonic, men's and women's different bodies, and men's and women's reliability as witnesses of their own and of others' experiences. In the process, diabolic possession, which had previously been at the very margins of theological discourse, became important and moved from being a physical affliction to being a state of mind or a psychological/

spiritual disposition; exorcism, which in the Middle Ages was an unregulated and trivial occupation, was transformed into a liturgical and supervised activity; exorcists, who in the past had been mere health practitioners, acquired an additional and crucial role as deciphers of interior truths; and divine possessions (visions, trances, ecstasies, and other "interior movement") came under growing suspicion.

With such broad epistemological, ecclesiological, and cosmological assumptions concerning possession changing at the same time, early modern Catholic possession, obviously, was not a stable category. Rather, it was a linguistic construct that was used to attribute meaning to physical and spiritual phenomena. No one authority had a monopoly over the task of assigning meaning to such occurrences, and, in fact, numerous bodies within and without the church struggled over this prerogative. Mystics, demoniacs, theologians, exorcists, and Inquisitors pursued different hermeneutic strategies in their attempts to make sense of possessions. Thus, the construction of the knowledge of possession and its meanings was a historical phenomenon, bound by shifting cultural norms and by epistemological presuppositions about what was possible and what was not, and for whom. It was both subject to change and an agent of change. Possession was never a purely personal experience. It was always experienced and analyzed within sets of cultural, gendered, institutional, political, and social norms. The story of this book, then, is the sum of the assumptions and changes concerning possession, the ways they interacted, their institutional contexts, and their power relations. The cultural construction and the historical mutations of possession warn us against trying to "translate" possession (both diabolic and divine) into modern medical and/or psychological therapeutic categories, and against superimposing sociological and anthropological insights from other cultural settings to explain the Catholic configuration of possession. These two caveats cannot be overstated enough, and I want to address them before describing in more detail my arguments about the uniqueness of the early modern European construct of possession and its relation to notions of truth.

In all cases of both divine and diabolic possessions, there was something that persuaded contemporaries that they were confronting a diabolic or a divine causality or context, rather than "organic" illness such as insanity, hysteria, paralysis, imbecility, or epilepsy, all classifications of afflictions that were not unfamiliar to early modern people. A demonic or divine etiology existed in their classificatory system side by side with naturalist definitions. If they chose, however, not to employ these "natural" categories and, instead, ascribed the behaviors to "possession," it was not a result of

the inadequacy of their intelligence or medical knowledge. And if we are to make sense of their understanding of possession, we should start by recognizing the coherence of their system of organizing knowledge. Assuming that medieval and early modern people were simply not sophisticated enough to know the right meanings of the symptoms they experienced and witnessed tells us more about modern scholarly arrogance than about premodern ailments and healing techniques, or about early modern configurations of the interactions with the divine. Arthur Kleinman's criticism of transcultural psychiatry is extremely useful for transhistorical explanations: "having dispensed with indigenous illness categories . . . studies of this kind go on to superimpose their own cultural categories on some sample of deviant behavior in other cultures, as if their own illness categories were culture-free."[1] It is an explanatory mode that completely erases the subjective experiences of participants and disregards the epistemological setting within which they experienced these events.

In fact, as Émile Littré pointed out a hundred and fifty years ago, this "retrospective medicine" assumes that possession as such did not really exist, that it was always something else.[2] Diane Purkiss rightly criticized the rationalizing tendency of modern scholarship, pointing out that "the following ways to displace possession are on offer: the possessed are physically ill; they are mentally ill, in a thousand ways; they are poisoned; they are in an altered state induced by drugs; they are acting; they are taking a culturally sanctioned opportunity to express 'bad' feelings about the family, the church and sex; they are reducible to a textual sign."[3] While I share her biting criticism, I do not share her dismissal of the definition of (demonic) possession as a definition of affliction. At the very core of the drama of possession, I argue, was always a suffering body, whose pain should never be overlooked. Had it not been an embodied experience—an ailment or what, for the time being, we should call "spiritual restlessness"—demoniacs would not be in need of an exorcism. The challenge, therefore, is not to rationalize the definition "possession" by secularizing it, "naturalizing" it, or psychopathologizing it, but to understand what was it about this specific etiology that made sense for early modern people, to locate it within their own medical, psychological, spiritual, and cultural contexts—and to do all this while being continuously aware of the changes in the definitions and configurations of the term that were taking place during the period.

The transmutation of diabolic possession into medical or psychopathological diagnoses is only one of a number of current exegetical strategies explaining (away) the phenomenon, and it is worth discussing their benefits

and shortcomings before we offer an alternative framework.[4] All of these theories are based on large amounts of data that anthropologists have accumulated from non-Western cultures (Christian and non-Christian) and on cross-cultural comparisons. As basic categories of classification and comparison, they use the wide terms "altered states of consciousness" and "spirit possession." Most societies, the argument goes, recognize states in which individuals go through transformative experiences that put them in an altered state of consciousness and often enable communication with the beyond. Possession by divine spirits or spirits of ancestors, trance, mediumship, shamanism, zār and voodoo possessions, religious ecstasy, and other similar behaviors dramatize religious ideologies and personify power relations between humans and the divine.[5] Let us note, however, that trance experiences and shamanism assume an exit of the spirit of a uniquely qualified member of society from the body and its journey into another realm, a configuration that was (almost) unknown in Catholic Europe, where the idiom assumed a nonvoluntary penetration of the body. The shaman dominates the spirits, while the demoniac (or the divinely possessed) is controlled by the spirits; zār and voodoo possessions are highly ritualized and choreographed behaviors that follow a very precise protocol and assume possession by spirits or the dead, while the possessions with which we deal were much less (admittedly, not altogether) ritualized, and the possessing spirit was exposed almost always to be demonic. Last but not least, many of these altered states of consciousness were not related to notions of illness. Trance, for example, could be induced voluntarily by means of drugs or ecstatic music and dance. This form of possession was not completely lacking in the early modern European idiom of possession, but, as we shall see in chapter 1, church authorities rejected the belief, and it was being discredited as a superstition.

Other traditional explanatory paradigms of possession can be divided into three categories, which I will call the psychopathological, the sociological-feminist, and the communicative-performative. The psychopathological, as we have previously mentioned, regards possession as a manifestation of a personal, intersubjective pathology. Sociological-feminist interpretations of spirit possession are varied but have one thing in common: all insist on the social and cultural construction of the idiom. Thus, for example, some anthropologists have found a direct correlation between possession and social change. People are more likely to become possessed in times of social upheaval and instability. By becoming possessed, they express their anxieties concerning the changes. However, not all members

of a given society are equally as likely to become possessed. Possession occurs among people, first and foremost women, who are denied agency and a public voice. In this perspective, becoming possessed is a strategic choice that enables marginal elements (mostly women) to use their society's belief in spirits to transgress their subordination and to acquire the ability to express their distress by speaking in voices other than their own. They air their grievances and frustrations and call attention to suffering or to social disturbances, all the while pretending to remain (or presenting themselves as being) passive messengers of the agencies that talk through them. The deprivation-frustration-transgression-possession nexus has been developed by anthropologist I. M. Lewis and has been used very creatively by French historian and philosopher Michel de Certeau in his discussion of diabolic possession in early modern France.[6]

The communicative-performative approach argues that being possessed cannot be reduced to either the psychological or the social. Instead, it is a performance of both the cosmic order of a given society and the personal anxieties of individuals within the society. The enactment of possession demonstrates to the audience the demoniac's intersubjective distressful experiences at the same time that it gives a cosmic meaning to individual suffering. As such, the performance of possession is both a mode of cultural communication and a personal identity formation at one and the same time. The possessed woman performs a social drama, which reenacts or symbolizes basic cosmological and social truths, and by so doing reasserts the belief system, which, in turn, structures and gives meanings to her own actions and experiences. Nancy Caciola has recently employed this explanatory mode in her discussion of possession and discernment of spirits in medieval Europe. Spiritually inclined women, she suggested, used preexisting identity roles to mediate their chaotic experiences. As they performed the role of possessed by spirits, they adopted such an identity, and their success in this performance reified it.[7]

The insights to be gained from these models of understanding cannot be denied, and this book has incorporated many of them. But the dangers of cross-cultural universalism and sociological functionalism are no smaller than the dangers of medical or psychological reductionism. Both the sociological model à la Lewis and (to a lesser degree) the performative model assume the existence of a coherent agent, a woman who is in possession of a conscious and integrated self, which she employs strategically. The verbal and physical chaos that characterizes many possessions, the indeterminacy of the symptoms in the pre-discernment (diagnosis) stage, and the inherent

uncertainty of the etiology—in other words, the very same elements that made possession a hermeneutic challenge—should warn us against attributing to the suffering and totally confused body of the possessed such a modern and coherent self. In addition, these functionalist and comparativist approaches do not do justice to the immense wealth of metaphors, images, and symbols that characterized European cases of possession and that distinguished them from all other modes of action that Europeans utilized. Finally, such approaches assume a stable definition and configuration of possession and do not take into account the transformations of the European meanings and practices of possessions, changes that are at the very center of this book.

Rather than using available psychological, anthropological, and sociological-feminist models, *Believe Not Every Spirit* argues that possession in the late medieval and early modern period had unique characteristics that made it significantly different from possessions in other cultures, and that it cannot and should not be "translated" into alternative modern explanatory models. As we shall see, until the fifteenth century, possession had been a relatively unimportant occurrence, and possessed people had neither been regarded as shamans, mediums, or cult practitioners, nor had they been assigned or claimed roles of communicators with the beyond. Possession became important only in conjunction with a blossoming of new forms of spirituality, and the number of possessed people increased in correspondence with the number of practitioners of the new spirituality.

The book explores the triad of demonic possession, (female) mysticism, and discernment of spirits as three interrelated expressions of the spiritual climate of early modern Europe. It argues that in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in Spain and Italy, and in the seventeenth century in France, new mystical techniques trickled down to significant segments of the population. Personal spiritual experiences were viewed by some as more important than theological knowledge, and "Divine Ignorance" was celebrated.[8] It was almost unavoidable that at some point the church hierarchy would start examining the benefits and dangers embedded in such equality before the divine. The dismissive attitude in some of the new spiritual and mystical schools toward exterior meditations and spiritual exercises during the pursuit of interior passivity was particularly disturbing to the church. The church feared that this perspective could lead to a rejection of all church rituals and devotional practices. And, indeed, as we shall see, there was a geographical and theological correlation between the diffusion of new passive interiorized spiritual practices and the discernment of possessing spirits as demonic rather than divine.

Situating possession within the context of the new spirituality, I argue that demonic and divine possessions were two facets of the same religious experience, namely, embodied encounters with the supernatural. Such encounters were always intersubjective, always interior, and always not accessible for external scrutiny, hence the inherent connection between possession (in both of its forms) and the hermeneutic challenge of truth. Late medieval and early modern theologians and mystics followed John's admonition: "Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits if they be of God" (1 John 4:1). Like him, they were acutely aware of the morphological similarities between divine and demonic possession and the dangers of deception. This awareness led the Catholic Church to elaborate a system of discernment of possessing spirits. The development (and I would argue failure) of such a method of discernment of spirits became a major theological occupation in late medieval and early modern Europe. As more attention was being paid to possessions and the need to discern them, new theological and epistemological explanations of the relations between the divine and the demonic, the supernatural and the natural, and the trustworthiness of men's and women's judgment were being elaborated.

These developments were not merely new disciplinary mechanisms, imposed by the newly centralized bodies of state and church to elucidate truth.[9] Together with practitioners of the new forms of spirituality, we should take seriously the dangers along the spiritual path, first and foremost, the fear of demonic temptations and perturbations that might await the mystic as she advances from activity to passivity. Practitioners' anxieties and doubts made them participants in, rather than victims of, the discernment of spirits and other forms of examination of interiority. These processes did, indeed, make exorcists important. After all, they had been dealing with demons for hundreds of years and had acquired a body of practices and theoretical knowledge that could and should be put to use (or so they claimed). But exorcists were far from authority figures set on imposing new disciplinary mechanisms. Their professional claims were doubted and their reputation abysmal. More often than not, as we shall see in chapter 3, their practices and techniques were themselves criticized and censored. Confessors, Inquisitors, spiritual advisers, directors of conscience, and mother superiors of spiritually inclined nuns all participated in the redrawing of the new maps of interiority, and they were just as likely to disagree among themselves as they were to agree. Discernment, I argue, was a social practice that involved a process of negotiation rather than a fixed theology or a coherent endeavor. As such, it was a procedure in which men as well as women, the laity as well as the clergy, participated.

By the seventeenth century, the ever-growing attention to the similarity between mysticism and demonic possession overshadowed a previous construction of possession as a physiological affliction. But the process was one of extension, not of substitution. Throughout the early modern period, possession also continued to be defined by somatic behaviors, and exorcists, as we shall see, continued to expel demons from bodies just as much as they were concerned now with discerning demons in the soul. Sadly, the identity of entities that possessed the soul could only be diagnosed once a set of bodily behaviors was detected. But analyzing these somatic signs was far from easy, especially given Saint Paul's admission that "Satan disguises himself as an Angel of Light" (2 Cor. 11:14). Alas, external signs stubbornly resisted unveiling interior truths and continued to frustrate attempts to discern interiority by means of exteriority. A woman who had been discerned to be possessed by demons could later be found to be a genuine mystic, and famed mystics were often exposed as demonically possessed or simulators.

The history of possession, discernment of spirits, and female mysticism in early modern Europe, then, is a history of the changing relation between the psychic and the physical.[10] And being a history of bodies and souls, it is inevitably a gendered history. More women than men were possessed by demons and treated by exorcists, and more women than men practiced new spiritual exercises and meditations that led them to experience direct interactions with the divine. But possession was gendered not only because bodies and souls were gendered; interiority and reliability were also gendered. As I shall elaborate, medieval teachings that viewed women as mentally and physically weak and more prone to diabolic attacks and temptations, as well as to deceptions and simulations, created a set of presuppositions in which both men and women were more likely to attribute women's psychological/spiritual experiences or somatic afflictions to satanic interventions. And once the entire tradition of misogynistic assumptions about women's untrustworthiness and deceitfulness was incorporated into the new science of discernment, a woman who claimed a divine experience was much more likely to be found to be possessed by demons, deceived by Satan, or simulating her possession or her sanctity.

While misogyny played a major role in the process of discerning possessions, a crucial argument of the book is that discernment and exorcism were collaborative processes—processes in which the exorcist and the possessed individual, or the confessor and the spiritually inclined woman, together constructed a coherent narrative that made sense of the possessed woman's suffering or her supernatural experiences. During the discernment process and the exorcism, the symptoms themselves often changed

in accordance with preconceived notions of what a diabolic or divine possession should look like. Only such collaboration between the exorcist and the possessed woman could guarantee the latter's healing and reintegration into her society, and only collaboration between the female mystic and her father confessor and mother superior could lead to her recognition as a true mystic or, alas, to the realization that she was being tempted by the Deceiver.

The book addresses three processes that developed simultaneously and shaped one another. The growing importance ascribed to exorcism was directly related to changes in spirituality and to the development of new discerning methods. The mystical changes shaped the epistemological questions and the exorcismal techniques. In an ideal world, each page in the central chapters of this book (chapters 2–7) would have been divided into three columns, one devoted to exorcism, one to discernment, and one to mysticism. This synoptic configuration would have given the inherent interconnectedness of the three narratives a visual and spatial representation. The reader, then, would have been invited to read all three narratives simultaneously, following the page both vertically and horizontally. Alas, we are not accustomed to such method of reading, and I chose not to burden the reader with this exercise or myself with attempting to write such a narrative. But it is important to keep in mind that, while the chapters are organized consequently, they tell an interconnected story.

Since the book treats diabolic and divine possessions as, at least, interrelated and, at most, two facets of the very same experience, the sources I employ are extremely varied. I have used the obvious sources, among them entries in shrine records, protocols of exorcisms, eyewitness accounts of possessions and exorcisms, and theoretical writings by theologians, Inquisitors, and exorcists on demonic possession and on discernment of spirits. But equally important is the body of writings that on its face has nothing to do with possession or exorcism: mystical writings by male and female mystics, letters and spiritual guides by confessors and mother superiors to nuns on how to discern spirits, and nuns' spiritual diaries. Together, all these documents create an immensely rich web of practices and doctrines that shaped and were shaped by the idiom of possession. The book focuses on Spain, Italy, and France, the three countries where the confrontations with the new mysticism were the most furious, where the earliest guides for the discernment of spirits were authored, and where exorcismal practices came under the most severe attacks. Whenever deemed important, I added examples from other parts of the Catholic world: Flanders, the Holy Roman Empire, and the Americas. Chronologically, it is limited to circa 1500–1650,

but, again, some of the developments described in the book (for example, the growth of the new interiorized spirituality) started earlier, and some lasted into the eighteenth century (mass possessions in convents, the Quietist controversy). Again, whenever earlier and later changes seemed important, I incorporated them into the narrative. The book shifts back and forth among three distinct ways of reading early modern sources. At times, I read descriptions of possession straightforwardly, as objective descriptions of events that took place as they are represented to us. At other times, however, I offer alternative contexts (social, spiritual, and psychological) that could have led the woman involved to believe herself to be possessed by a spirit. And at yet other times, I suggest political, social, gendered, and spiritual agendas that could have motivated exorcists, theologians, and spiritual advisers to credit or discredit a woman's version of the events.

Finally, demons are immaterial angelic entities. In order to emphasize their nonhuman nature, I chose, when using the pronoun form, to refer to the demon in the gender-neutral "it," even though all of the demons in the book carried masculine names. While it may at times be idiomatically awkward, it serves as a constant reminder of the complete otherness of the interactions that took place during diabolic possessions and that this book attempts to elucidate. De-anthropomorphizing demons does not diminish the crucial gender component of their contacts with humans, since they assume a physicality and a gender identity as part of their strategies of deception and seduction.

Concluding his analysis of and meditation on the mass possession of the Ursuline nuns at Loudun, Michel de Certeau lamented melancholically that "possession has no 'true' historical explanation, since it is never possible to know who is 'possessed' and by whom." He then went on to admonish historians not to assume the mantle of the exorcists and use their authority to eliminate the anxiety of Otherness that is embodied in possession.[11] I hope that by taking the possessed women's demonic fears and their spiritual hopes seriously, *Believe Not Every Spirit* has managed to historicize early modern possessions by resuscitating, rather than eliminating, both its otherness and its humanness.

PART ONE

Possession & Exorcism

* I *

Trivializing Possession

Let us start with two anecdotes. A pamphlet praising the local shrine of Treille, in Flanders, recorded that in 1634 a miracle took place "in the body of Marie de Lescurie, daughter of Jacques and Jeanne de la Fosse from the parish of Saint-Étienne in the city of Lille, twenty-seven years of age, who, after having been afflicted with diverse and strange illnesses for seven or eight years, and [due to] the complete lack of results of the cures applied by physicians, it was recognized finally that her suffering could not derive from any natural cause, but was due to a malevolent and evil spirit. With the permission of the bishop of Tournai, it was decided to proceed to exorcisms." It took a novena of prayers and exorcisms in the shrine of Notre-Dame de la Treille to expel the possessing demon.[1] Just a few years later, an entry in a Book of Miracles that recorded the miracles of the Virgin of the shrine of Eberhardsklausen, in the Rhineland, documented a similar recovery: "In the year 1642, the 12th of November, Matthiess, sixteen-year-old son of Nikolass Pützen, a townsman of Merl, was beset by an unfamiliar, furious mania that it was widely held that it was caused by evil spirits. The youth, his arms rigidly contracted, with paralysis of the face, foaming of the mouth, and with irrational appetite, shouting [and] howling terribly, broke off the *Agnus Dei*, [and] behaved so inhumanly that many imagined that he was possessed by an evil spirit, since he also became fully dumb and mute. Hence the parents, after futilely seeking advice many times, took their last refuge to the Mother of Jesus, rich in mercy, at Eberhardsklausen with the promise of a pilgrimage and of [a donation of] wax. Upon which the mad youth immediately came back into possession of his reason, began to speak, and became healthy in all ways."[2]

At the earliest stages of Marie's illness, it was assumed that organic causes were responsible for her condition, and physicians administered natural medicine for her affliction. It was their failure that led to the suspicion that there must be a diabolic cause for her condition. Young Matthiess's furious mania combined both physiological and mental symptoms, and it is likely that he, too, had been examined by physicians and had been exorcised by the local priest at Merl, who had given him the Agnus Dei prior to his pilgrimage to the Marian shrine. Both cases, I would argue, were typical of the dynamics that characterized most diabolic possessions and exorcisms in early modern Europe. A person who was assumed to be possessed by demons was taken to a healer or to a healing site, where healing practitioners performed their assigned job and cured the afflicted person. Importantly, both cases were recorded only in the ledgers of the local shrines in which they occurred. The matter-of-factness of the events themselves and the prosaic nature of the entries represent the mundane character of the traditional form of diabolic possession in premodern Europe. In fact, we do not even know what passed during the exorcisms, which techniques were used by the exorcists, and, in Matthiess's case, how long the expulsion lasted.

The purpose of this chapter is to trivialize diabolic possession and to show the banality of such cases in early modern Europe. This, in opposition to a tendency in the historical literature to present occurrences of diabolic possession as dramatic events, which were allegedly rare as much as they were sensational. As I shall argue in this chapter, demonic possession was originally a catch-all term that was used in premodern times to describe all sorts of both physiological and psychological afflictions, the causes of which were not self-evidently organic, or afflictions that failed to respond to standard naturalist medical cures. Starting in the late Middle Ages, however, the diagnosis of possession was expanded to include disturbances that had their origins as well as their manifestations solely in the soul. This widening of the scope of possession was a response to unprecedented growth of ecstatic behaviors that characterized both divine and diabolic possessions. With more people claiming direct interactions with the divine, self-described visionaries, prophets, and prophetesses were scrutinized more and more thoroughly by the church. More often than not, they were found to be possessed by malevolent, rather than divine spirits.

While the experience of possession itself was always one of pain and agony, being diagnosed as possessed gave meaning to the individual's sufferings and hopes for recovery. A diagnosis of possession made sense. It was familiar to both the laity and clerics from numerous previous cases that

had been recorded in the Bible and in lives of saints, and from previous and similar events that many early modern Europeans witnessed firsthand. Possession was an idiom that was a part of the cultural vocabulary of early modern people. It was therefore easily appropriated and shared by the demoniac herself, her family and neighbors, as well as by the lay and clerical healing experts or the theologians who partook in the diagnostic and healing processes and in the curing ceremonies that followed. As a rule, it was only once physicians of the body failed in their curative attempts that physicians of soul intervened, offering an alternative healing technique, the essence of which was the performance of ritual and invocation of superior powers. But given the shortcomings of premodern medicine, almost all afflictions could ultimately be attributed to a demonic appropriation of the human body. Thus, the boundaries between natural and supernatural causalities and between physiological and psychological symptoms were completely porous.

The Bible itself gave credence to an understanding of demonic possession as a state that at first glance cannot be distinguished from other forms of illness. The casting out of evil spirits and the healing of diseases are regularly spoken of together: "He gave them authority over unclean spirits . . . and they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick and healed them" (Mark 6:7–13; cf. Matt. 4:24; Acts 5:16). Possession could manifest itself in purely physiological symptoms but could also include psychological signs, two categories that, in and of themselves, made little sense for premodern people. Both ailments that we, today, would identify as "purely" physiological or organic and psychological and pyschopathological disorders that modern medicine would ascribe to mental illness or to chemical disturbances in the brain (such as epilepsy or depression) were earlier diagnosed as resulting from demonic invasion.

A definition of demonic possession as a term that could apply to all sorts of afflictions both affirms and challenges common explanations of diabolic possession. First and foremost, it ignores the Catholic Church's own current definition and description of what constitutes possession.[3] Prior to the creation of mandatory etiological and diagnostic rules for the exorcism of possessing demons and the compilation of an authorized Roman Rite in 1614, however, the church did not hold a clear view concerning the essence, the causes, and the characteristics of demonic possession. Overlapping, and at times contradictory, definitions and explanations abounded. Theologians and physicians disagreed among themselves regarding the nature of possessing identities; what constituted a possession and how to distinguish demonic from "natural" affliction; whether a specific case presented

enough signs indicating that it was, indeed, a case of possession; whether natural remedies should be used (and if so, which); whether prayers and invocations of saints sufficed to deliver the possessed or whether a full exorcism was necessary; and, finally, assuming a rite had to be performed, which liturgy should be used. There was also no agreement on the most basic theological issues, among them whether diabolic possession was a divine retribution for some previous sinful act committed by the demoniac or whether people became possessed due to bad luck; who was qualified to perform exorcism; and whether exorcism succeeded *ex opere operato* or only *ex opere operantis*. The complex and fascinating process by which the Catholic Church established orthodox answers to these questions stands at the heart of this book. In this respect, the use of a posteriori definitions such as "prescribed rite" or "mental illness" is counterproductive and even misleading. An expansive, rather than restrictive, definition, like the one offered here, situates diabolic possession within the polysemic matrix of diverse experiences and practices that shaped attitudes toward possession; the nature of both the human body and the human soul; the relations among the human, the divine, and the demonic; and the demarcation between the natural and the supernatural.

Whether it took place in the body or in the soul, diabolic possession in early modern Europe afflicted many more women than men. This trend corresponds to an almost universal overrepresentation of women among the possessed in most societies, as anthropologists and cross-cultural ethnopsychologists have repeatedly pointed out. In Europe, as in many other societies, the association between women and physiological and psychic suffering was part and parcel of the cultural imagination. According to early modern medical theory, women were considered moist and cold, and hence more prone to "contaminations" and "impressions." Their imagination was presumably more active, while their intellect was weaker. Women were assumed to be less rational and to have less control over their bodies. They were therefore viewed as more easily tempted and deluded, serving as a convenient gateway for Satan. Early modernists also believed that women's sexuality was insatiable, and that their wombs might wander into their brains and cause hysteria.[4] All of these notions rendered women more susceptible to the influence of spirits, be they demonic, disembodied, or angelic. Thus, the idiom of possession, based as it was on an entire set of misogynistic assumptions, created spiritual possibilities for women at the same time that it suspected them. As we shall see throughout this book, it was the paradox of women's susceptibility to both diabolic and divine spirits that increased anxieties concerning possessions and led, by the

seventeenth century, to new and restricted definitions of both possession and exorcism.

Put differently, just as symptoms of afflictions needed to be diagnosed prior to a definition of possession, possessing spirits themselves needed to be discerned. Possession indicated an involuntary encounter between a human being and a spirit of an undefined nature. The large majority of medieval and early modern theologians argued that the possessing spirit was likely to be an angel or a fallen angel (a demon), but even this assertion was not above doubt. Among the laity and some clergymen, alternative traditions were also common. Some theologians and many laypeople held that spirits of the dead could also come back to haunt and (more rarely) possess humans.[5] And while orthodoxy had it that most apparitions of and possessions by the dead were demonic deceptions, a confusion concerning the identity of possessing entities was common enough. The importance of this point cannot be overstated, because this hesitancy concerning the identity of possessing entities—were they deceased, demonic, or divine?—shaped many of the cases, as the two following examples from sixteenth-century France demonstrate.

In 1527 Anthoinette de Grollee, a nun in the reformed convent of Saint-Pierre in Lyon, felt that somebody was lifting her veil and kissing her while she was asleep. More kisses followed on succeeding nights, and, together with growing noises that were heard from the nun's room, they alarmed the abbess to suspect the presence of a spirit. Anthoinette was the first to hypothesize that she was being disturbed by the disembodied spirit of her good friend Alis de Tissieur. The latter was among the nuns brought into Saint-Pierre following its reform. Alis was never happy there and got depressed and, worse yet, was given to "abandoning her honor at any time." She left the convent but continued to live dangerously, her body becoming diseased and deformed. In 1524, blind, ugly, and partially paralyzed, Alis repented and asked the Virgin if she could be buried in her beloved convent. Alas, she died on the road and was buried without a funeral or prayers.

Years earlier, while Alis was still in the convent, she befriended the young novice Anthoinette. Now, almost ten years later, Anthoinette suspected that her friend had come back from the afterlife to ask for help in getting her last wish fulfilled. Once the spirit was conjured to tell the truth, Anthoinette's suspicion was confirmed. The abbess then brought Alis's bones into the chapel, but before the nuns had time to rebury their deceased ex-sister, violent noises of knocking disrupted the prayer. In the meantime, a rumor spread in Lyon that a nun was possessed, and the bishop

of Lyon and Father Adrien de Montalembert were called to advise whether the encounter between Anthoinette and Alis was a case of possession by a demonic spirit or an apparition by a revenant, and given the diagnosis, what the best way to deliver the spirit would be. Sensational news travel fast, and early the following morning, when the two clerics tried to make their way in to start their exorcisms, four thousand people blocked the gates to the convent. Was Alis's spirit residing inside Anthoinette's body or was it wandering around the convent, they wondered. "I was charged with composing the ceremonies, exorcisms, conjurations, and adjurations that one should use to discover the pure truth of this spirit," Montalembert explained. Note that the exorcism was not intended to cast out Anthoinette's demon but merely to discern its nature. Yet Montalembert had to admit that there were no clear rules to distinguish the souls of the dead from evil spirits.[6] Avoiding risks, the bishop then started to exorcise both the church itself and Anthoinette, but loud knocks from underneath the ground prevented him from pursuing the ceremony. Ordering the nuns to chant the entire book of Psalms and to confess, he left. The nuns spent the following days praying, and only when their task was completed did the bishop resume the exorcism. At this stage, the bishop was treating the entity within Anthoinette as if it were a demon. He cursed and adjured it in Latin and had Montalembert translate the adjurations into French for the benefit of the huge crowd that was present just outside the walls: "You, destroyer of truth, listen to our pronouncements against you frauds. God commands you to leave this place." The bishop then excommunicated the demon and forbade it to come back, cursing it with eternal damnation (F iiii–G ii). Then Alis's bones were brought into the church. Anthoinette (and her spirit) were placed opposite Alis, and the bishop renewed his interaction with the spirit. Now, however, his first question was whether it was the spirit of the deceased sister, to which the spirit answered "yes." It then went on to recognize the bones as its own (I i–I ii).

As a disembodied and wandering soul rather than a demon, the spirit then conversed with the bishop, offering different types of knocks for positive and negative answers. Alis's spirit confirmed the existence of guardian angels and recounted its own encounter with the devil himself. It affirmed the existence of purgatory and asserted that prayers, alms, good works, fasts, pilgrimages, and indulgences were all beneficent for the salvation of souls. In all of these answers, she "contradicted and condemned the damned assertions of the false heretic Lutherans." The spirit also confirmed the sacrality of Catholic holy days such as Good Friday, Easter, Ascension, and feasts connected with the Virgin Mary. On all of these dates, it instructed,

based on its firsthand knowledge of the working of purgatory, sins are remitted and souls in purgatory get time off from their suffering. The edifying discourse over, Anthoinette (or was it Alis's spirit?) knelt in front of each nun and asked forgiveness, while the bishop ordered a set of absolutions and prayers to deliver Alis from purgatory. A month later, Alis appeared one last time to Anthoinette, announcing that due to the nuns' prayers and the Virgin's intervention, her sojourn in purgatory was shortened, and she was soon to depart to paradise.

Only ten years after Luther's first act of protest in 1517, the bishop of Lyon and Montalembert were already alarmed enough to fashion this dramatic event in order to bring about "a confusion and extermination of the sect of the false heretic Lutherans and their sectarians" (B ii). In their rush to prove the truths of the Catholic Church, they ignored the more prevalent theological view, according to which spirits who claimed to be disembodied souls should never be trusted, because they were nothing but demonic entities. And like the two distinguished clerics, neither the nuns nor the many thousands of Lyonnais who gathered outside the convent doubted the presence of Alis within Anthoinette and, more generally, the possibility of a possession by a human soul.

A few years later, another case of possession by a disembodied spirit was to attract even more attention. In fact, this case became paradigmatic, in the sense that twentieth-century historians of diabolic possession and exorcism have mistaken its dynamics as characteristic of all early modern possessions. On November 3, 1565, Nicole Obry, a sixteen-year-old, recently married girl, encountered a spirit. Nicole was born in the village of Vervins, in the diocese of Laon in Picardy. Shortly before the encounter with the spirit, Nicole got married and moved with her husband to Laon. One evening, while she prayed in the local church near the cemetery where her grandfather Joachin Willot had been recently buried, the spirit of the grandfather appeared to Nicole. In this first encounter, and in a few additional meetings in the following days, the disembodied soul explained to Nicole that it had died before it had had time to confess and fulfill vows it had taken. The spirit was now suffering in purgatory, and it asked Nicole to mobilize its family to pray for his soul, to give alms, and to go on a series of pilgrimages. Nicole's husband, one of her uncles, and a third relative then left on a pilgrimage to some local shrines. From her parents' home in Vervins, Nicole followed their journey in detailed visions. She heard their conversations and "even envisioned what they were served to eat." Nicole recounted these visions to her parents, and upon their return the pilgrims confirmed the accuracy of Nicole's visions.

But Nicole's grandfather also requested that the relatives embark on a pilgrimage to faraway Santiago de Compostela in Spain, and this request was not fulfilled. Nicole then started to suffer from involuntary seizures and threatened that the grandfather's spirit would turn her mute, deaf, and blind unless all the requests were fulfilled. The family consulted the village priest, the local teacher, and Pierre de la Motte, a famed local Dominican preacher. The teacher was the first to suspect that the spirit was not the grandfather's disembodied soul. Explaining that "it is not the habit of good angels to torment other creatures," he suspected it of being an evil spirit. Friar de la Motte then examined the girl and confirmed that "a devil possessed this body." Nicole, in the meantime, became paralyzed, her mouth inflamed, and she started gesticulating in an uncontrolled manner. These somatic signs affirmed the teacher's and the Dominican's diagnosis. La Motte then conversed with the spirit in Latin, forcing it to admit that it was, indeed, the demon Beelzebub. For the following four months, Nicole was exorcised in the cathedral of Laon. Thousands of spectators gathered in the church and witnessed the demon attempting to resist adjurations. Lying on a bed in the middle of the church, Nicole convulsed and cried out, fainted and lost consciousness, and answered in a gruff and frightening male voice to questions that were addressed to her in Latin, German, French, and Flemish. She also revealed people's hidden sins and brought them to confess, and led a number of Protestants to convert to Catholicism. Finally, with the use of holy water, crosses, saints' relics, and the Eucharist, the devil was expelled from Nicole's body, not before it admitted that it feared the sacrament because it was the "Real Presence" of God, as Catholicism maintained, and not just a sign, as the Huguenots had it. In fact, Beelzebub confessed its true identity as a Huguenot leader and upon its expulsion was heading back to Geneva.[7]

As prominent as the religious-polemical aspect of Nicole's case is, we should not overlook what the minutiae of the unfolding of this possession tell us about the earliest stages of the event, namely, Nicole's own explanation of her disturbance and her family's affirmation of Nicole's assertion. In the earlier stages of this encounter, neither Nicole nor her family and neighbors doubted Nicole's belief that she was possessed by a disembodied soul, and a series of visions confirmed this earlier diagnosis. Prior to the Dominican's intervention, the spirit insisted and swore that it was "a messenger of God, the spirit and the soul of Joachim Willot," Nicole's grandfather. In fact, even the local teacher did not rule out the possibility of possession by a spirit, but only pointed out that the symptoms of this specific case resembled a diabolic possession. Only then did the Dominican

friar rule on the issue, imposing the more common view of the church, according to which disembodied souls were more likely to be demonic than revenants. Nicole's own physiological responses to this new diagnosis then confirmed the friar's diagnosis.

Catholic theologians, however, remained divided on the issue of the nature and identity of possessing and obsessing spirits. A few years after Nicole's possession, another French friar attacked Calvinist theologians who denied apparitions of disembodied souls. Recounting biblical and patristic events, the Capuchin Noel Taillepied explained that the dead return and appear not only to "women and children, or to idiots and people who are sick," but also to healthy and intelligent people. They are more likely to appear if they still have some unfinished business, just as Nicole's grandfather did: "When the spirits that appear to us command us to perform good deeds, it is probable that these are wandering souls or good and saintly spirits." In fact, he argued, Nicole's diabolic possession confirms, rather than denies, the possibility of disembodied souls. Otherwise, why would a demon pretend to be a ghost if ghosts do not reappear, he summarized.[8] He was seconded in 1598 by the Jesuit Petrus Thyraeus, who distinguished among three types of disembodied spirits: diabolic, those who return from hell, and those who return from purgatory; and by Pierre de Lancre, who admitted that while the very large majority of appearances of ghosts were demonic, at some rare occasions God might permit disembodied souls to appear for very specific purposes.[9]

For a significant number of laypeople, then, and for some theologians, possessing spirits could be disembodied souls and not necessarily demons. For others, they could even be benevolent spirits. The *inspiritata* Lucia from Friuli was brought before the Venetian Inquisition in 1582, accused of being a diviner and a soothsayer. Lucia had a good spirit by the name of Buranello, who resided in her stomach and was called up from there to her tongue whenever she needed its help. Laypeople and priests frequented her house to consult this benevolent spirit and rewarded her for her service. She was not the only Venetian who used a good spirit. Three other local women—Diana Passarina; Theodora, daughter of Battista; and Elena Crusichi, known as Draga—believed themselves, and were believed by others, to be possessed by good spirits.[10]

* * *

Possession, whether diabolic or divine, and whether it occurred in the body or solely in the soul, always took place within specific historical settings.

Thirty years ago, William Monter pointed out that the early modern period was "the golden age of the demoniac." Many historians have since concurred, some comparing the situation to an epidemic or a plague. Some, most prominently Erik Midelfort and Stuart Clark, attributed this "golden age" to the growing demonization of the world in the period. Others, following Daniel P. Walker, asserted that the period witnessed a dramatic increase in cases of possession due to the religious strife of the Reformation, which motivated Catholics (and Protestant sectarians) to use the idiom of possession as a form of propaganda.[11] In fact, the use of possession as propaganda was not restricted to the Catholic-Protestant conflict. It was also used to convert Jews and to impress the native population of America, if we are to trust André Thevet, the Franciscan voyager and cartographer who performed "more than one hundred" exorcisms on the bodies of Brazilian Indians in French Antarctica (Rio de Janeiro) in the last months of 1555.[12] There is much truth to these contextualizations, and it is worth pondering their contributions as well as their shortcomings.

As we have seen, the possessions of both Anthoinette de Grollee of Lyon and Nicole Obry of Laon were immediately put to polemical use. The use of diabolic possession for propagandistic purposes was, of course, far from being a novelty of the early modern period. It was, in fact, as old as the church itself. But three developments changed its nature in the early modern period. I have already mentioned the growing anxiety concerning the identity of the possessing spirit that resulted from the spiritualization of possession. Obviously, when a woman who had been presumed by her family or neighbors to be a messenger of deceased relatives or a vehicle of divine favors was exposed to be possessed by demons, she attracted more attention than a person who suffered from incurable headaches and was therefore assumed to be possessed by demons. Equally important were the inventions of the moving press and of sensational journalism, both creatures of the last years of the fifteenth century. These two changes created a new style of writing about possession. Starting during the Italian Wars of 1494–98 and the execution of the Florentine prophet Savonarola, sensational pamphlets became a new mode of information, appearing first in Italy and then in France and Germany, and they gained popularity in the following century.[13] Adrien de Montalembert's narrative of the possession of Anthoinette de Grollee by the spirit of Alis de Tissieur was an early example of ingenious use of the media revolution of the sixteenth century. His thirty-two-page long booklet was published merely a few weeks after the event (*le xv^e^ jour d'octobre l'an 1528*). For Montalembert, the exorcism was more than just a healing rite. It was a demonstration of a much larger

event, the cosmic struggle between the powers of good and evil and between Catholicism and Lutheranism. Anthoinette's possessed body acquired a new meaning. No longer merely a body in pain, it became a text, a record of the Christian mythology itself. The possession was no longer an ephemeral occurrence, but a historical event of immense importance, an eschatological sign of the growing danger of heresy, while the exorcism was a reassuring demonstration of divine mercy. Hence both Montalembert's anti-Lutheran diatribe and his triumphalism.[14]

Montalembert titled his description of the exorcism *The Marvellous History of the Spirit that just a short time ago appeared in the Convent of Saint-Pierre de Lyon*. Similar titles became standard in the sixteenth century. Versions of Nicole Obry's possession and dispossession were titled *The Treasure and Entire History of the Triumphant Victory of the Lord's Body*; *The Abridged History of the Grand Miracle by Our Savior in the Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist*; and *The History of the Sacred Victory . . . of the Precious Body of Our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ over Beelzebub*. Other records of successful exorcisms were similarly titled *Five Admirable Histories which demonstrate . . . the Virtue and Power of the Sacred Sacrament of the Eucharist* and *The Triumphant Victory of the Virgin Mary over Seven Evil Spirits*.[15] Sensational printed records of possession and exorcism also followed Montalembert in emphasizing the veracity of their descriptions. They indicated the names of participants and the exact location and date of each stage in the ceremony and often included signed letters from eyewitnesses to the exorcism. They were usually printed on paper of poor quality and ranged in size from a single broadsheet to five hundred pages. A few even appeared as a single-page engraving, whose annotated margins directed the viewers how to decipher the image.[16] Their authors had a wide audience in mind, literate, semi-literate, or even illiterate.

Unlike cases of possession and exorcism that continued to edify a saint or a shrine, the cases that were printed as polemic pamphlets edified not an individual or a site, but Catholicism itself. The dramatization of the events in these pamphlets often included an exorcist who was bewildered and confused, rather than self-confident. At times, he was unfamiliar with exorcismal techniques and attempted different methods such as fumigation, the laying on of hands, fasting, prayers, and the use of holy water, a crucifix, and the Eucharist. Often he called additional exorcists to help him, while the possessing demon, on its part, was often revealed to be only one of numerous demons within the body. The diminutive figure of the exorcist highlighted his role as a mere vehicle of the power of the Catholic Church. And like Alis's spirit, in many propagandistic records

the departing demons harangued the community about the veracity of Catholic beliefs, while other demons ridiculed Protestants for their beliefs or confessed that they themselves were, in fact, Protestants or that they had been sent from and were heading back to Geneva or to a conference with Luther.[17]

Many of these possession narratives seem contrived. After all, how could a possessed woman, suffering, screaming, and out of control, address theological issues, give edifying sermons, or describe daily life in purgatory? Questioning the accuracy of this literary genre, however, is not to argue that early modern theologians and propagandists were disingenuous when they claimed the veracity of their reports. Asking whether the events "really" unfolded as they were recorded is a *question mal posée*. The parting of the ways between history and story and the "Birth of Fact" (to use Lorraine Daston and Katharine Park's term) was still in its infancy when the genre of writing about possession came into being, and its creators had a concept of truth that was wider than our own. The reports were true because they were possible and because they represented moral and theological verisimilitudes, while at the same time entertaining and instructing. They told a story that was, in fact, more truthful to the events than the events themselves, because their hyperbolic truth told a version that was edifying, more coherent, and that made better sense of the events. Their versions told an absorbing tale that turned anecdotes into signs, raw information into *notabilia facta*—deeds worthy of note.[18]

In a rare surviving record of actual transcription of an exorcism ceremony, the exchange among exorcist, demon, and demoniac "as it really happened" presents the complex process of translation from event to pamphlet. The document, which was discovered by Gregory Hanlon and Geoffrey Snow in the Archives départementales du Lot-et-Garonne, records a session during the exorcism, in 1619, of Marie Noguès. The exorcism ceremony opened with a Mass, and Marie remained relatively calm. But when the exorcist showed her the crucifix and said, in both Latin and French, "This is the Cross of the Lord," Marie reacted with four or five barks. Then, however, the exorcist stopped talking to Marie and, addressing the demon within her, ordered it to obey. Demonic rage prevented Marie/the demon from pronouncing the words the priest demanded of her. The demon was then asked if it promised to obey God and the priest, and whether it was willing to be punished according to justice when it disobeyed, and it responded positively. Ordered to leave the body, the demon responded by shouting. The exorcist insisted: "Leave . . . there is no time to lose, give your heart to God," but the demon only increased its

cries. Roaring, barking, and trembling, it tried to vomit. As the exorcist increased his efforts to cast the demon out, the demon doubled its own cries and barks. Turning "its" head from side to side, its agitation increasing, its hands hitting its nose time and again, the demon continued to resist. The exorcist was exacerbated: "Why don't you exit? . . . Why don't you come up [from the belly to the mouth]? . . . Why don't you leave?" Rather than answering these questions, the demon increased its cries and tried to hide from the exorcist. Its gesticulations became more dramatic, its arms and head turning from side to side and up and down, and its cries longer and louder. "All created things but you, enraged dog, obey their creator. You are a rebel!" the demon shut its eyes and opened its mouth, and in its rage inserted first one and then both hands into its mouth, as if trying to tear it apart.

This went on for a few minutes, with the exorcist repeating his orders and threatening to increase the demon's suffering, and the demon repeating that it could not exit the body. But then, suddenly, when asked why it could not exit, the demon answered: "God." From this moment on, something—admittedly not much—in the dynamic changed. The demon's verbal resistance gave way to some degree of collaboration, and words replaced cries and shouts. Still using as few words as possible, the demon nonetheless explained its activities. It refused to leave not because it did not want to, but because it could not. "I want to leave, I burn inside this body," it lamented. But Saint Gabriel himself revealed to it that God forbade it from exiting. Apparently the saint appeared daily to instruct it that the time had not arrived yet. As the ceremony unfolded, the demon pronounced the names Mahon and Mohamed (its name? its collaborators?), which the priest rushed to write down on a piece of paper and burned. "In the same manner that I burn this note, I pray God to intensify your suffering!" he threatened the demon, who responded in louder cries. And yet it insisted that it could not exit. The exorcist then held a Eucharist and again ordered the demon to exit. "Don't you adore the same great God that I hold between my fingers?" "Yes, yes." But the demon still insisted that God forbade it. Even the use of the Eucharist was in vain, and by the end of the session the demon was still inside Marie's body, still insisting that God prevented its exit.[19] In fact, Marie remained possessed for years to come.

Obviously, a huge gap separated this detailed account of an exorcism from standard propagandistic records of exorcism. But we can still easily identify some elements in this exchange that were typical of sensational narratives and can even use this "authentic" document to "justify" some of the literary choices of pamphleteers. The transcript goes on and on

and is repetitive. The exorcist translates each sentence and adjuration into French and asks repetitive questions, to which he usually gets the same negative answer. The demon's answers are monosyllabic when they are not sheer cries and gesticulations. The minutes, in other words, are tedious and, ultimately, make a lousy story. By condensing the exchange with the demon into one sentence, the author of a pamphlet would do no harm to the Catholic truthfulness of the event. Similarly, we can also identify in the minutes the "original" version of the theological discourses concerning the Eucharist or other Catholic truths that are so common in literary narratives of possession and exorcism. The priest asks the demon, and the latter affirms that God is in the Eucharist. Is there really a substantial difference between this admission and the sermons demons sometime give in praise of the Real Presence?

This being said, we should not be led astray by early modern pamphleteers, propagandists, and controversists. It is worth repeating that the large majority of early modern cases of possession and exorcism did not merit even a transcript, not to mention a printed record. Like the cases of Marie of Lille and Matthiess of Merl, they were, at most, included as short entries in parochial registries or in Books of Miracles in provincial shrines. The mass possession of the nuns at Loudun, the Salem witch trials, and the tantalizing cases that became major theaters of Catholic anti-Protestant propaganda were exceptional, while the thousands of cases that involved only a single energumen, that were "purely physiological," that did not make it into print, and that were not used for polemical purposes were the rule. It is equally true that diabolic possession always made sense within a Christian demonological framework that assumed that Satan and his disciples were intent on pursuing a persistent campaign to harm humanity. Malevolent possessing agents were understood to be fallen angels, nonhuman and noncorporeal entities, who had it in their ability to penetrate human bodies (and maybe souls). Diabolic possession demonstrated human vulnerability to demonic attacks and the need to live in accordance with Christian teachings, which may (or may not) reduce the risk of being possessed. And in more than a few cases, as we shall see in following chapters, possessing demons did, indeed, admit that they had been sent into bodies in order to inflict *maleficium*. But while chronologically many cases of possession did overlap with the huge increase in witchcraft accusations during the early modern period, and some—but far from a majority of—authors on possession connected diabolic possession and witchcraft, the normative configuration of possession in the period did not assume a *maleficium*. Just as it is important to remember that the

majority of early modern cases of possession and exorcism did not serve propagandistic purposes; it is important to remember that only very few cases developed into accusations of witchcraft.

This fascination with the more dramatic manifestations of possession follows a long hagiographical tradition, in which sainthood of both living and deceased saints was established by their ability to perform miracles, including dramatic exorcisms. The more extreme and theatrical the behavior of the possessed, the more heroic the saint's success and the greater the listeners' awe.[20] Indeed, as we have already seen, many possessed individuals exhibited strange behaviors. Ambroise Paré (1510–1590), the chief surgeon to French kings Charles IX and Henri III, described possessed people who "speak through the belly, through the natural parts, and speak various unknown languages. They make the earth quake; they make the thunder roll and the lightning flash, and they make the wind blow; they uproot and tear up trees, no matter how big and strong these latter may be! They make a mountain move from one place to another; they raise a castle up in the air and set it back in its place; they charm one's eyes and bedazzle them, with the result that they often make one see that which doesn't at all exist."[21] Others, however, exhibited minor symptoms that lasted for many years or afflictions that made the diagnosis difficult. This was the case of Marie of Lille, whom we met at the very beginning of this chapter and who had been possessed for eight years prior to her pilgrimage to the local shrine at Treille. This was similarly the case with Perinette Pinay, a respectable widow from the village of Montotier, near Lyon, who had been possessed for twelve years before she sought exorcism.[22]

This book, too, shares the fascination with the bizarre, and it, too, pays attention to dramatic cases of possession and exorcisms, especially those cases in which the possession was "spiritual" rather than physiological, and when the identity of the possessing spirits was questioned. However, voyeuristic delight should not obscure the numerous quotidian and routine cases in which the energumen's symptoms were as standard and as simple as a headache, "purely physiological" rather than "psychological," natural rather than preternatural, and when the affliction and the recovery did not merit much public attention. Witnessing possession, after all, was part of the normative experience of very large numbers of early modern Europeans.[23] For us, moderns, an etiology of demonic possession carries with it sensational and dramatic overtones. It calls to mind a world that was alien, not yet disenchanted; where porous bodies lacked integrity and could be taken over; where demons, ghosts, and even the dead could come back to haunt humans; and where the divine and the demonic were believed to

be active in the world. For early modern people, living within the Christian belief system, diabolic possession was first and foremost a routine explanatory mode that gave meaning to an affliction or an event, and offered a practical solution and a remedy. It was an interpretation that elucidated the meaning of suffering at the same time that it alleviated it. A diagnosis of diabolic possession was less threatening than the hopelessness of incurability, and, as we shall see in the next chapter, healing practitioners, who specialized in expelling demons, were always available. Their successes were numerous and their failures rare. Demonic possession was therefore both an extreme incarnation of a personal disorder and a reaffirmation of social order: demons could cause havoc within a body and within the social body, but they could also be expelled, and harmony could be reinstalled.

But where exactly was a possessing demon located? Augustine had mentioned that "a malignant spirit is using [a demoniac's] body and soul according to his will."[24] But he, and following him both medieval physicians and theologians, went on to develop a theology of the spirit that explained that under no circumstances can possessing demons overtake the soul. Only God can penetrate it and dwell within it, while demons operate on the soul from the outside, even if it might look as if they reside within it. "Let no one have any doubt," exclaimed Thomas of Cantimpré, "that [demons] are in the body, not the soul. Only God, not a created being, can enter into human souls through the inhabitation of grace."[25] An alternative early Christian tradition, however, identified with the Desert Fathers John Cassian (360–435) and Evagrius of Pontus (c. 345–399), describes the spirit of Accidie, a demonic and mental state of lethargy and despondency, which "takes possession" over monks. This was a demonic disorder that took place solely in the soul, and not in the body. Admittedly, it was a lower part of the soul that was manipulated by this demonic material and yet ethereal spirit, and both authors insisted that a higher "true" and untouched soul was immune to the material world. But there is little doubt that this Evagrian tradition created the possibility of vulnerability of lowers parts of the soul to the demonic.[26]

The tradition of diabolic possession of the soul was completely overshadowed in theological writing during much of the High Middle Ages. But as Nancy Caciola, Barbara Newman, and Dyan Elliott have recently documented, a new form of possession of the spirit ("psychological" or "spiritual" possession) reemerged in the thirteenth century.[27] The process had already begun in the twelfth century, with the suspicion surrounding the visions of Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179), the first medieval mystic who was not a male theologian, a bishop, or a saint. Her visions were

therefore examined very carefully for fear that demonic delusions, rather than divine inspiration, lay at the origin of her experience. Hildegard herself voiced this anxiety and wondered why "now, to the scandal of men, women are prophesying."[28] Both the abbess of Bingen and the church authorities feared that diabolic possession could manifest itself in a totally spiritual or psychological form. The fact that Hildegard did not exhibit physical signs of possession did not preclude the possibility that a demonic entity was controlling her. Hildegard's mystical visions were authenticated, but in the process the configuration of diabolic possession was expanded. Some possessions were now "spiritualized," meaning that the possessing spirit could now reside, or at least look *as if* it were residing, in the soul itself. This new understanding, and the fears and anxieties that created it, gained momentum during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and became even more widespread in the early modern period, when new forms of spirituality (to be discussed in chapter 4) spread from monasteries and convents to city squares, and when a growing number of laywomen claimed divine interactions. What constituted possession, where possessing agents resided, what was the exact identity of the possessing agent, and how to discern between divine and demonic possessions became major theological and social concerns that were to shape the entire discussion of possession in late medieval and early modern Europe. Furthermore, the need to discern spirits and to decipher what took place within people's souls also shaped the Catholic Church's attitudes toward new religious movements and new forms of mysticism and spirituality.

The growing spiritualization of possession consolidated a connection between possession and femininity. The possibility of diabolic possession of and in the soul implied uncertainty, confusion, lack of control, and the possibility of deception. All of these negative attributes were commonly associated with women. Thus, the spiritualization of possession meant also its feminization. As we shall see, the discernment of possessing spirits and the growing distrust of new forms of spirituality became completely intertwined by the 1550s with the development of an elaborate discourse concerning the reliability of women in general and spiritually inclined women in particular. Equally important, while everybody could, theoretically at least, participate in the process of diagnosing physical possession, only expert theologians could discern spirits that possessed the soul. This created a clear hierarchical relationship between the possessed, whose experience was always open for interpretation, and male theologians, Inquisitors, and exorcists, who claimed a monopoly over the knowledge of interior "movements." Widening the repertory of possession states, however,

never eliminated the connection between "physical" affliction and possession. In this traditional paradigm, a person who showed clear physiological signs of illness could be found to be possessed by demons. Now, a woman who did not exhibit any somatic signs of affliction could still be considered possessed, and therefore in need of the curing rite of exorcism, as the following example demonstrates.

Caterina Paluzzi (1573–1645) was a lay mystic and a protégée of both Filippo Neri and Federico Borromeo, two of the most prominent Italian theologians of the sixteenth century. When Paluzzi informed her father superior of a series of visions she had experienced, her father "said [that] if these still bothered me I should resort to exorcisms (*scongiuri*), and then come back and tell him whether they worked. I did what he said and still had the same effects and told him so, and he said I should have even more exorcisms and this would help me find out if the devil was trying to deceive me."[29] There is no indication in Paluzzi's autobiography that she was possessed in the traditional (physiological) manner. She did not suffer from physical pains, nor did she exhibit the preternatural signs common to diabolic possession, such as the ability to speak in tongues or a knowledge of hidden secrets. But she did practice extreme forms of mortification and was experiencing visions and an inability to digest food. Exorcisms in her case were recommended and performed solely because her soul was restless. They were used, in fact, as a probative technique to discern her spirit, assuming that if it was the devil who possessed her and caused her visions, the rite itself would force him out and the visions would cease.

The "spiritualization" of diabolic possession was only one of a number of changes in the early modern period that impacted forms of possession and techniques of exorcism. The medieval promiscuity of physiological and "psychological" signs of diabolic possession was giving way in the sixteenth century to the first systematic attempts by the Catholic Church to specify what were the required somatic and preternatural signs that distinguished possession from other afflictions. This systematization was soon followed by the publication of the first compilations of authorized rites of exorcism, which restricted exorcists' forms of intervention. They were now required to consult with physicians prior to diagnosing diabolic possession and to try their best to find natural causalities for mysterious illnesses. To be sure, possessions whose symptoms were solely physical continued to occur, and exorcists continued to cast out demons from the bodies of people whose afflictions were purely physiological. But the two processes of the "naturalization" of affliction and the spiritualization of diabolic possession were not unrelated. As possession acquired new importance as a

definition of spiritual behavior and as exorcists were assuming their new vocation as deciphers of interior movements within the soul, their role as healers of afflicted bodies diminished somewhat. By the seventeenth century, the "spiritualized" form of diabolic possession dominated exorcismal and other theological writings on the topic. The discernment of possessing spirits, the need to examine claimants' interiority, and the fear of misdiagnosis overshadowed the quotidian "purely physiological" cases, which were relegated now to short entries in ledgers of shrines specializing in such activities.

What really was happening inside the soul during possession? What was the real identity of the possessing spirit? And what were the characteristics of the possessed woman herself that could help determine her merits or failures and analyze her susceptibility to possession or her reliability? Early modern theologians and exorcists discussed these issues at the same time that the Inquisition was pondering who was a heretic, insisting that heresy took place within a person's conscience. Inquisitors were addressing this concern and trying to develop methods to examine people's interiority at the same time that people in Spain wondered who was a sincere convert to Catholicism and who was merely a Judaizer, while others, in other parts of Europe, asked who was a good Catholic and who was a Nicodemist. Lutherans were portrayed as hypocrites and deceivers, who hid their true heretical and even satanic identities beyond masks, while Calvinism was labeled *la religion prétendue réformée*.[30] Anxieties concerning the reliability of exterior signs as indicators of interiority were not restricted to the religious sphere. This was an age intensely troubled with issues of hypocrisy and sincerity and with the study of physiognomy and the gap between appearances and essences. Machiavelli instructed the Prince to be a "gran simulatore e dissimulatore," while Molière worried about the popularity of casuistry and fakery: "Don't you distinguish between hypocrisy and piety? . . . Honoring a face as much as a mask? Equating fakery and sincerity?" Who was a trusted servant or courtier, and who was a traitor who was simulating loyalty? Who was a reliable astrologer whose prognostications should be trusted? And how to tell the worthy poor from the unworthy vagabonds? Who was an impostor, and how could dissimulation be unveiled and rooted out? Who were sincere in their devotion and who was a Tartuffe?[31] The obsessive nature of much of the writings we will encounter—their effort, hope against hope, to separate truth from falsity, to develop systems of discernment and to rule out mistakes, fakeries, and simulations—demonstrates that larger issues than merely the curing of possessed bodies and souls were involved in the cultural reconstruction of the category possession

in the early modern period. And while other facets of the search for interior truth in the period did not distinguish between men and women, the search for the true nature of possessed people was gendered. Women who exhibited symptoms of possession were more likely to be unveiled as possessed by demons than by the divine spirit, to be deceived, or to be participating actively in simulation. The gendering of spiritual truth was a leitmotif of the early modern discourse of possession and is a central argument of this book.

Diabolic possession, then, was far from being a stable category. Its expansion in the early modern era to include possessions of the soul necessitated rethinking and expanding the meaning of exorcism, the development of new discerning methods and new exorcismal techniques. These interrelated processes are at the very center of this book. But let us first look at the traditional mechanism that was available for the expulsion of possession demons, namely, exorcism.

* 2 *

The Prevalence of a Mundane Practice

The previous chapter argued that demonic possession was common and ordinary in early modern Europe, and that multiple understandings and configurations of diabolic possession existed in late medieval and early modern Europe. While the historiography has repeatedly treated a few dramatic cases as typical of the period, demonic possessions were part and parcel of daily life. Evil spirits could possess the body as well as the soul and inflict physiological pains as well as mental disturbances. They could exhibit themselves in purely natural signs (such as ongoing pain) as well as in preternatural signs (such as the ability to move mountains). Similarly, I will argue in this chapter that much of the existing historiography has obscured the ordinariness, multiplicities, and varieties of exorcismal practices in late medieval and early modern Europe. Historians have tended to follow the post-Tridentine church's definitions of authorized and unauthorized practices, and have focused their attention on liturgical texts, relegating into the realm of folklore alternative popular healing techniques and formulas that Europeans practiced to cast out demons. Historians have also often described exorcism as a dramatic performance, with a male demon and a male cleric combating within and over the body of a possessed woman, while astonished onlookers watched with awe as the sacramental powers of the (masculine) church overcame the demonic (masculine) powers of Satan. As we shall see, up until the first systematic attempt to define and restrict exorcismal practices—an attempt that had started in the second half of the sixteenth century but did not achieve much success until the nineteenth century—exorcism was a routine and nondramatic occurrence that was practiced by many thousands of individuals, some of them

ecclesiastics, but the large majority members of the laity. Equally, exorcism was performed all over Europe by professional clerical exorcists, whose "mechanical" performance of the rite further diminished any dramatic effects. As a result of focusing attention on dramatic cases of exorcism by members of the clergy, privileging "psychological" cases over physiological, and dealing mostly with propagandistic and theological texts, our perception of the significance and meaning of demonic possession and exorcism is skewed. In order to re-create the lived experience of exorcism in Catholic early modern Europe, we need first to unravel the clerical classification system, a system that, I shall argue, developed only in the later years of the sixteenth century. At the center of this system of classification was the concept of "superstition."

The church had always carved out a category of what it deemed superstitious. Unauthorized spells and conjurations were likely (but not necessarily) to be superstitious. Equally, church rituals that did not follow the prescribed liturgy, or that were performed for the "wrong" reasons and did not have God as their object, were all regarded as superstitious. For our purposes, it is important to point out that, prior to the second half of the sixteenth century, the performance of the "right rituals" by unauthorized people *was not* viewed as superstitious. Equally, people who believed in the "automatic" (*ex opere operato*) function of sacramentals (ritualistic aids) were not condemned as superstitious. According to Thomas Aquinas, superstition is "the vice opposed to the virtue of religion by means of excess . . . because it offers divine worship either to whom it ought not, or in a manner it ought not."[1] From his definition, it is easy to see why unorthodox devotion could easily be associated with demonic magic, as magical practices could be understood as either superfluous and misguided, or as the worship of the wrong object. Starting in the early fifteenth century, when the fear of Satanism increased, a few theologians concerned themselves more systematically with superstition, but even their preoccupation with the issue did not lead to an attempt to eradicate superstitious practices. A confusion persisted as to who had the right to perform curing rituals, what practices were legitimate, and whether a performance of a rite by an unauthorized person, but with good faith, constituted superstition. The Erasmian attack on superstitious practices of the Catholic Church and the mutual accusations of superstition between Protestants and Catholics made it the "embodiment of the 'other,' of the despised, the defective, the diabolic and the deluded."[2] It was only in the early modern period that the church started to try to stop members of the laity from performing rites of healing by labeling them superstitious. Theologians, Inquisitors,

witch-hunters, and exorcists compiled lists of superstitious practices, pursued their practitioners at court, and tried (but, as we shall see, failed) to put an end to the coexistence of innumerable lay and clerical forms of exorcism that had characterized the medieval period.[3]

Over the last thirty years, historical research into popular religion has revolutionized our understanding of premodern European belief systems.[4] Historians have recovered the hidden world of practices and beliefs, among them a wide array of healing practices. Often, however, this historical enterprise employed the same categories that the church itself had employed in its attempt at eradicating such practices, first and foremost by regarding these traditions as "superstitious." For examples, many historians have relied on Jean-Baptiste Thiers's *Traité des superstitions* (1679), a collection of hundreds of premodern traditions, to represent early modern French popular culture.[5] What has been obscured in the uncritical use of this collection was that Thiers was a reforming cleric, whose selection and terminology were themselves part of the attempt to demarcate the boundary between what was superstitious and what was theologically sound. Thus, using Thiers's definitions, historians have treated as superstitious, folkloric, and archaic what this French zealot theologian had described as such, and have accepted as orthodox—and hence not superstitious, not folkloric, and not anachronistic—religious practices that were approved by the *curé* of Vibraye.

Writing more than thirty years ago, Hildred Geertz warned historians against extrapolating backward distinctions between religion and magic, and reading modern classifications into the late medieval and early modern religious universe.[6] Her warning still merits attention. By accepting and using the theologians' own definitions of superstition, historians have reburied the popular traditions of premodern Europe no sooner than they had exhumed them. Few attempts have been made to understand the worldview that gave coherence to these practices and traditions and to examine the exact relations between the practitioners of such traditions and the clergy. In addition, the cross-fertilization that took place all around Europe among different religious traditions and religious acts is left out.

Overturning this historiographical tradition, this chapter presents a premodern system of healing in which the natural and the supernatural, the lay and the clerical, and the physical and the spiritual interact and complement each other in a multiplicity of overlapping remedial techniques and practices. To reach this goal, I have opted to employ what I term a "social" rather than a "theological" definition of exorcism, by which exorcism is defined as a curing technique against evil spirits that have taken

over a possessed person, an animal, or an object. When confronted with an affliction whose cause was thought likely to be supernatural, Europeans had recourse to a large variety of healing techniques. They could consult a lay neighbor (a wise man or a wise woman), known for his or her curing and exorcismal powers; they could ask priests to perform exorcism rituals; or they could invoke saints known for their efficacy against possessing evil spirits. These healers were not necessarily viewed as competing with each other, nor were the methods employed by clerics much different from those employed by lay exorcists. Here, it is important to remember that the healing of possessed people has never been defined by the church solely as a ministerial activity. Rather, it was a grace that might be bestowed on anyone, lay or cleric. An energumen and her family therefore did not need to find a cleric to perform an exorcism. The local lay healer, using an amalgamation of Christian and non-Christian practices and spells, could just as likely perform the appropriate rites.

Defining exorcism as a healing technique and its practitioners as healers also allows us to connect exorcism with the world of early modern medicine. Exorcism was viewed as a curative practice in a world in which the boundary between natural and preternatural causation of illness was porous. Any illness could result from divine intervention, whether as a punishment for sin or as a lesson to be learned. But Satan, too, could afflict individuals, alone or through his malevolent collaborators (witches), and bring about what looked like a natural illness. As a result, both lay and ecclesiastical exorcists often cooperated with physicians in diagnosing supernatural and preternatural causes of affliction and in suggesting remedies. Physicians often admitted that a diagnosis of a specific illness was beyond their expertise and was likely to be demonic, while theologians and church exorcists welcomed physicians' opinions (and in fact many church guidelines mandated such intervention).

Early modern medicine itself represented an amalgamation of practices, theories, and traditions. Physicians used the medical learned tradition, whose origins and source of legitimacy were traced back to a corpus of classical and medieval texts, Christian rituals of healing, different methods of sympathetic magic, and traditional folk medicine. Physicians and exorcists alike, both lay and religious, used medical herbs and concoctions, holy water, smoking techniques (fumigation and suffumigation), purgation, prayers, and short written invocations of Jesus and the saints as curing techniques.

The overlapping techniques and the need to consult each other did not preclude competition between physicians and ecclesiastics. It was common

for individuals from both camps to criticize members of the other profession for their ignorance or even atheism.[7] Giovan Battista Codronchi, the most cited Italian demonologist of the sixteenth century, warned against physicians trying to cure *maleficium* and against exorcists using pharmacological and other medical treatments that are useless in cases of possession. Fifty years later, the Venetian exorcist Candido Brugnoli was still trying to separate spiritual physicians from physical ones. But since exorcists used some of the same natural medicines (oils, fats, and even tobacco) that physicians used, all he could argue was that natural remedies might mitigate but could not heal demonic afflictions. He concluded that physicians should therefore leave the cure of souls to exorcists.[8] Codronchi's and Brugnoli's warnings, and repeated similar warnings by other exorcists and even by the official *Rituale Romanum* of 1614, however, were voiced precisely in response to the setting in which physicians and exorcists collaborated and complemented each other's work. As Anne Jacobson Schutte pointed out, describing the situation in Italy (but I would argue that the same was true for other parts of Catholic Europe): "From the late sixteenth century to the end of the seventeenth, working relationships between inquisitors, exorcists, and physicians remained for the most part reasonably tranquil and collaborative."[9] Following David Gentilcore, we should view the early modern medicinal world as three permeable rings, labeled "medical," "ecclesiastical," and "popular," continually shifting in relation to one another.[10] In a minor revision to Gentilcore's rings, however, I would locate the exorcist at the very center of this circle, where popular, ecclesiastical, and medical systems overlapped. The early modern exorcist embodied the modern categories of the priest and the physician, the psychologist and the New Age healer, the meteorologist and the veterinarian, the advice columnist and the sex therapist. The idea that all diseases and afflictions could result from the presence in the body of an evil that needed to be expelled blurred the distinction between medicine and religion and between physicians, "magicians," folk healers, and priests. All were, in some way, exorcists.

Late medieval and early modern Europeans had a variety of exorcismal techniques and technicians to choose from. They were aware, we may assume, of the many personal and educational differences between the neighborhood female healer and a famous bishop who was known for his success in exorcism, say, Filippo Neri. But there was no reason why these distinctions should induce them to view the female healer as a superstitious ignoramus, or her techniques as less reliable than these of the famed Roman saint. Personal reputation for success or honesty, geographical

proximity, and financial constraints, and not theological concerns determined to whom early modern Europeans addressed their requests for exorcism, and whom they trusted with their own health and the health of their babies, fields, and animals. Nor did they approach exorcisms with the solemnity and awe that characterize our misconceptions. A fifteenth-century manual for exorcists from Plaga instructed the exorcist to forbid people to go in and out of the building while an exorcism was going on and to make sure that "dogs, especially, should not be allowed in, and [that] women should be on their best behavior."[11]

The fact that exorcism was not viewed as a dramatic and rare occurrence should not prevent us from recognizing that exorcism works by means of ritual, a term that has recently come under intense scrutiny.[12] Following Stanley Jeyaraja Tambiah and Catherine Bell, I define ritual as a verbal and performative way of acting that (is meant to) reorder(s) things, that is integrally linked to the society's central cosmological understanding, and that is performed in a manner that is carefully orchestrated to distinguish it from more quotidian activities. As Bell explained, "Ritualization is a matter of various culturally specific strategies for setting some activities off from others, for creating and privileging a qualitative distinction between the 'sacred' and the 'profane,' and for ascribing such distinction to realities thought to transcend the powers of human actors."[13] Echoing the recent critics of the usages of the term in Western traditions of the study of religion, we should be wary of post-Tridentine ecclesiastical definitions of ritual. As we shall see, rites of exorcism included many that were neither monopolized by authorized cult-practitioners (priests), nor fixed, nor necessarily even text-based. The practitioners, lay or clerical, had to have their power recognized by their community. Otherwise, their behaviors and verbal utterances would be perceived as powerless. No matter who performed the exorcism, they had to manipulate the power of the sacred in a precise manner that corresponded to a number of verbal and performative forms that satisfied their client's expectations. This helps us understand why, once an exorcist's authority was established, exorcism rarely failed. As long as the exorcists adhered to their society's perceived notions of invocations of the sacred and performed the correct ritualistic forms according to conventional expectations, their assumed ability to negotiate with or manipulate sacred powers remained intact.

In what follows, then, we will look at the wide prevalence and diffusion of exorcismal practices and practitioners in late medieval and early modern Europe, prior to the attempts to curtail these activities (which will be addressed in the following chapter). We will first look at the variety of

practitioners, from the local folk healer to the famed saint, paying special attention to practices and abuses of exorcism by the lower clergy. Exorcism could be performed anywhere, but in the second part of this chapter, I will document the wide spatial distribution of shrines that specialized in casting out demons and some unique techniques that were employed by guardians of these shrines. Together, the availability of exorcists and of local shrines contributed to the banality of exorcism in early modern Europe and to the shared understanding of the rite as a nondramatic and integral part of believers' lives.

PRACTITIONERS

La pellegrina (*The Female Pilgrim*) is a little-known comedy by the equally obscure Sienese playwright Girolamo Bargagli (1537–1586). Lepida, the protagonist of this comedy of simulations and false identities, is secretly married to Terenzio and is pregnant by him. Her father, unaware of her marital status and pregnancy, has, alas, decided to marry her to Lucrezio. Trying to avoid the wedding and the discovery of her pregnancy, Lepida fakes a severe illness. Her father first wants to call in a physician but is then persuaded of the supernatural character of his daughter's illness and decides to take her to see an old monk, known for his exorcismal efficacy. Lepida's maid, however, objects: "The abbot will tell the nuns. The nuns spread all the news the moment they hear it, and soon the whole of Pisa will be talking about us. Priests indeed! You also have to consider that the moment they see a girl like this, young and fresh like a rose, they'll think up some way to derive pleasure from it. They'll have you believe that she's possessed and that it will take them two months to exorcise her; that way she'll have to go back to them many times and they'll keep drawing things out." Rather than an ecclesiastic, she recommends a lay female Spanish pilgrim, "a vagabond woman, a quack doctor," who had just arrived in town and who, indeed, was welcomed into the house. In collaboration with Lepida and Terenzio, the pilgrim obstructs the father's plan.[14] In 1614 Cervantes used a similar plot in his romance *The Trials of Persiles and Sigismunda*. Isabela Castrucha's guardian wishes to marry her off to a cousin, and the young maiden simulates demonic possession. A doctor, an innkeeper's wife, and her uncle all try in vain to exorcise the demons. Then enters Andreas Marulo, her secret lover, who pretends to be an exorcist who is himself a demon! The exorcist-cum-demon conducts an exorcismal rite that is also a marriage ceremony between himself and the demon that possesses Isabela. The two lovers then reveal their simulations, but the

marriage is canonical and cannot be undone. Isabela's uncle dies on the spot, possessed by rage.[15]

These two tales present the set of issues at the focus of this section. They present lay exorcists and simulating demoniacs; they warn of clerical exorcists and of their tendency to abuse female clients; and, significantly, they do not take exorcism too seriously. As we shall see, both authors expressed concerns and attitudes that were shared by many early modern people. The experiences of Countess Giulia Sassatelli of Imola and some of her family members, who in the 1680s and 1690s were afflicted by a series of mysterious illnesses, were not very different from those that had been presented on stage a hundred years earlier. The Sassatellis consulted physicians, astrologers, the itinerant exorcist friar Giovanni Battista Amici, and the cleric Giorgio Zeni, who was known throughout Emilia-Romagna for his exorcismal expertise.[16] For Lepida's and Isabela's fictional families, as well as for the flesh-and-blood Sassatellis, then, a physician, clerics, and an itinerant exorcist represented equally respectable options. Such an approach was typical of possessed people and their families all over Europe, who chose regularly from a variety of healing alternatives. Unlike doctors and even priests, itinerant clerical and lay exorcists and healers, both sedentary and wanderers, were found all over Europe. Among many other terms, they were known in Italy as *guaritore* (m), *segnaressa* (f), *magara* (f), and *fattucchiara* (f); in south Germany as *Zauberer* (m); in parts of northern France as *devin* (m), *maige* (m), *guérisseur* (m), and *Devineress* (f); in Gascony as *désenvoûteur* (m); in Spain as *Ensalmadore* (m) and *Saludadore* (m); and in Portugal as *Curandeiro* (m) and *Benzedeiro* (m). In the last years of the sixteenth century and during the seventeenth century, most of these terms acquired negative connotations, associating these individuals with accusations of witchcraft and demonic invocations, and their activities were deemed superstitious, demonic, and fraudulent. But it is important to point out that until the very last years of the sixteenth century, these lay exorcists, itinerant exorcists, and the members of the lower clergy were tolerated by the church hierarchy and practiced alongside ecclesiastical exorcists, sometimes even in collaboration with them.[17] In order to gain a complete understanding of possession and exorcism in early modern Europe, we must reincorporate these healers and simultaneously erase the later classification that dismissed and prosecuted such exorcists as witch doctors, charlatans, and cunning folk.[18]

As with much of the historiographical research into popular practices, we are confronted with a problem of the biased nature of our sources. Much of our knowledge of early modern practices of exorcisms derives from the

late sixteenth century and the seventeenth century, when these activities were first questioned and then forbidden. In Inquisitional trials, lay and itinerant exorcists were accused of using illegitimate means and techniques, invoking Satan, or simply being ignorant and superstitious. New guides for exorcists and other writings by demonologists continuously attacked them, and often the condemnations included descriptions of their "heterodox" exorcismal practices. At the same time, physicians published their first compilations of popular errors and superstitions, ridiculing and warning against reliance on medical knowledge that was disseminated by unauthorized healers. Together, these documents, although problematic for the researcher, nevertheless unveil the wealth and variety of early modern practices of exorcism.[19]

Who were these lay exorcists and what practices did they employ? In 1574 Giovan Battista Giacomo Marsicano of Naples successfully exorcised members of his family after several priests and monks had failed. According to historian Giovanni Romeo, Marsicano then expanded his clientele outside his immediate family. Brought before the episcopal court, he was instructed by the archbishop to cease his activities, but "due to the annoyance [molestia] of the people who came to [his] house" continued nonetheless. Obviously, Neapolitans trusted him, and there is no indication that they saw his activities as less reliable or less orthodox than exorcisms by clerics. In fact, his reputation was built upon the fact that he succeeded when clerics had failed.[20] A few years later, during a trial of a treasure hunter who was accused of murdering his father by means of witchcraft, Faustina Vulcana (also known as Ottavia Giorgina), a female lay exorcist, testified that after having located a possessing spirit in the deceased father's legs, she had tried unsuccessfully to heal him. Faustina, it turned out, was herself possessed by two spirits by the names of Ottavio and Giorgino, from whom she acquired her nickname. But she was not the only lay exorcist involved in this case. The accused, Ettore Cangiano, himself had tried to exorcise his father, using verses he had learned from a Dominican friar, who had, in turn, already tried his hand in exorcising the afflicted father.[21]

Camilla Orsetta and Elena Crusichi were two famous healers in late sixteenth-century Venice. Orsetta was known for her gift of signing (*segnare*), a curing technique that was based on making the sign of the cross over the body while reciting prayers and administering herbal medicine. Crusichi, also known as La Draga, had herself been possessed years before by demonic spirits. Most of them left her body by 1576, but two stayed, and one of them, Faraon Drago, was still active. La Draga, who specializing

in curing babies, insisted that her signing activity was not helped by her spirit, and that the variety of her natural and magical practices, among them saliva, herbs, potions of natural components, prayers, and incantations, were all licit. In 1571, during her first investigation by the Inquisition, La Draga described her method to unbewitch people who were "eaten by witches" ("magna di strighe"):

> I go and take five sprigs of rue and five of ambrosia and five of incense and five of *erba stella*, and five cloves of garlic, and while preparing it I say five *pater nosters* and five *Ave Marias* in honor of the five wounds of Our Lord Jesus Christ. And I also take soot from Christmas Eve, and I crush all these things between two pieces of marble, and then I put on that five penniesworth of bay; and the child should be anointed with that poultice in a cross starting with the arm right down the body, saying: "In the name of Christ and the glorious Virgin Mary and of the Most Holy Trinity that the Lord should be the one to heal you from this illness." And this unction should be done on the third Thursday of the lunar month or on the last.

She then repeated her incantation during signing: "I make the sign of the Cross three times and I say: I sign you . . . by the servant of the world, by the sign of Thau, by the beard of Jesus, by the milk of the Virgin Mary, that every ill shall be undone from here and shall go away."

Interestingly, after listening to her detailed description for three sessions, the Inquisitional court dismissed the case, and the *processo* remained incomplete. Ten years later it was reopened, but this time, too, the court paid attention to La Draga's alleged power of divination, not to her healing capabilities. La Draga still insisted that she had learned her secrets by "Our Lord and the Blessed Virgin Mary," and that three nuns who had appeared to her in a dream were "divine messengers" who authorized her healing activities. Once again, she was dismissed, but this time with the admonition to abstain from such healing and divination practices in the future.[22]

In a similar vein, one Antonio de Correggi was put on trial in front of the Modenese Inquisition in 1595 and was found guilty of superstitious and "vain observance of times and abuse of the Gospel." Correggi healed by reciting prayers over a sick person on a hilltop at sunrise, on Good Friday and on the Feast Day of Saint John the Baptist. Significantly, the accusation against him was restricted to the issue of assigning vain importance to words, place, and time, while the practice of exorcism per se did not warrant a condemnation.[23]

Lay healers and exorcists were often poor, usually women, but in Holland and the Saar district of Germany, Portugal, and parts of Italy, male

lay exorcists were also common. Some were making a living off their ability to cure and sign, or receiving alms and small donations of food, while others were practicing "for the love of God." Some were trusted as exorcists because they were the third, fifth, or seventh sons of fathers who were themselves third, fifth, or seventh sons in their lineage. Less often, the fifth, seventh, or ninth daughter was also attributed with healing powers. Others could enjoy their power because they were born on Good Friday or on Christmas Day, or born with the caul (as was the case with the Benandanti in northern Italy).[24] Some, like the Venetian La Draga, inherited their talents from mothers or aunts (and less often from fathers or other relatives) or discovered such supernatural powers (*don*, *poder*) within themselves. The Neapolitan Faustina and the Venetian La Draga acquired their healing powers after being possessed themselves. Once Faustina was brought in touch with a person who was suspected of being possessed, she herself, rather than the patient, would exhibit the regular marks of demonic possession: she would fall to the ground and convulse, thus affirming the diagnosis. Another Neapolitan, Cesare de Amato, possessed two small ampoules that contained relics that he used to exorcise demons, to divine the future, and to find lost treasures.

Whatever the source of their power, the benefits of these lay exorcists' activities were recognized by their communities, and they functioned with the community's approval. Like the Modenese Antonio de Correggi, neither the exorcists themselves nor their clients found anything wrong in their activities. "By superstitious things, I mean doing harm to one's neighbor, taking another person's goods, and so forth," he explained to the Inquisitor. After all, had he not heard the priest saying the same formulas? Lay exorcists used Christian prayers such as the Credo, the Paternoster, and Ave Maria, inscribed Christian invocations (known in Italy as *brevi* and *carte*, small sheets of paper that incorporated a few words, signs, and prayers and were worn around the neck as amulets), and used Christian sacramentals such as blessed candles, incense, and holy water. Admittedly, they also used medical herbs, such as rue, garlic, and Saint-John's-wort (also known as hypericon or *fuga daemonum*) and crystals. But as we shall see, clerical exorcists used the very same herbs and stones, and some late sixteenth-century manuals for "orthodox" exorcisms even recommended their usage.

In fact, many of the "unauthorized" exorcists, who were being accused in the early modern period of abuse of exorcismal practices, were not laypeople but unordained members of the lower orders of the clergy. Mary O'Neil has found that 20 percent of the accusations of superstition brought before the Inquisition in Modena between 1580 and 1600 were directed

against priests. The same was true for the south of Italy, where exorcists were found during episcopal visitations to use unauthorized manuals for exorcists or to use the authorized manuals in superstitious ways.[25] As Jean-Michel Sallmann has pointed out, these clerics lacked economic security, chances of social mobility, or prestige. They derived their income from small benefices in insignificant chapels or from reciting masses.[26] Among them was Fray Antonio, a protégé of the Marquis Gianfrancisco Gonzaga. In a series of letters to his benefactors, Fray Antonio reported his successes in Ferrara: Within one week in 1516, he liberated eight people from their possessions and sent at least fourteen demons back to hell![27] More familiar among historians is Giovan Battista Chiesa of the village of Santena in Piedmont, the protagonist of Giovanni Levi's reconstruction of "the story of an exorcist." During his career as a suffragan parish priest and itinerant exorcist in the last quarter of the seventeenth century, Chiesa exorcised more than five hundred people of both genders and all social classes and political standings. He enjoyed the collaboration of other local priests, in whose houses he often conducted the exorcisms, and was sought by the infirm, the bewitched, and the crippled, as well as by people looking for cures for their farm animals and beasts of burden. The people who sought Chiesa's help did not see a substantive difference between physical and spiritual maladies, and addressed him as a physician, an exorcist, and a veterinarian. His popularity was such that hundreds of people followed him to his trial in Turin. As Levi documented, even Chiesa's judges never questioned the therapeutic efficacy of his exorcisms. They, too, accepted the notion that there are illnesses whose causes are magical or preternatural, and can therefore be cured only by exorcists or priests. They obviously also accepted that some personal charismatic powers enable some individuals to be better exorcists than others, regardless of their position in the hierarchy of the church. In fact, even when Chiesa was suspended from practicing exorcisms in 1697, the suspension letter of the Roman Cardinal Alderano Cybo stated that "the fact remained that by his exorcisms many were cured from evil spells and other ills, even long-standing ones."[28]

Equally popular during his lifetime was an Ambrosian monk from the monastery of Niderhoff in Lorquin, whom Robin Briggs has recently identified as Jean de Xanrey. For at least twelve years in the last quarter of the sixteenth century, people from all over Lorraine sought out this monk. An herbalist, soothsayer, and healer, he also identified malevolent witches and offered remedies to undo their harms. Nothing distinguished Dom Jean's "vile crimes" from those of lay practitioners, nor was he persecuted by the authorities, even after Nicolas Rémy, the chief persecutor of witches in the

duchy, had recommended such action. In fact, argued the historian of Lorraine Etienne Delcambre, the main reason Duke Charles III had brought the Ambrosians to his duchy was their reputation as expert exorcists.[29]

While Chiesa and Xanrey were both minor clerics, much more intriguing events took place among the exorcists in the cathedral of Modena. In 1517 the famous and most successful exorcist in the shrine, Father Gugliemo Campana, was put on trial for magical practices and unlawful exorcisms. The father, it turned out, used his direct access to the divine to lure women to fall in love with him, fathered a daughter, and practiced necromancy and magical necrotomy. Using a familiar spirit (which had, in fact, been exorcised by Campana from a possessed body and caught by him to remain in his service!), he communicated with demons, negotiating their departures from bodies they were possessing, but also, many Modenese suspected, inflicted diseases. They shared the belief that was common among early modern Italians that "he who could heal, could also harm" ("Qui scit sanare, scit destruere"; "Quei che sanno far le strigarie, le sanno anco disfar").[30] The citizens of Modena might have feared him, but they also needed him, and Campana was especially sought after for his love magic and for finding hidden treasures. As the chief *altarista* in the shrine of Saint Geminiano, a saint known for his exorcismal efficacy, Campana enjoyed prestige and trust that for fifteen years overshadowed the fears and the suspicion that some of his practices were irregular. Thus, for example, he used candles and wax to create images of the possessed individuals and then burn them on the main altar in the church, and in one case smeared the Holy Sacrament with a possessed woman's secretions. Eventually, however, Campana was condemned for life imprisonment (which in practice meant three to five years), permanently exiled from Modena, and was forbidden to ever perform Mass or hear confessions. But just a few years later, he was conducting Mass again.

In 1582 Modena was again shocked to learn of the unauthorized and heretical practices of another official exorcist in the cathedral. Teofilo Zani was put on trial, accused of superstitious practices. One of the witnesses, Margarita Livizzano, testified that five years earlier her daughter had been bewitched, and she had taken her to Zani. The priest recommended a set of prayers to be recited in different churches. And, indeed, during the prayers, the priest witnessed the bewitching enemies of the girl "going back and forth past the doors of the church." Zani then decided to supplement the traditional role of exorcist with the power of the "white witch," the lay practitioner of countermagic. Zani's involvement with traditions that were more commonly practiced by lay exorcists went even further. When

asked by another supplicant, Margarita Simonini, to write the names of Christ and the Apostles on thirteen almonds, a traditional cure for fever, he agreed. "Many times I have heard it said in Modena that the sick person was to eat each day, at random, one of those thirteen almonds on which the names were written," he explained. "When he ate that bearing the name of Christ, the fever would immediately leave." Zani, it turned out during the trial, also used unconsecrated Hosts, performed exorcism while dressed as a gypsy, and made sexual advances toward patients. In his defense, Zani explained that he used blessed almonds as a curing aid because "he had heard it said in Modena" that such random eating can heal. This offhand comment by the official exorcist shows how porous was the boundary between learned and popular cultures of medicine. Another priest in Modena blessed a magnet to be used in a love charm, and the Franciscan Tertiary Girolamo Azzolini recommended to the mother of a bewitched child to seek the help of a witch. When the woman replied that she did not know any witches, Azzolini sent her to one and instructed her to "tell her that she should cure this child of yours, and she will do it." In fact, he himself had used the services of the same witch in the past.[31]

As noted, like lay healers, some priests used rue, sage, Saint-John's-wort, and other medical herbs, concocted their medications and ointments, and placed them upon strategic places in the possessed body. Many of these herbs were also blessed in special authorized benedictions. When Codronchi's own daughter, Francesca, was bewitched, her exorcist created an amulet for her that included a *breve*, a leaf from an olive branch that had been blessed during Palm Sunday procession, an Agnus Dei, and rue, myrrh, and incense.[32] Florian Canale, a witch finder and expert exorcist, compiled for his fellow exorcists a long menu of his own "supernatural remedies." Among his numerous recipes, he recommended, for example, the use of an oil made of one and a half pounds of carefully chosen turpentine, one pound of new and greasy yellow wax, six ounces of sifted vinestock ash. Exorcists should then mix these elements with a sufficient quantity of ground glass and three ounces of powdered dragon's blood(!), melt and boil them together, then distill the concoction.[33]

Exorcismal practices and practitioners, then, were extremely diverse. They could be laymen or -women, or members of lower orders; and they could use familiar practices or invent their own. At times they used their personal charisma and at other times gained their authority from family heritage of professional position within the church hierarchy. In Bargagli's *pellegrina*, we have already encountered the popular perception of clerical exorcists taking advantage of their female possessed patients. Interestingly,

similar accusations were not brought against lay exorcists. The popular association of clerical exorcism with sexual abuse was part of the widespread anti-clericalism that commonly accused clerics (and especially friars) of sexual lasciviousness and solicitation. But the extremely detailed descriptions of sexual-exorcismal techniques and their variety, as well as the church's own repeated warnings against sexual abuse during exorcism, indicate, I believe, that the abuse of the rite and of female demoniacs was common enough. In 1514, when the Spanish exorcist Garci Sánchez completed the exorcism of Ynés de Moratalla, he took her to his home and seduced her. The two then orchestrated fake possessions and spectacular exorcisms of Ynés, which increased Sánchez's reputation but finally led to his self-denunciation to the Inquisition. When Francisco Corbera, the confessor of the Carmelite convent of Guadalajara (Spain) exorcised demons from the possessed María Leocadia de la Santísima Trinidad in 1667, his treatment included rubbing the Eucharist on her genitalia, then inserting it inside her. One woman in south Italy complained that a Dominican exorcist touched her entire body before asking her to sleep with him, and the Venetian Fra Basileo de Parma was banned by the city authorities for performing exorcism when it was found out that he had used his position as the prior of the Carmelite convent in Sabbioneta to seduce his patients. Moving to Bologna, his license was renewed, as were his sexual exploits.[34] A prominent Netherlandish priest and papal protonotary, who was a confessor to the nuns of Saint Elisabeth in Mechelen, touched the Host, the cross, and relics to the breasts and other "indecent parts of the body" of possessed nuns. At other times he exorcised demons by undressing himself and the possessed woman and touching his mouth to hers, and another exorcismal method in his arsenal was to mix pulverized relics, ashes, and holy water into a plaster and apply it over the naked body of the possessed woman.[35] We have already encountered Guglielmo Campana's use of exorcismal powers to incite women to fall in love with him. Geminiano Mazzoni, a Modenese Theatine, went even further and developed a method of "genital exorcism." As he proudly explained to the Inquisition in his voluntary confession in 1642, during his long years of practice as an exorcist and as a spiritual father, he had learned that demons often hide in women's vaginas. He therefore used his hand to manipulate and excite his patients' genitalia until the demons departed. In rare cases, when the demons refuse to exit, he used his mouth or tongue to whisper adjurations into the demon's ear, and when all else failed, he used his own genitals. On a few occasions, when the demon escaped from the vagina and hid in the woman's throat, Mazzoni, in order to demonstrate to the demon that

he was not afraid of being sexually tempted by it, and to show that he had nothing but contempt and scorn for it, inserted his sexual organ into the possessed woman's mouth. All was done in good faith, and "for the Glory of God."

Did Mazzoni believe in the efficacy of his practice, or was he merely abusing his female clients? Unfortunately, we cannot answer this question. One is struck, however, by his insistence on the legality of his method and by the fact that none of the elite women whom he treated had ever complained (and I will argue later that the spiritual bonds between Theatine spiritual advisers and their advisees created a climate in which overcoming temptation by passive submission to it was legitimized if not encouraged). Equally interesting is Mazzoni's comparison between physical and spiritual doctors: "If a physician," he asked rhetorically, "is allowed to touch any part of a woman's body when she is sick, why cannot [the exorcist] touch it for the health of her soul?" Especially when the method had the effect of "liberating [the women] from temptations?"[36]

Mazzoni's form of sexual abuse–qua-exorcism was uniquely outrageous. But less spectacular abuses were common and further demonstrate the degree to which exorcismal practices were unregulated. By the latter part of the sixteenth century, together with the first attempts to regularize exorcism and to demarcate a boundary between superstitious and legitimate healing practices, the fear of scandals led the church to condemn and forbid exorcising women in private, and to repeatedly warn exorcists against touching women "or do[ing] anything dishonest." Carlo Borromeo explicitly warned against touching possessed females, and the Bolognese exorcist Girolamo Menghi was probably aware of such abuses when he instructed that "goodness of life, that is, not to be in a state of mortal sin," is the most important requirement from an exorcist.[37] He recorded the strange case of an official exorcist in a city in Lombardy, who had to leave town during an ongoing exorcism of a woman. During the priest's absence, the demon appeared to the woman in the form of the exorcist, and, using both words and actions, tried to seduce her. Only divine grace enabled the woman to resist its temptations and to save the reputation of this "honest *sacerdote*." This might have been the case, but I do not see any reason not to entertain the possibility that the demon in the shape of the exorcist was none other than the exorcist himself.[38] The Roman Rite of 1614 insisted that "while exorcising a woman, [the exorcist] should always make certain that responsible women are present, who are capable of holding the possessed while she is being tormented by the evil spirit . . . and [the exorcist] should guard against anything he might say or do that might cause him or others the

possibility of evil thoughts" (Rule 19).[39] In 1636 the Sacred Congregation hinted at sexual abuse of female demoniacs when it instructed local Inquisitors to issue edicts against the "many disorders that continually arise in exorcism, which many perform with little knowledge and less prudence." A few years later, in 1651, the Franciscan exorcist Candido Brugnoli of Bergamo still found it necessary to attack exorcists who touched their female patients immodestly and "in a manner that ignites excitement." He listed a variety of techniques these exorcists used, among them slapping possessed people and beating them "in such cruelty and ferocity that is inappropriate for exorcists but for hangmen." Others flagellated female demoniacs, "many" touched their genitalia in a manner that led to sexual excitement rather than to delivery from demons, and yet others rubbed oils on the breasts and the genitals of possessed women. These exorcists, he insisted, did not merely err, but sinned.[40] Growing anxiety concerning the moral standing of priests was, as is well known, a major part of the post-Tridentine reform of the clergy. The reform of exorcismal practices and of exorcists was an integral part of this reform effort, but it was made difficult due to the physical dimension of exorcism, which included touching the possessed individual and at times using physical power during the ritual.

* * *

During most of the early modern period, then, exorcism remained an unregulated activity that was practiced by both laypeople and clerics, who used a wide variety of practices. Exorcism was a routine healing ritual, and as such attracted only minor attention. Even when the Inquisition started putting unauthorized exorcists on trial, they were usually dismissed with a warning not to continue their practices. And even when they were discovered years later still exorcising clients, their punishments were extremely mild. In the next chapter, I will try to account for this paradox. But first, in order to further reconstruct the world of exorcismal practices in early modern Europe, we should direct our attention to another common and mundane exorcismal activity, namely, pilgrimages to shrines that were known for their extraordinary efficacy against possessing demons.

SHRINES

Early modern Europeans had recourse to a dense network of sanctuaries, where exorcisms were performed regularly and, more often than not, successfully. Here, too, it is important to de-exoticize and de-dramatize

exorcism. Healing rites in these local shrines, be they a chapel inside a cathedral or a pilgrimage site in the countryside, were routine and normative occurrences. Often the only surviving records of these exorcisms are the shrine's records of miracles. Pilgrims flocked to sanctuaries that were known for their efficacy against possessing spirits, and "devout prayers of wayfarers have often obtained the deliverance of those possessed" in such sites, as Heinrich Kramer affirmed in the late fifteenth century.[41] Writing more than a hundred years later, Girolamo Menghi (1529–1609), the most prominent exorcist in sixteenth-century Italy, concurred. The Italian theologian referred to pilgrimages to sanctuaries and to the exorcisms that were performed there as "ecclesiastical medicine" ("medicine ecclesiastiche"), thus reminding modern readers that our distinction between medicine and exorcism, and between natural and supernatural afflictions, is a recent configuration.[42] In these shrines, relics of saints, images of the Virgin, and blessed water sources hardly ever failed to heal the possessed, the infirm, and the sick. The lame, the blind, and the deformed rubbed shoulders there with the insane, the paralyzed, and the enraged, all seeking saintly and miraculous cures.

Within a cultural and social context that took for granted Satan's activities in the world, the perception of affliction as a demonic attack, and the trust in anti-demonic powers of saints and their relics, the fact that early modern people approached exorcism with a pragmatic, practical, and nondramatic manner should not surprise us. What is surprising, however, is historians' inattentiveness to the ways in which these mundane exorcisms shaped late medieval and early modern understanding of both possession and exorcism.[43] Nancy Caciola, one of the few historians to pay systematic attention to these sites, argued that during the Middle Ages exorcisms in shrines were public performances and dramatic spectacles that enhanced the reputation of specific saints and their guardians, and that "by the fifteenth century exorcisms at saints' shrines were in sharp decline."[44] The drama, I would argue, had more to do with the nature of Caciola's documentation than with the reality of the events that took place there. Lives of saints that recorded successful exorcisms did so in order to enhance a reputation, claim sanctity, or confirm legal or political privileges of a specific shrine. By the later Middle Ages, exorcismal activities were routinized and successful exorcisms construed as affirmation of the power of the church rather than the charisma of an individual.[45] To make sure, saints continued to cast out demons, and some, such as the Roman saint Filippo Neri, were especially sought after during their lifetime for this charismatic power over demons. Exorcism was also continuously used to enhance a reputation for

the sanctity of some claimants.[46] Thus, for example, Savonarola's devotees recorded and publicized postmortem exorcismal miracles of the Florentine prophet, and Pedro de Ribadeneyra, one of Loyola's earliest hagiographers, added a few exorcisms by the founder of the Jesuits to a later edition of the saint's *Life*. In 1609, just as the campaign to canonize the saint was gaining force, the Jesuit order commissioned images of the saint exorcising demons.[47] But a much larger number of exorcisms took place in a mechanical manner in shrines with cult practitioners (exorcists) instead of saints performing a liturgical rite of healing, rather than using their personal charisma. This form of exorcism was so common that pilgrims knew where to go, and guardians of relics knew what was expected of them and how to perform exorcisms without claiming any personal charismatic power. The triviality of it all has led modern historians to ignore it, but the recovery of these unpublicized exorcisms is an integral part of any attempt to understand the role and place of possession and exorcism in early modern Europe.

The process went like this: when an exorcism by a local healer (lay or religious) failed, or following a recommendation by such a healer or by a priest, a possessed person was taken by his or her relatives to a local shrine that was renown for its efficacy against demonic possession. There, an invocation of a saint was orchestrated and was followed by exorcism by the shrine's guardians. More often than not, the ceremony terminated with a successful recovery of the possessed and his or her reintegration into society. Soon, we may assume, the entire episode was forgotten, as no stigma was attached to having once been possessed by evil spirits. Such shrines can be divided into two types: shrines whose patron saints, or the relics and images in their possession, were attributed with specific powers of conjuration; and Marian shrines, where the Virgin (in her different guises) was responding to all sorts of afflictions, demonic possession included. No systematic attempt has ever been made to map all these shrines and to present the complete "religious cartography" of early modern Europe, and such a project, important as it is, is beyond the scope of this book. What follows, then, are anecdotal examples from late medieval and early modern recourse to shrines in different parts of the Continent.[48]

The abbey of Saint-Sever in Normandy, where one Pierre Nagot was exorcised in 1384, was famous as "an abbey [to which] they bring demoniacs." The possessed were kept there for nine days, "during which time so much crying and yelling took place there that one could have neither peace nor repose in this abbey."[49] An equally famous and frequented site was the tomb of Saint Dymphna, "patron saint of lunatics," near the village of

Gheel in Brabant. At this shrine, following an initial diagnosis, the pilgrim confessed, prayed, and took Communion. Then he or she circled the church three times and passed three times under the saint's reliquary. The possessed individual was then put in isolation for the duration of a novena, guarded by female lay supervisors (*siecken waersters*) who were appointed by the city for this function. During each of the nine days, the demoniacs attended Mass and drank holy water. If by the end of this period the person recovered, he or she made an offering of their weight in grain, and they were then released to rejoin their families. Otherwise, they were placed with local families for continued treatment.[50] Similar healing miracles were performed by Saint Menoux in the village that carried this saint's name in the Bourbonnais (in central France). The possessed person was lowered into a water pool, then placed his or her head on a special hole in the saint's sarcophagus, the "trou de la débredinoire."[51] The shrine of Saint Aichard in Dour, near Cambrai, was another popular site, "which had power to cast out devils." The local church in the town of Loxeville in the Lorraine contained, adjunct to an altar dedicated to Saint Paul, a niche, where an insane or possessed person could lie down while a priest conducted Mass. The nearby Fountain of Saint Paul was famous for its healing power, and following the prayer, the patient's relatives would go there to fetch blessed water for the sick person.[52] In nearby Franche-Comté, local demoniacs and people from as far away as Savoy frequented the shrine of Saint Claude in the city that carried his name, and Parisians invoked the relics of Saint Maur in the monastery of Saint-Germain-des-Prés.[53] In the Holy Roman Empire, places that were known to cure demoniacs were the Marian shrine of Scherpenheuvel in Brabant and the Benediktbeuern in Upper Bavaria, where the possessed and the mad placed a relic of Saint Anastasia on their heads.[54] Similar sacred geography of shrines existed in Spain.[55]

The shrine of Sant'Antonino in Sorrento was famous among Neapolitans,[56] and when a nun in Turin was possessed by a demon in 1634, the first attempt to exorcise her took place in the local shrine of the Madonna di Oropa, a site that was equally famous for its efficacy against this affliction.[57] The tombs of Saint Geminiano in Modena, Saint Vicino in Sarsina, Saint Anthony in Padua, and Saint Giovanni Gualberti in the monastery of Valembrosa in Tuscany all specialized in curing possessed individuals. All of these saints had combated demons in their lifetime and had performed exorcisms, and they continued to do so after their deaths.[58] In the main entrance to the Duomo of Modena, a white stone carried an inscription explaining that as soon as a possessed individual arrived at the door, the demons, which were prevented from entering the sacred space, hid. Once

inside the church, the possessed would stand under an arch, the Arca di San Geminiano, while priests, known as *pubblici esorcisti* and *altariste*, exorcised the afflicted individual, using a special liturgy of this shrine. Every year on January 31, Geminiano's feast day, the square in front of the Duomo was the site of a public performance that reenacted the saint's own healings. A lay confraternity built three rooms adjacent to the church "per li ispiritati" who gathered there to be exorcised on the saint's feast day.[59] In Sarsina, too, possessing demons were not admitted into the church and often tried to prevent the individuals whom they possessed from entering. Therefore, a special metal ring (*Catena*) was attached to the neck of the demoniac, and he or she was pulled, against the possessing demons' will, into the church.[60] Binding the possessed was apparently a common practice: In Sant'Antonio in Campagna (in Campania) in the south of Italy and in Vic-sur-Seille in the Lorraine, as in Sarsina, the possessed was bound to a column near the altar for the duration of the exorcism.[61]

The geographical dispersion of such shrines all over the Continent indicates the important role they played in the lives of early modern Europeans. Proximity to the location of the possession itself probably played a role in choosing a destination of a pilgrimage, as was the reputation of the local exorcising saint. We can imagine family members consulting neighbors, local healers, relatives, and the local priest concerning the appropriate shrine to visit, and then evaluating their financial situation prior to taking to the road. Limited financial resources or other circumstances that restricted people's mobility should not, however, have been a detriment for those seeking cure. All over Europe, there were "professional pilgrims" (French: *voyageuses*; German: *Wallfahrtsbesorgerin*), usually women, who advised where to go and often carried out the pilgrimage on behalf of the possessed, bringing with them a piece of clothing and symbolic gifts from the afflicted person.[62]

Local sanctuaries, however, had to compete with the major European pilgrimage sites, first and foremost the Basilica of Saint Peter and other churches in Rome. One of the earliest and most widely printed early modern manuals for exorcists is titled "The Conjuration of Evil Spirits residing in human bodies as it is done in Saint Peter," which may or may not be an accurate attribute, but which indicates that the place was associated with conjurations of demons.[63] In the basilica, a column to which Jesus had been bound served as a unique means of casting out demons, and possessed individuals from all over Europe came to the city to be exorcised there. In 1460 Heinrich Kramer encountered in Rome "a certain Bohemian from the town of Dachov [who] brought his son, a secular priest, to Rome

to be delivered, because he was possessed. . . . And the father kept sighing and praying Almighty God that his journey might prove to have been successful . . . [and said,] 'Alas! I have a son possessed by the devil, and with great trouble and expense I have brought him here to be delivered.'"[64] In 1518 a French pilgrim witnessed the exorcism of a woman who had four demons in her body. Each marked his departure by blowing out a candle that was held by the exorcist. A year later the Venetian emissary Marcantonio Michiel witnessed an exorcism of a "woman who expressed herself in Latin, predicted the future, revealed people's hidden secrets, and showed many other obvious signs of being possessed by a spirit." She was asked by the priest, whose job it was to exorcise people at the column, for the identity of the possessing spirit, who, in this case, turned out to be not a demonic entity but the spirit of a Roman dignitary.[65] Two other Roman sites known for curing possession were the Lateran Basilica of San Giovanni and the church of Santa Maria del Popolo. A Roman shoemaker, who was accused by the Inquisition of performing unauthorized exorcisms, testified in 1559 that when his friend Agostino had been seeking cure for his possessed wife, "he had tried the three cures that are required in such affairs," namely, visits to these three major shrines. Cassandra, another co-defendant in the same trial, recalled going to the Popolo with all her neighbors to see a possessed woman who had been living there for twenty years![66]

In 1569 two members of the household of the Augsburger financier Johann Fugger became possessed. Following failed exorcisms at home and in the Dominican church in Augsburg, a spirit appeared to Ursula Fugger, informing her that her maid Susanna Roschmann would be cured of her possession only if she went on a pilgrimage to Rome and Loreto. The Fuggers took to the road, escorted by Jesuit priests and exorcists, and a retinue of servants. Following exorcisms in Loreto, they arrived in Rome, had an audience with the pope, and Susanna was exorcised successfully in the German church of Santa Maria dell'Anima.[67] Michel de Montaigne, who visited the city in 1581, witnessed an exorcism of a melancholic man in an undisclosed site in the city. The exorcist recounted to the French visitor "many stories of this science, and the ordinary experiences that he had had there, and, notably, that the day before he had released a woman from a fat demon, who, exiting, vomited out of this woman's mouth nails and a tuft of hair."[68] A few years later, during the Jubilee year of 1600, the possessed French girl Marthe Brossier (who was later discovered to be simulating her possession) was also brought to Rome to be exorcised. There she joined the multiple "obsessed and possessed, who were being delivered by the grace of God and by the ministry of the exorcists who

are ordained for this role."[69] The French poet Joachim du Bellay was less impressed and recorded in a collection of sonnets describing his visit to Rome the horrible suffering and disfiguration of the possessed women he encountered there, as well as seeing "a monk feeling them up and down, the belly as well as the breast."[70]

In addition to the local sanctuaries and to Rome, a large number of adjurations and expulsions of demons took place in Marian shrines.[71] The early modern period witnessed a growth in their number and popularity, as the Virgin became a symbol of Catholic intransigent opposition to Protestant denial of her intercessory role. Some developed into major churches, and the most popular of all was probably the Holy House (Casa Santa) in Loreto near Ancona in Italy.[72] We have already seen the Fuggers stopping there on their way to Rome. In 1594 an English visitor described an exorcism he witnessed there: "As I walked about the Church, behold in a darke Chappell a Priest by his Exorcismes casting a devil out of a poore woman: Good Lord what fencing and truly conjuring words he used! How much more skilfull was he in the devils names . . . if he had eaten a bushel of salt in hell; if he had been an inhabitant thereof, surely this Art could never have been more familiar to him. He often spoke to the ignorant woman in the Latin tongue, but nothing less than in Tullies phrase, and at last the poore wretche . . . confessed he selfe dispossessed by his exorcisme."[73] In Rome in 1647, there was a boy of eight who excelled in theological and philosophical disputations with cardinals and other theologians. But when he was brought to the chapel of the Virgin in Loreto, he started screaming in a voice that made it clear that he was possessed by demons. His master immediately fled and committed suicide, and the boy himself was exorcised and lost all his demonic knowledge.[74] The popularity of Loreto spread well beyond Italy. During a mass possession of nuns in Louviers in 1652, many of the satanic charms that had been previously hidden by the demon were found in chapels dedicated to the Virgin, and the most powerful one was discovered in a chapel honoring Notre-Dame of Loreto. This was an attempt by the demon and his disciples to neutralize the unique powers of this Virgin. Furthermore, the location of the powerful charm was revealed by the demon on the Octave of the day of the Conception of the Virgin, and Sister Marie du Saint Sacrement was healed during a novena in front of an image of the Lady of Loreto in the convent.[75]

But Loreto was only one among numerous Italian Marian shrines. Each year on May 24, possessed individuals from all over Lombardy arrived at the Marian shrine in the small town of Caravaggio (near Bergamo, northern Italy). The Madonna della Stella in Cellatica (also in Brescia) was also

known for her ability to expel demons, and her reputation lasted well into the twentieth century. When Pope Paul VI, a native of Brescia, reaffirmed in 1972 the existence of the devil, he chose to do it in the town nearest to this Virgin.[76]

Way east, in Austria, the pilgrimage sanctuary of Mariazell in Styria was frequented by the possessed especially on the feast of the Nativity of the Virgin. Among them was the possessed Bavarian painter Christoph Haizmann, who was exorcised in 1677 and went on to paint the scenes of his exorcism (and to become one of the most famous demoniacs of all times due to Sigmund Freud's analysis of his case).[77] The most prominent shrine for the healing of possession in Bavaria was Altötting (east of Munich). Due to intense patronage by the ducal family and to many printed histories of the shrine, Our Lady of Altötting enjoyed growing popularity in the last quarter of the sixteenth century and during the following two centuries. Among other exorcisms, the shrine historian Martin Eisengrein recounted the successful delivery of Anna von Bernhausen, a noble lady-in-waiting to Baroness Sybilla von Fugger of the famous Augsburg family of bankers. We have already encountered the Fuggers going on a pilgrimage to Loreto and Rome in 1569 to adjure the demons that possessed their maid Susanna. While they were away, Anna von Bernhausen was in her turn attacked. During a controversial public exorcism at the Augsburg Cathedral, the Jesuit Peter Canisius exorcised her, expelling six possessing demons from her body. One last remaining demon, alas, refused to leave. Then the Virgin appeared to Anna, informing her that this last demon would dispossess her only if she went on a pilgrimage to Altötting. Arriving there in early January 1570, the Fuggers' retinue initiated the proceeding with prayers invoking the Casa Santa of Loreto, thus putting themselves at the mercy of two configurations of the Virgin and connecting the two Fugger pilgrimages.[78] Once the exorcism itself started, the demon declared that it was not going to leave for another two days, which it exploited by torturing the young woman. It threw her to the floor, made her levitate in the air, and caused her such intense involuntary fits that five men had to hold her down. Like many possessed people, the voice that came out of Anna von Bernhausen's mouth was gruff and coarse, and she used it to curse the exorcist. When shown an image of the Virgin, the demon protested and called her "a whore." Finally, after two days of torture, the devil succumbed to the exorcism and the power of the Virgin, kissed the ground seven times, and asked for the Virgin's forgiveness before exiting.[79]

In Lorraine the Virgin of Avioth performed miracles "for many afflictions, for many illnesses, for the release of prisoners, the healing of

many invalids, the liberation of captives under the Turkish yoke, the deliverance of people possessed by demons, the grieved, and the discouraged [déconfortés]." A special hospice was erected near this church for possessed individuals. They would remain there during a novena of prayers and exorcisms, while their relatives stayed with the local villagers, undertaking confessions, taking Communion, fasting, and attending Mass.[80] Prior to her unveiling as a fraud, the possessed Marthe Brossier had first been brought to be exorcised at the shrines of Notre-Dame in Cléry and Ardilliers (near Saumur). Ardilliers was one of the more active miracle shrines in France, specializing, in addition to demonic possession, in cases of impotence and tinea (a skin disease). In the 1630s, following the exorcisms of the Ursuline nuns of Loudun, Father Lactance, one of the exorcists who had performed the exorcism, also came to Notre-Dame des Ardilliers to thank the Virgin for the successful completion of the enterprise.[81]

In northern France, the Black Virgin of Notre-Dame de Liesse was a renowned exorcist.[82] In Gascony, in southwest France, Notre-Dame du Calvaire de Beth-Aram [Bétharrem] performed miraculous exorcisms. The local historian Pierre de Marca explained in 1648 that many of the possessed that frequented the sanctuary had been bewitched.[83] Not far from Bétharrem, in the Agenais in Aquitaine, a small statue of the Virgin in a shrine to Notre-Dame de Bon-Encontre was the goal of local pilgrims seeking dispossession. In 1617 Serène de Bajamont, daughter of a Calvinist mother, was celebrating her marriage to the Count de Laugnac, when she suddenly started roaring and barking like an animal, to the great astonishment of the guests. The marriage, obviously, could not be consummated, and, after witnessing the countess's horror of the Eucharist and the crucifixes and rosaries, local priests realized that she was possessed. In May 1618 the countess arrived at the shrine. Her exorcism worked for a day, but the following day her symptoms returned, and the two servants who escorted her also became possessed. The failure of the exorcism surprised everybody in the district, and a rumor spread that the countess was bewitched. She was then taken to Notre-Dame de Guaraison in the diocese of Auch, another local Marian shrine, where leading Catholic theologians (including Pierre Hijer, the vicar of the archbishop of Auch, and Pierre Bouquier, the Provincial of the Dominicans) conducted exorcisms, but to no avail. The demon continued to torture the countess. Her mouth and throat got monstrously inflated, and she exuded a terrible stench (itself a clear sign of demonic possession).[84] She continued to bark like a dog and to imitate other animals, and to scream, "especially when she heard [people] talk of marriage or the Holy Sacrament." The drama intensified

when the countess's Calvinist mother vowed to convert to Catholicism if her daughter recovered and when public debates among Catholic and Protestant theologians argued about the diagnosis of possession and the validity of Catholic exorcism. A demon by the name of Mahonin, who also resided in the countess's body, revealed in the meantime that it had been sent into the body by a "certain religious," who turned out to be the countess's Franciscan confessor (and her first exorcist) Brother Natal. The friar was imprisoned, tried by famous demonologist Pierre de Lancre, and confessed. He was found guilty of *maleficium* and was hanged, but even his execution did not release the countess and her servants from their demonic charms. Exorcisms continued throughout the next five years but failed spectacularly. The Virgin of Bon-Encontre, in fact, refused to perform any miracles at all during this period. Finally, at some undisclosed time between 1622 and 1625, the countess recovered. Her servants, however, died while still in the grip of the devil.[85]

The French exorcist Jean Benedicti recorded numerous exorcisms that he himself had conducted, all of which included visits to local Marian shrines and invocations of the Virgin. On October 20, 1582, Perinette Pinay, an elderly woman who had been possessed for twelve years by seven demons, came to seek his help. Four demons had since left during an exorcism in a local Marian shrine. Others exited during an invocation of the Virgin during a Palm Sunday procession, and only one demon refused to exit Pinay's body and hid in her *parties honteuses*. While being exorcised by Benedicti, this demon admitted his fear of the Virgin, and Benedicti immediately ordered Pinay to perform a number of Marian invocations, including a pilgrimage to Loreto and partaking in public processions in the parish of Notre-Dame de l'Isle in Lyon. These means brought about a successful relief, and the last possessing demon departed from Pinay's body. Catherine Pontet, another possessed woman, came with her father to the Marian shrine of Notre-Dame de Fleury, where she was exorcised by Benedicti in 1582. In addition to invocations of the Virgin, this exorcism included the use of holy water that Benedicti himself had brought the year before from a visit to the Holy Land, where he had collected holy water from numerous sites, among them the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, the Church of the Nativity, the Jordan River, and more than fifteen other sites, mostly places connected with the life of the Virgin: the cave where she hid from King Herod, the place where she composed the Magnificat, the place of her Presentation, and her tomb as well as those of her parents and her husband.[86]

Obviously, the Fuggers' pilgrimages and Benedicti's successful exorcisms served an anti-Huguenots propagandistic message. The prominent role they assigned the Virgin as healer should therefore not surprise us. Protestants, after all, targeted the cult of the Virgin as an example of Catholic superstitious beliefs, and the miraculous interventions of these local Virgins proved them wrong. But before we dismiss the historical value of such propagandistic publications, let us note that the specific historical and geographical details of the adjurations are indications that the sites were used at the time for miraculous and exorcismal healings and were known for their efficacy. Had it been otherwise, the propaganda would not have worked. Let us also remember that pilgrimages to shrines of affliction were equally common in Italy and Spain, where the struggle against Protestantism was insignificant, and that this tradition is still alive and well in many parts of Catholic Europe. Ex-votos indicated the sincere gratitude of the sanctuaries' clients, for whom the personal recovery, and not the interdenominational strife, was important.[87] The small Marian shrine of Monte Bradone (Monteprandone, Italy) exhibited a collection of items that were "vomited by numerous sick people due to the merits of the Blessed Virgin" and the prayers of Giacomo, the Franciscan curate of the church.[88] In Vic-sur-Seille in the Lorraine, where the Blessed Bernard of Baden was invoked against demonic possessions, the visitor Nicolas Volcyr, secretary to the Duke of Lorraine, found in 1525 "stones, coal, wood, distaffs, and other diverse things" attached to a column. It was said that all of these objects were expunged from bodies of possessed people during exorcism. Nicolas Rémy, visiting the same church seventy years later, described seeing the shrine's "interior columns draped and hung with linen cloths from which were suspended bricks, coals, balls of hemp and of hair, trumpery, bits of glass, sword-blades, skins of lizards and toads, and all sorts of such trash." All had been vomited or otherwise ejected by possessed people during their exorcisms.[89] Later in the seventeenth century, such collections of ex-votos were forbidden, and whatever was vomited by the possessed was immediately burned by the exorcist. Small medals and small metal statuettes in the shape of toads were instead sold at the site, replacing the vomited matter, and commemorated successful recoveries.

* * *

Exorcismal practices in early modern Europe were an integral part of the healing system of the period. Male and female folk healers and clerical

exorcists shared techniques and formulas, at times even consulting with each other or sending clients to each other. In addition, hundreds of local sanctuaries made available liturgical exorcisms, whose nondramatic and almost mechanical nature further demonstrates the mundane characteristic of early modern exorcism. In fact, many of the shrines whose names have been mentioned in this section still function, and exorcismal activities in some of them were still documented by folklorists and anthropologists in the 1950s and 1960s. Equally, anthropologists and folklorists have documented exorcismal activities by local "unauthorized" healers well into the 1960s.[90] Judging by the persistent activities of lay healers, the post-Tridentine attempts to monopolize and regulate exorcismal activities and to develop a canonical set of exorcismal formulas either failed miserably or were carried out only halfheartedly. In the next chapter we will question not only the timing and content of the reform efforts, but also the ambivalence that characterized them and led to their incomplete implementation.

* 3 *

From Praxis to Prescribed Ritual

In the previous chapter we have seen that during the later Middle Ages and most of the sixteenth century, lay and ecclesiastic exorcists practiced side by side, with some competition, but, more significantly, with some degree of collaboration among themselves and with physicians and lay medical practitioners. Although theologians held various ideas regarding what constituted "superstitious" practices, prior to the sixteenth century the church had rarely tried to enforce strict rules on lay exorcists. Indeed, the activities of the latter were tolerated, even when they differed substantially from orthodox benedictions, and even when popular belief held that those who could heal could also harm, meaning that such healers could also be engaged in malevolent magic. We have also seen that there was no one exorcismal formula that was required of ecclesiastic exorcists, nor was the practice of exorcism restricted to any specific subgroup within the clergy. As long as it did not involve explicit invocation of demonic powers in order to cause harm, clerical exorcism was hardly regulated, and, as Richard Kieckhefer's recent work has shown, even the boundary between necromancy and exorcismal conjurations was blurred.[1] Beginning in the second half of the sixteenth century, however, these multiplicities of practices and practitioners came under attack.

The changes that occurred starting in the late sixteenth century, and that are the topic of this chapter, reshaped all aspects of traditional forms of exorcismal activities. A systematic attempt by the church aimed to prevent lay healers from practicing exorcism, defining many of their previously tolerated activities as superstitious and even heretical. The late sixteenth century also witnessed a series of initiatives, first by individual bishops,

and then by the Curia itself, to replace the disorder that had characterized traditional practices of clerical exorcism with one standardized liturgical rite, to be performed by a small, well-trained, and meticulously selected group of reliable exorcists. This regulatory effort was part of a broader redrawing of the boundaries between the sacred and the profane and among the natural, the preternatural, and the supernatural that took place in the sixteenth century, both before and after the Council of Trent. The church initiated a systematic campaign to control all activities that dealt with the miraculous and the supernatural. The reform effort, then, was not only a clericalization of exorcism; it was also a reform of the clergy itself. Together, these changes brought about a new understanding of the meaning, role, and importance of exorcism.

These changes were inspired by a wide range of political and religious developments. The growing attention to exorcismal activities resulted in large part from a change in the definition of "superstitious practices." Starting in the late fifteenth century, such practices were no longer tolerated as benign mistakes, but as indications of collaboration between the practitioner and Satan. As the new association of diabolic possession and unauthorized lay exorcism with witchcraft was gaining adherents, exorcists—together with Inquisitors—found themselves at the forefront of the combat against the devil. Equally important, this new interest in exorcismal practices resulted from the growing popularity of new forms of lay spirituality. Starting in the fourteenth century, a growing number of laypeople imitated and shared spiritual pursuits that had previously been restricted to members of religious orders. This process led, inevitably, to a growing anxiety concerning lay misconceptions and misappropriations of beliefs, practices, and rituals. Additional changes in meditative techniques in the early modern period further increased these fears. Among the fears held by the clergy was the possibility that laypeople might confuse the demonic with the divine and mistake demonic possession for divine inspiration. Starting in the 1520s, diabolic possession was no longer understood solely as an affliction. It was now argued that, at times, it could take place within the soul, without any external physical signs that had characterized medieval possessions. In extreme cases, as pointed out in chapter 1, one might exhibit no physiological ailments whatsoever and still be possessed, or one might exhibit all the recognized symptoms of holiness and nevertheless be discovered to be possessed by demons. This "spritualization" of demonic possession necessitated the creation of new professionals—people who were trained by the church hierarchy to discern what spirit was activating people's interiority. Exorcists, while continuing

to fulfill their old vocation as healers of possessed bodies, acquired during the sixteenth century a new occupation as "readers of souls," as the experts who could discern spiritual movements within people's souls and minds. Put differently, exorcism acquired a new meaning as a hermeneutic and probative technique that was mobilized to question, credit, or discredit a person's claims for spiritual worth. Exorcists, accordingly, were now expected to be soul doctors as much as body doctors, thus giving them special knowledge that was not held by laypeople. Thus, just as the demonization of superstitious healing practices mandated a clear distinction between lay healing activities and clerical exorcisms, the spiritualization of diabolic possession encouraged the creation of a clear division between the traditional "physical" healing activities (that could be practiced by both clerics and lay experts) and the new spiritual discerning activities, which were defined as a priestly monopoly. Finally, this clericalization of exorcismal practices and the new importance consequently assigned to them led to an implicit "sacramentalization" of the rite. From an improvised practice that could be performed by both laypeople and clerics, the success of which was never guaranteed, exorcism was transformed during the latter part of the sixteenth century into a rite that, if performed accurately by authorized clerics, was (almost) always successful. All these changes together led by 1614 to the replacement of the multiplicity of techniques, rituals, adjurations, and improvisations that had characterized the practice in the late Middle Ages by an official *Rituale Romanum*.

In this chapter we will first explore the changes in ecclesiastical rites between the last years of the fifteenth century and the publication of the official Roman Rite of 1614, and trace the evolution of the movement to forbid and criminalize lay exorcism and to unify the clerical rite. At the focus of the examination here is the Italian peninsula, where the confrontation between exorcists and the Inquisition was more dramatic, and where the majority of new guides and instructions for exorcists were composed. But it is important to keep in mind that similar developments took place in other parts of the Catholic world, and that developments in Italy shaped changes in rites and liturgies in other countries. This historical process I describe raises a set of questions. First among them is: Why in the sixteenth century? What made the Catholic Church pay much more attention to exorcismal practices? What made "health ritual experts" (lay exorcists) important enough to be condemned? Why were some techniques and formulas condemned even when, as we shall see, their efficacy itself was not questioned? And why were clerics restricted to a codified set of practices?

There is another important issue we must keep in mind as we follow the liturgical changes. The attempt to demarcate clear boundaries between orthodox and heterodox formulas of exorcism had uneven results. Attempts at clerical monopolization of exorcism occurred in different places at different times, and some forms of exorcism that were condemned in some places remained legitimate in others. Furthermore, some exorcismal formulas that had been recommended as canonical in the late sixteenth century, and whose explicit intention had been to replace earlier, unauthorized formulas, were put on the Index of Forbidden Books in the early eighteenth century, while new shrines where exorcisms were being performed were incorporated into the sacred topography of the post-Reformation Marian revival. In fact, the campaign against lay exorcists and their unauthorized formulas and rituals was slow and hesitant and, more often than not, failed, as did the attempt to make the Roman Rite the only authorized rite for clerics. The Roman Rite of 1614 included only twenty-nine benedictions, and local synods and dioceses immediately hurried to issue hundreds of additional conjurations and adjurations that dealt with specific needs that the Roman Rite ignored, while individual practicing clerics continuously added their own formulas. The failure of the post-Tridentine church to enforce a unified ritual and to restrict its usage to a small group of clerics, in turn, raises the question to what degree the church was genuinely committed to the erasure of lay exorcism, and how strong was its commitment to a unified rite.

THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST LAY EXORCISTS

A first transformation of clerical exorcismal rites took place in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Casting out demons expanded during this period from being a charismatic gift and a means for establishing sanctity, to become also a routine curative technique, performed by healing practitioners, many of them members of the mendicant orders. While saints cast out demons by the power of their charisma and without subscribing to any set of rules, priests and friars relied on different prayers, benedictions, curses, invocations, and other ad hoc improvisations to expel possessing demons. Significantly, this routinization of exorcisms was not accompanied by a creation of a standard set of rituals or prayers that was to be practiced by all exorcists at all times. Practices of clerical exorcism in late medieval Europe were characterized by their variety.[2] Most formulas were short Latin invocations and were based on the rites of casting out demons during baptism and on the purification and blessing of holy water

and salt for liturgical purposes. Many combined these rites with readings from Scripture that commemorated exorcisms by Christ and with invocations of saints. The basic formula went something like the following late fifteenth-century short conjuration: "I exorcise you, unclean spirit, in the name of God the Almighty Father + [making the sign of the Cross] and in the name of Jesus Christ his Son + and by the power of the Holy Spirit + that you should recede from this servant of God, N[ame of the afflicted person]."[3] This particular formula, which was performed at the Basilica of Saint Peter in Rome, circulated first in manuscripts, and then enjoyed wide popularity in the last decades of the fifteenth century, when it was printed six times before 1500. The Basilica of Saint Peter, like the sanctuary of Saint Geminiano in Modena and other centers of exorcismal activities, had its own liturgies, invoking the powers of its patron saint. Other saints who had specialized in their lifetime in exorcising demons were also commonly invoked. Thus, a manual from late fifteenth-century Florence included an adjuration that Saint Ambrose had allegedly used, and another contains a prayer attributed to Saint Cyprian.[4] Many exorcists added to these short formulas other prayers as they found fit, developing their techniques "in the heat and fury of exorcism," as the Modenese Don Geminiano Mazzoni explained during his trial in 1624.[5]

The power of the adjuration itself, the cross, or the Eucharist usually sufficed to compel the demon to reveal its true identity, a first and crucial stage in any exorcism. But sometimes it was not enough, and the demon had to be reminded of God's omnipotence and of the fact that it, too, was part of God's creation. It was also important to query about the reasons for the possession, the demon's name and rank, and the timing and sign of its departure. Establishing the demon's identity and the prayers and adjurations that would lead to its expulsion were always accompanied by ritualistic actions, such as making the sign of the cross over the body of the possessed, sprinkling it with holy water, feeding it with the Eucharist, or laying hands over the demoniac's head or other body parts. Exorcisms also included long lists of different sorts, be it names or attributes of demons or of God, different threats and punishments that the possessing demon was to suffer for the possession, or lists of body parts from which it was being ordered to depart. Indexing divine attributes and names was another way of reminding the devil of God's omnipotence. By invoking satanic names and showing familiarity with the different satanic configurations and ranks, the exorcist further reminded the demon that he knew its secrets and remembered its damnation, and that his power was greater that the power of evil. Demonic names represented specific demonic aspects, and by

discovering the name, the demon's hidden nature was revealed, whether it was a demon of lust, envy, disorder, fury, filth, pride, stench, et cetera. This knowledge allowed the exorcist to insult the demon "where it hurts," to infuriate it and hasten its departure. As Armando Maggi pointed out, it was only by turning invisible demons into visible (linguistic) signs that demons could be eradicated.[6] Most exorcisms also recalled the Christian myth of Creation, Incarnation, Crucifixion, and Redemption, and some reminded the demon of its original sin of pride and its fall from grace.[7] These mythical commemorations fulfilled the important ritualistic function of reestablishing order both within the possessed body and in the cosmos at large.

Within these general frameworks, however, exorcismal rites were both varied and improvised. One manual, cited by Nancy Caciola, recommended showing the demoniac a picture of Saint Jerome, "which no demoniac can look at without pain," and another suggests writing some "satanic verses" on a card and placing it on the possessed body. Erasmus, in his satire of exorcismal practices, invented the ridiculous invocations of "the bowels of the Blessed Mary" and "the bones of Blessed Winifred," a caricature that was not too far off the mark.[8] Some exorcists used holy water while others preferred blessed oil; some included fumigation and suffumigation, and others used medical herbs. Others, however, rejected such practices, claiming that no material substance had the power to expel demons, and portrayed practitioners of such rites as ignorant. Some approved amulets and distributed small wax medallions of Agnus Dei to the possessed, while others rejected these practices, arguing that while they offered temporary relief to the demoniac, they had no power over the devil. Some exorcists assumed that the possessing demon was in the body, while others addressed it in the soul. In some texts, the possessed person was ordered to lie on the ground inside a chalk circle; in others he or she was to be bound to a column. In some rites they were to hold candles, in others a wax candle in their own size or in the measurements of Christ was to be held by the exorcist.

Exorcists also used a wide variety of physical contacts with the possessed. We have already encountered the sexual abuse that at times accompanied exorcism. But physical contact could be asexual, too (yet still abusive). The Roman saint Filippo Neri used to slap possessing demons (and the bodies in which they found sanctuary), spit on them, and lay his hands on the spot where the demons resided within the possessed body (even when this site was in a woman's private parts). He was not alone. Montaigne, visiting Rome, witnessed an exorcism that including beating up

the possessed person with a stick and spitting in his face, and the Spanish Franciscan Martín de Castañega recalled in his 1529 *Tratado de las supersticiones y hechicerías* (*Treatise of Superstitions and Witchcraft*) meeting a fellow Franciscan who used the "solemn discipline of the whip" ("una solemne disciplina de azotes") to cure demonic possession.[9]

The manuscript *Liber exorcismorum* is a good example of the improvised nature of exorcismal practices prior to the reforms of the latter part of the sixteenth century. This compilation, from the Franciscan monastery of Eemstein near Dordrecht, in the Low Countries, contains some of the standard rites, including the exorcisms according to saints Anthony and Ambrose, and many benedictions against vermin, storms, and hail. Among other abjurations, benedictions, and spells, it also includes cures for bewitchment, mostly potions consisting of herbs, wine, honey, and consecrated incense, and it recommends rebaptism of the patient, the use of amulets, and the sprinkling of the patient with holy water to combat bewitchment. The compilation might have belonged to the friar Henrick van Ryssel, who in May 1562 cured a man by shaving off all of the man's hair and clipping his nails, then mixing these with a quantity of the patient's urine and a number of iron nails. After boiling the mixture for nine days, the patient recovered. The friar, obviously, did not find anything superstitious or suspicious in the use of such formulas and techniques. The friar who compiled this collection obviously had not had access to printed rites (such as the early printed editions of the Rite according to Saint Peter), but felt the need to accumulate as many liturgical benedictions as were available to him. Significantly, the compilation also includes Jean Gerson's treatise "De probatione spirituum" on the discernment of spirits, the most systematic and theoretical discussion on the topic that was available in the sixteenth century. This inclusion indicates that, in addition to practicing exorcism, the compiler of this collection pondered the theological complexity and indeterminacy that characterized discerning diabolic possessions.[10] Most manuals for exorcists, admittedly, did not include theoretical material and, more often than not, relied more on prayers and less on a mixture of natural and supernatural practices that resemble "magical" and necromantic practices.[11] But it is significant that the *Liber exorcismorum* was part of a mendicant exorcismal culture, not a compilation of pre-Christian rites, necromancy formulas, or recipes used by an old witch. As such, it demonstrates the wide variety of rites used by clerics (including sophisticated ones); the blurring of boundaries among magic, necromancy, and exorcism; and the interconnection between lay and clerical techniques of casting out demons.

Caciola argued that by the fifteenth century there was "a conscious decision, on the part of Church authorities to regularize exorcism." Her argument, I suggest, should be qualified. Compilations, manuals, and the distribution of copies of conjurations from specific shrines were individual initiatives by either theologians or exorcists, striving to legitimate their own improvised rite and to make available to other exorcists formulas that had proven to be successful.[12] There was no claim in any of the fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century collections that the rites they recommended were the only authorized ones, nor were there any papal rules or decisions explicitly addressing exorcism issued in the fifteenth century. Early manuals were approved (if at all) by local synods and by individual bishops, each containing its own set of prayers and actions, some in explicit contradiction of others.

This same profusion of rites and practices that characterized the early manuals and printed compilations is equally evident in fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century theological treatises on exorcism. Writing in the first quarter of the fifteenth century, Johannes Nider did not find anything illicit in treating demoniacs with herbs and precious stones (especially magnets), as long as no incantations were used, and he advised exorcists to use amulets containing short prayers and blessings.[13] Furthermore, for Nider, exorcism was only one of a number of remedies against demonic possession, which could also be combated with the use of the Eucharist, confession, relics, and prayers.[14] Heinrich Kramer, who relied heavily on Nider, agreed that the use of herbs and minerals in exorcism was permissible, as long as they were consecrated and as long as the rite was performed "in a simple way" ("simpliciter"). As long as exorcismal conjurations were done "by virtue of the Christian religion, as when someone wishes to heal the sick by means of prayer and benediction and sacred words," they were lawful.[15] While both theologians, then, emphasized the need to regulate exorcisms, they failed to demarcate a clear boundary between traditional healing practices and the new and allegedly more restricted clerical exorcisms they advocated, and both refrained from positing that their formulas and rites were meant to replace all other exorcismal techniques.

The multiplicity of rituals and formulas and the church's tolerance of such disorder indicate, I believe, that the rite of exorcism remained, in some essential way, unimportant. Prior to the 1550s, two crucial caveats allowed the church to treat exorcism with a degree of indifference. First and foremost, exorcism was not a sacrament, and it was never assumed to work *ex opere operato*. Secondly, diabolic possession was still viewed (often, but admittedly not always) as a spontaneous occurrence that took place

at Satan's own initiative and had not yet acquired its sixteenth-century reconfiguration as a result of *maleficium*. As such, exorcism was still viewed as a healing practice, not as an inquisitorial tool to discover witchcraft and witches, or as a means to discern people's interiority. These two issues deserve careful scrutiny.

Exorcism has always been a sacramental, a blessing rite that was conductive to divine grace but, unlike sacraments, did not have a mechanical efficacy. It worked *ex opere operantis*, with the identity of the practitioner, the manner of performing the rite, and the spiritual disposition of the user all being determining factors for its success, as were (at times) the sins or degree of contrition of the possessed him- or herself. If so, it could be assumed that a flawed performance of exorcism, its usage by an unqualified individual or for the wrong purpose, would simply not work. Exorcism worked because God willed it to work, not because the exorcist enjoyed sacramental powers to activate divine grace. In fact, God could, and indeed had in the past, willed even laypeople to exorcise, using improvised techniques, an additional proof of the nonsacramental nature of the rite. In fact, one fifteenth-century compilation of exorcismal rites mentioned explicitly actions that might be taken "if the exorcist is a priest," an indication that laypeople, too, could perform this rite. Even as late as 1624, the compilation *Malleus daemonum* by the Franciscan Alessandro Albertini included three formulas for the use by "uneducated people [ignaris] and women . . . in the lack of a priest."[16] As a rite that was not a sacrament and that was not supposed to be administered as a sacrament, the church found little reason to intervene and regulate the manner in which exorcism was practiced. Admittedly, many laypeople and even a few ecclesiastics viewed exorcism and adjurations of demons as a sacrament, operating *ex opere operato*. Inquisitor Heinrich Kramer knew, of course, that exorcism was not a sacrament and that it might not work due to a lack of faith in the bystanders or the exorcist, to sins of the possessed person, or because it was not performed right. But even he often talked about it as if it were a sacrament of the church. "God forbids that I should maintain that the Sacraments cannot be administered by wicked men, or that when baptism is preformed by a wicked man it is not valid, provided that he observed the proper forms and words. Similarly, in the exorcism, let him proceed with due care, not timidly and not rashly. Would that no one stumbles while performing such sacred office by any accidental or habitual omission of any necessary forms or words." Exorcism is a "reverent performance," he went on to say, a rite that should be performed with meticulous reverence, as if it were a sacrament.[17] By comparing the reverence that is due to

the rite of exorcism to the sacraments, Kramer promoted exorcism above other remedies for possession that Nider, his predecessor and mentor, had recommended and placed it above prayer, confession, and relics.

Edward Peters argued that in late medieval Europe there was a popular belief that "suggested too great a dependence upon the compulsive powers of sacraments and sacramentals." As we shall see shortly, this process continued in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In his anthropological study of mid-twentieth-century Christian beliefs in the south of Italy, Ernesto De Martino documented the persistence in the popular imagination of a sacramental approach to exorcism. South Italian peasants believe in gradations of exorcismal techniques, from the exorcism practiced by lay healers, to benedictions of water and salt by priests, to celebratory exorcisms (during a dedication of a new church, Rogations, and the blessing of the elements and the fields), to exorcisms that were part of the ritual (baptism, benediction of the wine or oil), to the more dramatic exorcisms of possessing demons. The last two forms of exorcism are viewed as operating *ex opere operato*, like the sacraments. Far from being a popular belief, this approach has been maintained by the church itself, which convinced the believers of the quasi-automatic efficacy of its rituals while blurring the distinction between benedictions, sacramentals, and sacraments. Furthermore, the repetitive commemoration in most rites of demon expulsion of the exorcisms that Christ himself performed reinforced the similarity between exorcism and other sacraments.[18] Admittedly, there was nothing in Kramer's discussion to indicate that only a cleric could perform exorcism, and as such, Kramer obviously did not view it as a sacrament.[19] But, as Kramer's example demonstrates, ambivalence as to the sacramentality of exorcism was not restricted to the less-educated segments of European society.

The new attention paid by the church in the early sixteenth century to the right performance of exorcism was a direct result of the new association between witchcraft and demonic possession, and the new understanding of superstition, unlawful adjurations, and unauthorized exorcisms as collaboration with the devil. Already in 1437, Pope Eugenius IV issued a bull against healing practices by the laity and explicitly associated such practices with demonism. "The news has reached us," he stated, "not without great bitterness of spirit, that the prince of darkness makes many who have been bought by the blood of Christ partake in his own fall and damnation, bewitching them by his cunning arts in such a way that these detestable persuasions and illusions make them members of his sect." These disciples sign pacts with the devil, sacrifice to him, and "cure diseases . . . not afraid

to use the materials of Baptism, the Eucharist, and other sacraments."[20] Pope Innocent VIII's bull *Summis desiderantes affectibus* of 1484 also warned that the power of the devil was growing, due, in part, to an increase in the number of people who use "incantations, spells, conjurations, and other accursed charms and crafts."[21] Yet we have seen that Johannes Nider and Heinrich Kramer found nothing wrong with the performance of exorcism by laypeople, as long as they did not usurp the clerical rite, which included some prayers only a priest could pronounce. Every Christian, Nider reminded his readers, had the power to command demons and drive them out in the name of Christ, but lay exorcists should be extremely careful not to use unknown characters and charms, and should be aware that the only mode to adjure demons is the imperative and never the supplicative. Obviously, the clergy is more trustworthy than the laity, and educated people and doctors of sacred theology were even less likely to use corrupt charms.[22]

Kramer, however, saved much of his vehemence for priests. "Much negligence is committed by improperly instructed priests . . . or else by old women who do not observe the proper method" for conducting exorcism, he lamented.[23] The clerical exorcist must make sure that there was nothing in his adjurations that resembled tacit invocations of demons, that it contained only recognized names and did not contain anything that was untrue or vain, and that it relied solely on God. Due to the growing presence of the devil in the world and to the likelihood that demonic possession resulted from *maleficium*, two new ideas that were being developed at the very same time Kramer was writing, the German Inquisitor went on to propose "some regular system of exorcism and adjuration." His suggested ritual opened with a confession by the possessed person, and he strongly recommended the priest to confess, too. Kramer then went on to say that when there was a suspicion of bewitchment, a diligent search should be undertaken to look for *maleficium*, a procedure that, again, indicates that he assumed that a priest was performing the rite. If nothing was found, the possessed should go or be carried to church, preferably on holy days. Once there, "if possible, he is to hold a lighted candle, and receive the Holy Communion, [and] to remain bound naked to a Holy Candle of the length of Christ's body or of the Cross." The liturgical rite itself opened with pre-exorcismal prayers, with all present praying together for deliverance. The exorcism invocations themselves were short and closely resemble the exorcism rite in baptism, and Kramer in fact explained that the possessed person was being "reborn in Baptism." This combination of prayers and exorcisms should continue as long as needed and should be

performed at least three times a week. If the priest could read, he should read the opening paragraphs of the Gospels, but an illiterate priest could also perform exorcism. Such an exorcism would undoubtedly be different from the one Kramer recommended, and, in fact, Kramer, after having called for a regulated rite, admitted that his suggestion was just one of many possible formulas. "Let each proceed in this matter as he finds best" and "as seems good to him," he concluded. The ritual of exorcism, then, was still perceived by Kramer to be an improvisation that each exorcist could perform according to what he sees right ("ut sibi videbitur"), and in this respect there was nothing in Kramer's rite that distinguished it from other late medieval formulas.[24]

Kramer, then, called for a standard exorcismal rite at the very same time that he allowed exorcists to pursue their own method. This ambivalence was typical of other fifteenth-century theologians, and it was only in the following century that attempts to reform and regulate exorcisms gathered strength. In 1513 Pope Leo X commissioned the "Libellus ad Leonem X," an extensive program for reform of the church, which included an attack on superstitious practices. Like Karmer, the authors of "Libellus," the Venetians Tommaso Pietro Querini and Vincenzo Paolo Giustiniani, directed much of their fury against priests whose ignorance and inability to discern between licit and diabolic rituals led to superstition. A reform of clerical superstitious practices was, they implicitly argued, a precondition for a reform of lay superstitious practices. The reform bulls of the Fifth Lateran Council of the following years reaffirmed and elaborated these condemnations.[25] Even more vehement was the attack by Pedro Ciruelo. In his *Reprobación de las supersticiones y hechicerías* (*A Treatise Reproving All Superstitions and Forms of Witchcraft*) (c. 1530), this Spanish theologian departed from Nider's and Kramer's tolerant approach to lay exorcism and expressed the view that unauthorized exorcists were all magicians, necromancers, and witches, who cast out demons due to an implicit or explicit pact with the devil. He also opposed Nider's and Kramer's trust in the efficacy of medical herbs and fumigation, arguing that such practices were nothing but clear indications of fraud and superstition (and hence collaboration with the powers of evil). Viewing all these practitioners as "superstitious, diabolical, [and] deceitful exploiters of the illiterate faithful," Ciruelo posited that only bishops, deacons, subdeacons, people with minor orders, and priests inherited the divine power to cast out demons. He claimed further that all laypeople (including those who had received first tonsure but were not ordained) did not possess the power and should refrain from practicing exorcism.

Equally suspicious were priests who claimed that they had more natural or supernatural power than other priests. "Such clerics are certainly aligned with the devil," he said. "To delude these clerics even more, the devil has taught them certain exorcisms similar to the formulas used by the Holy Catholic Church." But these formulas are malicious and superstitious, and the priests who pronounce them are criminals who participate in a diabolic scheme to deceive people. The devil, as is well known, desires a great audience for his lies, and these exorcists supply him with such an opportunity, which the devil uses to incite people into sin. Through the actions of such lay and clerical exorcists, "he sows much poison in the hearts of his listeners and causes many to lose their souls." Worse yet, Ciruelo explained, exorcists who do not follow the right rite increase, rather than decrease, the number of demonic possessions. They are "ministers of the devil [ministros del Diablo] . . . who provide [him] with a wide scope for his activity and allow him to converse with people in many places and villages where he can deceive and bring ruin upon many souls." Ciruelo, however, had to deal with the fact that often such exorcisms were successful and came up with the awkward explanation that this success was an illusion. It was nothing but a "pretense [that] arises out of a conspiracy between the exorcist and the demon, much like the understanding shared by two criminals."[26] Ciruelo laid the responsibility for the eradication of such unauthorized exorcisms on both the religious and secular authorities, whose job it was "not [to] allow in their dioceses or territories the presence of any person whose occupation is exorcism." While it was easy to dismiss the ability of the laity to perform exorcism as fraudulent and superstitious, it was more difficult to restrict ecclesiastics from performing exorcism or to rule whether they were performing them in the right manner, when such right manner had not yet existed. One possible sign is the nature of the verbal exchange with the possessing demons. It is forbidden, he warned, to converse with the devil or to comply with any demands uttered by him. Any inquiry of the demon is a grave sin, "an alliance of friendship with him."

Ciruelo did not offer a rite of exorcism but did supply a few guidelines:

> Once the priest is convinced that the person is possessed by a devil, he should then vest himself in surplice or alb and a stole and grasp a crucifix and some holy water. The possessed person should be brought to the church or to some other respectable place, and all the people present should be dismissed, lest anyone should hear the devil say something before he is expelled. Following the manual of pastors, the priest should recite the exorcisms that are used in the blessing of water, at the same time sprinkling holy water. Then the priest should place the end of the stole on

> the possessed person and read the exorcisms which are recited at the door of the church over those who are coming for the sacrament of baptism. In these exorcisms the priest orders the devil, in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, to leave and abandon that creature of God. He repeats that command three times. Then the priest reads to the possessed person the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, emphasizing those passages that have specific application against the devil. . . . Finally, the priest may add some of the Collects [colletas] and prayers of the Church which are found in the Missal.[27]

As this quotation makes clear, Ciruelo was much more concerned with eradicating unlawful exorcisms than with the creation of a standard rite. He was especially troubled by the growing presence of lay individuals (mostly women) who claimed supernatural powers to communicate with the divine and by the support they acquired from clerics, and believed that restricting access to healing rites was a necessary step in the eradication of Alumbradismo, the new lay spiritual movement that swept through Spain in the early years of the sixteenth century. Like most traditional rites, his suggestions relied heavily on the ritual of baptism and implicitly indicated that a special rite of exorcism of the possessed was not necessary, because each priest was already in the possession of the appropriate prayers and invocations to perform exorcism through their familiarity with the rites of baptism. Ciruelo's attack on superstitions and superstitious practitioners combined fear of demonism and witchcraft, opposition to lay healing practices, and the need to reform the exorcismal practices of the clergy. And while his proposed guidelines for the rite of exorcism had more in common with traditional rites and the reliance on the baptismal rite, his fierce hostility to lay exorcism and his association of such superstitious practices with witchcraft, simulated sanctity, and heresy were a novelty. Finally, in its restriction to clerics only, its emphasis on the need to perform exorcism in the right manner and the rite's similarity to baptism, and in the expectation that, once performed accurately, exorcism should work, Ciruelo's *Treatise* demonstrated the new (as yet implicit) sacramentalization of the ritual.

In fact, by the time Ciruelo was advocating restricting the performance of exorcism to the clergy and warning priests against superstitious practices, printed versions of traditional Latin rites and new compilations of exorcisms in Latin began to circulate, all addressed to members of the clergy. The *Coniuratio malignorum spirituum in corporibus hominum existentium* that had been practiced in the Basilica of Saint Peter in Rome (five Roman and one Venetian edition before 1500); the *Coniurationes demonum* (two different editions in Rome, 1497); and Silvestro Mazzolini da Prierio

[Prierias]'s *Tractatulus. Quid a diabolo sciscitari. Et qualiter. Malignos spiritus. Possit quisquis expellere de obsessis* of 1502 were among these new printed resources. Prierio (1456?–1523) was a Dominican friar and a regent master (and later a dean) of the prestigious theological faculty at the convent of Saint Dominic in Bologna, and by the end of his days became the Maestro di Sacro Palazzo in Rome. In the early years of the sixteenth century, he was also a practicing exorcist and, using the Eucharist, exorcised a local noblewoman who had been bewitched by a famous Bolognese witch, Gentile Cimitri, who was executed in 1498.[28] The short *Tractatulus* (twenty-four pages) is concerned mostly with how to distinguish between a "spontaneous" possession (with no involvement of a human malevolent agent) and a possession that results from *maleficium*, and instructs the exorcist how to examine the demons without falling into the trap of necromancy and superstition. As we shall see, these two concerns of this Dominican theologian were to dominate friars' involvements with matters of possession and exorcism throughout the century. Prierio warned the exorcist against conversing with the demons in order to learn occult secrets (necromancy) and restricted their exchange to ordering the demon to exit. It was, however, legitimate to ask the possessing spirit for its name, the cause of the possession, the presence of additional demons within the demoniac's body, and about possessions of other individuals by other demons. The priest should then find out whether the demon had entered the body following a pact with a human being and, if so, to obtain this person's name.[29] All these questions were legitimate and did not cross the line separating exorcism from necromancy and vain curiosity because they were not meant to obtain esoteric knowledge for the sake of knowledge but merely to heal the possessed person and discover the cause of the possession and the human agents who might be responsible for it.[30]

The recent connection between exorcism and discernment of *maleficium* was also a major concern in the short section devoted to exorcism in Alberto da Castello's *Liber sacerdotalis* (also known as *Sacerdotale Romanum*) of 1523.[31] This compilation was also a part of Pope Leo X's enterprise to standardize and codify the rituals of the Roman Catholic Church. It included all the liturgical and sacramental rites that a priest was to perform and was reissued in more than twenty editions during the sixteenth century. The short section on exorcism contained four rites, three of them for the deliverance of demoniacs, among them the ancient exorcism attributed to Saint Ambrose. Like late medieval exorcismal manuals, the short rites were based on baptismal rituals, early medieval exorcisms, and other prayers. Castello's original contribution lied in his explanatory section of the rite,

where he instructed exorcists to interrogate the demons as to whether the possession resulted from witchcraft. He explained that demons possessed humans for a number of reasons, among them despair or sinful behavior, for the salvation of the soul (*Salutem animae*), or as a result of *maleficium.* If the demon entered due to bewitchment, it should be ordered to vomit the malevolent object or reveal where it is hidden. Once found, this object should immediately be burned (and should not be thrown into the river, as some superstitious exorcists often did). The Dominican theologian then enumerated the traditional signs of possession, among them shrieks and outbursts of fury, rolling of the eyes, resistance to the exorcism (especially an inability to hear Psalms 56 and 91 and the first chapters of the Gospel according to John). These signs, however, were not always certain. Equally doubtful were paralysis, contrition of the heart, stomachaches, an inability to hold food, and other somatic manifestations that could just as likely result from humoral imbalance. The only two symptoms that were beyond any doubt and could not be attributed to anything but diabolic possession were the ability of "illiterate e idiote" people to understand foreign languages and the knowledge of secret things, two preternatural occurrences that cannot be explained in natural terms.

Castello's guide enjoyed immense popularity in the second third of the sixteenth century. At the same time, a number of archbishops and bishops initiated their own campaigns to curb illicit exorcismal activities and to regulate clerical practices of casting out demons. One way to achieve this was to restrict the use of the rite to a few "official exorcists." Archbishop Giovanni Matteo Giberti of Verona, a leading church reformer and a role model for many other bishops, explained in his *Constitutiones*—a detailed set of rules and regulations of the clergy in his diocese (1542)—that while the ability to exorcise demons was given to all priests as part of their ordination, widespread abuse mandated restricting this privilege. Some exorcists claimed that they enjoy extraordinary powers over demons, others that they knew unique formulas, others yet incorporated assorted superstitious practices into their exorcisms, and some demanded money from possessed people who asked for help. In order to remedy this situation, Giberti ordered all exorcists practicing in the diocese of Verona to obtain a written license from him or his vicar and to perform their duty out of Christian charity. Giberti also prohibited the use of medicine during exorcism, and in some versions of the *Constitutiones* even threatened unlicensed exorcists with incarceration ("sub poena carceris").[32] Bologna soon followed when a local synod there regulated exorcismal activities in 1547. Modena, Florence, Venice, Naples, and other Italian cities passed similar rules.[33]

While some reform efforts concentrated on standardizing clerical exorcism, church synods in Augsburg (1548), Narbonne (1551), and other places focused their efforts on curtailing "superstitious" lay exorcisms. In 1559 the church synod of Chartres ordered all the *curés* in the district to warn their parishioners against "using witchcraft, superstitions, and consulting witches for healing the sick." Six years later, the provincial council of Milan (1565) ordered "bishops to severely punish and excommunicate all magicians and sorcerers who believe, or promise others that they are capable . . . of healing *maleficium*."[34] This was followed in 1576 by an order to priests in the bishopric of Milan to eradicate all "superstitious" practices and the publication of a "modus exorcizandi." During the following three years, an *Index variarum superstitionum* was compiled throughout the diocese, and among the practitioners of such unlawful rites were more than a few clerics.[35] Following Giberti, Carlo Borromeo (1538–1584), archbishop of Milan from 1564, established the position of public exorcists, four to six men who were the only priests in the city who were licensed to conduct exorcism. To eliminate abuses even further, his cousin, Federico Borromeo (1564–1631), archbishop of Milan since 1601, ordered that the activities of these public exorcists be restricted to a few churches that were designated for this purpose. Sometime during the last years of the sixteenth century, Milan also established a special hospice for possessed individuals. The hospice, whose existence was deemed necessary due to the "growing multitude of possessed individuals" in the city, was to be staffed by paid exorcists and physicians, who were to collaborate in healing demoniacs. It was the responsibility of these practitioners to make sure that people who were not possessed but rather insane or who suffered from melancholic humors, frenzy, and *mal della matrice* (a sensual hysteria common among women in general and nuns in particular) would not be mistaken for demoniacs. Exorcisms and confessions were to take place daily, medical examinations monthly. The document is dismissive of physicians' claim that most maladies can be healed by natural medicine and makes it clear that exorcists' use of fumigation and relics was more suited for cases of possession. Undoubtedly responding to numerous cases of sexual impropriety during exorcism, the instructions also stipulate that honorable women should also be on the staff. Finally, the document repeats the Milanese warning of 1576 against abuses of the rite of exorcism and threatens exorcists who practice without a license with "severe punishment."[36]

Thus, by the time Pope Sixtus V published his bull *Coeli et terrae* (1585) and condemned all forms of "superstitious" ceremonies and incantations, accusing participants of being in league with the devil, local initiatives had

already tried to put an end to exorcism by lay healers and unauthorized clerics. It is important to note that Giberti's reform, as well as other early regulatory attempts in Italy, France, and Germany, predated the Church Council of Trent and that they targeted the clergy at least as much as they tried to restrict the laity's access to the supernatural. In fact, some theologians, among them Ciruelo (explicitly) and Giberti (implicitly), even argued that reform of the clergy was a precondition for a reform of the laity, and that clerical unauthorized practices and abuse of power were to be blamed for the prevalence of superstitious exorcismal practices and beliefs among the laity.

FROM GIROLAMO MENGHI TO THE ROMAN RITE OF 1614

Initiatives for reform of exorcismal rites, then, had already been under way since the early years of the sixteenth century, when, in 1576, the Bolognese Franciscan friar and exorcist Girolamo Menghi (Hieronymus Mengus, 1529–1609) started authoring the series of books that were to overshadow all previous writings on the topic. Menghi joined the Franciscan order in 1550 and practiced as an exorcist in Venice, Bologna, and Lombardy. His *Compendium of the Art of Exorcism* (*Compendio dell'arte essorcistica* [Bologna, 1576]; Latin edition, Bologna, 1580), *The Devil's Scourge* (*Flagellum daemonum* [Venice, 1577]), *Club against Demons* (*Fustis daemonum* [Bologna, 1584]; second part of the *Flagellum*), and *The Demon's Flight* (*Fuga daemonum* [Venice, 1596]) were all reprinted numerous times, some in pocket editions suitable for itinerant exorcists, and the latter three books were later included in the most comprehensive and authoritative collection of early modern exorcisms, the 1,272-page long *Thesaurus exorcismorum* (Cologne, 1608, and later editions).[37] The books became so popular that a number of practicing exorcists who were brought before Inquisitional tribunals for abusing their power claimed in their defense that they had acted exactly as Menghi had instructed in his books. Some even used his guides to search for hidden treasures, to perform necromancy, and to heal impotency.[38] Worried about the perceived chaos that characterized exorcismal activities in Italy and the unorthodox practices employed by many exorcists, Menghi set himself the goal of compiling all of the existing authorized rituals into a manual for the use of parish exorcists. His books instruct exorcists on how to diagnose a genuine diabolic possession, how to confront the demons, and how to cast out evil spirits, and they contain numerous exorcismal liturgies. This concrete and practical approach was due partly to the events of

the recent past. A certain *aegritudo*, a mysterious and deadly infection, was threatening innumerable victims, Menghi stated on the opening page of his *Devil's Scourge*, a book that in some Italian dioceses became mandatory reading for priests. More and more people were being attacked by evil spirits but continued to live their lives as if the plague were not ravaging them. Only exorcism could extirpate this disease, but the art of exorcism was unknown. With only a few books about exorcism in circulation and with many ignorant exorcists, who were not familiar with the right ways to perform their art, practicing all over Italy, Menghi believed that it was more important than ever to supply exorcists and theologians with authorized guides.[39]

Menghi's popularity, however, raises interesting questions. Admittedly, Menghi combined theological discussions of different aspects of diabolic possession and exorcisms with practical advice and specific formulas and, as such, condensed in one book all that exorcists needed to know. But there was very little, in fact, that distinguished this Franciscan exorcist from his Dominican predecessors, and it is difficult to find anything original in his writings. Menghi's lack of originality was demonstrated already in his first literary effort, a publication of an enlarged edition of Prierio's *Tractatulus*. In fact, Prierio's thinking was to shape his fellow Bolognese's entire enterprise. Concurrently, Menghi started composing an Italian-language encyclopedia of all issues dealing with *maleficium*, witchcraft, and exorcism. The *Compendio dell'arte essorcistica* was a theoretical work that was intended as a refutation of the charges that diabolic possession was impossible, that witches did not inflict harm, that the witches' Sabbath did not exist, and similar skeptical ideas that Menghi found incredible. Some arrogant people, Menghi admonished in astonishment, "have been so seduced and persuaded by the father of all errors and lies, that they don't only disbelieve, but also do not want to believe, in the truth of all that is treated in the present work, and even go around disseminating and persuading this caprice of theirs . . . in the minds of simple people [vulgo]."[40] Against such arrogant doubts, Menghi's encyclopedia combined all that was needed to prove the existence of demons, witches, and *maleficia*. It also intended to prove that demons possessed human beings and animals, and it argued that "medicina celeste," as it was practiced by ecclesiastical exorcists, was the only appropriate means to overcome diabolic power. While the major focus of the *Compendium* is, in fact, witchcraft and not diabolic possession, Menghi titled it *Encyclopedia of the Art of Exorcism*, and by so doing connected the two phenomena, arguing that exorcists were witch-finders par excellence, and that they, and only they, possessed the means to combat witchcraft.

Who were these skeptic voices who denied the merits of possession or witchcraft? During the first half of the sixteenth century, a few radical Averroistic Aristotelian natural philosophers challenged the Platonist-Thomist consensus concerning the existence of demons and their ability to inflict harm. Prominent among them was Pietro Pomponazzi (1462–1525), who, in his *On the Causes of Natural Effect, or Incantations* (*De naturalium effectuum causis; sive, De incantationibus*) of 1520 (published 1556), argued that it is only lack of knowledge that prevents us from finding natural causes for all occurrences in nature. Harm and affliction are caused not by demons, but by hidden properties of objects in nature, by the imagination, and by the power of heavenly bodies. It is within the power of natural philosophers to study these qualities and powers and supply natural explanations. One should not, however, exaggerate the importance of rare skeptic voices such as Pomponazzi's. It did not take much time or effort to dismiss their arguments, as did, for example, Silvestro da Prierio, Martín de Castañega, Andrea Cesalpino, Giovan Battista Codronchi, Ambroise Paré, Zaccaria Visconti, and Martín Del Rio. They argued that radical Aristotelian natural philosophers were wrong, because they refused to accept the difference between immediate or manifest causes, on the one hand, and occult or invisible causes, on the other. It is quite possible that people who exhibit symptoms of possession or bewitchment suffer from melancholy, black bile, humoral imbalance, or *mal della matrice*. All of these afflictions, however, could result from preternatural (demonic) interventions that only superficially look like purely natural or medical causalities. Thus, demons could increase the influence of hidden properties or activate the imagination by stirring the humors. And if so, it is only demonologists and exorcists who could discern etiologies of afflictions. Only exorcists have the combination of forensic and spiritual techniques to decipher the hidden supernatural causality of natural diagnoses and to separate natural from unnatural events.[41] In fact, naturalism, rather than challenging demonism, reinforced it, as proponents of demonism quickly incorporated natural and medical explanatory frameworks into their system.[42]

Relying heavily on previous authors, especially Nider and Kramer, and on Prierio's own critique of naturalists, Menghi's first two long sections of the *Compendium* challenged these skeptic voices and proved the existence of witchcraft and witches by repeating all the by-then common references to Scripture, the church fathers, and Saint Thomas. It is only toward the end of his compilation, in the shorter Third Book, that Menghi finally addressed exorcism, and even here, he added little that was new. Menghi warned that only judges and exorcists could combat witches and *maleficia*

(225–27), and that while natural medicine could reduce torments and symptoms, it could not heal malevolent afflictions. Prayers, confession, the sign of the cross, and other rites of the church also alleviated satanic sufferings, but exorcism was not only the best, but also the only medicine that cured the cause as well as the exterior symptoms of the affliction (228, 244–45, 289–90). After these general observations on the unique efficacy of exorcisms, Menghi moved into a systematic discussion of the rite. Following Prierio's *Tractatulus*, he explained that the exorcist should first make sure that he was confronted with a genuine diabolic possession rather than natural affliction and should consult with physicians (who are portrayed, then, as both collaborators and rivals of exorcists) (225). Like his predecessors, he explained that physical pains that resisted natural medicine and horror of sacred objects should raise suspicion of diabolic possession. But it was mostly preternatural symptoms, such as the ability to speak foreign languages and to exhibit wisdom above one's level of education, as well as knowledge of hidden secrets, that were reliable indications that a person was, indeed, possessed by demons. Alas, it could also happen that a possessed person refused to speak or understand a foreign language in order to humiliate and ridicule the exorcist, as had happened to Menghi himself (151).

More importantly, Menghi, repeating Ciruelo's admission, warned that all of these signs could also be signs of divine possession. This, then, was Menghi's second concern. His problem was not only the few radical Aristotelian skeptical natural philosophers who denied the possibility of witchcraft and demonic possession. More challenging, as historians Giovanni Romeo and Guido Dall'Olio have pointed out, were voices from within the church itself who doubted the entire forensic expertise exorcists had developed, and who argued that often people who were found by exorcists to be possessed by evil spirits were, in fact, melancholy, simulating, or possessed by divine spirits. The Italian Inquisition was reluctant to believe in witches' Sabbaths or in the devil's ability to transform humans into animals or to transfer them in the air, and most Inquisitors were extremely lenient in their dealings with accused witches and superstitious healers.[43] Menghi was writing during the very same years that the Italian Inquisition was centralized under Roman control, and its questioning methods and standards of truth presented a challenge to overzealous demonologists.[44] During the 1560s and 1570s, to the horror of people like Menghi, witch trials in the Italian peninsula were lingering on for years and often terminating with very lenient punishments or even in acquittals. Some cases of demonic possession, too, were dismissed as mere natural psychological or physical afflictions. As we shall see in subsequent chapters, some

theologians even ridiculed exorcists as victims or collaborators of feminine deceptions, arguing that such exorcists understood nothing of the complex psychological anxieties and plots of demoniacs and especially possessed nuns, who suffered under involuntary enclosure and forced chastity. The theologians' mistrust was directed especially against Observant friars like Menghi, who regarded themselves as the most suitable warriors to combat Satan.

Writing against this tide of criticism, Menghi argued that exorcists were uniquely qualified for two different but nevertheless related assignments. They could discern possessing spirits, and once it was determined that the cause of a genuine possession was, indeed, diabolic, they knew better than others how to conduct the exorcism.

Going back to his main concern, namely, possession that resulted from witchcraft, Menghi then instructed exorcists how to proceed in such cases. The exorcist ought to conduct a very diligent search for the signs of *maleficium*, because possession due to bewitchment was more common than "spontaneous" possession and was more difficult to undo (291–93). In fact, warned Menghi (following Kramer), an exorcism was very likely to fail if the exorcist did not discover the *instrumenti maleficiali*. Once the instrument of evil was discovered, the rite itself should be conducted in a church, preferably on a holy day. Both exorcist and demoniac must confess and (if the demoniac's health permitted it) take the Eucharist. During the exorcism itself, the exorcist ought to command the demon repeatedly to exit the possessed body (292). It was permissible to interrogate the demon and to negotiate with it, but it was important not to show curiosity or ask the demon unnecessary questions (296).

Menghi's *Compendium* and other writings should therefore be understood not only as guides for exorcists, but, above all, as an ideological attempt to promote the "case for exorcism" to other branches of the church and to revitalize the campaign against witchcraft that Menghi believed to be waning down. For Menghi, exorcism was important not just because it could heal possessed people, but mostly because it could combat *maleficium* and demonstrate the existence of witches and the harm they inflict. Exorcists, Menghi insisted, were not just healers, but also forensic experts, who could confirm suspicion of *maleficium* and lead possessed victims of witches to identify the cause of their affliction. Menghi's insistence that a search for the instrument of bewitchment should precede the exorcism, and his belief that most demonic possessions resulted from malevolent collaboration between demons and humans, created a professional niche for exorcists, whose activity was now redefined as unique and indispensable,

far more important than and far superior to the simple curing activities of other clerics or, obviously, lay healers. But their expertise was not limited to combating witchcraft. Equally important, their forensic knowledge enabled them to distinguish divine from demonic possession.

In 1577, soon after the publication of the first volume of the *Compendium*, Menghi penned the *Flagellum daemonum, seu exorcismi terribiles, potentissimi, et efficaces* (*The Devil's Scourge: Terrible, Mighty, and Efficacious Exorcisms*). Unlike the *Compendium*, which was written in Italian, this was a Latin compilation of rites and very detailed explanations of how to perform them, and it became Menghi's most popular book. Obviously, it was meant to instruct exorcists on how to approach their duty and how to avoid the pitfalls that characterize and lead to many abuses.[45] Each exorcism in the compilation starts with the sign of the cross, a reminder of Christ's redemptive sacrifice. The prayers themselves commemorate the Incarnation, Crucifixion, and the Resurrection, the major events in Christ's life and death on behalf of humankind. Menghi recommends the use of the first lines of the Gospel according to John: "In the beginning was the Word . . . and the Word was God," and the opening lines of the other Gospels, and some rituals also include commemorations of the Virgin Mary and other angels and biblical figures whose interactions with God saved human beings. The exorcism is, in fact, a repetition or a reenactment of the salvific passion of Christ himself. Like Christ, possessed people suffer with no fault of their own, but like him, their suffering is not void of meaning.

Menghi's recommended liturgical practices, just like his formulas, are traditional. He advised the use of fire and sulfur to fumigate the demon (and the person who is possessed by him) (Third Exorcism), herbs (Fourth Exorcism), and the burning of a painted image of the specific demon that occupies the possessed body (Sixth Exorcism). An entire section of the compilation deals with the virtues of natural herbs, stones, and other substances. *The Most Effective Remedies for Expelling Evil Spirits* (*Remedia efficacissima in malignos spiritus expellendos*) is a pharmacological recipes book. It enumerates the natural substances exorcists should use and instructs them on how to concoct fumigants and vomitories, using such ingredients as rue, dill, garlic, hypericon, sulphur, and frankincense. The natural substances should be mixed with holy water and holy oils, and be used in tandem with prayers, adjurations, and *brevi*. The exorcist should also insult the demon by calling it names and should make sure to exorcise it from each and every part of the body: "Expel, oh Lord, the devil from this creature of yours, from the head, from the ends of his hair, from his

forehead, from his eyes . . . from his knees, from his legs, from his shameful parts . . ." (Second Exorcism). If the devil refuses to leave and for some reason the ceremony must be terminated, the exorcist should at least make sure that the demons were pushed from the upper parts of the body to the lower parts and reside in the lower belly, or better yet in the toenails (Seventh Exorcism).

As a practicing exorcist and a demonologist, Menghi witnessed and had good reasons to be alarmed by the presence of witches, and he was equally alarmed by the skepticism of fellow ecclesiastics. But he also had other concerns that were just as significant. Menghi was on the forefront of an additional battle, the one being waged between Protestants and Catholics. The former accused the Catholic Church of multiple abuses—of Scripture, of rituals, and of clerical prerogatives, and Menghi believed that purifying and standardizing exorcismal rites could help the Catholic Church in its fight against Protestantism. Confronted with a growing malady of witchcraft that was threatening both the body and the soul, he lamented, the church lacked efficient protection. At a "tempestuous time, . . . when the Enemy has become more powerful than ever," exorcists found themselves, just like old cunning women, forced to improvise rituals.[46] Most exorcists who pretended to confront the threat did so for vainglory and fame, while others were paralyzed due to fear and ignorance.[47] Menghi recalled meeting an (ecclesiastical) exorcist, "who had never held a book of this art in his hands and nevertheless promised that he could recognize and cure all the *maleficati* that he encountered," and he went on to warn that even many exorcists who did consult guides were ignorant and prone to superstitious practices, because the few existing manuals were not reliable. By using vain practices such as spells, astrological charts and signs, and medical herbs, and by invoking the sign of the cross and fragments of prayers in an incorrect manner, such practitioners committed sin and led others to sin. Rather than decreasing Satan's power, these practitioners, who usurped the name exorcists, increased it and defamed the art of exorcism and the Catholic Church.[48] In addition to promoting his own guides as the only reliable books on the market, Menghi thus furthered the clericalization and sacramentalization of the rite of exorcism.

In the following years, Menghi continued to exorcise demons and to compile manuals for exorcists.[49] By 1596, at the advanced age of sixty-seven, in a new compilation, the *Fuga daemonum* (*The Demons' Flight*), he looked back with pride at his achievement. Only licensed and learned exorcists currently practice the art, he exclaimed. "These days, there are few superstitious exorcists to be found," he declared, "for, by the grace of God

and through the vigilance of priests and Inquisitors, they have no place except in the galleys or in perpetual prison." Five years later, in the Second Part of the *Compendium*, he was equally satisfied with himself and declared that his assertion that most (or even all) diabolic possessions resulted from *maleficium* had turned out to be right, and that by now it has been accepted by most exorcists.[50] Both declarations obviously overstated the case, but both demonstrate the importance that Menghi assigned not only to the fight against witchcraft, but also the elimination of "superstitious" exorcismal rites and the eradication of lay exorcism.

It was either Menghi's success, or the growing presence of (diabolically or divinely) possessed individuals in the Italian peninsula, or a sincere commitment to supplying exorcists with authorized and better guides, that inspired a minor publishing boom in exorcismal manuals at the end of the sixteenth century and the first decades of the seventeenth.[51] Most were written by members of the Observant orders. Since the manuals are repetitive, there is no point in summarizing them, and one example should suffice. Valerio Polidori was a Conventual Franciscan and a practicing exorcist in Padua. Like Kramer and Menghi, he reminded his readers that evil witchcraft by women had increased dramatically in the recent past and, with it, cases of possession due to spells. The exorcist should start, therefore, by finding the *signum materiale* and destroying it. He should then proceed by questioning the demon as for the causes of the possession, the names of its mignons, the holy names it abhors the most, and the angels it fears. Following the warnings expressed by all of his predecessors, Polidori reminded the exorcist not to converse with the demon and not to trust the demon's responses. Polidori was a doctor of sacred theology and, as such, well educated. It was either due to his education, or maybe due to his contacts with physicians in Padua, a major center of medical learning and of naturalistic skepticism, that Polidori enumerated symptoms that might help the exorcist to diagnose the etiology as distinct from natural afflictions. Diabolic possession that was caused by *maleficium* was manifested in a swelling of the body and the limbs and acute pains. The victim's face changed its color, and the stomach seemed constricted. The heart felt like it was being pricked or gnawed by a dog. The victim could not digest food and felt as if a huge ball was stuck within the body. Mental capacities were also reduced, and the victim lost his or her reasoning power and suffered periods of idiocy. Due to their severity, these cases were easy to discern as supernatural and demonic. Polidori, however, paid equal attention to cases that were not induced by witchcraft. Such cases were more difficult to diagnose correctly, and the exorcist should use a variety of

spiritual remedies to supplement the formulas of exorcism. These include *brevi*, holy water and holy oils, and even natural medicine, which should be ascribed only after consultation with a physician. The burning of incense and fetid plants and minerals was also useful, as were the drawing of a horrible image of the devil on a piece of parchment and showing it to the devil, kicking and slapping the demon, and spitting on it (and on the body within which it was residing). Polidori recommended a wide variety of concoctions for suffumigation and *profumigatio horribilis* that allegedly were known to expel demons. But he made a clear distinction between two ways of using natural medicine. If it was intended to operate directly on the demon (the way physicians employ medication), it was doomed to fail, because natural and material objects could not affect the demon. However, if it was used by an exorcist to strengthen the body and was used in conjunction with prayers, invocations, and conjurations (which physicians, obviously, could not perform), it was lawful and likely to work. Consultation with physicians, therefore, should not be misunderstood as if the latter enjoyed equal status with exorcists. Like Menghi, then, the Paduan exorcist was sharing his techniques with fellow exorcists, while at the same time he was reinforcing the division of labor between exorcists and other professionals, arguing that exorcists were uniquely qualified to detect *maleficium*, to discern interiority, and to heal possessed individuals.[52]

These examples of Menghi and Polidori and the fact that many other manuals repeated the same instructions, should not, however, create the impression of a homogenous discourse shared by all exorcists. The French theologian Pierre de Bérulle's book on exorcism, for example, addressed only "spontaneous" possessions, totally ignoring the possibility of *maleficium*, while the Spanish Jesuit (working in the Low Countries) Martín Del Rio continued to maintain that true faith, the sign of the cross, holy water, baptism, tolling the bells of the church, Agnus Dei and other amulets, and the invocations of Christ, the Virgin Mary, saints, and one's guardian angel were all as efficient against diabolic possession as exorcism.[53]

All of Menghi's and his followers' attempts to standardize their profession and art did not reduce the Inquisition's mistrust of many exorcists. A number of papal decrees were published between 1591 and 1657, accusing members of Mendicant orders of necromancy and practicing unlawful invocations.[54] In the first half of the seventeenth century, some clerics were even censored for misuse of their exorcismal power and for mistaking natural afflictions for demonic possession.[55] Cardinal Desiderio Scaglia of the Holy Congregation in Rome argued in the 1620s that often exorcists mistake natural afflictions for diabolic possession and thus increase

melancholic humors. During a case of possession in a convent in Carpi in 1636–38, the local Inquisitors and the Roman Congregation even ordered the exorcists to cease their work, arguing that they mistook melancholy for possession and trusted women whose humors were imbalanced in order to pursue their own professional agenda.[56] Exorcists, for their part, continued to publish manuals, which grew longer and more elaborate as time went by. Excess, of course, was not new to exorcismal rites. Exorcists had always pronounced long lists of divine names, used an inexhaustible vocabulary of curses and insults, and named each body part from which demons were being expelled. Menghi, as we remember, originally wanted itinerant exorcists to carry a pocket edition of a manual with them. The *Thesaurus exorcismorum* of 1608, however, was more than one thousand pages long, The ever more repetitive and ever longer collections, I believe, were acts of growing frustration, of hoping against hope to achieve recognition and respect from a growing body of theologians who ridiculed, dismissed, or otherwise disrespected the art of exorcism and its practitioners.

And, in fact, these practicing exorcists were not wrong in feeling overlooked. Following the Church Council of Trent, the Curia reignited Leo X's initiative to produce a unified Catholic rite. In 1584 Gregory XIII asked Cardinal Giulio Antonio Santori (also Santoro, Santorius; 1532–1602), to start compiling such a ritual. Santori, Cardinal of Santa Severina, was one of the most efficient and productive cardinals of the second half of the sixteenth century, an Inquisitor, and in 1592 a candidate for the papacy. He published a few segments during his lifetime, among them the section on exorcism. The suggested rite was never made official but became the main source for the Roman Rite of 1614.[57] By the time the cardinal was researching the rite of exorcism, Menghi's *Flagellum daemonum* and his *Compendium* were already available, as were many other local smaller collections. But Santori chose to base his proposed rite on earlier baptismal services, the tenth-century *Ordo romanus L.*, and other early sacramentals from the eighth century, while basing his theoretical explanations on Alberto da Castello's *Liber sacerdotalis* of 1523, totally ignoring Menghi's labor, as well as the publications of fellow contemporaneous Italian exorcists.[58]

Quoting Castello, Santori describes four causes for possession: despair, sin, salvation of souls, and witchcraft (677). Like Castello, he warns against mistaking melancholy and mental retardation for possession and makes a special mention of women's natural inclination to be deceived. It is important to interrogate the possessed person's state of mind and health history, and to question relatives whether the victim suffers from melancholy, depression, wild imagination, or other mental troubles (673). However, the

possibility that alleged demoniacs suffer from natural afflictions neither excludes diabolic etiology, nor does it mean that melancholics should not be exorcised. Often they are victims of the demon, and in such cases the exorcist ought to adjust his techniques to the personality of the demoniac and to refrain from agitating her too much. Following consultation with physicians, an exorcist should also consider administering natural medicine (674).

While Santori's *Rituale sacramentorum Romanum* was never completed and never made official, in 1614 Pope Paul V used parts of it when he published the authorized Roman Rite, a compilation that was to serve all Catholic dioceses. The pope, however, refrained from making this rite mandatory, and in fact encouraged local dioceses and religious orders to continue to use their own established traditions as they found fit.[59] Following Santori, the exorcismal rites and conjurations were taken from the eighth- and ninth-century Gelasian and Gregorian Sacramentaries, from the Roman-German Pontifical of the tenth century, and from the baptismal exorcism of catechumens. The most powerful exorcism was the one attributed to Saint Ambrose, which had been included in the Roman-German Pontifical and in Castello's compilation and terminated with the expulsion of the demon to hell: "Depart, seducer, depart. Your abode in the wilderness; the serpent in the place of your habitation. Now there is no time to delay. For behold the Lord God approaches quickly upon you, and fire will blaze before Him, and precede Him, and burn up His enemies on every side. . . . He shuts you out, He who has prepared eternal Gehenne for you and for your angels . . . who is to come in the Holy Spirit to judge the world through fire, Amen."

The explanatory chapter, "On Exorcism of People Possessed by Demons," includes twenty-one rules for the exorcist. It opens with an admonition that only priests and other authorized religious people ("legitimus Ecclesiae minister") can exorcise (Rule 1). Late medieval rites, as we have seen, often admit laypeople's ability to exorcise, and even Kramer did not rule it out. But the systematic attack on "superstitious" practices during the sixteenth century and the "sacramentalization" of the exorcismal rite naturally culminated with this restriction. The same quasi-sacramental approach lies beyond the rule that once an exorcist was appointed by the bishop, this choice was inspired by God, and therefore the priest should trust that he was given the grace and skill to perform it even if he had no experience in such matters. The Roman Rite further explained that "once exorcism is pronounced, we can fairly say that it will not be without result." I have already pointed out Kramer's and Nider's hesitations on whether

exorcism should be viewed as a sacrament or not, and have argued that in the sixteenth century the rite came to resemble a sacrament. In 1643 the Neapolitan Carlo de Baucio posited that exorcists enjoyed "gratiam gratis data," and, writing in 1668, Candido Brugnoli further sacramentalized the rite. Exorcists operate *ex opere operato* and they are infallible. In fact, he argued, they are like angels and, like the latter, perform superhuman acts.[60] Other theologians insisted on the distinction between sacraments and sacramentals, but the sacramentalization of the rite (especially among practicing exorcists and their clients), as we have seen, had been a long-term process that was hard to stop. In fact, in 1757 the authorized version of the Roman Rite that was published by Pope Benedict XIV reaffirmed the infallibility of the exorcismal rite when performed in accordance with the rules of 1614.[61]

Describing the ideal exorcist, the Roman Rite instructs that he should be a mature man, who demonstrates solidity of character, piety, wisdom, prudence, confidence in God, humility, and integrity (Rules 1, 16). He should learn his job by practicing ("ex usu"), probably as an assistant to another exorcist, and by studying manuals for exorcists, "prepared by competent authorities" (Rule 2). "For the sake of brevity," the Rite does not specify which manuals should be read but mentions other "utilia documenta," among them lives of saints (Rule 10). Like all other manuals, the Rite exhorted the exorcist "not to assume easily that someone is possessed" (Rule 3). He must recognize the signs that distinguish the possessed from the melancholic or the mentally disturbed, and diabolic possession from physical illness. The Rite returned time and again to the complex relations and external similarities between natural illness and demonic possession. Rule 7 warned that sometimes demons try to deceive exorcists to believe that possession is a natural affliction, or by pretending to be revenants or even saints, while Rules 11 and 18 addressed people who were concurrently physically ill and possessed. The exorcist, who did not have the physician's training and competence, should not give "or recommend any sort of medication." This was the physician's task. The exorcist, however, had in his arsenal holy water, a medication as powerful as any. Santori's rite recommended an interrogation of possessed persons and people who knew them in order to find out their temperament, health history, whether they were melancholic, what was their moral standing, past traumas, and similar psychological and mental issues. The Roman Rite ignored the investigation altogether and named only three symptoms of diabolic possession that were beyond doubt: the knowledge of foreign languages and of hidden things, and physical strength that exceeds the demoniac's age and natural

condition (Rule 3). There is a connection between the omission of the investigation of the history of the possessed individual and the reduction of the signs of diabolic possession to three only: the preternatural characteristics of these three symptoms were so self-evident that no additional inquiry was necessary.

The devil is a powerful enemy. He sees through the exorcist's intentions and actions and is trying to deceive him and avoid the exorcism. He may delay the process by exhausting the exorcist and making it difficult for him to recognize the case as a genuine possession (Rule 5). He does it, for example, by pretending that he does not understand foreign languages or by insulting the exorcist so much that the latter discontinues his effort. Demons can also pretend to leave the body while in fact they go into hiding, waiting for the exorcist to believe that he was successful (Rules 6–9). But be their resistance as powerful as it may, the Rite, like all early modern manuals for exorcists, warned exorcists to restrict their interrogation of the demon to essential questions that did not resemble necromancy and that were not "superfluous and those motivated by curiosity" (Rule 14). Authorized questions include "the number and names of the possessing spirits, the time at which they entered the body, the cause of the possession, and related matters" (Rule 15).

Following the questioning of the demon and the exorcist's decision that demonic possession was, indeed, the cause of the behavior, the exorcist was ready to start the ritual. Among the questions he asked the demon was one concerning the timing and signs of the demon's departure. Now, in the appropriate time, the exorcist should confess and fast, and, if possible, take Communion. Dressed in his surplice and stole, he should then bring the demoniac into the church, away from the curious masses (Rules 11, 15), lock the doors, and gather a group of reliable priests and other eyewitnesses. This was neither a spectacle nor a propagandistic show, as some exorcisms tended to become and as many historians have presented exorcisms to be. The curious, the young, and the untrustworthy (which is to say women) should be excluded from witnessing the ceremony, and even the few reliable men who are present were forbidden to converse with the demons, and their participation was restricted to answering the priest's prayers (Rules 14, 15). After making the sign of the cross and sprinkling holy water over himself, the possessed person, and the other witnesses, and following readings from Scripture (Psalms 10, 12, 21, 30, 34, 53, 67; Mark 16; and Luke 10, 11 are recommended), the priest was to order the devil to depart (Rule 20). He had to note which curses and adjurations made the demon most irritated and to repeat them often, "for two, three, four or more hours, and if possible

until he has achieved victory" (Rule 17). The curse words were accompanied with threats, some of them (like in the exorcism according to Saint Ambrose) referring directly to the torments that attend the demon in hell. The exorcist was still permitted to decide which of the different available formulas to use, how often to use curses, and how many times to repeat the exorcism. It was understood that the prayers and threats caused a major crisis for the demon, who, confronted by the superior power of the church, increased the torments of the possessed person. At this time of the last battle, the priest should use all the ammunition in his arsenal, including making the sign of the cross and sprinkling holy water on each body part in turn. If relics of saints were available, this was the time to use them. The Eucharist, obviously, was a powerful weapon, but the exorcist should not use it unless he was absolutely certain that the demon would not profane it. And even when he decided to use it, "it should not be brought close to the head or other part of the demoniac's body," thus preventing the demon from spitting on it or abusing it in other manners (Rule 13).

The Roman Rite offered guidelines but also left space for variations and improvisations. Many dioceses continued to invoke local saints and local rites, while archbishops, bishops, and different religious orders continued to maintain their right to follow specific exorcismal traditions. This existence of a variety of practices and liturgies was authorized at the very same time that the Curia was asserting its control over the rite, condemning "superstitious" forms of clerical exorcism, and (mildly) reprimanding abusing exorcists. In 1614 we could have expected the process of standardization that had started a hundred years earlier to come to fruition. Exorcism, which had previously been regarded as a minor healing procedure—and as such unworthy of curial supervision—was supposed to become a monopoly of the clergy, and to acquire a sacrament-like efficacy. How, then, to account for the persistence of local rites and for the fact that many exorcismal techniques that resembled necromancy or, at least, vain practices remained in use? Why was not the church much harsher in its treatment of abuses and much more strident in it tolerance of variants? And more importantly, how can we account for the fact that lay exorcists continued to practice their craft well into the twentieth century even in the most Catholic of European countries?

It is important to keep in mind the inherent ambivalence that characterized the church's attitude toward exorcism. Both a mechanism to expel demons and a probative technique to discern interiority, exorcism was inherently intricate and even messy. In the later Middle Ages, it acquired more technical and less charismatic characteristics, but it still continued to

be performed by canonized as well as unrecognized saints, whose ability to cast out demons derived from their personal attributes and not from their position within the church hierarchy. As such, exorcism was both a technique and a divine grace. In the early modern period, attempts to systematize its performance encountered resistance from many quarters, mostly localities and religious orders that preserved their own rites, many of which were ascribed to leading saintly figures who had cast out demons in the distant past using these specific formulas. Opposition from the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars to the role of the Congregation of the Index and power struggles between these two congregations and the Inquisition—together with episcopal attempts to restrict curial intervention in their dioceses and lay interventions by secular rulers who protected specific orders or individuals—prevented the centralized church from asserting its authority in this ever-more important aspect of religious life. This, of course, was not different from the difficulties that confronted the implementation of other aspects of the Tridentine reforms.[62] But, unlike other reforms, I would argue, and notwithstanding the gradual increase in the importance of exorcism, it was simply still not important enough. Neither a sacrament nor a sacramental, exorcism was better left alone.

Exorcism, by its very nature, always involved interactions with the demonic, and, as such, cast a shadow over its practitioners. It was extremely naive as well as difficult (not to say impossible) to organize an entire rite around the physical contact and contest between an exorcist and a possessing demon while at the same time warning exorcists of the pitfall of sexual contact with female demoniacs. Equally, any attempt to demarcate the clear line separating conjuring or coercing the demon to depart from petitioning it was doomed to fail. It was just as naive to order exorcists not to show any curiosity while encountering a demon. Such rules could not but fail. Above all, let us not forget that "he who could heal, could also harm." Exorcism contaminated exorcists. Even after all lay exorcisms were deemed "superstitious" and their practitioners threatened with punishment, and even after the Catholic Church reaffirmed its own definitions of "superstition" as opposed to Protestant accusations, exorcism was inherently unreliable. And it was for that reason that ecclesiastical exorcists were viewed with suspicion even after the reforms of 1614. After all, were not mendicant exorcists found repeatedly to violate the rite, to use unauthorized techniques, and to abuse possessed women? We have encountered the distrust with which the Inquisition regarded exorcists, and the sense of hurt pride that saturated Menghi's writings. Luckily, he did not live to see all of his own texts put on the Index of Forbidden Books in the

first decade of the eighteenth century. They, too, fell victim to the church's restiveness regarding exorcism.

It was the same perturbation, I suspect, that prevented the church from pursuing its case against lay exorcists. For one thing, it was not clear exactly who was a lay exorcist and who was an ecclesiastic. Was Giovan Battista Chiesa, the suffragan parish priest and itinerant exorcist from Piedmont (whom we encountered in chapter 2) a true representative of the post-Tridentine church, or should he be regarded as a traditional lay exorcist? More importantly, pondering the techniques employed by lay exorcists too closely risked calling attention to the shadowy world in which ecclesiastical exorcists were also practicing their craft. With skeptic voices both within and without the church more than happy to ridicule exorcists as well as exorcism itself, exorcism as a healing technique was relegated to the margins of the church's attention.

But at the very same time, another process was going on. As the curative aspect of exorcism was diminishing in its theological importance, its probative role was increasing in stature. The following chapters document and analyze the growth, in the early modern period, of new forms of spirituality and the ways they challenged the church to rethink and rearticulate the connections between divine and diabolic possession and, hence, exorcism.

PART TWO

Mysticism

* 4 *

La Spiritualité à la Mode

In the later Middle Age, as I have argued in chapter 1, the definition of diabolic possession expanded, and the devil was assumed to possess people (especially women) inside their souls and without showing any purely physiological signs. A woman who had visions or exhibited other forms of spiritual uniqueness that she believed to be of divine origins could be found now to be deceived and be, in fact, possessed by demons rather than by the divine spirit. This growing distrust of some forms of late medieval and early modern spirituality is usually portrayed as a misogynistic attack on female spirituality tout court. The growth of late medieval lay spirituality, so the argument goes, had originally increased women's ability to pursue spiritual life. They became prophetesses, visionaries, divine guides and advisers, and were celebrated as living saints. But the growing popularity of these women, in turn, increased clerical anxiety and led to a backlash and to growing restrictions on women's access to divine revelations. The result was that by the early years of the sixteenth century, women, who had earlier been attributed with divine grace and had been celebrated as prophetesses and visionaries, were more likely now to be viewed as witches, melancholiacs, possessed by demons, or simulating their sanctity. The idiom of exorcism, which had previously been understood as a healing technique, was now used to exorcise and thus silence these women.[1]

A number of historians have lately challenged this chronology, pointing out the persistence of female lay spirituality well into the seventeenth century. But the paradigm of growth, peak, and decline and the causality for the process as being motivated by misogyny have not been substantially challenged.[2] While there is much truth to the argument that gender played

a role in the growing fear of women's prophetic powers and in the wider use of the linguistic construct "demonic possession" in this context, it is important, I believe, to complicate this narrative. To this end, this chapter traces changes within early modern Catholic spirituality, arguing that rather than positing a systematic attack on female spirituality per se, what came under suspicion was one new spiritual technique that was characterized by an emphasis on passive interiority. For lack of a better term, we will call this technique pre-Quietist. Putting spirituality at the center of the examination, rather than gender, could enable us to better account for the dominant presence of not a few spiritual women in the early modern period, and to the fact that the centuries that witnessed the censoring of some women were also the centuries of immense female religious creativity. Shifting the focus from gender to spiritual methods, however, does not eliminate a gendered perspective. The school under attack was portrayed as feminine and its followers as *femmelettes* or as men who let themselves be led astray by women.

In the following pages I will argue that new directions in Franciscan and Dominican spirituality in the Low Countries, Italy, and Spain created a climate in which individual believers sought more interiorized and passive routes for interaction with the divine. By the early decades of the sixteenth century, mystical knowledge was often even presented as equal, if not superior to, intellectual knowledge, and a theology of love, affection, and passivity overshadowed a theology of reason. In France, due mostly to the Wars of Religion and the devastation of the country during the sixteenth century, a spiritual renewal started only later, in the last decade of the sixteenth century, reaching a peak in the second half of the seventeenth century.

But interiorized spirituality was a dangerous practice. It revived old unresolved theological issues: What is more important—sacred doctrine or experience (*cognitio dei experimentalis*)? Affection or scholastic reasoning? Learning from books or learning through love? What is the role of good works and human effort? Which prayers are "better"—vocal or mental? Do men and women, the clergy and the laity, the learned and the unlearned enjoy equal access to spiritual life? Who had the authority and the capacity to control such interiorized experiences? And once a person advances in the spiritual pursuit, what guarantees that a divine spirit, rather than a demonic spirit, would infuse itself into the practitioner's soul? How should the sincerity of the practitioners be determined? And how should possessed souls be discerned?

Among the followers of the new mysticism there were many who believed that silent prayer was more beneficial than public prayer, while others

argued that the smallness of humans compared to the greatness of God meant that no human cooperation was possible with the divine, and that only God could participate in an active manner in the process of human salvation. Some advocated complete mental and intellectual passivity as the right means to experience the divine, while still others dismissed altogether the value of good works. In other words, the new spirituality gave birth to numerous schools, as well as to many adaptations and amalgamations of techniques. It was the confrontation with the issue of passivity vis-à-vis the divine within these broad and restless developments that caused the most anxiety concerning the new mysticism. Passivity itself was often associated—implicitly or explicitly—with women; but throughout the early modern period, prominent male mystics were questioned, imprisoned, and censored, while some female mystics—among them Teresa of Ávila, Lucia Brocadelli, Barbe Acarie, and Jeanne de Chantal—were venerated, and others found patrons and supporters among male clerics, including in the highest echelons of the hierarchy.

The growing appeal of the new forms of mysticism overlapped chronologically and geographically with the growing anxiety concerning demonic possession and with the clericalization of exorcism and the increase in the number of manuals for exorcists. A main argument of this book is that this was far from being a mere coincidence. The connection between passivity and demonism was referred to implicitly by a number of the leading opponents of the new mystical trends. As we shall see in chapter 5, by the second quarter of the seventeenth century, the connection between the new mysticism and demonic possession was even made explicit. By the end of the process described in this section, all interior "spiritual movements" were viewed with suspicion and were scrutinized excessively, and practitioners of all the new variants of the new spirituality—and not only promoters of passivity—interiorized the anxiety and doubted the sources of their own inspiration. Some followers of the new mysticism were accused by their opponents of being possessed by demons rather than by the divine spirit, and most relinquished their ability to discern their own experiences.

In order to understand why these anxieties got to be articulated in the language of possession, we should first familiarize ourselves with the terminology of the new mysticism. A few key words have come to be associated with the practices of the new spirituality: Alumbradismo, Illuminism (Illuminati, Aluminados), and, especially, Quietism.[3] I have chosen to employ the terms Quietism and pre-Quietism as umbrella terms for these disparate trends. But the use of the term is problematic and calls for justification. Writing more than thirty years ago, Romeo De Maio already pointed out

the teleological sloppiness of naming as pre-Quietist inclinations and practices that were widespread in almost all spiritual movements of the early modern era.[4] And, indeed, throughout the following discussion, we should be aware that many, if not most, of the spiritual trends that were born in the early modern period—among them Teresian, Jesuit, Salesian, and Theatine—pursued techniques of interiority that were not explicitly "Quietistic" or passive. Opponents of the new schools, however, were motivated by anxiety, and their growing fear of the new spirituality shaped their responses to the new schools as much as it shaped the specific praxis that was advocated by proponents of each specific trend. Put differently, I find the use of the term "pre-Quietist" legitimate because it reflects the theologians' greatest fear, namely, that all the new spiritual schools could undermine traditional hierarchies and the traditional (and always unstable) balance between *Scientia Experimentalis* and *Sacra Doctrina* (to use Roger Bacon's terms). Using the term "pre-Quietism" also enables us to demonstrate continuities and instabilities that most theologians and some church historians have tried to deny. We should not forget that the "schools" came into being only once the exact boundaries among the different trends were established and institutionalized. In fact, *pace* De Maio, we can argue that different practices of passive interiority were widespread and were present in what only later got to be identified as distinct schools. Furthermore, some schools (such as the Carmelites and the Jesuits) shaped their spirituality only through their own internal conflicts over this issue. Thus, what is lost in using the imprecise term "pre-Quietism" is gained in coherence, in the ability to point out a long-term process in which ambivalence and residual anxiety toward different trends of the new spirituality gave place to condemnation and silencing of some directions and the legitimization of others.

As we plunge into the world of Catholic mysticism of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, a few additional technical terms ought to be defined. Vocal prayer is a prayer that follows a set form of words. All public prayers are, obviously, vocal. Members of contemplative orders were also expected to practice meditative, silent prayer. Meditative prayer was not mystical, however, as it was totally under the control of the practitioner. It usually included choosing a goal for the prayer, a visualization of an event from Christ's life or Passion that had some connection with this goal, and meditating on the meaning of this imagination. As such, meditative silent prayer involved the three superior faculties (according to Saint Thomas's psychology): the will, the intellect, and the memory.[5] Some individuals, however, found meditation to be unrewarding. These people experienced the third form of prayer, known as contemplation. The latter is radically

different from meditation, and only this stage should be called mystical. While meditative prayer involves active production of images, feelings, and words, contemplative prayer is nondiscursive and nonvisual. At its peak it is not even felt, and the soul stands in a state of suspension. As such, it is obviously extremely problematic to try to explain or even describe it in words. Indeed, the mystics who experienced it in early modern Spain used the term "no pensar nada"—thinking nothing—as the best approximation of this state. Teresa of Ávila explained: "In this [meeting with the Beloved] nothing is seen in a way that can be called seeing, nor is anything seen with the imagination."[6] Hence, the transition from meditation to contemplation is also a transition from activity to passivity, from designing a course of prayer to abandoning the soul to be acted upon by God, who would infuse it with the only thing that is still active in this stage, beyond words and images and beyond thinking and understanding, namely, pure love.

Another topic that was debated in early modern Catholicism was whether contemplation resulted from a conscious act of abandonment of language, discourse, images, and will, or whether this state came from a passive transition, willed solely by God. In the last years of the sixteenth century and the early years of the seventeenth, Carmelite mystics and theologians developed a distinction between infused contemplation and acquired contemplation. Infused contemplation is a divine grace and has nothing to do with human effort. Acquired contemplation is the result of human efforts to reach such a degree of spiritual growth that meditation loses its usefulness and leaves the practitioner unfulfilled. As such, it advances the practitioner toward the higher stage of contemplation, in which divine grace will complete the spiritual ascent by bestowing infusion into the soul. While infusion is always beyond humans' control, the best technique to reach this stage was debated, and proponents of pre-Quietist methods argued that by deliberately giving up attempts to elicit images or emotions during prayer and surrendering to God's presence, the practitioner is more likely to achieve infusion than by meditations. It is important to keep in mind, though, that the distinction between infused and acquired contemplation became common only in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries and was itself an element in the debate about passive prayer. It was part of the Carmelite order's attempt to defend itself against accusations of quasi-Quietist spirituality. Jerónimo Gracián (1545–1614), Juan de Jesús María de Calahorra (1564–1615), and Tomás de Jesús (1564–1627), the earliest promoters of this distinction, wrote within the context of the pre-Quietist controversy, and their drawing of the boundary between acquired and infused contemplation contributed to shaping

the view of pre-Quietists as heretics and as unsophisticated in their alleged ignorance of the distinction between these two forms of contemplation.[7]

Importantly, acquired contemplation had a major advantage. It decreases the danger of demonic temptation during contemplation, because during the slow learning process, the practitioner also learns to discern interior movement and resist pitfalls. The fear of demonic deception, then, was an integral part of the debate concerning the new forms of spirituality. As such, it directly connects the new spirituality, and the residual anxieties to which it gave birth, to demonic possession.

* * *

The early modern Spanish style of mental prayer descended from a late medieval Franciscan practice of mysticism that emphasized "gathering" or "recollection"—*recogimiento*. Recollection was a technique of methodic meditation, whose goal was the gathering of the soul to a union with God by means of abandonment of attention to possible distractions. In this method, a person recollects inwardly his or her physical, emotional, and intellectual energies while quietly awaiting the infusion of God's grace and wisdom. This way of prayer and meditation was influenced by numerous medieval traditions and mystical writings, among them the writings of Pseudo-Dionysius, Saint Bernard, Richard and Hugh of St. Victor and other Victorines, Saint Bonaventure, Hugh of Balma, Johannes Eckhart, and the more recent Rhino-Flemish mystical school.[8] The technique was so common among Spanish Franciscans that their monasteries were known as Recolectorios and Casas de recolección. In a not unrelated development, already in the first half of the fifteenth century some Reformed Franciscans in Spain expressed anti-intellectual and anti-scholastic attitudes. Writing in 1460, Lope de Salazar y Salinas (c. 1393–1463) recalled that his colleague and spiritual master, Pedro de Villacreces (1360–1422), the Franciscan father who can be regarded as the founding father of Recogimiento, had said that he learned more from weeping in the darkness of his cell than from studying by candlelight in Salamanca, Toulouse, and Paris combined. Villacreces allegedly went on to say that he would prefer to be a simple old woman, practicing her love of God and of her neighbor, than to be an expert in the theology of Saint Augustine or Duns Scotus. Putting words into practice, Villacreces excluded grammar and the other liberal arts from the friars' curriculum.[9] Other Spanish Franciscans expressed similar

devalorization of the written word. Francisco de Osuna, to whose writings we will turn shortly, argued that all the philosophers and wise men of the world and "all the doctors of the earth with all their books and experience and all they have said and written down" do not restore life to the body as much as the heart.[10] And he added: "God does not discriminate, [and therefore] this communion is just as available to you, whomever you are, as to other people, for you are no less made in the image of God than other" (1:1, p. 47). Osuna connected the distrust of the written word with a recommendation of silent prayer and with a democratization of access to spiritual pursuit.

The Franciscan approach, with its valorization of love and mental prayer and its ambivalence toward scholastic teaching, was strongly encouraged in Spain by Cardinal Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros (1436–1517), confessor to the queen, archbishop of Toledo, and Inquisitor General of the kingdom. It also benefited from non-Franciscan patrons, among them Cisneros's own cousin, Francisco García Jiménez de Cisneros (1455–1510), a Benedictine prior and later abbot of the monastery of Montserrat in Catalonia, himself the author of the mystical guide *Ejercitatorio de la vida espiritual* (1500), which was written in the vernacular in order to reach "los simples devotos."[11] It is difficult to exaggerate the importance of this work. Previous manuals instructed lay believers on how to follow the right track by good deeds or how to pray vocal prayers; but here was a guide to meditative and contemplative life, which assumes that a series of spiritual exercises enables all believers to reach the highest stages of contemplation. No less dramatic was making available for simple folk, in Castilian, spiritual exercises that had been practiced or could be deduced from writings of the most learned authorities in the church, and that had in the past been used solely by members of religious orders.

Another major source of inspiration for the new popularity of mental prayer was Italy. Already in 1498 Francisco de Villalobos complained against the penetration of Italian Illuminati into Spain and recommended scourging, cold, hunger, and prison as the right means to put an end to their influence.[12] But to no avail. Franciscan spirituality in Spain was influenced by the writings of the Italian humanists Marsilio Ficino and Pico della Mirandola, whose writings reconciled Neoplatonism with Christianity.[13] Works by two Italian female saints, Catherine of Siena (1347–1380) and Angela of Foligno (1248–1309), also played a role in the new Spanish mysticism. Raymond of Capua's 1395 *Life* of Catherine of Siena was translated into Castilian and published in Alcalá in 1511. Her letters and prayers were

published a year later, and a Catalan edition of her *Life* was published in Valencia in 1511.[14]

But what was the content of this new Franciscan spiritual method? What was the technique of recollection like? And what did its adherents try to achieve? Recollection is a discipline of gradual exercises. Through practice and self-discipline, a series of meditations leads the practitioner to a state of being mentally and spiritually so concentrated on God that the conscious experience of the physical senses ceases, and one loses awareness of the external world. At the highest stage, the meditative technique leads to a union with God and a transformation of the self. This is achieved not through meditation or the intellect but through divine love.[15] The experience is private, but it is important to understand that the purpose of recollection was not just a personal gain, as important as this goal was. Cardinal Cisneros and the theologians and practitioners of recollection believed that the exposure of as many individual hearts as possible to divine love would lead to a renewal of the entire church. It was therefore important to make the method of self-perfection through recollection available to the laity as well as to clergy, to the lettered and unlettered, to males and females, young and old. All could learn it and all could practice it, and, as such, it made available to all Christians a route to partake in the global wider goal of Renovatio mundi.

The major contributor to the development and codification of Recogimiento was the Franciscan friar Francisco de Osuna (c. 1492–c. 1540). Osuna studied at the universities of Salamanca and Alcalá, and in 1523 joined the Franciscan monastery at La Salceda, a leading center of the Franciscan reform. (Not coincidentally, La Salceda was established by Pedro de Villacreces, the same Villacreces who allegedly said that he had learned more from the tears of a loving woman than from all his years of study at the biggest universities of Europe, and the man who reshaped the Franciscan curriculum.) Life in La Salceda was dedicated to prayer, and its friars practiced meditation and recollection.[16] It was during his stay at La Salceda that Osuna developed his own technique of meditation and formulated short reflections as aids for mental prayer. These reflections were arranged alphabetically, because, according to Osuna, the knowledge of God is gained through spiritual exercises that are, like the letters of the alphabet, basic units of all that is created from and by them. During his lifetime, Osuna composed six such collections of reflections, the result of years of practicing and developing his method of systematic meditations whose goal was to reach spiritual perfection. In his reflections on each letter,

Osuna advances like a child learning his ABCs from simpler meanings to more inner and spiritual understandings. The *Third Spiritual Alphabet* (*Tercera parte del libro llamado Abecedario espiritual*) of 1527 was Osuna's most popular book. The original Castilian edition was followed by five additional editions during the sixteenth century, and other editions appeared in the following century. The book was also translated into all the major European languages. It is to this text that we now turn.[17]

The created world and the Incarnation were two examples of divine love and, as such, traditional topics of meditation. Osuna did not reject the benefits of meditating on these two issues, but already in the prologue he explained that "those who wish to attain to high and pure contemplation profit by leaving creation and the Sacred Humanity so as to ascend even higher." Meditating on the created world is obviously not an obstacle to spiritual life, but this is merely the first step on a ladder to be used as we climb toward God (prologue). Superior to meditating on the world is the practice of recollection of the interior person, his or her sensuality, reason, the senses and virtues. This recollection involves "closing the corporeal and exterior senses" in order to open the soul's interior ones, making ourselves blind, deaf, dumb, and meek "not so that we understand nothing at all but rather that we understand more clearly" (3:1). The powers of the senses must cease to operate, for "God is more apt to enter a soul closed to everything except Him." Like Jesus' retreat into the desert, this is a retreat into solitude, so that the soul can be recollected in God (6:2–3). It is also a retreat into darkness: "When the devout person closes the windows of his senses, his understanding is plunged into darkness inasmuch as no light can come to it except through them" (10:2).

While the goal of the technique is to recollect the soul away from the senses and to empty the heart "in order for the Lord alone to dwell there," Osuna insisted that these are active endeavors. The practitioner of recollection was not advised to wait passively for God to empty her heart for her or infuse it with divine love. The main body of Osuna's book (treatises 6–12) therefore provided detailed instructions to practitioners on how to engage actively in the process of emptying their hearts and souls. The activity of recollection involves the purgation of thought, actions, speech, memory, and understanding. "Those who are not practiced in spiritual matters usually . . . reduce it to a matter of thinking about nothing at all." But they are wrong, because one always thinks of something. "The recollected does not consider that perfection is tantamount to thinking of nothing at all [no pensar nada]; if that were the case, those who sleep a dreamless sleep, and

the stupefied would be perfect" (21:5).[18] The recollected is also not to cease her efforts to improve herself, nor should she cease to pray verbal prayers (13:1–2) or avoid good works (19:3).

The insistence on the active participation of the practitioner in the pursuit of recollection was directed against another school of Franciscan spirituality, the Dejamiento. While some Franciscan houses practiced and encouraged recollection, other houses practiced a more complete form of abandonment. Both groups were proponents of interiorized spirituality and of advancing gradually through the emptying of the senses and recollection into one's innermost self. Both branches also had clusters of laypeople attached to Franciscan houses, and Franciscan teachers were associated with both.[19] But some of the more radical practitioners argued that only complete surrender to God's will and to God's actions within the soul can guarantee pure love. This method was known as Dejamiento—abandonment. Its practitioners, the *dejados*, were later to be accused as Enlightened or Illuminated—*alumbrados*—and prosecuted as heretics and sectarians. Unlike practitioners of "orthodox" recollection—who believed that good works, external acts, and even rites and ceremonies are meritorious but should be distinguished from the goal, which is unitive love—some followers of Dejamiento allegedly advocated complete passivity and abandonment of the soul to the love of God and dismissed the value of good works and of participation in church rituals, including, in radical cases, a rejection of prayer and even partaking in the Eucharist. According to the *dejados*, the practitioner merely had to submit himself or herself to God. Temptation and evil thoughts might come, but the practitioner was not to fight them, as they may have originated from God. Only such complete withdrawal from any involvement with the world, they argued, would allow the Holy Spirit to act within the soul. Only complete passivity enables infused contemplation, which is a divine grace, not a reward for human effort. *Recogidos* and Osuna, on the other hand, required active effort to suspend imaginative and intellectual activities, and presented recollection as the mastering of a regimen of specific meditative practices that had been common among the Franciscan friars at La Salceda, and that Osuna elaborated and codified into a system.

Osuna's practice of *recogimiento*, then, was not complete passivity. Or was it? Osuna's *Third Spiritual Alphabet* was published, as previously mentioned, in 1527. Three years earlier, the Inquisition started its investigation and condemnation of a circle of alleged *alumbrados* in Seville.[20] An edict issued in Toledo in the summer of 1525 condemned forty-seven propositions attributed to the *alumbrados*. Among them, three dealt directly with

mental prayer. Proposition 20 condemned those who argue that "prayer should be mental and not vocal . . . and that God has no use for vocal prayer." Proposition 22 (§1) attacked the belief "that it was acceptable for someone not to be engaged in specific prayers because people turned to these out of sentiment and this engendered undesirable things." This could be read as a frontal attack on Illuminism, whose supporters allegedly argued that meditation, with its emphasis on specific thoughts or images, is useless, and only passive contemplation is beneficiary. But the most important proposition to be condemned was Proposition 12, which accused the *alumbrados* of claiming that "during passive prayer they had to refrain from doing anything so as not to hinder what God wished to do, and they were to ignore all created things, and even thinking of the humanity of Christ interrupted their abandonment in God. And they were to reject all thoughts that occurred to them, even good ones, because they had to seek God alone. And the efforts they put into rejecting such thoughts were meritorious. And while they were in that state of quiet, not wishing to distract themselves, they regarded it as a temptation to bring God to mind."[21] It is more than likely that this proposition described accurately the *alumbrados*' valorization of mental prayer over vocal prayer and of passive contemplation over active meditation. But these were also Francisco de Osuna's beliefs. In other words, the condemnation of Dejamiento and Alumbradismo was also an implicit attack, or at least a potential attack, on Recogimiento.[22] Hence Osuna's insistence that contemplation demands active effort on behalf of the practitioner. Osuna was demarcating a clear line between his technique and the heretical and condemned *alumbrados*. But once we move from the general tenor of Osuna's meditative technique to specific exercises, this boundary between the two branches of Spanish Golden Age mysticism turns out to be porous.

Osuna got dangerously close to Dejamiento in his discussion of the mental prayer that the recollected practices. Being recollected with God diminishes the importance of all other religious activities. "You are not to cease your efforts but you must raise up the heart's intention, the soul's disposition, and your entire attention to God" (21:5). There is an inherent ambivalence in this advice, which Osuna fails to address. Mystical or mental prayer is the highest form of prayer (13:1–4), and it diminishes the importance of other forms of prayer. "Stilling the understanding and making the will call out, we form a brief prayer that at once penetrates the heavens." Osuna went on to remind his readers that "scripture frequently and wisely advises us to await salvation silently, so that while engaged in interior matters we may enjoy the intermediate silence of the saints in this

intermediate world and the powerful word of God may descend from the royal throne into our hearts" (21:3). Here we see him clearly advocating complete passivity while waiting for divine infusion. Industrious human effort was crucial as a precondition for infusion of divine grace (1:1). But once unity occurs, the soul is recollected and abandons itself to its divine master. This, as we have seen, was the very way of abandonment. Rather than following Osuna's defensive distancing from Dejamiento and conceptualizing two opposing branches of spirituality, it is clear that there was no obvious boundary between the two tendencies at the time Osuna was writing. It is likely that both recollectors (*recogidos*) and Illuminated (*alumbrados*) moved between the two techniques and probably did not distinguish between them as distinctly as some Catholic apologists have since done.[23]

Recollection is both exclusive and egalitarian. Its exclusivity comes from its essence as a challenging regimen of practices. But all it takes to become recollected is practice, effort, and grace. Any devout person—even "a little woman or a simpleton [mujercillas e ydiotas]—can possess it" (12:7). The exercises are allegedly simple enough that they can be practiced by manual workers as well as by merchants, and by the cloistered and the uncloistered alike (15:2, 8:1). The Illuminist road, obviously, was also open for all to travel. No wonder, then, that suspicion of mental prayer was growing together with the growing popularity of the new accessible spiritual technique. The trial and condemnation of Alumbradismo in Toledo in 1525 was followed by waves of anti-*alumbrado* persecutions, with accusations being widened to include all forms of beliefs and sexual practices. While some accusations were obviously far-fetched and exaggerated, they nonetheless exposed the growing anxiety of more conservative theologians, who witnessed with growing unease the participation of unlettered and unsupervised laymen and laywomen in new forms of interiorized interactions with the divine. One such defendant of orthodoxy was Melchor Cano (c. 1509–1560). This Dominican theologian had held a positive view of new spiritual forms until his travel, in 1551, to Trent, where he participated in the Second Session of the Church Council. Horrified by the Lutheran threat, Cano returned to his homeland and immediately started targeting *alumbrados* and even the Jesuits, whose beliefs he identified with Lutheranism. Cano even accused Ignatius de Loyola himself of being an *alumbrado* and of being influenced by Lutheranism. In his criticism of Bartolomé de Carranza (1503–1576), primate of Spain and archbishop of Toledo from 1557, who was similarly accused of Lutheranism, Cano compiled a list of rhetorical questions as a means of differentiating between heterodox and orthodox

ideas.[24] His questions are worth repeating, because the very same three issues will keep reappearing in the Illuminist controversies in Italy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and in the Quietist debate in France in the seventeenth century. These three major issues are

1. Whether the contemplation practiced by the mystic is or can be understood to be a rejection of vocal prayer and meditation;
2. Whether the mind and the soul are completely passive during contemplation;
3. Whether meditating on Christ and the creation are rejected as worthless during the contemplation.

Cano attacked the importance of personal experience and the entire notion of "learning from experience" in recent spiritual writings, arguing that this proposition is a clear manifestation of Alumbradismo, because "if this is true, then . . . let us close our books and also close the classrooms, abolish the universities, kill scholarship, and give ourselves over to prayer."[25] Furthermore, this attitude assumes that women are just as likely as men to understand and experience divine revelations. Both Lutherans and *alumbrados* allowed women to read Scripture, and if they were illiterate, they were being read to in secret places and narrow alleys, where their chastity was threatened and where sexual debauchery was always a temptation. Valorizing experience over learning, the Dominican went on to explain, would destroy the religious orders, because what reason is there for people to become religious if this state does not contribute in any way to their salvation? Cano therefore insisted that mental prayer, as well as access to spiritual guides, should be restricted to a few well-trained contemplative religious.

Cano's vehement attack on the new spirituality was only one element in a systematic attempt to silence *alumbrados* and practitioners of mental and passive prayer. In the very same year that Cano was writing, Inquisitor General (and the man who initiated Carranza's trial) Fernando de Valdés compiled the first Index of Forbidden Books, which included, in addition to works by Osuna, the works of many other major mystics of the first half of the sixteenth century. The Index also included works by the Rhino-Flemish and Jesuit mystics, vernacular Bibles, Books of Hours, and secular romances. No less important was the voluntary self-censoring that followed the Index and Cano's attack, and the systematic attempts by religious orders to distance themselves from views, beliefs, and practices that suddenly fell under suspicion. The Discalced Carmelites developed the distinction

between acquired and infused contemplation, while the Jesuits purged the order of proponents of infused contemplation and redirected the order toward a more orthodox and less controversial spirituality.[26]

At exactly the same time that the major writings of Osuna and his fellow spiritualists came under attack, manuscripts of an even more radical advocacy of passive contemplation were circulating in Carmelite monasteries and convents. Its author, John of the Cross (1542–1591), entered the Carmelite order in 1563. In 1567 he met Teresa of Ávila and joined the Discalced Carmelites, and during the next few years he founded a number of Reformed Carmelite monasteries. In 1577, due to the Calced Carmelites' opposition to the reforms, he was thrown in prison, only to escape the following year and continue his efforts on behalf of the reform. In a series of mystical writings, John of the Cross developed a systematic and detailed manual for spiritual ascent, combining Recogimento with Teresian mysticism and cloaking the two in traditional Thomist concepts and vocabulary. John of the Cross's mystical writings map the journey of the soul to unite with the Beloved and the process of annihilation that it must go through to reach this goal. The route is compared by John of the Cross to a dark night, a visual metaphor for the systematic purgation of the senses, imaginations, and faculties. His emphasis on negation and on emptying the soul obviously raised suspicion in this age of anti-Alumbradismo persecutions, and his writings were not published until 1618. Furthermore, when they finally got published, they were censored and edited by his Carmelite followers, who feared an Inquisitorial condemnation. And, in fact, these fears were not unwarranted. Soon after John of the Cross's major works were published, forty propositions, dealing mostly with the issue of passivity, were extracted from them and were presented to the Inquisition. The Inquisition did not pursue the examination, but the Carmelites remained fearful, and all consecutive editions, well into the twentieth century, were mutilated. Other Carmelites were busy compiling apologies for John of the Cross. While he was never condemned and in fact was beatified in 1675, canonized in 1726, and declared a Doctor of the Church in 1926, the mere fact that his disciples felt the need to censor his works and write defenses on his behalf indicates, that at least for some opponents of the new spirituality, John of the Cross's writings marked a dangerous deviation from orthodoxy.

In his *Ascent of Mount Carmel* (*Subida del Monte Carmelo*) of 1578–79,[27] John of the Cross described the soul's process of self-purgation as it passes through the dark night, preparing itself for its union with God. The soul empties itself of its senses and its faculties (understanding, memory, and

will, and later joy, hope, sorrow, and fear), which are all viewed as obstacles to overcome. "All the imagination can imagine and the understanding can receive and understand in this life is not, nor can it be, a proximate means of union with God" (2.8.4), he explained. The transition from meditation to contemplation, or from prayer and understanding to the experience of divine love, John of the Cross elaborated, is a transition from activity to passivity (2.12.3). It entails denying not only worldly things but also spiritual attachments, including even the sweetness of God (2.7.5), because the way to God is not through meditation or consolation, which are good for beginners, but solely through self-denial and annihilation (2.7.8).

The experience of love is therefore an experience of darkness and of the elimination of all that is experienced through the senses. John of the Cross went much further than Osuna in his emphasis on the emptiness of the mystical experience. Even the brain becomes inert, and "the memory is voided and purged, as I say, of all kinds of knowledge" (3.2.5).[28] The stage of contemplation, then, is a state of passivity (2.13.1). But both Teresa of Ávila and John of the Cross emphasized that the practitioner should not aspire to suspend an awareness of Christ or abandon meditation on the created world voluntarily. The cessation of meditation should arrive when the "soul is led into the peace and quietness" that characterized the union (2.13.2). It is only when the practitioner can no longer meditate that he should "learn to be still in God. . . . Divine calm and peace will be infused into his soul . . . and let him not meddle with forms, meditations and imaginations, or with any kind of reflection, lest the soul be disturbed" (2.15.5). John of the Cross was aware of the danger that accompanies such extreme passivity, as it "may reduce man to the state of a beast—a state of oblivion and even worse—since he becomes incapable of reasoning or of remembering his natural functions and necessities" (3.2.7). But this fear is groundless, because at this stage God himself infuses and activates the human faculties (3.2.8).[29] John's defense notwithstanding, his notion of passivity was denounced by his opponents, even though he did not deviate from Teresa's own teachings.[30]

What is left is nothing but "dark and loving knowledge," *Noche oscura* (*Dark Night*, 1577–78), as John of the Cross's discussion of this transition from meditation to contemplation and from activity to passivity was titled. In this stage, "it is God who is working in the soul" (*Dark Night*, 1.7; cf. 2.5.1, 2.23.10). Even the unitive love is received, not pursued. The mind and the soul contribute nothing besides a passive willingness to receive, while God himself infuses the soul, communicating directly with it (*The Living Flame of Love* [*Llama de amor viva*] [First Rendition] 3.42). "For when the

soul is detached from all knowledge of its own, and from every desire and all affection of its sensual part, and dwells in the pure negation of poverty of spirit, wholly emptied of the mists of wetness, wholly weaned from the breast and from milk, which is what the soul must be careful to do . . . the director must aid the soul to deny itself in all these ways, and it is then impossible that God will not perform His own part" (3.40). But John of the Cross went further and suggested that even images and church festivals are not necessarily beneficial for people who reach this stage in their spiritual ascent. "For pure spirituality is bound very little to any of those objects, but only to interior recollection and mental converse with God." And it may be better for a spiritual person to practice in solitude than in church, in a "living temple" rather than a "visible temple" (*Mount Carmel* 3.37–40). No wonder that enemies of mysticism found the last proposition especially dangerous.

In the second rendition of the *Living Flame* (c. 1586), John of the Cross ridiculed spiritual directors, who, being inexperienced enough in their own spiritual exercises, try to prevent practitioners from contemplating God. They have "no knowledge save of hammering souls and pounding them with the faculties like a blacksmith." And they try to direct their followers toward meditation and away from passive contemplation, which they regard, in their ignorance, as "the practices of *Alumbrados* and fools" (3.43). Passive contemplation for John of the Cross here becomes no longer one among a number of plausible and equally valued routes to union, as it was for Osuna. It became the only meaningful one. No wonder that later generations of pre-Quietists and Quietists were more than happy to point out the similarities between their own works and John of the Cross's, while opponents of the new techniques tried to maintain or create a distance between John of the Cross's orthodoxy and Quietist teachings. Clearly, the absorption of mental prayer became, by John of the Cross's time, part and parcel of Spanish spirituality. The approval of his works (even if only in a censored form), to be followed by his beatification in 1675, at the very peak of the Quietist controversy in France and Italy, supplied supporters of passive prayer with legitimacy and pedigree, and they used his writings to prove their own orthodoxy, arguing that they were merely repeating what the Spanish mystic had already said.

* * *

Neither the development of mental prayer and passive contemplative techniques, nor the anxiety and suspicion that these innovations created were

unique to sixteenth-century Spain. In Italy, as in Spain, proponents of passive contemplation found themselves under suspicion. Here, too, silent prayer and lay spiritual quests stirred up fears. Conservative theologians argued, and the Inquisition concurred in the 1550s, that spirituality had to be restricted to qualified individuals (members of religious orders), and that passive contemplation was dangerous even for religious people. In extreme cases, it was argued, such practices could lead to a rejection of good works, vocal prayer, and other church rituals. This new mysticism was also viewed as undermining the hierarchical and natural order of the world in general, by equating women with men, and the church in particular, by dismissing the central position of learning and reasoning. The redrawing of the boundaries between the laity and the clergy and between men and women during the Council of Trent directly challenged the confusions that characterized the new forms of interiorized passivity. Opponents of the new spirituality did not distinguish among the new threats, and the accusations against practitioners of the spirituality of abandonment were often collapsed together accusations of Protestantism, sexual immorality, and Nicodemism.[31] Interestingly, while none of the proponents of pre-Quietist theology in sixteenth-century Italy could be compared in their stature to Francisco de Osuna or John of the Cross, the pre-Quietist movement in Italy survived and even flourished among both the laity and the clergy until the 1670s and 1680s. At its peak, shortly before its destruction in the second half of the seventeenth century, it was even supported by the pope and leading cardinals.

The Spanish lay immigrant Juan de Valdés was the most prominent Italian Illuminist of the sixteenth century, and his form of passivity resembled Protestant teachings. In the 1520s, he was a student of Pedro Ruiz de Alcaraz, the leader of the Toledo *dejados*. In 1529, in his *Diálogo de doctrina cristiana*, Valdés drew a distinction between God's active grace and the church's observances, which he regarded as mere "accessories" (5v). Valdés advocated indifference toward these observances, since they have no impact whatsoever on salvation. One has to differentiate, he argued, between satisfying God and satisfying the church (60v). Submitting to the practices and ceremonies of the church, even when it is done in bad faith, is satisfactory, since they have no salvific importance whatsoever (72v–73r). But since humans have no capability to influence their salvation, which depends solely on God's grace, the right approach toward God is passivity (80r). The Spirit illuminates the mind at its will, and learning from spiritual experience is therefore more valuable than learning from Scripture and dogma (95v).[32]

While Valdés came from and remained in the margins, the case of the Milanese Achille Gagliardi (1538–1607) was more troubling. Gagliardi, the author of the *Short Summary of Christian Perfection* (*Breve compendio intorno alla perfezione cristiana*) (written c. 1585, circulated in manuscript before 1596, published in French before 1599 and in the original Italian in 1611), was a Jesuit, and the fact that he, too, developed a spiritual approach that emphasized interiorized passivity indicated the success of such trends and the infiltration of such teachings into the Jesuit order.[33] Like so many of the leading fathers of different spiritual trends in the early modern era, Gagliardi, too, was influenced by a woman, Isabella Cristina Bellinzaga (Berinzaga) (1551–1624), a lay visionary and mystic in Milan (who is regarded by some scholars as the actual author of the *Compendio*).[34] For five years, the mystic and her spiritual adviser experimented with techniques of meditation, contemplation, and annihilation, until their close collaboration raised suspicion. The *Compendio* was the result of this collaboration and was of immense influence on the spiritual wing of the Jesuit order, as well as on the French pre-Quietists. Pierre de Bérulle paraphrased it in his 1597 *Brief Discourse on Interior Abnegation* (*Bref discours de l'abnégation intérieure*), and at least one translation of the original also circulated in France, where it was known to have been written by "une dame milanaise."[35] The book's orthodoxy was questioned, but it was cleared in 1601, possibly due to Bellinzaga's noble connections, and was not put on the Roman Index until the purge of all spiritually suspected texts in 1703.[36]

Describing the stages of annihilation of the self in its ascent toward divine love, Gagliardi explained that the soul must first recognize its lowliness and baseness (186). This first stage is characterized by active renunciation of all created things (193–94), including affections, desires, and actions (188–226). This first withdrawal only leads to the more radical stage, the purging of spiritual illuminations and divine revelations, which often lead to self-love rather than to pure love (226–32). At the end of this process, the soul finds itself in a state of passive quiet, *apátheia*, "where, like a lamb before the shearer, it simply lets God do what he wants" (229). This is such a complete withdrawal that the soul cannot actively perform any operation, "however exalted and holy, but can only continue to suffer willingly what God permits" (239). This stage may be accompanied by horrible afflictions and by demonic temptations, but the soul must submit itself to these experiences. The route to union is not over until God ceases even the activity of the passive part of the soul, and the will stops functioning altogether, "as though the soul did not exist." In this "Sublime Passivity" the will has become no-will, and the capacities, while still functioning, do so not of

their own accord but totally according to God's will. The soul no longer even wants to will what God wills. It is like a baby, being rocked in its cradle (206). This joining together with God is liberty; it is the deification of the soul (230, 233).

Gagliardi, then, took Spanish passivity a step further. While both Osuna and John of the Cross insisted that even in passive contemplation there is still an active response in the soul to the divine movements within it, Gagliardi left no space for activity, and even the actions of the will were purged. It is important to note that Gagliardi, who was ordered in 1594 to cease all contacts with Bellinzaga, was not censored for his writings and even became a leader of the mystical wing of the Jesuit order. In fact, in the first half of the seventeenth century, pre-Quietist tendencies and treatises were popular among members of all religious orders in Italy.[37]

What was debated and tenuously tolerated within religious orders, however, presented a more acute threat once it spread among the laity.[38] In the 1640s, the lay and illiterate Milanese beggar Giacomo Filippo Casòlo established a lay confraternity in the church of Santa Pelagia in Milan, whose members were known as the "Pelagians."[39] The Pelagians were involved in teaching mental prayer to the laity, and therefore got support from the local Jesuits in their efforts to popularize Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises*. Following his success in Milan, Casòlo was invited to the Valcamonica area near Brescia, where another group of followers gathered around him. While Casòlo himself was not suspect of heresy, his disciples, who were by then led by the priest Marco Antonio Recaldini, raised suspicion in Brescia. An examination of the group during the 1650s found that, indeed, mental prayer had attracted many adherents in the area, "the majority of whom were simpletons [popoli idioti]."[40] Men and women met together at night to pray, preach, and interpret Holy Scripture. Furthermore, they believed that vocal prayer—including attendance at Mass—was unnecessary, as were meritorious works. Following an established tradition in describing unsupervised and unauthorized lay spiritual movements, the Brescian Pelagians were also accused of dispensing with matrimony. The Inquisitorial inquiry into the beliefs and practices of the Pelagians led to their condemnation in 1657, but, significantly, it did not put an end to the practice, and Quietist lay circles were common throughout the peninsula.

In fact, by 1682 the church was still divided on what to do with Quietist circles in Brescia and other Italian towns. These circles often enjoyed the patronage of local elites or of the spiritual wing of the Jesuits, and benefited from a leniency on behalf of the Roman Curia, where the popular Roman preacher Miguel de Molinos, bishop (and later cardinal) Pier

Matteo Petrucci, and even Pope Innocent XI (1676–89) supported Quietist tendencies and resisted harsh measures against them. Leading the opposition to the Pelagians were two other Jesuits prelates, Paolo Segneri and Cardinal Francesco Degli Albizzi.[41] The latter compiled a large collection of documents on the Pelagian heresy in order to expedite an Inquisitorial inquiry into and condemnation of their activities. Among the recriminating evidence was a letter from the Neapolitan (and Jesuit-trained) Cardinal Caracciolo (1682), which made the connection between Quietism and demonism explicit. "There has been widely disseminated among many simple people the frequent practice of the passive prayer which is called of pure faith and of quiet," Caracciolo lamented. These people pretend to place themselves in the supplicant attitude of prayer, but, in fact, they do not pray vocal prayer or meditate, but "remain in total quiet, mute in silence, like the dead. And because they think they are making mental passive prayer, they try to cast out of their minds and even from their eyes every matter for meditation, exposing themselves, as they say, to the lights and to the divine influences they expect to receive from Heaven." They understand neither prayer nor meditation and have never studied with masters. Since the major infights in the last years of the sixteenth century within the Jesuit order over issues of spirituality, the last point—namely, the crucial role of the spiritual adviser in supervising the spiritual ascent of the practitioner—had become a major component in the Jesuits' attempt to distance themselves from accusations of Quiestistic tendencies. Caracciolo therefore focused much of his attack on the Pelagians on the hubris that characterize such people, who "presume to ascent by themselves to that sublime degree of passive prayer of contemplation that God by his free gift concedes to whom he wants, when he wants." No wonder, then, that the devil takes advantage of these people's ignorance and vanity. He attacks them with delusions and evil imaginations and leads some to believe that "all the thoughts their minds suggest to them during that act of mute and quiet prayer are illuminations and inspirations from God, and, as such, are not subject to the laws; therefore they think they are permitted to execute with no permission whatever comes to them in prayer."[42]

But little could be done to silence passive interiority as long as two of the most prominent Roman theologians were holding similar beliefs. These two theologians, Miguel de Molinos (1628–1696) and Cardinal Pier Matteo Petrucci (1636–1701), came from the very center of the church hierarchy and were intimate with Pope Innocent XI.[43] The initial approval of their writings and their positions within the church indicate the degree to which such beliefs and practices were tolerated until the 1680s and the fact that

the boundary between Quietist heterodox practices and orthodoxy was not yet drawn. But the persecution and punishment of these two theologians in the 1680s offers a clear indication of the growing anxiety concerning some passive forms of mental prayer, and the panic that was to characterize the activities of the Catholic hierarchy in the last quarter of the seventeenth century, and which led the Inquisition to repress spiritual works that had previously enjoyed popularity and endorsements.

Miguel de Molinos enjoyed the doubtful honor of giving his name to a heretical school—Molinism—not a minor achievement in a time in which so many followers of mystical techniques were accused of being sectarians and heretics.[44] This well-respected and well-connected Spanish theologian was educated by the Jesuits, became a priest in 1652, and obtained his doctorate in theology at the University of Coimbra. For most of his life, Molinos resided in Rome, and it was there that he penned his *Spiritual Guide* (*Guía espiritual*, 1675).[45] The book, written in Spanish, enjoyed endorsements from members of all the major religious orders, another example of the popularity of Quietistic tendencies well into the last quarter of the seventeenth century, and it was soon translated into all the major European languages. In all, more than seventeen editions of it appeared in the seventeenth century.[46] Most of Molinos's *Guide* repeated arguments that had become part and parcel of early modern interiorized mysticism. He repeated the assertions that the senses are not capable of reaching divine blessings (1:14), that meditation is inferior to contemplation (1:15–17), and that the latter can only be reached through divine grace (1:52) by means of passivity and abandonment (1:40, 3:1). Following John of the Cross (but not quoting or mentioning him), he further explained that "the straightest, most perfect and secure way of proficiency is the way of darkness . . . by darkness the soul is annihilated . . . by darkness the Lord purges the senses and sensibility, which hinder the mystical progress" (1:40). The annihilation of the soul—"la interior mortificación"—Molinos posited, is a precondition for God's infusion of his will into the soul (3:63). This includes resignation and abnegation of all faculties and hopes, including the will (3:66). Here Molinos departed from John of the Cross and Carmelite mystics, for whom human will continues to function during this stage (in conjunction with the divine will). For Molinos, the soul has to annihilate itself and die in God (3:75–79), and it does so by interiorizing its smallness and humility (3:85–87, 3:175, 3:188). The route of nothingness leads to a complete disappearance in God (1:61–63, 3:70, 3:191), but even this does not guarantee union, which results not from human efforts but from infused grace (3:121–23, 3:126).

Molinos further argued that in the later stages of contemplation, even vocal prayer and meditation should be left aside (1:23, 1:77), because "God has no regard to the multitude of words but to the purity of the intent" (1:78). In this "perfect resignation" (1:85), there is no need to perform good works (1:88). Even meditation on the Eucharist and the Incarnate Word—which was so central to so many early modern mystics, and especially the Carmelites and Jesuits—is of no importance (1:122). Importantly, Molinos never argued that these Christian practices should be discarded. On the contrary, vocal prayer and meditation have positive effects on people (1:11–14, 3:3). It is only during contemplation that such prayers might distract the soul from its goal. Then and only then does meditation on the Incarnate Word, which is one of God's creations, become a distraction (1:127–32).

Molinos was well aware of the temptations that await the spiritual soul in its ascent. While John of the Cross's dark night was also filled with purification by trials, his trials were divine in origin and only rarely (if at all) diabolic.[47] For Molinos, the instigator of these trials is likely be Satan (3:24). Abandoning all created things, the soul will be attacked by devils and will experience "martyrdom" in the form of temptations, desperation, self-doubts, blasphemous and sinful thoughts, and internal chaos (1:67–68, 2:125–27, 3:24–28). These trials and tribulations are stages in the process of deification, and blessed is the soul that suffers them in quiet and resignation (1:88, 1:136, 2:128, 3:30, 3:32, 3:73–74). And even when the superior parts of the soul achieve amorous union with God (3:196) and enjoy holy and celestial indifference (3:199), the inferior parts of the soul might still be attacked by infernal powers, who would try to destroy the soul's unity with the beloved (3:200). In Molinos's *Guide*, the theological and moral anxieties that had always been embodied in passive contemplation became explicit. He argued that good works and prayers lose their merit and that even contemplation of Christ is unnecessary for advanced practitioners. More scandalously, he also taught that temptations should not be resisted during passive contemplation. His separation between the tranquillity of the superior soul and the demonic trials of the inferior parts was also extremely problematic. Did it mean that the inferior parts could succumb to sin and the superior part would not be affected? Or that the superior parts' union with the divine prevents the lower parts from falling into temptation? Molinos insisted that even in the highest degree of abnegation, some form of awareness was still functioning: "This awareness has no clear knowledge by means of discourse, images, or reasoning, [but] it is aware and knows through an obscure, general and confused faith. And

this knowledge . . . is clearer and more perfect knowledge of God than any particular communication through the senses" (*Advertencia primera*). The passivity is complete, the annihilation of the self leaves no space for the capacities and the senses, and yet there still exists some knowledge of God and what we may call tacit memory of all things created, which prevents the soul from being overtaken by Satan. With Molinos, mystical fables and metaphors such as the dark night, annihilation, and resignation were transformed into a concrete reality of a dissolution of the self, or, to be precise, its disintegration into two parts: a superior part dead to the world but infused with divine grace, and an inferior part, dead to divine grace and possessed by demonic powers.

Molinos, in fact, embraced what the opponents of pre-Quietistic trends had argued all alone, namely, that passivity meant surrender, and that the devil was likely to take advantage of the annihilation of the will and the soul. A demonic evil spirit, rather than God's benevolent spirit, may infuse the practitioner and take possession of her. Admittedly, Molinos argued that there was still some residue of a passive awareness of Christ's love within the annihilated soul, which would block it from happening. And he was undoubtedly convinced that by the time the practitioner reached the highest degree of contemplation, she was experienced enough to resist such attacks. These caveats notwithstanding, by admitting the danger of satanic infusion, Molinos's theology exposed and even celebrated the ambivalence that had characterized passive interiorized spirituality since the early sixteenth century, and that had led to the meticulous scrutiny of writings and practices by opponents of passive interiority.

The attack on Molinos began as soon as his text was published and was led by the Jesuits. Not surprisingly, the order, which had been struggling for almost a hundred years against accusations of Alumbradismo and had been striving to distance itself from passive interiority, was unhappy with a spiritual guide that was written by a product of Jesuit education and that called attention to the similarities between passive interiority and Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises*. Since the latter part of the sixteenth century, the order was articulating a spirituality that emphasized meditation and activism rather than contemplation, and read the *Spiritual Exercises* as a guide for personal improvement and asceticism rather than as a set of exercises to achieve union with the divine. And while the order banished infused contemplation from its practices, Molinos was adamant about the benefits of passive contemplation. The Jesuit Gottardo Bell'huomo published already by 1678 his *Il pregio e l'ordine dell'orationi ordinarie e mistiche*, a critique of Molinos's *Guide*, in which he defended the value of prayer, good works,

and meditation. His fellow Jesuit Paolo Segneri, the most popular Jesuit preacher in Italy, followed in 1680 with a book that explicitly challenged Molinos's text. The Jesuits also pointed out similarities between Molinos's Quietism and both Protestant and Jansenist propositions regarding the value of interiority, the limited benefit of good works, and, of course, the dismissal of free will. Interestingly, though, Molinos's book was not condemned. Instead, it even enjoyed new approbations.[48] Responding to the Jesuit attack, Molinos also penned an *apologia pro vita sua*, titled *Defensa de la contemplación*. This text, which was published for the first time only in 1974(!), defended Molinos's view of contemplation as the highest degree of spiritual ascent, while rejecting any reading of his *Guide* as a dismissal of meditation. Meditation, he argued, is holy and positive ("santa y Buena," [176]) but should, indeed, "cease when God moves the soul on to contemplation," a view that (as we have seen) was shared by John of the Cross, among others.[49] All the common devotional practices—including verbal prayer, corporal penitence, and ascetic practices—are beneficiary, but when push comes to shove, they cannot lead to perfection (chaps. 1–2, 4). He went on to defend himself against the Jesuits, who argued that, by decreasing the importance of meditation, he dismissed Loyola's *Exercises*. Not so, argued Molinos. He valued the book and valued ascetic Ignatian mysticism; the *Exercises* are "santísimos, utilísimos, y dignos de infinita alabanza," and therefore the best means to lead beginners into spirituality. He himself had read them numerous times and had recommended them to his spiritual advisees. However, these mental meditations do not lead directly to union and may, in fact, lead to self-love (chap. 3). Molinos repeated his assertion that in the life of some practitioners of vocal prayer and meditation there comes a time when they feel repulsed by, and impatient and unsatisfied with, imaginations and the senses. For them, and for them only, the *Spiritual Guide* offers passive contemplation and resignation as a better means of achieving perfection (chaps. 7–9). Molinos remained adamant that these select few were not necessarily members of religious orders. "La contemplacíon no solo se da a los perfectos" (143). The route of contemplation is open to all believers, and God alone chooses to whom he bequests his grace (chaps. 9–11). Making acquired contemplation available to all believers did not degrade it, since God himself said that the small and the simpletons ("rústicos") will enjoy his grace (chap. 19). At the same time, it is true that passive contemplation is dangerous and opens the door to temptations. But meditation is even more prone to demonic illusions than contemplation, because the former involves visualization and imaginations, while the pure nudity of the latter makes the devil run away (17).

Molinos also used his apology to elaborate further his ideas concerning demonic temptations during contemplation. It is true, he explained, that demons attack contemplatives. This is a divine design to humble them. One should therefore not resist such thoughts and images, because resistance is simply a waste of time when the soul should be occupied with much more rewarding experiences. Experiencing demonic temptations and martyrdom is not a sin but a challenge, as long as we do not succumb to them (chap. 18). Some spiritual advisers warn people against such experiences and persuade their advisees to desert the route of contemplation once they confront the devil (chaps. 20, 22). But it is only Satan who gains from this, because he knows better than these advisers how immense are the spiritual gains that can only be achieved through contemplation (chap. 20). Such spiritual directors use examples from the "absurd and monstrous errors of the sect of alumbrados" to enhance their fear of contemplation. But they are mistaken, because there is no similarity between Alumbradismo and Quietism.

Like Osuna and John of the Cross before him, Molinos spared no effort to distance his orthodox doctrine from heterodox Alumbradismo.[50] A careful reading of his convoluted articulation of the difference demonstrates, however, how difficult this enterprise was. It is not true that passive contemplation means idleness, he argued. "The soul thinks that it is not doing anything [no hace nada], because it operates without any particular or detectable acts. But in this it is obviously mistaken because it functions in universal and perfect actions." The soul is busy attending to God, and this is very different from the idleness of the *alumbrados*. "For the whole object of the alumbrados is to procure carnal pleasure and natural appetites, and to maintain this rest they kept themselves empty and idle, without performing any external or internal act with body or mind. . . . And remained in a state of suspension, idle and vain, sensual and diabolical" (chap. 21). The *alumbrados* were arrogant and believed that their passivity was more meritorious than good works, prayers, and other virtuous acts that the church commanded. In orthodox passive contemplation, on the contrary, the suspension of such acts is temporary and comes only when these acts are no longer relevant for the practitioner. Furthermore, in Molinist passivity there is no justification for sin, because the will and the soul, while passive, are bound to God's will. But Molinos did not offer any substantive way of discerning between the two forms of idleness and passivity, between the Molinist/divine and the Illuminist/diabolic.

The Molinist controversy addressed such delicate nuances of abstract spiritual matters that it is hard for us today to comprehend the intensity of

the theological debate that erupted in Rome in the early 1680s. Pamphlets, broadsheets, poems, and defamatory accusations were exchanged back and forth between Molinists and anti-Molinists. "The city was divided into two camps," one supporting and one opposing Quietism.[51] Pressure from the French court, which was trying to use this opportunity to decrease Spanish influence in the Curia, and continuous Jesuit attacks finally led to Molinos's arrest in 1685. His writings and letters were confiscated and analyzed, and following an examination and a trial, he was condemned to life imprisonment. Molinos was also found guilty of sexual immorality and exhibitionism, of encouraging secret meetings of his followers in which men and women mixed, and of holding heretical beliefs. Similar sexual accusations, as we have seen, had been used in the past against other proponents of passive spirituality and by the 1680s were part of the ammunition that was used to discredit these trends. Sixty-eight propositions attributed to Molinos were condemned in August 1687, and a papal bull signed three months later, *Coelestis Pastor*, confirmed the condemnation.[52] Immediately following the trial, Molinos confessed his guilt and spent the remaining nine years of his life in a Roman jail. His books were put on the Index in 1689, while many of Molinos's followers and supporters were arrested, condemned, and punished. Molinos's friend and defender Petrucci abjured his own mistakes, and his books, too, were put on the Index. The ongoing examination of the lay Pelagians also reached its terminal stage. It is true that "the Congregation of the Holy Office in Rome [the Inquisition] has never condemned contemplative mysticism, [but] has nevertheless always disapproved the methods that were introduced by modern spiritual directors . . . because they cause disorder," explained Cardinal Degli Albizzi in a long report on the Quietist movement that he compiled in April 1682.[53] He was especially unhappy with the fact that members of the laity, and even women, were preaching, and that some women even "began to meet in some private homes to discuss" religious matters. His solution to the widespread popularity of such forms of prayer was therefore to ban all vernacular books that advocated and taught contemplation, and to forbid the practice of contemplation to "all but perfect souls, completely separated from the world," which is to say, members of religious orders. But he, too, had to make concessions to "those, who by a special grace of God it is obvious that Our Lord had granted them the infused grace which can be acquired only with difficulty." The social threat of democratization of spiritual practices and making it available even to the laity and to women, then, resisted easy solutions even when the theological debate was finally solved by a judicial and Inquisitorial resolution.

Some of the condemned propositions compiled from Molinos's writings further highlighted the connection between passive mysticism and demonism. Proposition 41 alleged that Molinos taught that a man should not be held responsible for acts committed in his body by the devil without his consent. Molinos, in fact, did not deviate here from traditional church teaching, as was clear, for example, in theologians' long struggle with dreams and nocturnal emissions, or in exegeses of Job's blasphemies against God, as even propositions 44 and 49 admitted. Propositions 41–53 all dealt with the Quietist argument that one should not waste time resisting demonic temptations during mental prayer. According to these propositions, Molinos taught that souls in high states of contemplation were tempted to commit blasphemous acts, and that they ought not to resist these temptations, nor were they to regard these acts as sins or to confess them. As we remember, the awareness that the devil attacks practitioners of meditation when they move from active meditation to passive contemplation was widespread among Quietists and was also expressed by Molinos. Achille Gagliardi even compared the humiliation suffered by mystics due to these attacks to Christ's suffering on the cross![54] But even authorities such as Teresa of Ávila and John of the Cross equally advised their followers to remain indifferent to such temptations, and their views were never condemned. One should view the condemnation of Molinos's theses not merely as an attack by Jesuit theologians on Molinos himself, but as a systematic discrediting by the Inquisition and the church apparatus of the entire concept of acquired contemplation. It was only now, in the last quarter of the seventeenth century, that the line was drawn between heterodox Quietists and orthodox non-Quietist mystical interiorized practices. This argument is supported by the fact that Molinos's book enjoyed approbations from leading Roman theologians only ten years prior to its condemnation, and that many of his ideas in fact repeated Carmelite mystical concepts and practices. But while Molinos's condemnation was, indeed, a turning point, the final battle was to take place ten years later, in France, which was the last to be exposed to Illuminist spirituality of the early modern period, but which was also the one to give birth to some of the most prominent Quietist theologians and the most dramatic theological debates of the seventeenth century.

* * *

As we have seen, pre-Quietists tendencies spread in Spain in the early sixteenth century and in Italy in the second half of that century. The

French "Century of Saints," to use Henri Bremond's term, began in the last decade of the sixteenth century, fifty years after the Council of Trent had allegedly put all female spiritual initiatives under suspicion and restricted all forms of spiritual innovations by the laity. We have mentioned before that Gagliardi's *Breve compendio* was edited by Pierre de Bérulle in a French rendition in 1597, and that two additional translations of this work appeared in French in the following three years.[55] Other forms of interiorized spirituality also became available. Teresa of Ávila was translated for the first time in 1601–2, and John of the Cross in 1621. Their influence in France was immense.[56] French audiences also enjoyed access to other major spiritual texts. The German and Rhino-Flemish mystics were translated in the second half of the sixteenth century, the *Life* and other works of Catherine of Genoa in 1598, and in 1603 Angela of Foligno became available for French readers.[57] But while the new spirituality arrived late, it was in France that it was to blossom to the greatest extent. In France, too, it was to become a political issue and a cause célèbre that was to end with the public humiliation of one of the country's leading theologians and with a papal condemnation of Quietism. As I have done for other countries, my discussion will center on spiritual works by major figures whose mystical theology and practices advanced existing configurations of passive mental prayer, and whose writings increased lingering anxieties concerning demonic interventions during the mystical pursuit.

The first original proponent of pre-Quietism in France was, in fact, a Scot, Benoît de Canfield (1562–1610), a convert from Puritanism who became a Capuchin monk. Canfield's *Rule of Perfection* was written in the early 1590s and was published in English in 1608 (incomplete) and in French as *La règle de perfection* in 1609. The book was immensely popular and was published in forty editions during the seventeenth century. Like other spiritual guides of the period, the *Rule* described a way to achieve union with the divine.[58] For Canfield, the way to this goal was through the unity of the human will with the divine will. Canfield posited a total antagonism between human will and the divine will, and distinguished three wills in God. The first is external will ("volonté extérieure"), which is represented in all creation. This will corresponds to the Christian believer's active life. Then there is the internal will ("volonté intérieure"), which activates the human soul and corresponds to the meditative life. Finally, there is the essential will ("volonté essentielle"), which corresponds to the divine essence, to God himself (1:4, 3:1). It is through progress from meditation on the created world to contemplation that the human soul reaches the last stage, in which the human will is annihilated and is absorbed by the divine

will, and both become one (3:2, 3:8, 3:12). "Yea, in the perfection of this annihilation in this divine will the soule is so abstracted and fixed in God, and so high lifted above herself, that shee feeleth not her owne operation though most vehement, but only the interior operation of God" (1:2:7). In this stage there is pure conformity to divine will, a "totall change of himself into God" (1:2:11; cf. 3:6), and a rejection of all created things (3:1, 3:8). In this ongoing and unmediated condition of unity with the divine essence, God's will infuses the human soul, which is annihilated as a separate entity (3:2) and is being deified. The soul is in a state of complete nudity (3:6, 3:10) and simplicity (3:7), totally possessed by God (3:2). Annihilation of the self through meditations and contemplation is not, however, sufficient for union. Like his predecessors, Canfield explained that one could not find God within oneself by human will alone. Active annihilation was just a first stage, but God alone infused the soul and enabled passive annihilation and union (3:4, 3:10). He introduced here into French passive mysticism the recent Carmelite concern with the difference between infused and acquired contemplation. Like Osuna, Teresa, and John of the Cross (of whose writings Canfield was not aware), Canfield understood acquired contemplation to be a transitory stage leading to infusion. Spiritual exercises could advance practitioners toward perfection, but there was a last stage that could not be reached by means of human will alone. The practitioner did not become deified due to her contemplative efforts, but only as a result of divine grace.

Canfield departed from Carmelite spirituality in his exploration of the position ascribed to Christ's humanity in contemplation, an issue that was to become the most controversial and potentially dangerous aspect of Canfield's *Rule*.[59] Nowhere in the first edition of the *Rule* did the author mention Christ, his Incarnation, or his Passion. In fact, one could argue that in his rejection of all created things as a precondition for reaching contemplation, Canfield implicitly eliminated any salvific role for Christ's humanity or his Passion. Francisco de Osuna also believed that "those who wish to attain to high and pure contemplation profit by leaving creation and the Sacred Humanity so as to ascend even higher."[60] But the anti-Alumbradismo campaigns of the sixteenth century, as well as Saint Teresa of Ávila's devotion to Christ, had reemphasized the role of the Incarnated Word in contemplation. The first version of Canfield's *Rule* was therefore attacked, and a revised 1610 edition incorporated a long treatise on the Passion (3:16–21) as a way of deflecting such accusations.[61] The question of whether the unity through annihilation and rejection of all created things included a rejection of God's humanity was to occupy French mysticism

throughout the rest of the century. Pierre de Bérulle and his Christocentric followers argued that only the Incarnation enabled union with the divine, while others continued to pursue a tradition that had started with Eckhart and argued for a complete negation of created things, which could, in some radical interpretations, include Christ. As we remember, the dismissal of a beneficiary role for Christ during contemplation was a major accusation against Molinos, who was condemned in 1687. It was found equally unacceptable for the French Capuchins already in the early years of the century, and they made sure that all subsequent versions of Canfield's *Rule* included their colleague's advocacy of contemplating the Passion.

Another major theologian who shaped French passive spirituality of the seventeenth century was François de Sales (1567–1622). De Sales's spirituality was developed through his spiritual friendship with two prominent women, whom we shall meet in the following chapter, Barbe Acarie and Jeanne de Chantal.[62] There was little in de Sales's *Treatise on the Love of God* (*Traité de l'amour de Dieu*) (1616) that was original and that had not been said already by his Spanish and Italian predecessors.[63] The *Treatise* detailed the benefits of loving God and supplied practical instructions on how to do it. It is therefore surprising that the book became the very epicenter of the controversy that was to erupt fifty years later between Bossuet and Fénelon, and was to bring about the end of the French school of passive mysticism. Each of these two theologians read selectively from de Sales's *Treatise* to support their claims for and against Quietism. At times during the 1680s and 1690s, it looked as if the entire fate of quiet prayer was going to be determined by the success or failure of these two theologians to read, and read into, de Sales's text. For our purpose, the question of whose interpretation was more accurate is less important than the observation that the *Treatise* could have been read by an authority like Fénelon as a major exposition of the benefits of quiet and passive prayer.

Following his predecessors, de Sales described (book I) the different wills, movements, and affections of the soul, and stated that the highest affection is divine love. While our human efforts enable us to advance toward it, and God has installed in us a natural inclination to love him, this love is like a miraculous child, born to a barren woman (I:6). It can only be conceived through divine charity and heavenly grace (I:17–18). Not only union, but contemplation, too, is an arduous task that cannot be reached unless God grants it to us "when it pleases him" (VI:7). For the soul can only reach contemplation following a long process of preparation through prayer and meditation. In the most advanced stage of prayer, quiet is a precondition for God's action within the soul. The faculties (including

reason) and powers suspend their operation, and even the will places itself in God's hands (VI:8–10, VII:2). The appropriate corresponding human action to this divine gift is indifference, in which the soul loves nothing except for its love for God's will and is touched by nothing except for God's will (IX:4, VI:10). The soul suspends itself; it flows from itself until it loses itself to itself, and it lives without living ("vit sans vivre") (VI:12). The passivity in such union is compared by de Sales to the state of being a statue in a niche. It stays put where its master placed it, not wishing to do anything besides being what its creator wants for it (VI:11). However, it stays put as a separate entity. There is a major difference here between Canfield's and John of the Cross's deification of the soul and the fusion of God and the practitioner. Following Teresa, de Sales also emphasized that this passive unity was not a permanent state, and that the practices of prayer, devotion, and good works that were put aside during these rare moments of contemplation should be reactivated the rest of the time. Like other proponents of passivity, de Sales also taught that while union is a passive state, the soul remains attentive to the love and to the divine movements of love that are active within it. This is not action, he emphasized, but merely a disposition to accept what may come (IX:15).[64] And just as he did not elaborate on the experience of union, he did not develop a systematic theology of the difference between unitive passivity and his concept of attentiveness. These shortcomings, in fact, might have contributed to the book's immense popularity. The *Treatise on the Love of God* presented the progress of the soul as a straightforward if arduous task. If only we would practice pure love, he seemed to say, it was guaranteed that our love would be answered with divine love.

The fifty years following the publication of de Sales's *Treatise* were a time of growing popularity and diffusion of new types of mysticism, Salesian and Carmelite, but also Bérullian (with its emphasis on the mediating role of the Incarnation) and Jesuit. But this was also the time of fierce attacks on the new mysticism by opponents who did not care much about the precise differences among these schools of interiorized spirituality. In fact, as Jacques Le Brun has observed, anti-Quietism established itself in France even before Quietism.[65] Writing in his 976-page-long *Abomination des abominations des fausses dévotions de ce tems*, the Capuchin Archange Ripaut (d. 1635) led the attack on the new spirituality (*spiritualité à la mode*), accusing its followers of pride, hypocrisy, vanity, sensuality, demonism, and a complete rejection of the Sacraments, of enclosure for nuns, and of good works. The new mystics, he argued, believing that they were deified, follow a long line of heretics, from the Manichaeans and

Mohammedans to the Beguines, Lutherans, and Anabaptists. Like them, they used their false spirituality to perform "dishonorable acts with women and girls of their sect."[66] The condemnation of the *alumbrados* of Seville in 1623 echoed across the Pyrenees. In the panic that followed, an alleged Adamist sect was discovered, whose members, mixing spirituality and sensuality, understood spiritual nudity literally, that is to say, engaged in naked sexual debauchery.[67] This accusation, according to which spiritually inclined individuals—who escape clerical supervision and claim direct divine inspiration—were likely to believe that they were above sin and might therefore challenge their own bodies in physical temptation, had a long history. Adamists existed in the orthodox imagination more than in religious sects, and the label had been hurled in the past at the Beguines and at members of the sect of the Free Spirit. Johannes Nider also warned that believing and following revelations might lead directly to Adamism.[68] Ripaut's accusation recycled and revived the association of unsupervised pursuit of spirituality by the laity (and especially by women) with debauchery and heresy, and it is therefore not surprising that soon after the publication of his book and the panic it provoked, an alleged Illuminist circle of sixty thousand members(!) was discovered in Picardy. Other Illuminists were discovered among the Capuchins at Rheims, and then it was further revealed that even the nuns at the royal monastery of Maubuisson were not immune from conflating passive spirituality with active nudity and debauchery.[69] False mysticism, explained Ripaut, contradicts not only the divine order. It also violates the natural order of the sexes and the rule of law (172–78). The last accusation opened the door for secular intervention in the persecution of the pre-Quietists.[70] The leader of the Picard sect, Pierre Guérin, was arrested and executed—however, not before his teachings allegedly spread all over France.

The second third of the seventeenth century was a time of compulsive repetitions of theological debates between proponents and opponents of passive mysticism and parallel fights between supporters and enemies of pure love. First, there was an exchange between the Jesuit Antoine Sirmond and Jean-Pierre Camus (1639), a disciple of François de Sales, on pure love and whether it could be achieved, with Sirmond suggesting that charity (pure love) can only be infused by God because human self-love could never be overcome.[71] It was followed in 1657 by an attack by the Carmelite Jean Chéron (1596–1673) on mysticism in general and women's role in spreading false spirituality in particular, and numerous responses by the Jesuit mystic Jean-Joseph Surin in defense of mysticism, abnegation, and passivity.[72]

Following the arrest and trial of Molinos in 1685–87, a new hunt for Quietist lay groups led to the discovery of additional such groups in Dijon, Lyonnais, Autunois, and Noyon. At issue in all of these debates were sets of major theological concerns: doctrine versus experience; affection versus reason; silent prayer versus ceremonies; and the balance between free will and divine grace. In each debate, a different issue was at stake, but all had direct connection to the legitimacy of passive spiritual practices. During the debates, French theologians sharpened their arguments concerning all of these issues and exposed the weaknesses and internal contradictions of their opponents. Positions were radicalized, and all were, indeed, ready for the final show.[73]

In France, more than in Spain and Italy, the attack on Quietism soon acquired explicitly misogynistic overtones. Quietism was presented as a new feminine fashion, which was practiced mostly by girls and women.[74] In fact, at the very time that Molinos and Petrucci were put on trial and condemned in Rome, and when Quietism was eradicated there, it enjoyed its Indian summer in France. And it was a woman who was at the center of both the final blossoming and the destruction of Quietism in France. Jeanne-Marie Bouvier de La Mothe, who became known after her marriage as Madame Guyon (1648–1717), was a wealthy mother of three, who started developing her spirituality after reading de Sales's *Introduction to the Devout Life* and the biography of Madame de Chantal. From the very beginning of her spiritual life, according to her autobiography, her prayer was "devoid of all busy imaginations and forced reflections; it was a prayer of the will, and not of the head. The taste of God was so great, so pure, unblended and uninterrupted, that it drew and absorbed the power of my soul into a profound contemplation, without act or discourse."[75] Actions and words lost their meaning. Using her own experience as a guide, Guyon argued that visions could not produce true union; they merely increased vanity and were subject to demonic deceptions (74; cf. 147). She therefore abandoned herself to the more extreme form of divinely infused love and in 1672 experienced a mystical marriage with Christ. In 1680 she had another mystical experience in which she achieved a unity of the wills and an annihilation of the powers. "When the soul is docile, and leaves itself to be purified and emptied of all that which it has of its own, opposite to the will of God," she explained, "it finds itself little by little detached from every emotion of its own, and placed in a holy indifference, wishing nothing but what God does and wills. This can never be effected by the activities of our own will, even though it might be employed in continual acts of

resignation" (51). Following this understanding, and feeling a maternal need to fecundate others with her insights, in the winter of 1681 she wrote her first mystical treatise, *Spiritual Torrents* (*Les torrents spirituels*).[76]

Guyon described three degrees of love and a journey of the soul from active to passive love and to annihilation through being burned by God's own love. In this mystical death, the soul "lets itself be stripped, emptied, impoverished, killed; and all its efforts to sustain itself will but be its irreparable loss, for it is seeking to preserve a life which must be lost" (65). The soul is even deprived of divine gifts and love, until she is left naked and destitute. "Hitherto she has been despoiled of gifts, graces, and favors (facility for good); [now] she has lost all good works, such as outward charity, care for the poor, readiness to help others" (79). At the last stage of this spiritual route, "the soul is reduced to a state of nothingness . . . it does nothing, either good or ill" (101). "It lets itself be carried along naturally. It ceases to think, to wish, or to choose for itself . . . it is no longer in itself, it is all in God" (108). It "just suffers itself to be possessed, acted upon, and moved without resistance" (112). One of the characteristics of this stage of naked faith (*foi nue*) is an irreversible deification of the soul, which no longer exists as a separate entity. Obviously, when God and the soul become one, as they were before Creation, the soul is ignorant of the notions of good and evil, and therefore cannot sin ("car qui n'est plus, ne peut pécher," 150).

One is immediately struck by Guyon's radicalism. Unlike de Sales, for example, she did not shy away from controversial issues and did not hesitate to declare the complete lack of resistance by the soul to anything that was taking place within her. The *Spiritual Torrents*, however, was too "advanced" to serve as a guide for spiritual life. While it described the state of being deified, it did not instruct how to get there and presented union as infused, rather than acquired. A few years later, following a vision in which Guyon was instructed to "give birth" to souls in search of spiritual life, she composed her *Short and Easy Method of Prayer, which all can practice with the greatest facility, and arrive in a short time, by its means, at a high degree of perfection* (*Moyen court et très facile pour l'oraison, que tous peuvent pratiquer et arriver par là à une haute perfection* [Grenoble, 1683–84; published 1685]).[77] Like the *Spiritual Torrents*, the guide emphasized abandonment and annihilation of the soul as the main goal of spiritual exercise. But unlike the *Spiritual Torrents*, it detailed a road map for how to get from simple meditation (12:2) through negative meditation and active (acquired) contemplation to infusion (13:3). In this last stage, the soul is like a boat, which, while it takes a lot of effort to load it and pilot it out of

the port, once in the open sea, flows by itself, and the captain has only to supervise the sails (23). "The soul wants nothing besides what God wants." Like Molinos just a few years before her, Guyon was careful to posit that this infusion should not be confused with a rejection of activism. Even in this stage, the soul acts by responding to movements of grace within it and by coordinating itself to the divine movements that activate it (21:1).

Attacks on Guyon started at once and conflated personal and theological issues. In 1687, two years after its publication, the *Short and Easy Method* was condemned by the archbishop of Paris, and the following year Guyon was sequestered in the Convent of the Visitations in Paris, accused of preaching heretical Quietist views on prayer. Due to the intervention of Madame de Maintenon (the secret wife of King Louis XIV), she was released and moved to Saint-Cyr, the school for daughters of the elite that Maintenon ran. It was at the same time that she met the young abbé François de Salignac de La Mothe-Fénelon (1651–1715), who was soon to become tutor to the Duke of Bourgogne, grandson of Louis XIV (1689). The previous year, Fénelon had read Molinos, and Guyon further increased his spiritual understanding, leading him to espouse passive mysticism, a move that was to bring about Fénelon's ruin. In the early 1690s, Guyon lost Maintenon's patronage, and a long period of accusations, intrigues, and counter-intrigues led, in July 1694, to the establishment of a special commission in Issy to examine her writings. Guyon in the meantime moved to Meaux, where Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet (1627–1704), another novice in spiritual matters, was bishop. Bossuet, who had first been impressed with Guyon, developed in 1693–94 an uncompromising opposition to her teachings, especially concerning pure love and passivity. He believed that her concept of pure love reduced the importance of prayers of petition (which in her view were equal to self-love), and that her passivity did away with Christian virtue and the importance of good works. The *Articles of Issy* (1695) condemned opinions that clearly resembled Guyon's writings but did not condemn Guyon explicitly. They remained therefore open to competing interpretations, and both Fénelon and Bossuet composed their versions of the articles, while Guyon herself first obtained and then was withheld a certificate of orthodoxy from Bossuet. She escaped from Meaux, was caught, and was imprisoned in Vincennes (1695). She was later released, imprisoned again in secret in the Bastille (1699–1703), and finally exiled to Blois, where she lived until her death in 1717.[78]

With Guyon in jail, the final episode in the gigantic fight for and against Quietist contemplation took place between the two most prominent French theologians of the second half of the seventeenth century,

Fénelon and Bossuet. Fénelon, who in the meantime had read de Sales, focused the debate on the issue of pure love, arguing that the passivity of the Quietists was the same holy indifference that de Sales had preached and that had long been understood to be a precondition for perfection and unity.[79] Unhappy with the condemnation of the passive way, of acquired contemplation, and of Madame Guyon, he published in 1697 his *Explication des maximes des saints sur la vie intérieure*, a spiritual guide and a defense of Guyon, with examples and justifications from the writing of "those saints who have been Canonized or admired by the whole Church," and which showed that there was nothing novel about the route of Quietism and passivity.[80] At the center of the *Maxims of the Saints* was a defense of pure love.[81] Fénelon distinguishes five kinds of love. The most degraded love is Jewish carnal love. Slightly less unworthy is instrumental or mercenary love, whose purpose is concupiscence. The third degree is love that has our own happiness, rather than God's glory, as its primary motive. Then comes love in which charity is mixed with self-interest. The highest degree is pure love, with no interest and consideration of fear or hope (introduction). Meditation corresponds to imperfect love because it involves discursive and distinct acts (21), and it is mixed with human feelings—hope and fear. There is nothing wrong with this love, and we should practice it as long as we are not called for contemplation (articles 2, 23). Far superior to it, however, is resignation, and Fénelon distinguished holy resignation from pure love and holy indifference. The resigned person loves God equally in pain and in suffering but retains private desires, while in indifference the soul has freed itself from all preference and loves only what God loves (5). Fénelon, too, like all previous Quietists, insisted that it was a mistake to identify this indifference with complete passivity and lack of will, because we still will what God wills, including "all spiritual and temporal good that is within the order of providence" (6). In this state of unity, the soul is still guided by "the precepts and counsels of the written Law and the actual grace which is ever conformable to the Law" (7). It is also wrong to equate this state with laziness, because the soul produces acts of contemplation and excitation, and continues to resist demonic and carnal temptations (11, 29–30). This last observation differed substantially from Guyon's or Molinos's descriptions of the stage of holy indifference. As we remember, both stated explicitly that the soul should not resist demonic temptations but rather view them as challenges. Fénelon disagreed, but like Molinos and Guyon, he did reject the possibility of sin during what he called the "Spiritual Wedding," arguing that in this stage, God's will was "entirely conformable to the written Will," and that God would not permit sin (18).

Besides, even in this stage, the soul still had free will to avoid sins (37), a contradiction that Fénelon never explained. Fénelon further agreed with Guyon, Molinos, and the entire tradition that they represented, that vocal prayer was, indeed, "a superstitious worship." It should nonetheless be practiced by all Christians, including contemplative persons, unless they are in the "last trials" (the highest stage of contemplation) and find vocal prayer troublesome (19).

Throughout the *Maxims*, Fénelon went out of his way to demonstrate the orthodoxy and traditionalism of passive contemplation, arguing against Molinist opinions and trying to distance Guyon and the mystics (French: "saints") from Molinos and other recent "excesses." All the while, he nonetheless remained steadfast in his defense of the egalitarian nature of mysticism. "God who conceals himself from the Wise and great men, reveals and communicates himself to the little ones, and to the simple" (43). Since François de Sales, the notion of pure love had been an important part of all seventeenth-century French mystical writings, and with Fénelon it became the central issue of the Quietist controversy. Pure love is "love that loves without feeling, just as pure belief is belief without seeing." Bossuet, too, accepted this definition of pure love and the definition of contemplation and union as extreme passivity but argued that this was a rare miraculous infusion, and that it could not be reached through exercises.[82] The bishop of Meaux totally rejected the notion that indifference had a meritorious value, arguing that since concupiscence was not erased by baptism, we live in sin, and therefore we are all exposed to temptation. Only God himself is beyond self-interest, he argued. "This pure love, that is allegedly beyond self-interest, is nothing but an illusion," he stated, and went on to explain that this illusion extinguishes hope and abolishes fear and, as such, destroys itself. This is a pure invention, a subversion of religion and Scripture, "that neither nature, nor grace, nor reason, nor belief can tolerate."[83] In 1696 Bossuet and his supporters transferred the issue to Rome, hoping to gain an official condemnation of Fénelon. It was debated for three years until the papal brief *Cum alias* (1699) condemned twenty-three of Fénelon's *Maxims*. Fénelon's "scandalous and offensive" concept of pure love as disinterested charity (article 1), and the maxim that it was possible in this life to reach a stage of perfection in which the soul does not try to improve itself (6) were found to be especially erroneous, as was the separation between the superior and the inferior parts of the soul. Fénelon submitted to the sentence on April 9 and was exiled by the king (who, for reasons that are beyond the scope of this book, played a major role in pressuring the pope to condemn Fénelon) to his diocese of Cambrai.[84]

While the attack on and condemnation of Fénelon did not put an end to his career (and he was even appointed cardinal in 1700), it did put an end to more than a century of Quietism. What were condemned in 1699 were all the major concepts that had developed since the early years of the sixteenth century. Acquired contemplation, as a set of exercises that could lead toward infusion—a concept developed by Osuna, Teresa of Ávila, and John of the Cross—was suddenly found suspicious (but not condemned, due mostly to Teresa's prestige).[85] Pure love in its Salesian meaning was questioned, as was the democratization of perfection that had been preached by both Teresa and John of the Cross. What were attacked were spiritual and mystical practices and approaches; but one of the best means to discredit these forms of spirituality was to connect them with women. We have already encountered the Dominican Melchor Cano in Spain discrediting Alumbradismo by associating it with female vanity, and the connection that was drawn between lay Illuminism and female sexual promiscuity. In 1657 the French Carmelite Jean Chéron made this the centerpiece of his own attack on mysticism. There is nothing unique or spiritual about the spiritual experiences of Illuminist *femmelettes*, he explained. These fake mystics are full of vanity and self-importance, and suffer from melancholy and an overpowering imagination. Their *imagination hypocondriaque*, fantasies, and lack of control are so powerful that these women are, in fact, in danger of developing epilepsy and insanity. Male pseudo-mystics, in their turn, attract these curious little women, who transform their feminine passion for vain exteriorities into objects of piety and devotion. "The weakness of this sex in no way makes this passion excusable; but it is totally unacceptable to see [this passion] supported by men," who should know better. Women are incapable of achieving the highest degrees of spiritual experience, and even men are usually led astray. Spiritual directors should be blamed for encouraging these women, who are in need of physicians to treat their melancholy and hypochondria, rather than of spiritual advice. Chéron went on to ridicule the entire vocabulary of new mysticism. Listen to these women, he scorned, to their ludicrous discussion of "the silence of the heart, prayer of passivity, transformative and deifying prayer . . . spiritual intoxication, negative meditation, divine aspiration radiating in the heart, separation of the spirit, annihilation of the soul, union, transports of delight, the abyss of divine clarity, the darkness of light . . . the depth of cordial abnegation." Chéron's list went on for three more dismissive paragraphs of spiritual terms, mostly cumulated from the popular *L'anatomie de l'âme* by the Capuchin Constantin de Barbanson (1581–1631). Chéron's identification of the new mysticism with *femmelettes*

was then echoed in 1679 by the Jansenist theologian Pierre Nicole (1625–1695). The latter denigrated Quietism by pointing out that "there are many illusions to be feared in these extraordinary orisons. For there are strange forces at work in the imagination, and especially in that of women."[86]

In June 1698 Bossuet used a similar misogynic rhetoric to complete the discrediting of Madame Guyon and her mysticism. His *Relation sur le quiétisme* was such a biting satire, that Quietism was ridiculed beyond recovery. "In the autobiography of this lady, I read that God bestowed upon her such an abundance of grace that she literally was bursting, and that her corset had to be unlaced."[87] This woman is "the true cause of the problems of the church" (1127). But not just the church was threatened. So were the court, Rome, and all of Europe (1132–52). There was, in fact, something demonic about Guyon's ability to seduce and delude men, among them such distinguished theologians as Fénelon. This "self-appointed prophetess, set on seducing the entire universe," whose "frenzy approaches madness" (1175), believes her power to free people from evil (1157). But the truth is that she is "an ignorant woman" (1135), abominable (1129), ridiculous and odious (1150), and possessed with an evil power to seduce (1175).

Both Guyon herself and Fénelon responded to Bossuet's vicious attack.[88] But as Marie-Florine Bruneau and Nicholas Paige have recently pointed out, the satire reduced mysticism to feminine vain self-importance and ignorance, to lack of reason and even madness.[89] Fénelon's fault was not that he held heretical beliefs, but that he was led astray by a woman and sincerely believed that "he had learned more from her than from all learned men together" (1126). With Guyon's silencing and arrest, then, the danger to the church and to the world had passed. Passive contemplation, learning from experience, and pure love—these feminine and diabolic delusions, that had seduced even the best and the brightest—would no longer threaten the hegemony of learned theologians and of church rituals. The "cabal of mystics, composed of fanatics . . . and dominated by women," would be subdued.[90] By equating Quietism with femininity, lack of control, demonic temptations, and self-delusion, it became possible for Bossuet to gender the boundary between orthodox and heterodox forms of mysticism, discrediting Quietism as feminine.

Bossuet's criticism raised suspicion concerning the writings and authority of Francisco de Osuna, John of the Cross, François de Sales, Pierre de Bérulle, and other prominent male teachers of negative mysticism and of pure love.[91] Quietism was dangerous because it encouraged equality in access to the spiritual pursuit. As Madame Guyon stated, "All are called. All can practice prayer of silence" ("Tous sont appelés. Tous peuvent faire

oraison").[92] No less troublesome was the growing denial of exteriority in the pursuit of interiority. This could mean, in extreme cases, rejection of all church rituals and devotional practices. Last but not least, all the practitioners as well as the enemies of passive contemplation were aware of the dangers along the route, first and foremost of the demonic temptations and perturbations that awaited the mystic as she advanced from activity to passivity. Some Quietists, as we have seen, even argued that practitioners of contemplation should remain passive when confronted with such demonic attacks. It is easy to understand why other theologians found this unacceptable. The annihilation of the self and the emptying of the faculties could (and hopefully would) lead to an infusion of divine love. But just as likely, they could create a void, and Satan, rather than God, might fill this void and take possession of the practitioner's soul. These were issues of the most profound theological implications. Anxiety concerning the place of women in the new spirituality has always been part of the anti-Quietist discourse, as was the equation of female proponents of these trends with sexual debauchery. The association of passivity, femininity, carnality, and demonism, as we have seen, was self-evident for both supporters and opponents of the new mysticism. Employing misogyny as a major weapon in the anti-Quietist arsenal should therefore come as no surprise. But Teresa of Ávila and the Carmelite mystical school was equally fearful of the new trends, as were other female opponents of Quietism.[93] Because of their alleged lack of discerning powers and self-control, women came to symbolize the dangers embedded in the new spirituality. But the ferocity and vehemence of the attacks on Guyon and other female practitioners in the second half of the seventeenth century should not distract us from remembering that the struggle over Quietistic practices was fought not only over restricting women's access to spirituality, but over all human beings' experiential contacts with the divine. At its core was not misogyny, but the inherent tensions between doctrine and experience, activity and passivity, and exteriority and interiority. During three hundred years, the church struggled to find the right balance between new forms of interiorized and passive spirituality and traditional notions of exclusivity and hierarchy. Passive contemplation became the center of this ongoing endeavor because, more than other aspects of the new spiritual schools, it highlighted the major danger inherent in the new practices, namely, the triangular relations among God, lay uneducated believers (including all women), and the devil.

* 5 *

Contemplation, Possession, & Sexual Misconduct

When the news of a mass possession at the Hospitaler convent of Louviers in 1643 reached Marie de l'Incarnation in her faraway convent in Quebec, the Ursuline missionary and mystic was quick to ascribe the demonic attack to the nuns' heterodox devotional practices. Similarly, after reading Madame Jeanne Guyon's *Short and Easy Method of Prayer* (*Moyen court et très facile pour l'oraison*), Pierre Nicole, the prominent Jansenist theologian, exclaimed: "Quietism is a trick of the devil. Wishing to abolish all the mysteries and all the attributes by which God operates His grace for humankind, but failing in this effort, he found the secret meaning of erasing them from [human] memory, by teaching false mystics a method that consists of not thinking any more about them."[1] Marie de l'Incarnation was herself a mystic and experienced in spiritual experiences as well as temptations. Nicole was a very spiritual man, whose *Traité de l'oraison* of 1672 was one of the most popular devotional books of the last quarter of the seventeenth century. He was also a nephew of Mother Suireau, known as Marie des Anges, the austere reformer of Maubuisson, whom we shall meet presently. Marie de l'Incarnation and Pierre Nicole's affiliations of Quietism with the demonic were far from unique. As we shall see, the new mystical trends and contemplative techniques that were analyzed in the last chapter became associated by the 1640s with demonism in general and diabolic possession in particular.

But Marie de l'Incarnation, Nicole, and fellow opponents of the new forms of mental prayer and of passivity were not the only people to express such anxieties. Contemplative people themselves were equally uneasy. They, too, perceived the spiritual route they were pursuing as perilous, and

they, too, articulated an inherent affinity between some forms of acquired contemplation and diabolic possession. In the following pages, we first look at the dangers of contemplation as they were portrayed by practitioners of passive forms of contemplation. We then look closely at four cases of pre-Quietist scandals in seventeenth-century Europe, in which the connection among the new forms of spirituality, sexual misconduct, and demonic possession was made explicit.

Demons have always prowled after members of religious orders. Thus, the early history of the Dominican order was portrayed by its first chroniclers as a continuous struggle against the devil's relentless attempts to destroy the young order.[2] Two hundred years of struggle later, the Dominican Johannes Nider, writing in his *Formicarius* (1437–38), repeated the assertion that demons target Mendicant orders more often than other people: "Daemon quomodo religiosos plus quam alios. Opinor demonis malicia a principio Mendicantium ordines." His contemporary the Franciscan Bernardino of Siena agreed, explaining that Satan wages special battles against souls that are committed to God.[3] Once new contemplative techniques became available to the laity, it was no longer only monks and nuns in religious orders that were likely to be targeted and tormented by demons. The danger now threatened all practitioners of interiorized spiritual exercises and mental prayer. Diabolic attacks were not restricted to any single stage in the spiritual pursuit of perfection. As we have seen, the devil could attack by illusions, delusions, and false revelations during meditation, or during the transition from meditation to contemplation. He could tempt the body while the soul was united with God, and he could just as likely distract the soul itself by doubts and self-doubts. As the soul advances in its pursuit of perfection, so does the Enemy's destructive zeal. Admittedly, as Saint Paul said, "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able" (1 Cor. 10:13). God does not let the devil torment people more than they can resist. But what is a person's capacity for resistance? And how is it to be measured? With the growing popularity of spirituality that was no longer text-centered and learned, but rather experiential, and was no longer restricted to male clerics, the dangers of individuals trying to ascend higher than they should loomed large and with it the danger of demonic temptations and possessions.

Alonso de la Fuente, the Dominican Spanish friar who discovered the sect of *alumbrados* in Llerena in the second half of the sixteenth century, explained that once he learned that laywomen were practicing contemplation, "the news offended me more than the news of the raptures, because there was among these women such ignorance of the law of God that they

scarcely knew the common prayers of the church, and being subjects of this sort, they had all at once ascended to divine contemplation. I advised them, then, that they not practice contemplation, because they would be lost." Contemplative exercises, he went on to say, evoked "bad thoughts, filthy ideas, carnal impulses . . . heresies, blasphemies against God," and other unwanted results.[4] María de San José Salazar (1548–1603), a Discalced Carmelite reformer and a practitioner of contemplation, agreed: "Once people are in contemplation, the Devil is hard pressed to harm them," she explained.[5]

Pre-Quietist and Quietist forms of contemplation, as we have seen, posed some unique dangers. The emptying of the soul of all things, memories, senses, and emotions was an exercise whose goal was to invite God to inhabit the empty space (infusion). But it created an opportunity for Satan to take possession of the void and fill it himself. The dark night of the soul could thus turn easily into a night of depression, itself a form of demonic temptation. Equally disturbing for theologians and mystics alike was the partial or complete rejection of free will among followers of some variants of the passive school of mysticism. If humans lack free will and are led to sin, be it by their natural inclination after the Fall or by the diabolic temptations that await practitioners on their way to union, how could spiritual people resist it? And should they? Or should they rather leave it to God's grace to operate within them and lead them away from sin?[6] Finally, Quietist spirituality gave rise to a suspicion of sexual immorality. The separation between the superior and inferior parts of the soul and the fact that the superior part was perceived to be infused with divine grace while the inferior part was being attacked by demons, as portrayed by Molinos and Guyon, could have been read as proof of the impeccability of the superior part during contemplation. In this complete separation of human nature and divine infusion, nature (body) becomes unrelated to the soul (spirit). One could practice sinful acts in the body without being a sinner in the soul. It is therefore not surprising that most Illuminist schools, from the Beguines to the *alumbrados* and on to Guyon and Molinos, were accused of sexual improprieties. Molinos's condemnation included, as we have seen, accusations of encouraging men and women to practice masturbation and sexual debauchery.[7] We do not need to accept these accusations as fact. But rather than dismissing them as fabrications, it makes sense to look at the language and practices of passive contemplation that made such accusations conceptually and metaphorically plausible.

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All of the pre-Quietist authors whose writings were analyzed in the previous chapter were aware of the dangers awaiting contemplatives as they advance through the dark night toward divine union. In *The Third Spiritual Alphabet*, Francisco de Osuna admonished the practitioner who takes up the spiritual route: "Remember, brother, in abandoning the world and conquering vice you give the devil more reason to be enraged, and he will feel particular hatred and rancor against you. If it seems he has retreated, beware, for he is busy rearming and mustering stronger forces. . . . Because God does not allow the devil room for his attack against beginners, the demon's wrath steals up a narrow path, but it rushes along a spacious road toward those who have conquered him at least once" (Seventh Treatise, chap. 2).[8] Demons are so clever, cunning, and ingenious, he went on to explain, that they devise new ways to tempt believers and assault spiritual people with all forms of spiritual and interior means, focusing on one goal only: to distract them from enjoying the great blessing of divine grace (7:4). Saint Teresa agreed with Osuna that demons attack contemplatives and try to prevent them from advancing. The devil, she explained, plays special tricks on practitioners of mental prayer. In fact, the more advanced they are, the more severe his attacks. Once the soul gets closer to God and "believing it has no longer anything to fear from itself, as I say, the soul places itself in danger," and the devil immediately takes advantage of this self-confidence.[9] "The attacks made by devils in a thousand ways afflict the soul more in [the superior dwelling place] than in the previous ones," Teresa stated in *The Interior Castle*, her guide for contemplation. When they see contemplatives, they instigate uproar, temptations, and afflictions. And in *The Way of Perfection*, she exclaimed: "What a strange thing! It's as though the devil tempts only those who take the path of prayer." Her awareness of the dangers involved notwithstanding, Teresa was not willing to give up the benefits of mental prayer: "I don't understand what they fear [those] who fear to begin the practice of mental prayer. I don't know what they are afraid of. The devil is doing his task well of making the truth seem evil if through fears he prevents me from thinking of how I have offended God, and of the many things I owe Him, and of what leads to hell and what to glory, and of the great trials and sufferings the Lord endured for me."[10]

John of the Cross concurred, explaining that the devil fills the memory of the practitioner with impressions and reflections, and with pride, avarice, wrath, and envy. It is therefore of the utmost importance to annihilate the faculties—including the memory—before entering the dark night.[11] It is especially the case when the soul is trying to pray in quiet that the devil stirs

disquiet in it and disturbs it (*Dark Night*, 1:4). The practitioner, however, should be aware that "as a rule, these storms and trials are sent by God in this night and purgation of sense to those whom afterwards He purposes to lead into the other night. . . . For if the soul be not tempted, exercised and proved with trials and temptations, it cannot quicken its senses for wisdom" (1:14). Demonic attacks, then, are beneficent, as they challenge the contemplative and build his or her character prior to reaching his or her spiritual goal. The devil's role in this confrontation is ambivalent, rather than negative. The soul, "when it feels the disturbing presence of the enemy, then—wondrous thing!—without knowing how it comes to pass, and without any efforts of its own, it enters farther into its own interior depths, feeling that it is indeed being set in a sure refuge, where it perceives itself to be most completely withdrawn and hidden from the enemy" (2:23).

For the Milanese Jesuit Achille Gagliardi, the demonic threat is especially present in the time between the termination of the meditative stage and achieving contemplative union, when the soul experiences pains, afflictions, perturbations, and disquiet.[12] The dangers continue even during contemplation and quiet, when God "may allow [the soul] to go back to feeling serious temptations, similar to and greater than those it used to suffer in the beginning of its conversion, both of the flesh and of impatience, fear, difficulty, and the like . . . and the devil may sorely tempt it, forcing it to go back into hard combat, with great difficulty, although the superior part usually wins." These afflictions purify the soul of its self-love and pride, and increase one's awareness of one's baseness and submission. When the practitioner encounters these temptations, he or she should not resist them but "suffer them willingly, caring nothing about and scorning them, and subordinating oneself with total submission to the Lord."[13] These demonic attacks are an opportunity for humans to experience God's sacrifice, to practice *Imitatio Christi*, and to learn submission (225–26).

In 1675 Miguel de Molinos published the most vivid and detailed description of demonic attacks during the transition from meditation to contemplation. Following Teresa of Ávila and John of the Cross, Molinos explained that this stage is, indeed, accompanied by diabolic tribulations, but the practitioner should find refuge in prayer and resignation (*Spiritual Guide*, bk. 1:4).[14] The transition is so hazardous because the route of darkness ("il camino delle tenebre") empties the heart, turning it into a blank page on which God can inscribe whatever pleases him (1:46). Being completely vacant, the soul is totally abandoned, and the demons immediately seize the opportunity to attack it. The Enemy fills the soul with libidinous suggestions, immodest thoughts, impatience, and blasphemous

outbursts against God, the Sacraments, and the mysteries of the church. The confusion he creates is so thoroughly successful, that it is no longer clear what comes from God and what from the devil (1:49). An interior war is being fought within the soul, part of God's plan to instill humility in the believers by means of purgation and annihilation (1:71). A few years later, defending himself against the accusation of heresy, Molinos further elaborated the demonic threats and their connection to contemplation. The advance made by the spiritual person ignites Satan's envy, and his envy grows as the spiritual benefits of contemplation grow. "Satan knows that a single act of faith is worth more than many meditations." He therefore tries to devastate not only the practitioner of quiet prayer, but to create general chaos, confusing divine and demonic acts and people. But Molinos, who, as we have seen, was trying to distance himself from any association with Alumbradismo, turned the tables on his opponents' accusations and explained that the alleged affinity between the sixteenth-century movement and his own form of Quietism was itself nothing but a satanic conspiracy. In fact, argued Molinos, Satan succeeds in his efforts to create hermeneutic confusion not only within the contemplative soul, but also in the entire church, when so many people connect Quietism with Alumbradismo and confuse people who pursue divine grace (like Molinos himself) and those who pursue carnal lust (*alumbrados*).[15]

Finally, for Fénelon, too, the stage of holy indifference is "the most extream tryal." After the soul has abandoned all material things, it is tempted to congratulate itself and to indulge in self-love rather than disinterested love. These trials are the means by which God purifies us of this misdirected love. But the practitioner can rest assured that "God never makes his Creature suffer without fruit. It is with a design only to purify the Soul, and to overcome her resistances."[16] For him, too, the demonic attacks are part and parcel of the final stages of self-purgation, and the bishop of Cambrai agrees with all of his predecessors that these are purifying labors.

These examples reveal the degree to which spiritual ascent opens the gate to demonic threats, and that the transition from meditation to quiet and passive contemplation and infusion was perceived by its practitioners to be especially hazardous. Following Molinos, who compared the abnegation to a blank page, one is tempted to visualize the void that is created within the contemplative soul. Since there is no void in nature, this void must be filled, and lucky souls are filled with God's grace. But the Enemy, too—always awaiting for opportunities to confuse, destroy, and cause harm—is obviously interested in filling this void. The linguistic construct of demonic attack and diabolic possession during annihilation and emptying of the soul

are therefore natural metaphors of the threat, allegories of the spiritual struggle and of the risks involved.

But there was more than just fear of demonic hindering to spiritual advance. Equally satanic and disturbing was the Molinist and Guyonist argument that in advanced stages there is a separation between the superior and the inferior parts of the soul. Molinos argued that in contemplation the superior soul does not feel or sense, but rather exists in "mystical dryness" (*Spiritual Guide*, 1:25). The soul, practicing "sacred inaction" (1:61), does not try to resist temptations but to ignore them. But what does this ignorance mean? How does it work? Does inaction have any limits? And is it also legitimate to argue that the right way to overcome temptation is to ignore it? Finally, is there not a danger that divine indifference toward diabolic temptations would lead to a neo-Gnostic view of sin according to which bodily sins are natural in our corrupt world after the Fall and should therefore not be resisted?[17] Indeed, the opponents of Quietism never missed the opportunity to associate passive contemplation with sexual debauchery. It is important to remember that sexual accusations had been historically brought against most heterodox beliefs. The fact that Molinos's condemnation listed sexual sins does not mean that he was indeed involved in these activities. But opponents of Quietism shared this anxiety with practitioners and proponents of this spiritual mode. All were aware that, often, attacks on contemplating souls took the shape of libidinous temptations. Here demons encountered individuals vacant of all their faculties and powers of resistance, waiting to be possessed by divine infusion, but open, too, to possession by the devil.

To further elucidate the fears surrounding the relations between the new contemplative techniques and the old Enemy, I want to look at four dramatic events. Three are celebrated cases of mass possessions and disorder in French and Spanish convents, while the fourth is the demonic-mystical possession of the Jesuit theologian Jean-Joseph Surin. It is not a mere coincidence that three of the four cases concern women (and that Surin's spirituality of annihilation and his own possession resulted from his personal involvement in exorcising demons from a fourth convent). As we have seen, women were perceived as more prone than men to be possessed by demons, more likely to be deceived by them, and more likely to pursue sexual gratification with them. All of these prejudices echoed in the attacks on pre-Quietism and Quietism from its earliest stages and were to play a role in the evolvement and the narrative structures of these cases.[18]

The sensational character of these cases supplies historians with an embarrassment of riches—embarrassment in both senses of the word: first,

because so much of anti-Quietist writings are histrionic and, second, due to the fact that more than one person paid with his life for this demonization of passive mysticism. The alleged sexual debauchery at the royal French monastery of Maubuisson (1628–31), at the mass possessions at the Benedictine monastery of San Plácido in Madrid (1628–33), and at the Hospitaler convent in Louviers (1643–47) also exemplified the growing sexualization of female contemplation in seventeenth-century Europe. I finish the chapter with the possession of Father Surin following the mass possession at the Ursuline convent at Loudun (1633–54). Surin articulated a new theology of demonic possession and exorcism, which cemented the new association between passive contemplation and diabolic possession. Admittedly, all the narratives describing these events are fiercely ideological, and some were written long after the events had taken place. My reading of the sources in this chapter is straightforward, documenting cannibalism, orgies, and witchcraft as undeniable facts. This is due to the fact that my concern in the chapter is not what "really" took place in each of the cases, but what were the theological anxieties and fears that motivated the narrators to allege such crimes.

* * *

In 1630 a major scandal erupted in one of the most prestigious convents in France. Maubuisson was a Cistercian female monastery, located near Pontoise, northwest of Paris, that was established by Blanche of Castille in the thirteenth century as a royal monastery. In the early 1600s, its abbess was Mother Angélique d'Estrées, whose sister, Gabrielle d'Estrées, was the mistress of King Henry IV. Other nuns were equally prominent daughters of the highest nobility, and the monastery was infamous for the disorder and troubles that resulted from these elite women's sense of entitlement and their disregard for their religious vows. The monastery's disrepute was such that in 1618, against the abbess's will, Mother Marie-Angélique Arnauld (1591–1661), the renowned abbess of Port-Royal, was called in to reform it. Arnauld introduced austere practices, among them the regular use of the whip, and made the sisters sleep "in an unhealthy and nauseating dark room, where bugs, toads, and lizards shared their company."[19] Unsurprisingly, most of Maubuisson's nuns, all daughters of the most prominent families in the kingdom, had difficulties adjusting to Arnauld's reform of their convent. The Estrées camp responded by force, expelling Arnauld, who had to be protected by royal troops. At the end of the power struggle, Arnauld left the monastery, which remained divided as

ever between pro- and anti-reform elements. In 1627 a new reformist abbess was elected. Sister Suireau (Mother Marie des Anges) arrived from Port-Royal, where she had been shaped by Arnauld. She came to Maubuisson explicitly "to turn the nuns more spiritual" by reintroducing pieties and austerities into the royal community. Like her predecessor Marie-Angélique Arnauld, Marie des Anges also found herself in conflict with the older nuns.[20] Things went from bad to worse when, in 1628, a new confessor arrived. Louis Quinet, a Reformed Cistercian, was a mystic and had high hopes of turning Maubuisson into a center of spirituality "parallel to Carmel." He introduced the sisters to new spiritual exercises: "One no longer talked about fears of divine retribution, of sins and the punishments they deserve," or of penance and mortification. Instead, the nuns practiced unitive exercises and techniques of annihilation of the self.[21] Between the austerity of Marie des Anges and Quinet's method of pre-Quietist pursuit of abnegation and infusion, the community found itself totally confused and bitterly divided. Quinet was forced to leave in 1630, but the nuns who opposed Marie des Anges invited additional spiritually inclined nuns to join the community. Among them was Mother Madeleine de Flers from the Augustinian Hôtel-Dieu in Mondidier, who enjoyed a reputation of being "rare et miraculeuse" and was known for her ecstasies and levitations.[22]

According to Madeleine de Saint-Candide Le Cerf, the Jansenist chronicler of the events in the convent (whose memoirs were published by Sister Ann-Marie de Brégy), Madeleine de Flers introduced Illuminism into the community. Most prominent among her Illuminist methods was the teaching of naked faith. In order to reach the highest stages of spirituality, she taught, one has to go through difficulties and temptations. De Flers went on to explain that only arduous experiences lead to deification; only passivity, lack of self-love and self-examination, and abandonment "in simple nudity" get us closer to God. "This nudity is something admirable, because from the moment one is stripped of everything, one cannot sin." In fact, she posited, it is not enough to merely be tempted or attacked by the devil. Indeed, during the passage through the desert one ought to become possessed by the demon! Such possession, she argued, is a sign of purification and selection. It should therefore not be feared or viewed as a threat, because "this is an ordinary divine conduit" for chosen souls. She herself, she explained, had experienced such possession while in Mondidier, where she and seven of her novices had the good luck of becoming possessed by demons, and one novice had even killed herself while under Satan's control (238–44).

De Flers confirmed the fears that passive contemplation and emptying the self were perilous, and that the evil one awaited his chance with contemplatives. However, rather than viewing this as a dangerous threat, one should view it as an edifying challenge. But Madeleine de Flers did not stop there. Instead, she went on to teach how to achieve a voluntary demonic possession. Perfect nudity and indifference lead to frenzy and *joüissance* (245), during which one has to perform "willingly, sincerely, and voluntarily" carnal and spiritual sins without thinking about them. "When one is filled with the spirit of God, one enjoys full liberty, and one should not subject oneself to the Law, to religious practices, or to constraints" (247). And further: "Plus on est criminel, plus on est saint." Her popularity among the spiritually inclined sisters led many of them to follow her and to practice "sexual abominations." They became vain, impure, and arrogant, convinced, as they were, that they were enjoying divine grace (251–52). Imagine this orgiastic celebration of demonic possession going on under the abbacy of the austere and reformist Mother Marie des Anges! The latter, of course, would not have anything to do with such practices, and she put an end to this frenzy. After only six months of such teachings, she forced Sister Madeleine to leave the community in April 1631. The Jansenist theologian Jean Duvergier de Hauranne (1581–1643), better known as the abbot of Saint-Cyran, then intervened and put an end to the Illuminist delusions and the demonic possessions.[23]

It is not easy to make sense of this narrative, which is based mostly on biased Jansenist sources, the aim of which was to portray Marie des Anges as the perfect but martyred abbess, while her enemies were all portrayed as dangerous heretics. I think, however, that it does not stretch the evidence to argue that Sister Madeleine introduced the sisters not to a method of spiritual exercises whose goal was to induce demonic possession, but rather that her idea (in accordance with pre-Quietist practices) was to produce a divine possession, namely, infusion as a result of acquired contemplation. As such, what she practiced and taught was in line with Father Louis Quinet's teachings. The latter, as we remember, had introduced similar practices into Maubuisson a few years earlier. We should also note that de Flers's appointment was approved by Dom Maugier, abbot of La Charmoye and superior of Maubuisson, and by other Cistercian fathers, who found nothing heretical in her spirituality. As noted, Quinet wanted to turn the place into a second Carmel.[24] De Flers's perfect nudity was obviously nothing but Canfield's spiritual nudity and had nothing whatsoever to do with nudism. But a turn of phrase and a deliberate literalism enabled Jansenist critiques of pre-Quietism to turn Maubuisson into a center for

sexual debauchery. Jansenists, of course, objected to all methods of spirituality that dispensed grace and found the Canfield–de Flers–Quinet type of mysticism totally unacceptable. Portraying Sister Madeleine's practices as legitimizing and even mandating demonic possession as a means of spiritual ascent served as an ammunition in the Jansenist anti-spiritual arsenal. It was a further truth of the dangers of all forms of passive contemplation. Using the idiom of demonic possession and collapsing divine and diabolic possession as well as spiritual and physical nudity were easy ways to discredit all forms of pre-Quietist spirituality.

* * *

The convent of the Blessed Incarnation of San Plácido (La Incarnación bendita de San Plácido) was established in Madrid in 1624 as an act of love between Don Jerónimo de Villanueva, the protonotary of Aragon and a high-powered bureaucrat in the royal Spanish administration, and Doña Teresa de Silva de Valle de la Cerda. The two had already been betrothed when Teresa decided to commit herself to God. She and Don Jerónimo then endowed the first reformed Benedictine monastery in the city, where Doña Teresa was to serve as an abbess. They personally chose the first nuns and appointed Francisco García de Calderón as the first prior, spiritual director, and confessor. This Benedictine friar from Seville was reputed for both his learning and his piety, and had been Teresa's spiritual adviser for the previous four years. Tensions and quarrels among the thirty nuns started shortly after the community was established. The nuns came from different social and religious backgrounds. Some, like Teresa herself and the family relatives and servants who joined with her, had lived in the world prior to the establishment of San Plácido. Others, among them the prioress, were nuns who followed Calderón from Seville, and others yet arrived from other convents. Among the latter were Sister María Anastasia, previously the slave Jusepa, and Isabel de Frías, a daughter of a Morisco, who had also been married to a Morisco. Before joining San Plácido, both had lived in a religious community where very little discipline was practiced. Jusepa had been possessed for many years by a demon, and in September 1625, shortly after her admission to San Plácido, her demon reappeared. By December the majority of the nuns were possessed by spirits, among them all of Calderón's followers, led by Doña Teresa.

Unlike most possessing spirits, who are demonic and blaspheme and ridicule religiously inclined people, the possessing entities of San Plácido behaved as angelic and good spirits. They exalted the merits of the nuns

and explained that the nuns' sufferings during their possessions were meant to embody the Passion of Christ. They also praised the reform of the Benedictine order and blessed the nuns, whose efforts were a first step in a reform of the entire church. At some point they even explained that Calderón was a new Jesus and Teresa the new Virgin Mary, and they appointed twelve of the nuns to be the new apostles.[25] In fact, so convincing were these spirits, that Doña Teresa believed at the early stages of the possession that the possessing spirits were divine and not diabolic. But she soon realized the demonic and scandalous nature of the events. Once the identity of the possessing demons was unveiled, exorcism rituals were initiated and were to last, unsuccessfully, for three years. Attempts to keep the scandalous event secret equally failed due to the jealousies and conflicts among the female religious and their male patrons, who publicized their accusations and suspicions against rival nuns and clerics. By 1628, due to political intrigues and a systematic campaign by Don Jerónimo's enemies to discredit him, the Inquisition intervened and incarcerated Doña Teresa and a few other nuns.

Calderón insisted in his interrogations that the nuns were possessed by divine spirits and that miracles were taking place in San Plácido. But it was soon discovered that he had been connected with an infamous *alumbrado* cell that had been discovered in Seville in 1622. There, already, Calderón had carnal relations with a female living saint, and when caught argued in his defense that their intercourse was spiritual and therefore above carnality. He allegedly brought the same religious doctrine with him to Madrid. He hugged, caressed, and kissed some nuns, took baths with others, and touched their *partes interiores*. But since his hands were "puras y vírgenes," he explained to some suspicious nuns, there was nothing sexual in his touching either. On the contrary, this was a "camino de perfección." Since San Plácido was a reformed community of saintly women, these acts "carry no sin when they are performed among followers of the way of perfection . . . because the route itself is a [divine] grace."[26] The sexual feelings and temptations, he further explained, are nothing but inferior resemblances in the body of the love for God that is experienced in the soul. Don Jerónimo and Doña Teresa themselves were allegedly also involved in these sexual/spiritual practices. The patron often visited the abbess in her room, and when they were caught kissing and holding hands, they explained that since both were people of "purity of soul," there was no harm in their physical contact.

Calderón's alleged separation of physical acts and interior intentions, and his alleged belief that some people are above sin, made it easy to accuse

him and the community of practices and theology that were nothing but an avatar of Alumbradismo. However, as Carlos Puyol Buil has pointed out, the Benedictine reformed convent emphasized prayer above all, and it is bad faith to affiliate San Plácido with Alumbradismo.[27] It makes more sense to associate the events with the popularity of mental prayer in Observant and reformed female communities, and with the assertion that passive contemplation leads to perfection. In fact, the prior was not alone in following this Illuminist doctrine, nor should the nuns be viewed as ignorant and innocent victims of male sexual advances and prerogative. Doña Teresa herself allegedly explained that Calderón's and Don Jerónimo's caresses had led her to the highest contemplation and the most exalted perfection (fols. 234v–35r). Furthermore, the abbess had a long history of visions and revelations. It was one such vision that led her to renounce her engagement and establish the community, and in following visions she was promised that all the difficulties that confronted the young establishment in its early years would be overcome. She also fell into trances and ecstasies during which she sometimes lost consciousness, suffered partial paralysis, and vomited. At one time Doña Teresa even fasted for forty days, another clear sign that she believed to be divine, but that could just as likely be deciphered as demonic.

Doña Teresa and the nuns of San Plácido were clearly followers of the new contemplative techniques. Their sexual temptations were exactly what Teresa of Ávila and other early practitioners of the new techniques worried about and warned against, but also expected. Calderón's vocabulary of "route of perfection" and "purity of soul," and his teaching concerning a separation of superior and inferior parts of the soul and the body, resembled the writing of Osuna, John of the Cross, and Saint Teresa. But times had changed, and the anxieties concerning these practices increased dramatically. Divine possession was, by the 1640s, more likely to be unveiled to be demonic possession, and practices of Quietism were by now established to be Illuminist and therefore heretical. Doña Teresa was therefore accused of Alumbradismo, false and hypocritical revelations, witchcraft, trust in the demon, pretense of sanctity and prophecy, and even pretense of demonic possession. In other words, she was a complete fraud—neither a saint nor a demoniac. Given the inability to discern the identities of the possessing entities, the courts found it easier to discredit the entire spiritual enterprise. She was found guilty and was exiled for four years, but she then used her patronage connections with Grand Duke Olivares himself to reopen the case. In 1642 she and the other nuns were found innocent. Calderón, too, was found guilty and was incarcerated for life in another

monastery. Unlike Doña Teresa, he did not get a second day in court. The case against Don Jerónimo was suspended by order of Olivares himself, but with the fall and disgrace of Olivares in 1643, it was reopened, and he was accused of consort with demons and heresy in connection with his patronage of San Plácido. He was arrested, released in 1647, and spent the last years of his life trying to get Pope Innocent X to reopen his trial. In 1649 he was declared not guilty and died four years later. At his request, he was buried in San Plácido.

* * *

A few years later, in 1643, a similar case of mass possession at the Hospitaler convent of Saint-Louis et Sainte-Elisabeth in Louviers (Normandy) attracted national attention in France. Contemporaneous descriptions of the events followed what had become, by 1643, a familiar narrative of mass demonic possession in convents, similar to the narratives of events that had taken place in Aix-en-Provence in 1611–13 and in Loudun in 1633–40. While some nuns at first behaved in a manner that raised a suspicion that they were afflicted by demons, at least one, the novice Anne de la Nativité, experienced what looked like divine visions. A growing disorder in the convent then led to the creation of an examination committee, which affirmed the demonic etiology and initiated exorcismal ceremonies. During the exorcism, many nuns recalled their encounters with evil spirits, but also mystical visions and divine apparitions they had experienced (that later were revealed to be demonic). Anne de la Nativité, for example, had long conversations each evening with an angel. Together, the two discussed the most subtle matters of theology and spirituality, especially interiority as the route to perfection and the importance of total passive submission to the divine will. Her and other nuns' visions presented harmonious and spiritually rewarding coexistence among nuns, angels, and other divine entities. But other somatic signs indicated that the nuns were far from enjoying divine grace. Some could not walk without falling over, while others felt repugnance whenever they tried to fulfill their religious practices. Many were so tormented each night that their screams and shouts echoed throughout the building. Trying to pray, the prayer books flew away from the sisters' hands and circulated freely in the choir. These and other external signs indicated that rather than being a case of rewarding spirituality, demons must have been involved. No one could doubt the severity of the demonic attack once one of the nuns admitted that she had been attacked one night by a male witch who had entered her cell through the chimney, anointed

her body with grease, and escorted her on a night flight away from the convent, and another recalled being visited by a demon, who, pretending to be the father confessor, admitted that its passion for her was so strong that it could not be quelled.

Luckily, Monseigneur François de Péricard, bishop of Evreux, and Esprit de Bosroger, the provincial of the Capuchins in Normandy, were present at Louviers to calm things down and exorcise the afflicted nuns. With them were the archbishop of Toulouse, the Grand Penitent of Evreux, and two canons of Notre-Dame of Paris, aided by three physicians. They witnessed the sisters convulse, fall to the ground, jump from tree to tree, and even float in the well in which some tried unsuccessfully to drown themselves. During exorcism ceremonies, all the possessed nuns together laughed, sang, cursed, and blasphemed. Like all demoniacs, they answered questions that were posed to them in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. Trying to partake in the Eucharist, some fell into a coma, while others fainted or became paralyzed. This rejection of the Eucharist was the clearest sign yet that Satan and his minions were possessing the nuns. The nuns further amazed the audience with their systematic exposition of heretical ideas, which soon attracted the exorcists' attention and turned the case into a major witch-finding drama.

In addition to the possessed nuns, three priests—Pierre David, Mathurin Picard, and Thomas Boullé, the three consecutive spiritual directors of Saint-Louis et Sainte-Elisabeth—were now at the center of the enfolding event. All three were accused by some nuns of having bewitched them. During her exorcism, and after being accused by other nuns of serving as the demon's accomplice, Sister Madeleine Bavent was the first to reveal that years earlier she had been seduced and bewitched by Picard. Following her initiation into Satanism, she, in turn, inflicted all the harm on the community. For the last four years, usually twice a week, she had accompanied first Picard and later Boullé to Sabbaths. There they performed sacrilegious acts on the Eucharist, killed newborn babies, cannibalized human flesh, and used human body parts to create charms, which they then used to create havoc in the convent. Bavent also revealed to the exorcist the demonic genealogy of magicians-cum-spiritual advisers that had controlled the convent since its beginning. Before his death, she revealed, Father David had passed his magical powers to Picard, who, in turn, willed them to Boullé. Thus, the current acting spiritual director, Thomas Boullé, was also unveiled to be a devil worshipper. Being the only one of the accused still alive, he was condemned to death and executed. Father David, the man who introduced Satan into the community by means of mystical writings

and exercises, and Father Picard, the devil worshipper and the corrupter of nuns, could not, alas, be executed, since they had died a few years earlier. Picard's bones, however, were exhumed and then burned in the market square of Rouen in August 1647, along with Boullé.[28]

Like the episodes in Maubuisson and Madrid, the diabolic possession in Louviers should be understood within the context of the anti-mystical anxiety of the second third of the seventeenth century.[29] Pierre David, who helped to establish the convent and was its first spiritual director, was a secular priest but close to the Capuchin order. Before moving to Louviers, he was known as a Parisian mystic, one of the many religious people who were shaped by the new vogue for interiority that swept through elite circles in Paris in the early years of the seventeenth century. Like many male clerics and elite laywomen, he attended devout salons and frequented churches where Benoît de Canfield, the English Capuchin mystic, and many other proponents of interiority were teaching new forms of spiritual renewal by means of passivity and annihilation of the self. Among Pierre David's lay acquaintances in Paris was Madame Catherine le Bis, widow of Jean Hennequin, a magistrate in the Chambres des Comptes in Paris and then in Rouen. Hennequin was accused of embezzlement and was executed in 1602. His widow le Bis then became a close patron and a spiritual advisee of Canfield. In 1617 Father David convinced Madame Hennequin to establish a community of Hospitaler nuns in Louviers. The monastery was inaugurated the following year, with le Bis as its first mother superior.

According to Sister Bavent, who, while possessed, related to Esprit du Bosroger, one of the exorcists and the main chronicler of the possession, the history of the demonic disorders that had taken place in the community, it had been Father David who first introduced the nuns to the new spirituality that was later to be unveiled to be demonic rather than divine. Admittedly, Sister Bavent only joined the convent after Father David had passed away. But this did not deter her from relating to the exorcists that the spiritual director had instructed the sisters in Benoît de Canfield's writings, and that Canfield's *Règle de perfection* was the only rule practiced in the convent in its early years. David's interpretation of Canfield's mysticism, however, led the sisters not toward perfection but quite the opposite, to abomination. Things then went from bad to worse. After they had become versed in Canfield's way of perfection, the nuns were also introduced to other "hideous works, hiding sensuality beyond mysticism" ("affreux ouvrages, cachant la sensualité sous le mysticisme"). These included the major texts of Rhino-Flemish and German mysticism and

the "pernicious doctrine that he called Illuminism."[30] All these spiritual deceptions, rather than quieting the passions, inflamed them. Bavent also revealed that Father David explained to the nuns that the way to overcome sin is to sin and instructed them to practice innocence by practicing nudity. Under his guidance, and according to the teachings of Canfield and other pre-Quietist mystics, the nuns touched each other immodestly and performed sexual impurities with the crucifix and with each other. They took Communion stripped to the waist, and the officiating priests passed the Eucharist "over their private parts as far as the belly, and in this state abandoned themselves to the company of women." David, the hypocritical mystic, was thus exposed, in addition to being a heretic and an Illuminist, as an Adamist. The latter, as we have seen, was the recently discovered heresy that allegedly had many followers in Picardy.[31]

Following David's death in 1628, Father Mathurin Picard became the spiritual director. Like his predecessor, Picard had acquired a reputation, in Paris and other places, of being "fort spirituel." He had also been connected with the Illuminists of Montdidier, the same group that had been suppressed just a few years prior to his installation in Louviers, and where Madeleine de Flers had learned the spiritual practices that were to corrupt the royal abbey of Maubuisson. His involvement with this Illuminist group notwithstanding, Picard managed to seduce people to entrust him with the spiritual direction of the convent of Saint-Louis et Sainte-Elisabeth. He promised that under his supervision the establishment would "supercede all others in sanctity." (Remember Louis Quinet's promise to turn Maubuisson into a new Carmel.) Betraying this trust, Picard taught the nuns to disregard self-examination and humility. Rather, they should "fly with the eagles, and let the thunders and the haze of the passions and human disorders dissipate and evaporate in the inferior parts of the soul." Under his supervision, the nuns practiced "contemplation, passivity, enlightenment, ecstasy, union, and transformation."[32] The "contemplative route of unity" pursued by David, Picard, and their Hospitaler protégées, however, was a route of "a unity of evil." Pretending to lead his advisees on high to dwell among the angels, Picard's spiritual regimen instead awakened obscene sensual desires within them. When the soul reaches unity with God, he taught them, everything is permissible in the body.[33] During his entire career, from his installation in the convent in 1628 until his death in 1642, Picard worked to destroy the community and, above all, to destroy the mystery of the Eucharist. He once even baptized the host in Madeleine Bavent's menstrual blood and then hid it in the garden, which immediately caused the young nun to desire him.

In fact, explained Esprit du Bosroger, he learned from the possessed nuns that Picard had established a heretical sect that used contemplative passive mysticism to pervert the nuns. Under the guise of the new spiritual techniques, the father confessors installed demonic rule. More horrifying revelations were soon to follow. As we remember, Sister Anne de la Nativité had nightly encounters with an angel (who turned out to be a demon), in which they discussed theological issues. This amateur theologian alleged that it "was sent from God to teach her perfection." There are seven steps in the route to perfection, the demonic angel explained, and they lead at the summit to a union with God. One starts the route by purging the external senses by means of mortifications, and then one proceeds with a rejection of internal senses. This stage is followed by exposure to Illuminitive life, which prepares the practitioner for unity, a state of being above all created things and understandings. It is difficult not to recognize in this diabolic ascent to false perfection Benoît de Canfield's three stages of spiritual advance as they were elaborated in *The Rule of Perfection*. Canfield, like Sister Anne's devil, taught that the soul ought to purify itself first of the external world and then of the internal one before reaching unity with the divine will. He, too, emphasized the rejection of all created things, and he, too, compared this process to complete nudity. It was not difficult for Bosroger to collapse Canfield's metaphorical and spiritual nudity into a demonic literal and carnal one, to turn the word into flesh. All it took was bad will, which Bosroger had in abundance.

While the demons ruled Louviers, Sister Marie du Saint-Sacrement also held theological discussions with a demon. Her demon, too, instructed her in "le vray chemin de la perfection." Following her demon's teachings, she, too, advanced toward "the unifying and uniting *jouissance* between her and her divine spouse," until she reached complete resignation to the divine will, where she found herself "without any desires or affections, and in great indifference." Alas, her route toward perfection was also exposed as sensual and sexual rather than spiritual. In its conversations with yet a third nun, the demon taught that to honor the Incarnated Word is to dishonor God. This, too, as we have seen in the previous chapter, was a highly debated topic in French mysticism of the seventeenth century. By teaching the nuns that honoring the Incarnated Word dishonors God, their possessing demons unmasked the disturbing fact that the devil and followers of pre-Quietist trends shared the same theology. Route of perfection, holy indifference, resignation, annihilation of desires, affections, and the senses, ambivalence toward the Incarnated Word—the demons who possessed the nuns at Louviers and held elaborate and ongoing theological

discussions with them spoke the language of seventeenth-century pre-Quietist interiorized mysticism. One can almost imagine the possessing demons from Louviers sitting in the devout salons of Parisian elite laywomen, listening to Benoît de Canfield and François de Sales or debating with Pierre de Bérulle. Better yet, one could imagine them teaching in these salons, sermonizing in Parisian churches, and shaping the spiritual climate of the first half of the century.

Bosroger went further than his predecessors and directly related pre-Quietist acquired contemplation and passive mysticism not just to sectarianism and to sexual promiscuity, as had been done in Spain and Italy during the anti-Illuminist campaigns of the previous century. He argued, in fact, for the existence of a hidden meaning beyond the new form of spirituality that was nothing but diabolism, a way to recruit new souls to Satanism. The miserable nuns of Louviers were led astray by their male spiritual advisers. Hoping to encounter God, they were surrendered to Satan. But the message of the possession and the exorcism, and the reason Bosroger put pen to paper to record his exposure of the demons as pre-Quietist missionaries, was to warn his readers that the nuns of Louviers were not the only victims of the new spiritual deception. Like them, numerous men and women, both lay and religious, were being misled by this new heretical and demonic mysticism. Fifteen years prior to the outburst at Louviers, Archange Ripaut had tolled the tocsin and was the first to warn of the proliferation of the new diabolism in the guise of spirituality. Bosroger's discussions with the possessing demons affirmed Ripaut's worse fears. Interestingly, it is the Capuchin Bosroger who accused the Capuchin Benoît de Canfield of being an accomplice of Satan. But there is even more to this Capuchin connection. Archange Ripaut was also a Capuchin brother, and it was he who first discovered the Illuminist cells among his Capuchin brothers in Rheims and Picardy, and then initiated the anti-Illuminist hysteria of the 1620s. Ripaut's examination led to the expulsion of the suspect Capuchin brothers from the order (1629), but they continued to spread their beliefs until they got arrested (1631).[34] Bosroger, it seems, felt the same urge to purify his order, to make amends for the harm done to the order by Canfield's writings. As we remember, by 1610, a year after the first edition of Canfield's *Rule of Perfection* was published, his spiritual brothers already felt the need to censor and revise his text, and to introduce a whole section on the Passion to it. We can read Bosroger's defamation of Picard and of the Capuchin David and the execution of Boullé as the final episodes in this inter-Capuchin expiatory enterprise. Just like the Jesuits and the Carmelites, the Capuchins were busy redrawing

boundaries between orthodox and heterodox practices, and making sure that the order's reputation was not harmed by unauthorized spiritual trends. Exorcising the possessed sisters, the Capuchin Bosroger also exorcised the embarrassingly radical evil spirit of his brother Canfield that had possessed the order for the previous thirty years.

* * *

In 1635, while exorcising possessed nuns at the Ursuline convent of Loudun, Jean-Joseph Surin, the Jesuit chief exorcist, was himself attacked by demons. Using the third person to describe his own experience, Surin recalled that "suddenly, the demon transferred from the body of the Mother Superior to that of the Father."[35] Surin found himself in possession of two souls. One was in a state of great and profound peace with God, intimately united with the divine, not feeling at all what was happening in the Father's body. The other soul, alas, was in immense misery and immeasurable pain (*Triomphe*, 43).[36] Being both a theologian and a mystic, an exorcist and an energumen, Surin, more than any other protagonist in the "theater that is possession" (Surin's term, 16), connected and affiliated diabolic possession with mystical pursuit. The Jesuit father elaborated a systematic comparison between divine and demonic possessions, and talked about the ambivalence that characterized his own state and possession in general. Finally, believing strongly in the interconnection between the two phenomena, Surin developed a new method of casting out demons, a system that was shaped by his own spirituality of contemplation and interiority. While in Maubuisson, Madrid, and Louviers we have encountered the opponents of pre-Quietist spirituality making the connection between the new mysticism and the demonic, in Loudun we find a leading mystic, maybe the greatest French mystic of the seventeenth century, making the same connection.

Father Jean-Joseph Surin was born in 1600, a son of a prominent *conseiller* in the Parlement of Bordeaux.[37] He spent time with the local Carmelites, among them Mother Isabelle des Anges, the Spanish founder of the local Carmelite convent, who introduced Teresian spirituality to Bordeaux. It was in the Carmelite convent that he had his first mystical experience, which led him to choose religion as his vocation. Surin joined the Jesuits as a novice (1616) and studied in several Jesuit colleges. In 1626 he was ordained to the priesthood and four years later completed his novitiate. As a Jesuit, Surin participated in a mission to convert Protestants, taught, and was a renowned ambulant preacher. It was during his preaching

to the illiterate peasants in the countryside that he encountered holy ignorance, the ability of unlearned people to enjoy divine grace and to become enlightened without any learning. His theology of simplicity and even infantilism was to be shaped by this insight.[38] In December 1634, two years after the eruption of the mass possession at the Ursuline convent at Loudun, Surin was ordered to join the other exorcists who had already been fighting the possessing demons. His experiences in Loudun were to change his life.

Surin was frail (and it is likely that he had already suffered from several mental breakdowns). Not for him were "the tumults of action" (21). In his memoir of the events at Loudun, the *Victory of Divine Love over the Powers of Hell* (*Triomphe de l'amour divin sur les puissances de l'enfer*), which he began writing in 1636 but did not complete until 1660, Surin explained that exorcising by means of prolonged rituals, which demanded long verbal prayers and violent physical confrontations with the energumen—whose own physical strength was enhanced by the possessing agencies—was beyond his capabilities. Ever since his arrival at Loudun in December 1634, he therefore decided to try a different technique. His original method was to expel the demons by introducing the nuns to practices of *sainte indifférence*, contemplation, and interiority.[39] This interiority, he believed, will "overcome the demons" and "will set the demons in extreme rage" (19, 62). Rather than a cacophony of shrieks, screams, cries, public prayers, and commands, Surin chose silence. Whispering in Latin into the ear of the possessed Jeanne des Anges, the mother superior of the community, Surin explained to her the benefits of interior life and union with God.[40] His new exorcismal technique, Surin believed, could not fail. Once the nun submitted herself completely to God's mercy, another soul was gained, and God would surely infuse his grace and deliver this "interiorized" soul of its possession. But, even given a failure to unite the possessed soul with God, the demons would still suffer so badly from Surin's teachings and from their inability to hear his whispers and advocacy of interiority that they would voluntarily quit the bodies they possessed (19).

And, indeed, Surin was right. The demon was tormented listening to this spiritual discourse between demoniac and exorcist, to which it was not a part. It was also totally stupefied by Surin's new technique. Confronted with such ingenuity, the demon admitted that "this new manner of fighting him was more insufferable for him than all other exorcisms, and that at the end he would be forced to surrender." The demon then warned that since it was being attacked by such an extraordinary and interior manner, it itself would thence be forced to increase its own attacks on the nuns'

interiority (27–28). As such, Surin's new technique shifted the theater of exorcism from outside the body to inside, from external manifestations of physical strength and convulsion to an interior struggle that was taking place within the possessed woman's soul.

For hundreds of years, the church had taught that possessing demons cannot penetrate the superior part of the soul, and some theologians insisted that demons cannot possess the soul at all. All they can possess is the body. While, as we have seen in previous chapters, there had always been disagreement among theologians about the precise site where possessing agents reside and there had always been a gap between abstract theological discussion of the topic and exorcismal practices and guides, manuals for exorcists always insisted on the important axiom that human souls cannot be possessed by demons. Surin's demons, however, possessed the soul and could only be expelled by a transformation of the soul. To justify his break with tradition, Surin discerned three different stages in diabolic possession. In the first stage, he explained, the demon activates the soul by suggestion; in the second stage by impulsion, and in the third by impression. By "impression" he meant "imprint." The demon imprints on the soul its own perceptions and its own sentiments. The soul cannot resist and experiences these perceptions and sentiments as its own. As such, there is no way to differentiate between the demon's imprints and the human soul's itself. "The demon that possesses a human in such manner has such union with the soul and enters so deeply into it that this is inconceivable. . . . These souls that we witness being possessed are so imbued with the demon's will and ideas that they cannot separate or distinguish interiorly what is of these souls and what is not. [This is] because the demon has this power to imprint his sentiment and his idea on the soul, in a manner that the soul behaves as if it itself was a demon" (*Science expérimentale*, 366). As such, diabolic possession is a mirror image of divine possession, and the stages leading to it parallel the stages leading from meditation and contemplation to infusion. Surin's first exposure to mysticism took place in the Discalced Carmelite convents in Bordeaux, and Teresa of Ávila's exposition of the mystical pursuit clearly shaped his own thinking on the topic. Surin reached these radical new insights concerning the nature of diabolic possession and its precise location within the soul from his own experience as a demoniac, but this, he argued, was the nature of all diabolic possessions.

Michel de Certeau argued that Surin understood that the demons were, in fact, representations of his soul's own religious doubts, a projection.[41] If diabolic imprints on his soul activated him, Surin should not be held

accountable for the hostility toward God he confessed to have experienced during his own possession. It was the demon who was responsible for Surin's blasphemous and sacrilegious feelings and thoughts. But this reading, I think, undermines the concrete reality of demons in Surin's cosmology. Adhering to early modern configurations of both divine and demonic possessions (and especially to Teresian spirituality), Surin believed, I would argue, that the combat for spiritual perfection takes place within the soul, and that it is always, by its very nature, accompanied with diabolic afflictions and delusions. No divine possession without diabolic possession, his technique seems to suggest. Surin was perfectly aware of the similarity between the new mysticism and his innovative description of demonic possession: "Just as we know from mysticism that the divine nature unites with the soul by acts of grace so intimately that the soul feels itself one with God, similarly, in the diabolic actions . . . the soul feels this action as if it is united with it, as if the demon was human and the human was the demon" (366).[42] He was also aware that the demons increased their attacks on contemplatives just as they neared their union. In fact, he even questioned the demon about what exactly happens during infusion and got a very detailed explanation: "It starts with very great tranquillity, which increases slowly until the will is infused with love; then arrives rapture, when the soul has to prove its fidelity, because it often happens that many imperfections are mixed in this stage, as [the soul] is fixed more on the grace than on God himself, and it rushes more toward the good that is presented to it and loses itself in its joy, whereas if it were committed to leave behind its imperfection and interest in humility, it would not lose itself but remain without ecstasy" (148).

Having developed his new understanding of demonic possession as the mirror image of divine possession during the contemplative union, the exorcist set to work. For the next two years, he spent his entire time, be it while eating, or drinking, or walking the streets, "battling the devil." He himself, and not just the possessed mother superior, made the interior pursuit his sole occupation. Surin totally distanced himself from the affairs of the outside world and directed all of his attention to God, thus gaining new insights and increasing his own spirituality. Kneeling or sitting for hours in front of the mother superior, Surin prayed to God to deliver her, all the while sharing with the possessed nun his mystical experiences of divine love. With the power of his own new understanding of this divine love, Surin compelled the miserable demon to allow the possessed woman to listen and comprehend what the exorcist was teaching her. And, indeed, under Surin's instructions on interiority, purgation, illumination,

and union, Mother Superior Jeanne des Anges—though still possessed—excelled in her spiritual growth. "And little by little the desire to be entirely of God took form within her" (*Triomphe*, 34). The possessing demons, too, were immensely impressed and testified that they had never seen a person advancing so fast toward God. They therefore placed new obstacles in her way, but her attachment to the divine love enabled her to overcome them, too (34). Frustrated and furious, Leviathan, the chief demon, explained that while Jeanne des Anges contemplated, it could not attack her and had to hide and wait in a corner of her head, until she was done (77). In fact, this demon confided in Surin, it detested its job, and if God had let it, it would have left des Anges long ago. The mother superior irritated it, because she was so determined to follow God that the demon could not beat her. Luckily, however, not all contemplative souls are as strong-willed as Jeanne des Anges. While it is common for contemplative souls to reach tranquillity and love, the demon explained, pure love is so rare that it is common that there is always some residue of self-love involved in the pursuit of perfection. And just as the soul achieves its goal, it often loses itself in its own joy and satisfaction, rather than losing itself completely within God (78). This is a great time for demons, which benefit from this self-love to distract the practicing contemplative. "As soon as we experience that the soul loses its awe of God, we demonstrate [to] it the material pleasures of the world, thus leading the soul to sin" (*Science expérimentale*, 149).

Leviathan's demonic-theological discourse admitted, in fact, what other theologians had long suspected. Contemplatives were more likely than other individuals to be attacked by demons, and the spirituality of interior illumination and pure love was a dangerous route, opening possibilities for demonic attacks and increasing diabolic rage. Surin himself similarly argued that "extraordinary journeys are dangerous, because the demon always jumbles his operation with that of God" (305). The spiritual route is extremely perilous, because Satan cannot tolerate seeing people developing their interiority. Being aware of the immense benefits of this form of spirituality, the demon increases its attacks as the practitioner advances.

Using his new exorcismal technique of enlightening the mother superior in the teachings of interiority, illumination, purgation, and union, Surin was at first successful. But only a few of Jeanne des Anges's numerous possessing demons were expelled from her body and soul, and Surin was to experience within his own body the torments about which he had been theorizing. The demons, it soon became clear to the exorcist, took their revenge on the successful exorcist who had developed this new outrageous technique. A few months after his arrival at Loudun, Surin found himself

attacked by possessing demons. "And as the Father ascended internally toward God, the Devil doubled his movements" within his body. Surin felt that snakes were crawling inside his stomach. More importantly, the devil also planted doubts in Surin's soul (*Triomphe*, 39). Soon after he was attacked by the devil, however, God, too, started operating within Surin's soul (*Science expérimentale*, 255, 270). Surin realized that he was, in fact, possessed by both God and the Enemy. His soul was both miserable and happy at the same time (263, 339), and he could not discern what resulted from God's interventions and what was demonic (258, 264, 267, 303). As his soul weakened, his confusion and inability to distinguish between divine and demonic operations within himself increased (275). The more he experienced unity, with its joy, tranquillity, and beatitude, the more he was reduced to contrary feelings of misery and spiritual poverty, and the more the Enemy increased his attacks (336). Surin was assaulted and molested by evil spirits but at the same time benefited from infantile trust in God, which enabled him to respond to these attacks by increasing his belief in God, thus overcoming his diabolically induced temptations (336). In fact, Surin went on to suggest explicitly, his experience was not much different from what John of the Cross and other mystics had suffered during their own descent into the dark night (175).

Surin's dark night, however, was to last seventeen years (1637–54), which he spent in a state of mental mutism and paralysis. According to his autobiographical sketch, the *Experiential Knowledge of the Other Life* (*Science expérimentale des choses de l'autre vie* [1663]), he found himself convinced that God had rejected and damned him (178–80). He experienced intense hostility and resentment toward Jesus, for the latter had enjoyed the most complete union with God, which he, Surin, could never achieve (187–88). He was enslaved by demonic powers, tried to commit suicide, and even contemplated converting to Calvinism (188–90)! Locked up for most of the time in a chamber in a Jesuit college in Bordeaux, he could not verbalize the divine love that overwhelmed him, nor could he eject the demons that obsessed and possessed him. Interestingly, it was during these years of mutism and infantilism that he composed some of the most powerful mystical poems of all times.[43] In 1654 Surin awoke from his dark night. He dictated books, preached, and renewed his spiritual direction. He revived his correspondence and wrote hundreds of letters and, in 1663, completed his history of the possession at Loudun. The last five years of his life (1660–65) were spent among the poorest peasants in the countryside near Bordeaux. There, among the most humble and the least educated, he found the simplicity and naïveté that he still viewed as the true marks of spiritual love.[44]

Being possessed by both God and the devil, Surin's possession was typical of the confusion of the spiritual route of passivity at the same time that it was extreme in its ambivalence[45] and its duality. As I have pointed out, he was trying to insist that he was merely obsessed but had to admit that while he was loving and desiring God in the interior part of his soul, his hatred of Jesus Christ and his horror of him were also located within his soul, which was acting not on its own accord but according to Satan's will. He did his best to convince himself that the blasphemous thoughts were outside him but had to admit that "this does not seem to be the case. . . . [E]verything was in the interior. That's why the soul was in such pain, as if it itself was the devil, always damned" (*Science expérimentale*, 203). And he went on to explain that "this [demonic] spirit is united with mine without depriving my consciousness or the liberty of my soul, but makes itself nonetheless as a second self, and as if I have two souls. One of which is dispossessed of the body and of usage of its organs, and stands aside [se tient à quartier], observing the doings that take place within it. These two souls fight in the same field, which is the body. And the soul itself is as if divided, with one part of it the subject of diabolic impressions, while the other of movements that are its own, or that are from God."[46]

Surin was surprised and even shocked to find himself possessed by the demons that had possessed Jeanne des Anges. "No one had ever seen a similar thing," he declared. "Is it possible," he asked, "that ministers of the church will fall into such harm?"[47] But he was also thrilled to see himself "becoming a demon [me voir ainsi devenu diable]" and felt grateful for the opportunity to suffer for his sins. His fellow Jesuits were divided. The inability to decipher interiority that was part and parcel of all possessions was uniquely troublesome when a prominent theologian was concerned. His superiors accused him of Illuminism and of corrupting the nuns under his supervision. Some Jesuits thought that he was mad, others that he was possessed by divine grace, and others yet that he was possessed by demons. They agreed on one thing: that he had become "the enigma of the province" of Aquitaine.[48] Some people argued that Surin was punished by God for his illusions; others argued that he was trying to reach too high, whereas real spiritual people strive for the bottom (176, 217). The possessed nuns themselves and their possessing demons made fun of him: "Physician, heal thyself," they said triumphantly. Others were simply intrigued. On July 17, 1635, the erudite Nicolas-Claude Fabri de Pieresc wrote to his friend Father Marin Mersenne: "If the possession or obsession of this good priest exorcist will move forward, it will be more notable than all other events of this nature, that usually happen to souls of weakly little women

[femmelettes bien faibles]."[49] And a pamphlet on the mass possession at Loudun that was published the same year paid as much attention to Surin's possession as it did to the nuns'.[50]

* * *

But was Surin's possession as unique as he portrayed it? I suggest that Surin merely put into writing the ambivalence and duality that characterize all possessions accompanying the contemplative pre-Quietist pursuit. Surin's contemporary, the French poet Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux (1636–1711), made fun of mystics who, in their insolence, believe themselves to be possessed by God while, in fact, they are embraced by the demon.[51] Obviously, Boileau was ridiculing the fashion for spirituality that characterized the age, while Surin took it seriously. Both, nonetheless, shared the common understanding that the new mysticism was more confusing, more "open-ended," and more ambivalent than previous forms of spiritual ascent. The dark night of the quest could easily turn into a dark night of demonic delusions. Never before in history, explained the demons to Surin during the exorcism of the mother superior, had there been so many deluded souls who believed themselves to be spiritual. In fact, their self-love prevented them from realizing the amount of effort that it actually took to reach interiority (145). But there were also more virtuous souls in this historical time, souls who were really committed to God. The demons—for whom human enterprises, wars, arts, and sciences are mere trivia—direct their efforts into countering and disrupting these few Christian souls who are seriously committed to serving God. "Our happiness," the demons shamelessly announced, "is to raise doubts in the heart that adheres to union with God" (146).

Jesuit mysticism emphasized well-scripted exercises, put forward by Loyola, whose goal was a transformation of the soul through the systematic and methodical use of the faculties. Jesuit theologians had warned repeatedly of the dangers imbued in unstructured and unsupervised contemplation. The events in Maubuisson, Madrid, Louviers, and Loudun proved them right. Surin, who was shaped by Teresian spirituality in his youth, was more willing than other Jesuits to tolerate the ambivalence of the spiritual pursuit, namely, the fact that both God and Satan might operate within the mystic at the same time, or that the identity of a possessing spirit would not be discerned easily. One should therefore never let oneself be guided by one's own spirit, he declared in a good Jesuit spirit (313). Surin wants us to forget that he, too, challenged his spiritual advisers

(318–21), and that he failed to submit his spiritual autobiography to supervision by superiors. In fact, he insisted repeatedly that his unpublished text "will be found in my room when I die," and that his autobiography is "Secretum meum mihi [my secret for myself]."[52] More importantly, he escaped supervision and authority altogether by going mad and turning into a baby, whose insights, consolation, and support derived directly from *papa* and *maman*—Christ and the Virgin (301).[53] In so doing, he, in fact, shed his vow of obedience and his adherence to Jesuit-controlled and moderated spirituality in favor of an immediate and unmediated form of communication with the divine.

Surin's account of his struggle with "impression"—that is, the highest stage of contemplation—and its mirror experience of demonic possession portrays better than any other early modern spiritual text the inevitability of confusion and the inherent ambivalence of advanced stages of mystical pursuit. Infusion is possession, and it could derive equally from God and from the devil. "When God wants to possess a soul completely, He inverts everything in it to such a degree that it is separated from itself. Things that used to be familiar . . . become strange," he explained to Mother Angélique de Saint-François of Loudun.[54] But these activities could equally describe the Father of Lies. And since the route of contemplation challenges demons to interfere and to prevent practitioners from achieving their goal, a discernment of possessing spirits in this highest form of spirituality is impossible. This is the case not only because external signs are untrustworthy and because truthfulness of interior movements cannot be easily deciphered, but also because people can be possessed by diabolic entities at the same time that they are possessed by the divine spirit.

* * *

Whether they attacked the new Illuminist passive spirituality or practiced it, seventeenth-century theologians and mystics were aware that the systematic ascendancy toward perfection and infusion challenged practitioners in ways that threatened their endeavor. Enemies of the *spiritualité à la mode* were pleased to point out that the new practices were demonic rather than divine—*Luciferiques*, to use Ripaut's term.[55] Supporters warned devotees of the dangers involved, but like Teresa of Ávila and François de Sales, they believed that guidance and moderation would suffice to prevent the (pre)-Quietist practitioners from falling into the devil's trap. The outbursts of demonic possessions and disruptions at Maubuisson, Madrid, and Louviers presented opponents of the new spirituality with golden opportunities

to discredit the new spiritual practices, and they were more than happy to use them, employing the old topoi of uncontrolled female sexuality and the inherent connections between heresy and sexual deviance as their preferred accusations. Surin was, of course, a proponent of the new practices and set himself a goal to prove the benefit of quiet contemplation. Alas, his effort to heal Mother Jeanne des Anges by introducing her to the new mysticism ended up in a huge failure. Falling himself victim to the demons, Surin proved the inherent connection between divine and diabolic possessions. Being male, his possession was not explicitly sexual, or at least was not sexualized by Surin when he set down to record it. His possession was shaped (by either the demons or the author) as an epistemological crisis of belief and as a retreat from the world of Jesuit learning to infantile passivity.[56] All four cases, whether narrated by opponents or supporters of the new mysticism, demonstrate the period's confusion concerning the new contemplative techniques. It was this confusion that led, as we have seen in the previous chapter, to the condemnation and silencing of these techniques by the end of the seventeenth century. Equally important, it was this confusion that shaped the indeterminacy of all possessions and the anxiety concerning the exact identities of all possessing spirits.

PART THREE

Discernment

* 6 *

Anatomy of the Soul

Starting in the fifteenth century, diabolic possession was no longer a term that designated mostly physiological affliction with undetermined etiology or any affliction that resisted natural cure. As we have seen, it could now, more than ever before, take place within the soul. This wider definition of possession necessitated a system of diagnostic tools to discern how the soul operated or what was operating within a soul. This task, obviously, was beyond the competence of physicians and other non-authorized healers. Luckily, an "embryonic" method for discerning interior movements within the soul already existed, and it could now be elaborated and nuanced to be put to use to confront the new challenge. The growing popularity of new forms of spiritual pursuit in the early modern period further dramatized the need for a clear and standardized method of discernment. It is therefore not surprising that the very same theologians who were engaged in the debate for and against pre-Quietist and Quietist interiorized spirituality were also on the forefront of the effort to systematize a new theology of the anatomy of the soul. Together, the development of a theology of discernment and the demarcation of boundaries between licit and illicit forms of interiorized spirituality intended to draw clear distinctions between the divine and the demonic and between truth and falsity as well as between people who are more inclined to tell the truth and people who are more incline to deceive or be deceived.

Theologically, discernment of spirits (*discretio spirituum*) is a divine grace (*gratia gratis data*); philosophically, it is an interpretive challenge. The word "discernment" comes from the Greek *diakresis*—a direct gift of the Holy Spirit—and it is one of the seven charismatic graces (together with

evangelism, prophecy, eloquence, healing, wisdom, and contentment). As such, it is dispensed freely and, we may say, arbitrarily, according to God's plan. It is available for both males and females, both the laity and the clergy, as Paul made clear in his discussion of the topic (1 Cor. 12:4–11):

> There are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. . . . In each of us the Spirit is manifested in one particular way, for some useful purpose. One man, through the Spirit, has the gift of wise speech, while another, by the power of the same Spirit, can put the deepest knowledge into words. Another, by the same Spirit, is granted Faith; another, by the same Spirit, the gift of healing, and another miraculous powers; another has the gift of prophecy, and another ability to distinguish true spirits from false; yet another has the gift of ecstatic utterance of different kinds, and another the ability to interpret it. But all these gifts are the work of one and the same Spirit, distributing them separately to each individual at will.

But who has the ability to prophesy? And who has the right to? What knowledge of languages is required? And how is it obtained? Who can perform miracles, and what is considered a genuine miracle? What is being discerned? Is discernment a discernment of visions, of dreams, or of possessing spirits? Of interior virtues or characteristics of individuals or rather of stigmata, levitation, and other "exterior" signs? And are there different techniques to discern any of the above? Can learning add to the ability to discern? All of these questions and many more were part of the late medieval and early modern attempt to mark boundaries between the miraculous and the natural and between natural and supernatural human capabilities, and to define who enjoyed and who did not or should not enjoy divine favors.

Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) did not answer these questions definitively, but he did create a set of abstract rules that were to shape most future attempts to develop a method of discernment of visions, impulses, and possessing spirits. In his discussion of the reliability of miracles, Aquinas explained that there are four clear signs that permit us to tell whether a prodigy is genuinely divine (and not demonic). True prodigies last, while demonic prodigies are short-lived; they can be utilized, while demonic prodigies are futile; they are deifying, rather than harmful for faith and morality; and, finally, good spirits invoke God's name with dignity, while evil spirits use perverted and shameful means. But Aquinas went on to warn that sometimes demons operate through lasting and beneficial prodigies in order to deceive more successfully. Only the complete ensemble of all four signs is therefore a guarantee that an intervention is genuinely angelic. Equally, only when all four marks indicate a diabolic occurrence should

it be viewed as, indeed, diabolic.[1] Discussing signs and dreams, Aquinas further warned that man (here in the generic sense) was not competent to judge interior movements, which are always hidden, but only exterior acts, which are visible. And in his discussion of prophecy and other charisma, he explained that evil spirits possess the body but cannot possess the soul: "The Holy Spirit can act from inside, but the devil suggests from outside, either to the senses or to the imagination. . . . As for the body, the devil can inhabit a man substantially, as in possessed people."[2] If we follow the logic of this statement, the problem that is at the heart of this chapter should not have existed. If demons cannot possess the soul but only the body, we could have expected the similarities between possessing agencies that bothered theologians, mystics, and Inquisitors to also not exist. There should have been no place for confusing and misdiagnosing divine and demonic possessions.

But this turned out not to be the case. Unlike the Thomist philosophical exercise, Augustine and medieval liturgical rites of exorcism repeatedly referred to demonic possession as taking place in (some part or parts of) the soul and not solely in the body, and much of the theological enterprise following Aquinas to develop an infallible method of discernment of possessing spirits was equally shaped by the morphological similarities between both possessions (while at the same time paying lip service to Saint Thomas's configuration of two distinct forms of possession).[3] Thomist abstract clarity was repeatedly challenged by the ambivalences and indeterminacies of concrete cases.

It is important to clarify that the chapter does not deal with the theological discussion of different types of visions (and their divisions), nor does it address the differences among visions, revelations, and dreams, or the changes in the period of the configurations of natural, supernatural, and the preternatural. Compared to dreams and demonic temptations, which were extremely common among all members of society, possessions by demonic spirits were relatively rare. They therefore required a unique set of discerning techniques and observations. Once pre-Quietist and Quietist spiritual practices popularized passivity and encouraged the laity to pursue contemplative exercises, the anxiety concerning the nature of any supernatural intervention—be it divine or diabolic—in the soul increased, and it became urgent to identify the essence and purpose of each possession. Thus, this chapter is concerned with the specific debates regarding the issue of discerning possessing spirits. The following discussion focuses on a close reading of a few key late medieval and early modern texts that systematized and codified a method for the discernment of possessing

spirits.[4] Perhaps paradoxically, the chapter concludes that the attempt to develop an infallible probative method of discernment of spirits ultimately failed. The inherent contradiction between the axiom that prophecy and discernment were divine graces and the regulatory efforts of the church to supervise and restrict such claims was unsolvable. In addition, the late medieval and early modern discussion of possessing spirits was shaped directly by the need to address new forms of spirituality that were gaining popularity among the laity in general and women in particular. There was a contradiction between women's grace-induced ability to prophesy, on the one hand, and the growing restriction of women's teaching and speaking in public on religious matters, on the other. Nor was it possible to silence those women who insisted on their right, and in fact duty, to air publicly divine messages they allegedly received. Finally, growing anxiety concerning witchcraft and demonic interventions in the world and an expanding judicial and prosecutorial thrust in matters spiritual following the Council of Trent further complicated any easy solutions to draw clear lines between the divine and the demonic.

This inherent problem of the nature of divine and diabolic possession was exacerbated due to another unsolved major concern. Saint Paul had already warned that "Satan disguises himself as an Angel of Light" (2 Cor. 11:14). His warning meant that no vision or prophecy was immune to the danger of diabolic deceit, and no mystic or spiritually inclined person was above suspicion. A message that looked edifying and divine could still be a diabolic deceit, and the danger of misdiagnosis loomed large. Writing a hundred years before Aquinas, Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153) had already warned against zeal without knowledge and indicated the connection between spirituality and demonic deception: "The more eager the zeal, the more vigorous the spirit, the more generous the love, so also the greater the need for more vigilant knowledge to restrain the zeal, to temper the spirit, to moderate the love."[5] Spiritual people, he posited, were at risk of being deluded by their own zeal. They needed moderation, in Latin *discretio*. The dual use of the term *discretio* in the period further complicated the matter. *Discretio* in the meaning that interests us here was a charismatic gift, while *discretio* in the sense of moderation was a required normative behavior; but, as we shall see, there was a clear connection between the two meanings of the term as both discernment and discretion. The introduction of moderation as a means of diagnosis was in and of itself problematic. It was not clear what constitutes an appropriate, moderate experience (that should be trusted) and in what ways did it differ from the immoderate one (that should not), nor were there established measurements of moderation. As

we have seen, this issue was at the forefront of internal struggles concerning the new spirituality in religious orders in the early modern period. And finally, all theologians agreed that moderation was a gendered characteristic and that women were likely to lack it. The early modern discourse of the discernment of spirits was therefore a political, eschatological, gendered, and social concern. It was developed and defended at the same time that new alternative epistemological, psychological, medical, judicial, and scientific explanatory systems were proposed by both Protestant opponents of the Catholic Church and by its own members to account for many of the symptoms that characterized both divine and diabolic possessions. An ever-growing body of literature on the anatomy of the soul was being written in this period in an attempt to create boundaries between the divine and the demonic, truth and deception, the licit and the illicit, the natural and the supernatural, and between women's prophetic and spiritual claims and male clerics' prerogatives. Yet rather than demarcating boundaries and helping to discern the true from the false, and the divine from the demonic, these writings created an ever-growing conceptual confusion.

* * *

The first systematic attempt to develop a simple method for the discernment of possessing spirits was carried by Henry of Langenstein (c. 1325–1397), the most celebrated German scholar of the late fourteenth century and a professor of theology first at the Sorbonne and then in Vienna. Langenstein was writing to discredit the recent revelations of Telesphorus of Cosenza, a Franciscan spiritualist whose pro-French eschatological prophecies enjoyed immense popularity. Langenstein was also motivated to address the issue by some sermons he had heard from a monk who had been prophesying the near end of the Schism and who had turned out to be an impostor. Outraged, Langenstein sat down and wrote the first systematic guide for the discernment of spirits, *Liber de discretione spirituum* (c. 1382).[6] Langenstein saw a clear connection between the growing number of false prophets and the approaching apocalypse. The Great Schism and the recent prophets were both satanic means to increase confusion and disorder in the world. The need to discern spirits was therefore more acute than ever. But rather than referring to concrete cases and suggesting practical tests for the discernment of spirits, Langenstein pursued a philosophical examination of interior movements. Analyzing different energies, senses, and mental practices, he stated that there are four spirits that act upon these human activities: the human spirit, the Holy Spirit, and good

and evil spirits. Each human activity, however, is always unique, personal, and internal, and thus the precise nature of a spirit that energizes an individual is beyond human knowledge. "It is difficult to discern which motion is our own or else from a spirit, and from which spirit," he admitted, and divine *caritas* is the only reliable guidance (54).

Thus, having identified the need to develop means for the discernment of spirits, Langenstein failed to deliver. All supernatural experiences—whether positive or negative—should be approached with caution, he warned, and all are more likely to result from humoral imbalance or natural delusions than to be truly supernatural. Hence, all claimants of mystical experiences and/or diabolic fantasies should be regarded with suspicion (58–60). Trying different possible tools to discern spirits—for example, whether they caused *caritas*, joy, sweetness, or modesty (and are therefore more likely to be divine) or anxiety and fear (and therefore diabolic)—Langenstein remained unsatisfied with his own solutions. He therefore substituted the discernment of internal spirits for the discernment of observable external signs. Moderate behavior (*discretio*), he summarized, is the most reliable indication of a spirit's nature. People who are possessed by the Holy Spirit behave moderately, while people who are possessed by evil spirits trust themselves and are credulous and often vain. They behave in ecstatic manners and lack moderation.[7] Note Langenstein's full circle: since external signs in and of themselves are not reliable means for the discernment of spirits, we should ask what are the internal energies that activate the spirits. But since these energies act within the individual and are not accessible for us, only visible (external) signs can indicate what is the nature of the internal energy.

Langenstein was also the first to develop a systematic comparison of the morphological similarity between demonic and divine possessions. Both states were often combined with raptures, paralysis, physical weakness, trembling, convulsions, and an inability to digest food.[8] As such, "what really happened" when a person claimed to be possessed by either evil or benevolent spirits always escaped easy scrutiny. By admitting the morphological similarity between the two forms of possession by spirits, Henry of Langenstein did not break new ground. Similar fears had already been articulated by Paul and by Saint Augustine.[9] But he recognized the contemporary political and eschatological relevance of the topic. And while he did not supply a solution to the problem or offer new insights on how our mental capacities operate, and in fact admitted that observable signs are the only discerning tools in our possession (and even they are not reliable), Langenstein had a huge impact on the interiorization, or spiritualization,

of demonic possession. As we remember, in the early church and up until the twelfth century, most possessed individuals were suffering from physical afflictions. The parade of demoniacs was composed of people whose external, rather than internal, behaviors exhibited their state of being possessed. With Langenstein, the typical possessed individual who needed discernment was no longer necessarily the young woman whose deformed limbs, muteness, blindness, afflicted bodily gestures, and screams of horrendous pain lent themselves to a suspicion of diabolic possession. Rather, the new possessed woman was taken over by an evil spirit who was acting on her mental energies and capacities. The possessed victim no longer necessarily suffered from a physical illness but could just as well be discerned as possessed due to her immoderate behavior, unauthorized prophecies, or politically suspect visions.

Furthermore, the forms of ecstatic affective mysticism that he attacked were not gender-neutral. They were the typical manifestations of new forms of female spirituality in the period, and Langenstein's warning against and mistrust of such bodily manifestations put all female charismatic behavior under a cloud of suspicion. Affective or ecstatic spirituality was based on personal, emotional, and direct communication between the believer and Christ. It was not exclusively feminine, but it offered learned and even unlearned women, for whom access to intellectual pursuit of the divine was unavailable, other means of identification and unity with God. Focusing on Christ's humanity—his wounds, his suffering, his death, and his willingness to offer his body as food to feed his followers—affective interiorized mysticism resembled women's daily experiences as wives, mothers, and daughters, and their image and self-image as more emotional and less intellectually capable than men.[10] Thus, while Langenstein's treatise is not explicitly gendered, his attack on immoderate spiritual experiences and the equation of this disposition with suspicion of demonic delusions or possession were also an implicit discrediting of female access to mystical experiences.

A few years later, the French theologian Jean Gerson (1363–1429), the chancellor of the University of Paris, tried his hand at developing a more coherent method for the discernment of spirits. Like Langenstein's treatise, Gerson's three treatises on the topic of discernment of possessing spirits, too, were directly related to the growing popularity of affective mysticism, and all were written as direct responses to concrete mystical claims. "On Distinguishing True from False Revelations" ("De distinctione verarum visionum a falsis") (1401–2), "On the Testing of Spirits" ("De probatione spirituum") (1415), and "On the Examination of Doctrine" ("De examinatione

doctrinarum") (1423) became the standard works for all subsequent writers on the topic and deserve close scrutiny.[11]

Gerson's earliest treatise, "On Distinguishing True from False Revelations," opened with an admission of failure: "There is for human beings no general rule or method that can be given always and infallibly to distinguish between revelations that are true and those that are false or deceptive." The ability to discern spirits is a charismatic power, exercised only by those who have been given this gift from God (335–36). But in this "final hour, just before the Antichrist comes," we do not have the privilege of despair and inaction. Fantasies, illusions, and dreams abound, and some false seers even claim that they had revelations that they would become future popes. We must, therefore, develop a method to discern spirits. We cannot dismiss all claims, nor can we accept prophecies at face value. "We are to be like spiritual moneychangers or merchants. With skill and care we examine the precious and unfamiliar coin of divine revelation, in order to find out whether demons, who strive to corrupt and counterfeit any divine and good coin, smuggle in a false and base coin instead of the true and legitimate one" (337). The metaphor served Gerson throughout the rest of the treatise, as he compared the weight, flexibility, durability, conformability, and color of the coin to humility, discretion, patience, truth, and charity (338). Arrogant curiosity, vain praise, and presumption of sanctity are clear marks of a lack of humility, and hence of falsity. They should therefore be rejected. They are more likely to result from injury, imagination, illness, insanity, or depression (338–39). If, however, a revelation is useful for morality, society, or religion, it should be voiced without fear (341).

Another sign for genuine revelation is moderation (*discretio*). People who "vex themselves beyond measure with fasts, overextend their vigils, tax and weaken their brains with excessive tears," and don't follow advice are under demonic illusions (343). Patience—that is to say, the ability to go through tribulations and insults—is another true mark. Alas, this, too, could be a sign of arrogance and should be examined very carefully (348). The truth of visions is, at least on its face, easier to discern, as genuine visions correspond to Scripture, good morals, and sincere faith (348–50). But it is here more than in other tests that we find "the greatest need for the gift that the Apostle calls discernment of spirits" (350). It is here that the counterfeit coin most resembles the genuine, and the "deception is scarcely perceptible, save by the most skilled" (349). The same is true for divine charity. "If love is true, chaste, and holy, it helps us inconceivably much in coming to know heavenly things. But if it is vain, in error, and lustful, it will fashion for itself a different illusion, so that a person thinks

he sees or understands matters of which he is wholly ignorant" (357). This, obviously, is also never self-evident, and Gerson terminated his discussion, just as he opened it, with the admission that "unless it is easily apparent that deception or foolishness is involved . . . [we should] await the outcome of events" (363).

Gerson's first treatise on discernment, then, did not advance the discussion beyond that of Langenstein, and he came back to the topic fourteen years later. His "On the Testing of Spirits" was written in August 1415, during the Church Council at Constance, when the council was debating whether to reexamine the revelations of Saint Birgitta of Sweden. There was still a controversy about the saint, who had been canonized in 1391, and whose canonization had been reaffirmed in February 1415. Birgitta had experienced numerous visions, and Gerson raised the fear that this frequency itself was suspicious. Now Gerson was much more restrictive than he had been in 1401: "Just as everyone does not have the right to prophesy, to preach the Gospel, or to interpret tongues, since these duties more properly belong to those who have been officially and permanently appointed, so also it is regarding the testing of spirits" (26). Clericalization, however, is not a solution either, and the officials who are to discern spirits should do it through a combination of supernatural illumination and knowledge that they have acquired from Scripture. Abstract knowledge is never enough and cannot apply to particular cases, when only divine grace works. "No one is capable of discerning spirits merely through skill and learning based on a knowledge of Holy Scripture alone, unless such a one has personally experienced in himself the various struggles of the emotional soul" (29); and no one can "recognize that which is of the spirit unless he be of the spirit, so also no one can know with infallible certainty that which takes place in the soul of another unless it be through knowledge gained by personal experience, or by means of an inner feeling and insight" (27). Gerson felt the need to emphasize this point time and again: "The difference between the people whom we are discussing—one a theologian, the other a contemplative—resembles that which exists between a man who has merely studied about medicine and one who is experienced or has long practiced in that field. . . . [N]o one is capable of discerning spirits merely through skill and learning based on a knowledge of Holy Scripture alone . . . unless such a one has personally experienced in himself the various struggles of the emotions of the soul" (29).

What, then, ought to be discerned? The spiritual adviser, Gerson instructed, had to question the personality of the visionary, the content of the revelation, and the reason it took place (30). The content, however, is

less important than the personality: "The testing of spirits demands that the person to whom visions of this nature are reported should conduct himself prudently and cautiously." And here Gerson shifted from a gendered neutral discussion to a misogynistic attack on female visionaries. "If it is a woman, it is especially necessary to learn how she acts," he warned (36). A woman's enthusiasm is "extravagant, changeable, uninhibited, and therefore not to be considered trustworthy." A woman who talks too much about her mystical experiences, or is too curious, is likely to be a false visionary, while humility and moderation are usually signs of divine inspiration (30, 36–37). So, was Birgitta of Sweden a genuine visionary or a fake one? Gerson never answered. He raised a suspicion concerning the veracity of her experiences and obviously did not succeed in discrediting them, but he avoided ruling on the issue.

Gerson's treatise of 1415 taught that a combination of learning and grace-induced experience was the only safe way to discern spirits, and he posited a clear hierarchy between spiritual experiences of men and those of women, ruling that female spirituality should always be regarded with suspicion. In his "On the Examination of Doctrine" of 1423, Gerson continued his attack on female visionaries. They mistake mental illness for divine revelations and have the audacity to teach male clerics. Women are too easily seduced by demons, and it is therefore not suitable for them to be privy to divine wisdom, as it is not suitable for male clerics to trust such women. These *mulierculae*—little women—are both deceived and deceiving, which is why "the female sex is banned by apostolic authority from teaching in public."[12] Gerson now denounced both Catherine of Siena and Birgitta of Sweden, who had led the pope to come back to Rome and thus brought about the Great Schism of the church. And he revealed that on his deathbed Pope Gregory XI himself had admitted that he had been too credulous in allowing female prophetesses to influence him to return to Rome (469–70).

Thus, like Henry of Langenstein before him, Gerson failed to develop an objective and practical method for discerning spirits. As we have seen, Gerson shifted the focus from the content to the personality, then from the personality in general to women in particular, just to contradict himself in concluding that experience—which, unlike learning, is not gendered—is the only safe guide in such matters. What had been implicit in Henry of Langenstein's treatise, namely, the gendered aspect of the suspicion concerning ecstatic experiences, became explicit in Gerson's later treatises.[13] From Gerson on, the discourse of discernment of spirits became to a large degree a discourse on women's access to divine revelations. While he admitted that discernment is a divine gift, he also emphasized the crucial

and leading role of the church hierarchy in the discernment of spirits, and by so doing shaped the entire enterprise in a new way. The pre-Gerson philosophical and abstract discussion of the reality of visions, dreams, and other supernatural occurrences continued to flourish in the Renaissance and beyond. Following Gerson, however, much of the literature on discernment had a very practical "how to" nature, and a significant part of the literature on possession and discernment incorporated Gerson's implicit reduction of discernment of possessing spirits into a discernment of women's spiritual capacities and women's humility and moderation.

Both Henry of Langenstein and Jean Gerson dealt with discernment of spirits as direct responses to the growing number of claimants for prophetic power. In 1495 the Florentine prophet Girolamo Savonarola wrote a *Compendium of Revelations* (*Compendio di rivelazioni*) to defend his own prophetic powers, a rare rebuttal by a practicing prophet, whose claim to having received divine grace was challenged. Savonarola at the time was at the height of his power in the city, but Pope Alexander VI was already mobilizing his forces against him. Justifying his charisma, Savonarola explained that he was aware of the possibility of being deceived by demons and of confusing divine and demonic visions, but this was not his case: "I have been through the sacred scriptures and the lives and teachings of the saints from beginning to end and thus I understand well enough all the marks of diabolic as well as divine apparitions. I grasp how much they differ not only on this basis but also from experience."[14] While learning contributed to his confidence in his own visions, Savonarola emphasized that experience was a much more important indicator. But a better proof of the veracity of his revelations was the fact that they had been proven to be accurate and that they had brought spiritual reform to the city. Nothing in this self-explanation can serve as a guide for general rules for discernment. In fact, one can argue that Savonarola exhibited the pride and arrogance that were likely to be marks of demonic possession. Obviously, the pope, for one, did not share Savonarola's view that only good came out of his visions, whose beneficial usefulness was in the eyes of the beholder.

Interestingly, Savonarola went on to argue that his prophecies were genuine because they were not contaminated by contact with women. The imaginary tempter (*tentatore*), Savonarola's interlocutor in the *Compendium*, accused the Florentine prophet of relying on women visionaries, and the prophet was enraged. "As is publicly known in the city, I very rarely speak to women, and even then so briefly." He never trusted women, and even though there had been prophetesses in the past, God had chosen them only rarely to convey his messages, because "women lack experience,

are poor in judgements, fickle, and very weak, susceptible to vanity, and thus easily fooled by diabolic cunning."[15] Following Gerson, but advancing the gendered construction of visions even further, Savonarola suggested, in fact, that avoiding the company of women could in and of itself be a supportive sign of a genuine divine possession.

His justifications notwithstanding, Savonarola was unmasked to be "simulato eremita" and "tentatore." And, of course, he was not the only prophet whose claims were challenged in late medieval and early modern Europe. Lay prophecies from the mouths of "Piazza Prophetesses" and "Living Saints" were very popular in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, and many lay- and religious women became spiritual guides to both the laity and the clergy, initiated reforms of local churches, and used visions to advise rulers.[16] These forms of lay spirituality posed a growing threat to the church. Living saints were mostly women, and the influence they had over their followers meant a disruption of the accepted patterns of relations between the sexes and the established hierarchical order of the church.[17] By claiming for themselves direct channels to divine inspiration and revelation, these women's messages paralleled and increased the criticism of the church by the new reform movements, including the Savonarolans. In 1516, following the church's recovery from the Great Schism, the Fifth Lateran Church Council ordered bishops to investigate all claims of prophetic knowledge and mandated that before any prophecy or alleged vision were to be made public or preached, it should be approved.[18] But the council did not address the question of how to identify true prophets. Throughout the early modern period, guides for exorcists would repeat Gerson's criteria, emphasizing the need to question the content of the vision and the personality of the visionary. Moderation was valued, while ecstatic forms of prophecy were discouraged. The fluidity of these conceptual categories meant that, in practice, reputation, personal and familial power, and patronage networks determined to a significant degree a woman's chances of being recognized as a genuine prophetess.[19]

* * *

The tension between claims of prophetic power and church initiatives to systematize the theology of discernment of spirits was most prominent in the first half of the sixteenth century in Spain. As we remember, the early years of the century witnessed the growing popularity of mental prayers and Illuminist tendencies in the Iberian Peninsula, especially in Castile. Due in part to the inability of converts from Judaism to find their place within the

established Catholic Church, as well as to Rhino-Flemish and Franciscan mystical traditions and to Erasmian influence, many spiritually inclined believers developed new forms of religiosity that focused on personal interior experiences and raptures. They emphasized salvation through direct communication with the divine and de-emphasized the role of priestly mediation and even the Sacraments of the Catholic Church. Among them were four female mystics: the Franciscan tertiary Isabel de la Cruz and the *beatas* Francisca Hernández, María de Santo Domingo (the Beata of Piedrahita, c. 1486–c. 1524), and María de Cazalla (1487–?). All four women claimed visions and performed miracles and were examined by the Inquisition in suspicion of Alumbradismo. In 1525 the Inquisition published its first edict against the movement, and its attacks against it intensified in the following years.[20] The Inquisitional effort was judicial, not theological. Its agents did not advance the theological understanding of the discernment of spirits beyond Gerson and his contemporaries. Its systematic examination of suspicious spiritual occurrences, however, led to dramatic changes. Forms of Dominican and Franciscan spirituality that had been approved and even encouraged prior to 1520 were now more likely to be reviled as dangerous. Women (and a few men) who had been regarded as charismatic teachers, prophetesses, and mystics were now more likely to be viewed as heretics or, often, diabolically possessed. It is therefore not surprising that Francisco de Osuna included a discussion of discernment in *The Third Spiritual Alphabet*. Osuna explained that clerical appointment was not necessary for discernment, and that, at least theoretically, any person could discern as long as he or she had personally experienced inner movements.

> To illustrate how very helpful experience is, I knew a person who once consoled a man possessed by the devil. Even though he himself was not possessed by demons nor had he ever been, he explained everything the devil was doing in the other, the things he was inciting, and how he was acting with his soul, all of which the afflicted person confirmed as true. Now the person comforting was not speaking on the basis of revelation from God or the devil, but he did remember the spiritual things effected by grace that he had often felt, and by comparing, deducing, and contrasting one with another, he was able to conjecture and discern the evil the other was undergoing from the devil.[21]

Osuna's voice, however, was exceptional, and such self-confident views were soon to disappear from the Spanish scene. In his 1529 treatise on superstitions and witchcraft, the Spanish Franciscan friar Martín de Castañega

(?–1551?) paid special attention to the question of why women were more likely than men to be deceived by demons and to confuse divine and diabolic possessions. His *Treatise on Superstition and Witchcraft* (*Tratado de las supersticiones y hechicerías*) was written in Castilian and was meant for both "simple folk" ("los simples"), "to separate them from their errors and diabolic delusions," and for priests and other members of the clergy, who could use the short treatise as a practical guide during examinations of superstitions.[22] The book treated all aspects of witchcraft, superstitions, and diabolism, and combined firsthand experiences of encounters with witches (many of them males) and recitations of preexisting notions and clichés of demonologists. Castañega was concerned with corruption of the Sacraments and sacramentals of the church by unauthorized individuals and by ignorant clerics, and described many spells and popular practices that were used by both clerics and the laity to inflict harm as well as to protect from it. Among the superstitious practices, collaboration with demons loomed large. The devil targets women for collaboration because his intention is to subvert and mock divine rituals, and since only males can administer the Sacraments, it is befitting that only women would administer Satan's blasphemies. Women are most easily tricked by the demon because they are more carnal, credulous, curious, and talkative. Their humors are imbalanced, their nature makes them more ignorant than men, and their physical weakness makes them susceptible to demons.[23]

Women's nature being what it is, they are also prone to simulate divine or diabolic possessions. Therefore, when demons seem to possess a person, "one must first note and examine, with much vigilance, which spirits are those by whom the person is tormented, because through experiences it is seen that some persons, especially women, through their own malice, pretend [fingen] that they are bound by spirits or are demonically possessed, just as they sometimes fake [fingen] being the victims of maleficia or sorcery. They do so because of some dissatisfaction they have with their lovers or husbands, or because of the great carnal passion they have for someone, or because of the terrible temptations of the flesh that the demons ignite in them."[24] It is therefore important to develop a method for distinguishing not just between divine and diabolic possessions or between natural and demonic afflictions, but also between genuine and simulated possessions.

Castañega introduced here a new category, namely, simulated diabolic possession ("endemoniados fingidos"), and talked about women who were not deceived by a demonic delusion but were deceiving others, knowing full well that they were not, in fact, possessed by either good or evil spirits.[25] It is not clear what, according to Castañega, might motivate a woman to fake

diabolic possession, or what is the theoretical and theological foundation of the category. Why exactly would a woman who is dissatisfied with her lover or husband turn to faking possession, rather than, say, actually signing a pact with the devil? But the Spanish theologian did not argue that simulation of possession excludes demonic causality. On the contrary, there is a direct connection between simulated possession and female carnality. As Lu Ann Homza pointed out, since the devil "is a liar and the father of lies" (John 8:44), "when a woman faked her subjugation to demons, she revealed her attachment to them through the deception itself."[26] Both lies and carnality are the hallmarks of the devil, just as they are hallmarks of women. Because of this natural tendency to lie, "a woman who is faking her demonic possession easily produces frightful gestures, and the more so if the demon helps her, and the spectators become frightened watching her."[27] Luis de Granada (1504–1588) had a different take on this issue. Women who prophesy and pretend to enjoy divine revelations and favors end up getting possessed by the demon, which enters them to pervert and deceive them.[28] How, then, to discern spirits? Castañega did not answer directly, but his discussion made it clear that female mystical experiences were almost always either demonic or fake. The affinity and collaboration between the devil and women were such that whether they were genuinely possessed or simulating their possession, the source of women's experiences was likely to always be demonic.

Merely a year later, another Spanish theologian, Pedro Ciruelo (1470–c. 1560) penned his own *Treatise Reproving All Superstitions and Forms of Witchcraft* (*Reprobación de las supersticiones y hechicerías*). Unlike Castañega's book, which did not enjoy much circulation, Ciruelo's treatise was printed eleven times between 1530 and 1577, more than any other vernacular work on witchcraft in early modern Spain. Following Castañega's treatise, the book described diabolic interventions in the world, addressing the collaboration between witches and demons, and repeating standard accusations against witches.[29] Ciruelo, however, was much more learned than Castañega. He had studied at the universities of Salamanca and Paris before being appointed in 1510 to the chair of Thomist theology at the University of Alcalá and later held the same chair at Salamanca, and his treatise echoed his Thomist background. Ciruelo's discussion of witchcraft was a systematic exposition of the different ways in which witchcraft contradicted both natural and divine law, and the different dangers that were inherent in it to human souls. He started his discussion by declaring that since "no natural cause can be found to explain how [witches] do [amazing] things, it is necessary to say that the cause is spiritual and supernatural, that is,

an angel, either good or evil" (87). The devil invented superstitions and malice due to his envy, and any collaboration with the devil is abomination (88–108). Necromancy, false astrology, divination, ordeals, and omens are all superstitious. Dreams present a more complicated challenge. Ciruelo distinguished among three different types of dreams: natural dreams (due to humoral imbalance); moral dreams (which continue the occupations of the previous day because "the imaginations are wrapped up in their affairs" [160]); and supernatural or theological dreams—revelations from either "God or good or bad angels. . . . In a revelation from God or a good angel, there is no mention of frivolous events. Nor does such revelation occur frequently, but rather, only in a situation of grave importance that concerns the common good of the people of God. The man who experiences such a vision is convinced that it is genuine because God enlightens his understanding and guarantees the truth of the revelation" (161–62). Demonic revelations, on the other hand, are more frequent and are concerned with frivolous affairs. The dreamer, a necromancer or a divine, is a sinner, who enters into an alliance with the Enemy of God and becomes a slave to the devil (162). Only trained theologians have the probative knowledge to distinguish between divine and diabolic supernatural occurrences (163).

So much of Ciruelo's wrath was directed at clerics who abused their power due to greed or simple ignorance, that his trust in clerics and theologians as the only people capable of discerning visions was undermined. Such priests used spells and amulets, excommunicated locusts, caterpillars, and other vermin, and warded off clouds and tempests (270, 289–311). Also included among them were exorcists who were not ordained (but had received first tonsure), who performed public exorcism employing rituals that were nothing but necromancy (273). Ciruelo's main concern, then, became the discernment of exorcists and an attack on pseudo-exorcists, both lay and clerics, who used public exorcism to advance their own claim to fame. By giving the devil a platform to show his strength, superstitious exorcists deceive and exploit illiterate believers. What's worse, they encourage Satan to pursue his deceit (273). Once false exorcists were to be exposed, most diabolic possessions would also disappear, "since the devil finds little support" for his fakery (276). Ciruelo, then, accused false exorcists of being the direct cause of false possessions. Wherever they function, "they cause more havoc than a severe pestilence. For a plague destroys only the body; the evil exorcist destroys the soul" (276).

Ciruelo seemed to solve the tensions inherent in discernment by stating that all possessions are more likely to be simulations than genuine. Most, however, does not mean all; a few genuine cases of possession do exist, and,

as for discerning them, Ciruelo could only summarize what had already been said by numerous theologians before him: "Let the priest determine whether the afflicted person is really possessed by the devil or whether he is suffering from an illness that attacks his heart or his brain. Sometimes, what appears to be a case of possession really is not; in order to be certain, a wise physician should be consulted. Moreover, there are signs perceptible in the patient which signify whether he is possessed" (282). Knowledge of a foreign language was one such clear sign of demonic possession, and a claim by the spirit to be the soul of a dead person was another (282). The first of these signs, alas, had characterized mystics and contemporary *beatas* no less than demoniacs, and as such offered no breakthrough in the theological enterprise, while the belief in revenants, as we have seen, remained common in nontheological conceptualization of possession and was even shared by a few theologians.[30]

What was at stake for both Castañega and Ciruelo to argue that demonic possession was more likely to be deception than a true possession? Both were opposing Alumbradismo emphasis on passivity as the route for perfection. Contemplative interiorized passivity, just like the claim of being possessed by demons, could be construed as a defense against moral responsibility for sin. And so, by distrusting most possessions, the Spanish theologians forced allegedly possessed people to assume responsibility for their actions. By discrediting the veracity of demonic possession, both theologians also undermined the reality of spiritual "positive" possession and of Alumbradismo theology.

A third leading Spanish theologian who expressed skepticism toward both divine and diabolic possessions was Juan de Ávila (1499–1569). One of the most prominent and influential preachers and reformers in early modern Spain, Juan de Ávila studied at the University of Alcalá, the center of the reform movement in Spain, and was arrested in 1531 on suspicion of Alumbradismo. Following his release from prison in 1533, he continued to value internalized devotion but advocated moderation in all things spiritual. In his elaborate commentary on Psalm 44, *Listen, Daughter* (*Audi, filia*) (written in the 1530s, completed 1548, published 1556, put on the Index 1559)—a book that was written for Doña Sancha Carrillo, a noblewoman and a *beata*—he expressed opposition to visions and ecstasies that, he argued, were most often "a sign either of pride, or at least of curiosity, which is full of danger . . . [and] are not so much to be desired, as feared." This is especially the case with revelations that instruct a woman to admonish or reprehend another person, especially a priest or a prelate. Revelations are "great snares" of the devil, trusting them is a great blasphemy, and

escaping them is the only way to make sure that one does not mistake a divine revelation for a demonic one or vice versa.[31] Humans cannot discern spirits, he concluded, unless their content is so obviously against Scripture and the church that their discernment is self-evident (260). There are, nonetheless, a few signs that could help a visionary. If the vision or experience is vain and induces pride, it is likely to be demonic, while if it leads to humility, it is likely to be divine (261–63). "A man who believeth himselfe, saveth the Devill a labour, in tempting him; for he is Devill inough to himselfe" (270).

Juan de Ávila's oppositions to spiritual experiences and visions notwithstanding, when his disciple Teresa of Ávila submitted to him the manuscript of *The Book of Her Life*, he discerned her experiences to be divine: "It seems to me that [your visions] have been of great benefit to your soul; they have especially made you better realize your own misery and fault and have helped you mend your ways. They have endured for a long time, and always with spiritual benefit. They have inclined you to love God, to scorn yourself, and to do penance. I see no reason to condemn them. I am more inclined to hold them as good under the condition that you always take caution not to accept blindly everything that you experience."[32] But he admitted that many people whom he knew were deceived by demonic visions. What, then, makes Teresa's visions above suspicion? Juan de Ávila's criterion seems to be the content of the experience rather than the personality of the visionary, or, to be more precise, it is the vision's long-term influence on the personal characteristics of the protagonist. This further highlights the inability to develop any "objective" and infallible criteria, and the circular movement back and forth between discerning experiences and discerning persons. Teresa's visions were divine because Juan de Ávila held her to be above suspicion and due to her humility and submission to male authority. Others clerics and Inquisitors, however, did not share Juan de Ávila's trust in Teresa, and she had her share of conflicts with the Inquisition, which did raise concerns about the reliability of her visions and the possibility of demonic interference.[33]

Teresa's contemporary Diego Pérez de Valdivia (1510–1589), another disciple of Juan de Ávila, also tried his hand at developing a method of discerning experiences. His *Advice for the Recollected* (*Aviso de gente recogida*) (1585) was a 700-page-long guide to female lay mystics (*beatas*) and enjoyed popularity in both Spain and Italy. Pérez de Valdivia pointed out that *beatas* at times suffered demonic temptations and lacked experienced spiritual advisers who could distinguish such occurrences from spiritual exercises. He therefore advised *beatas* to moderate and structure their spiritual activities.

In fact, they should pursue meditation and not contemplation. They should also avoid, as much as possible, the company of men and spend as little time as possible in the company of any one particular spiritual adviser or confessor. He warned them against any attempt to claim that spiritual experiences substituted for church teaching and the Sacraments, and insisted that a *beata* should never try to become a teacher or to preach.[34] Pérez de Valdivia further argued that most bodily manifestations of alleged divine grace were demonic or a result of hysteria and agreed with his precursors that women were more likely to be deceived by demons, to mistake diabolic delusions for divine visions, or to simulate revelations for personal gains (570). But he, too, had to admit that "no vision can be absolutely certain."[35] The devil transforms himself into an angel of light, and therefore the discernment of spirits is always difficult. However, self-proclaimed visionaries are very likely to be under demonic illusions because they lack humility (578–79). Equally likely to be fraudulent are most cases of demonic possession. Pérez de Valdivia repeated Ciruelo's attack on exorcists, accusing them of staging spectacles and enabling the devil to increase vain curiosity and the intermingling of men and women in physical proximity. "For if there are no crowds, there are not possessed women," he stated (595–97).

Thus, the Spanish exercise in discernment of spirits after 1525 put all mystics and claimants for spiritual enlightenment between a rock and a hard place, and women, while not necessarily the target, were the main victims of this (failure of) theology. Restricted education prevented them from reaching divine inspiration by means of speculative (learned) mysticism, and they had to rely on divine enthusiasm or inspiration to achieve religious self-transformation. But the techniques and means that characterized such ecstatic interactions with the divine were themselves placed under growing suspicion (unless they were experienced by individuals whose renown, humility, and submission to authority placed them above such suspicions), while the boundary between a licit vision and an illicit and demonic delusion or simulation was totally porous. Teresa of Ávila and a few other outstanding women notwithstanding, a vision experienced by a woman was in and of itself an indication that it was likely to be demonic, especially when the woman in question was involved with any of the new techniques of interiority. In fact, approval of female visions had become so rare by the early years of the seventeenth century, that Teresa's defender and the first Reformed Carmelite in France, Denis de la Mère de Dieu (1584–1622), found it necessary to remind his readers that dismissing true prophets was at least as dangerous as listening to false ones.[36] The devil, he explained, attempts to cause the Catholic Church to distrust divine revelations. He

first convinces "simple and credulous" people that they want to experience revelations and then makes them believe, mistakenly, in the fantasies and "false illusions" that he puts into their heads. This discredits them and revelations in general. But some revelations are divine, and there are clear signs to discern them. They can be divided into two groups: marks of the person and marks of the vision itself. The marks of such person should be the personal characteristics (not too agitated, too curious, or too credulous); his or her age and sex (with women, the young, and the elderly likely to be deceived); his or her manners, deportment, and way of life. The vision itself ought to be chaste, modest, calm, filled with mercy, and lead to good feelings; it has to be in accordance with theology; and it must have a positive impact on the visionary (32–39). While Denis de la Mère de Dieu did not add anything new to the discussion of discernment, the mere fact that he construed his argument as a defense of, rather than an attack on, spiritual experiences demonstrates the degree to which all such events were discredited by his time. By the early seventeenth century, a voice like Denis's was a rare one indeed. The Spanish mistrust of interiorized spirituality and the Spanish category of "simulated possession" were to enjoy a long career. Numerous guides for confessors and exorcists devoted much space to different methods of discerning among divine possessions, diabolic possessions, and fakeries (both human and demonic). Repeated edicts against Alumbradismo repeatedly revived the anxiety concerning these issues and reinforced the connection among interiorized unsupervised spiritual exercises, demonism, sexual lasciviousness, and simulation of sanctity and possession. So much so, that by the middle of the seventeenth century, the focus of discerning activities shifted from the theological question of the content of visions to the judicial and moral issues of voluntary fraudulent behavior.[37]

* * *

Castañega and Ciruelo's recently popularized category of false demonic possession further complicated the task of developing a method for the discernment of spirits. It reappeared later in a draft for a new Roman Rite that was compiled in the 1580s by Cardinal Giulio Antonio Santori at the request of Pope Gregory XIII. Following Filippo Neri's warning that "for all sorts of reasons, [women] simulate possession by the demon" ("ob varias causas a daemone obsessas simulant"), Santori emphasized that, due to human depravity, "it often happens that some simulate possession [aliqua simulasse se immundo spiritu obsideri], whether due to material or

carnal lust, or to avoid punishment, or [due to] hatred or desperation."[38] (Interestingly, when the official Roman Rite of Paul V was published in 1614, it did not contain any reference to simulated demonic possession.)

The recent "simulated possession" was joined in the second half of the sixteenth century by "simulated sanctity," a category that was not, theoretically, distinct from the traditional false prophecy and hypocrisy, but that was to reshape the entire discourse of discernment in the later part of the sixteenth century and during most of the following century.[39] While the discussion of false prophecy referred to the content of the occurrence, simulated or false sanctity referred to the personal morality and intentions of the protagonist. As such, it was discerned not according to the inherent characteristics of a spiritual or demonic experience, but according to a set of criteria that referred to unacceptable behaviors that were practiced by simulating women (and a few men), who, it was argued, imitated the external characteristics of spiritual sanctity. The discernment of the personal attributes, especially of women, was not new. Gerson had already recommended it. But Gerson asked whether a specific woman was worthy of divine revelations, not whether a specific woman was deceiving. Now, under the rubric "false sanctity," hypocrisy and intentional deception became the targets of discernment, and the practitioners had to be punished, rather than exorcised.

As we have seen, Langenstein and Gerson had already developed their methods of discernment as direct responses to concrete cases of spiritual visions whose origins were in doubt. The simulation of sanctity and a fraudulent behavior were also main accusations against *alumbrados* in Spain in the 1520s and 1530s. In 1543 Magdalena de la Cruz, the prioress of the convent of the Poor Clares in Cordova who was regarded by all who knew her as a mystic and a living saint, admitted that she had been aligned with Satan since her early childhood and that she had faked her sanctity. She was imprisoned for the rest of her life. Fifty years later we find the category "suspected of simulating sanctity" ("simulate sanctitatis suspictione") as an accusation against the Neapolitan illiterate laywoman Alfonsina Rispola, who spent the 1580s and 1590s in jail due to the Inquisition's inability to discern her spiritual behaviors.[40] Rispola first had a vision of Saint Anne, who promised her that Naples would be saved from an epidemic. She later visited hell, purgatory, and Paradise; received the stigmata; encountered saints Peter, Jerome, Francis, and Catherine of Siena; and even participated in the Last Supper. Rispola was first arrested in 1581, but during her examination the judges could not find anything unorthodox in her visions, her humble manner, or her avoidance of scandal and publicity. They

chose nonetheless to keep her imprisoned. In 1592 the Roman Inquisition, which intervened in the process, also could not find anything heretical in Rispola's visions. A reopening of the case by the Neapolitan judges focused on questioning Rispola's acquaintances, who were equally divided between those who trusted the divinity of her visions and those who argued that she had faked her sanctity and was possessed by the devil. Rispola herself was in the meantime convinced of the demonic origins of her experiences. She asked to be taken on a pilgrimage to a shrine that was known for its efficacy against demonic possession, and she denied any claims for sanctity. But it was too late, and she was condemned to perpetual imprisonment in the monastery of Santa Maria della Consolazione, from which, twenty-five years later, she was still begging to be released.

By the 1620s and 1630s, simulation of sanctity became a legal category that defined individuals (mostly women) who alleged that they had visions, even when nothing heretical was found in the content of their revelations.[41] A *Handbook for Proceedings in Cases before the Holy Office* (*Prattica per procedere nella cause del S. Offizio*) by Cardinal Desiderio Scaglia, compiled in the mid-1630s and circulated in manuscripts among exorcists, devoted an entire section to the legal issues involving simulated sanctity and directly connected it to women in general and to spiritual women in particular. Such women are "tutte fintioni, hipocrisie et artificii." Due to their "weakmindedness, through pretense motivated by the prideful ambition to be considered holy and dear to God, and sometimes through [diabolic] illusion, [they] say that they have received revelations from God concerning the condition of the Church, revolutions in state, [and the status of] persons living or dead; and that they have been favored by divine visions; and that God and the saints speak to them. And if anyone in doubt consults them about whether [particular] human actions are sinful, they claim to pray over the matter and then give their ruling."[42] Some men also fake holiness, and they do so to gain money or sexual favors. Human evil, rather than demonic control, motivates these people. While the fear of simulation of sanctity itself was not new, the criminalization of this behavior and the intensity of the anxiety surrounding it were novelties, as was Scaglia's insistence that such hypocrites should be brought to trial. Following a discernment of these people's spirits and the discovery of their false pretenses, a guilty man should be sentenced to exile, imprisonment, or the galleys, while a convicted laywoman should be confined in prison, her own home, or some other place. A nun should be punished and disciplined according to the rules of her order. But how exactly were such fakeries to be exposed? When it came to actual practices of discerning spirits, all Scaglia could

offer was to refer his readers back to Gerson and to admit that, "Given the devil's deceits and subtle stratagems, it is very difficult to determine which apparitions and revelations are divine and which are [diabolical] illusions, and similarly, [to tell] which ecstasies are caused by God, distinguishing them from that lulling of the senses brought about by the devil, [natural] indisposition, or the imbalance of tempers termed 'ecstasy' or 'rapture due to weakness.'"[43]

In Spain, too, discerning hypocrisy remained a major concern throughout the seventeenth century. Numerous guides for Inquisitors elaborated techniques to uncover false revelations, all the while reminding readers that some visions are nonetheless divine. There was little that was original in these guides besides the association of *hipocresía* with beguine spirituality and with Alumbradismo, and their reaffirmation of the traditional view that women were more likely to be deceived and/or to fake sanctity. Concurrently, theologians and physicians joined forces in trying to find natural, as opposed to supernatural, causes for as many cases of "possession" as possible. Once revelations or raptures could be determined to result from melancholy, imbalance of humors, hunger, physical exhaustion, lack of sleep, or fervent imagination, the reliability of all supernatural experiences would be undermined and with it the need to develop a theology of discernment.[44] Alas, as we have already seen in chapter 3, it was easy to rebuke these naturalistic explanations and to argue that Satan acts in mysterious ways and could trigger natural afflictions and conditions as well as supernatural ones. Substituting preternatural etiology with natural causality could work in a specific case but could not in and of itself offer a solution.

Thus, the new legal category of "simulated sanctity" and the new naturalistic attempts at explanation further muddied an already confused attempt to discern spirits and were both, in fact, admissions of a failure. Both signified the impossibility of discerning spiritual experiences according to their content. Both were expressions of theologians' and Inquisitors' frustration of trying, hope against hope, to stabilize an experience that was beyond their control and that had been eluding them for more than a millennium. By examining only last (natural) causes, by criminalizing what could be an ingenuous mistake of thinking oneself to be possessed by the Holy Spirit or by demons, and by arguing that such misguided beliefs were always more likely to be malevolent deceptions than mere mistakes, theologians and the Inquisition also privileged a medical or a judicial process over the dialectical process of negotiations that had characterized previous attempts to determine the identities of possessing spirits.

This shift paralleled other expansions of prosecutorial and judicial enterprises in the later part of the sixteenth century. In fact, the growing popularity of the categories "simulation of sanctity" and "simulation of diabolic possession" indicated an attempt to reshape the boundaries of spirituality. The crucial demarcation line in matters of spirituality was no longer drawn between the divine and the diabolic—two supernatural categories—but between sincerity and deception: two moral categories. The distinction at the very center of the entire attempt to discern possessing spirits was portrayed now as no longer deriving from tenants of Catholic belief (Truth of Revelation) but from moral and natural law (Truth of Reason). Yet, as the case of Alfonsina Rispola demonstrated, this process of criminalization in and of itself still could not, and did not, solve the problem, just as the attempt to naturalize most cases of possession failed. Even an illiterate laywoman could still show enough signs of divine possession to be mistaken for twenty years for a genuine visionary.

The category "simulated sanctity" was also an indication of the growing anxiety concerning the reliability of signs. If external marks failed to distinguish between the divine and the demonic, what was the reliability of the visual in general? If sanctity and demonic possession could be fabricated, and if priests, exorcists, and confessors could be led astray by ignorant women, what could assure us that they were right in their pronouncements on other issues? The lingering anxiety concerning demonic possession and the forms of interiorized spirituality that resembled it led some theologians to prefer to dismiss the entire construct as falsity, and an ever-growing number of such behaviors were now categorized as simulation. In the process, women's unreliability in matters spiritual was reinforced. While both men and women could be deceived by the devil or receive divine revelations, and even clerics and theologians were not immune to mistaking one experience for the other, it was now repeatedly stated that the very nature of women made them more untrustworthy than men, and just as likely to deceive as to be deceived.

And yet, when all was said and done, and when the new naturalistic and legal categories came into common usage, it was still the responsibility of the church to develop a method for the discernment of spirits. The need to maintain the authority of priests to discern the authentic from the fake and the divine from the diabolic, to combat Protestant deniers and skeptics, and to put an end to or at least regulate the activities of itinerant and lay exorcists motivated the two major contributions to the theology and practice of discernment of possessing spirits in the last quarter of the sixteenth century and the early seventeenth century. Girolamo Menghi—whom we

have already met—and the Ambrosian brother Francesco Maria Guazzo (1570–c. 1640)—respectively the most prolific and the most prominent synthesizer of Italian thinking about possession and exorcism—tried in the last quarter of the sixteenth century to present coherent systems for discernment of spirits. For both, the main concern was how to distinguish natural causes of affliction from supernatural ones, and, in this, both were representatives of the growing mistrust and dismissal of forms of passive interiorized spirituality that could have been attributed in the past to possession. Menghi listed seven signs of genuine diabolic possession. People who are possessed by demons speak foreign languages that had previously been unknown to them; they reveal secrets and predict the future, demonstrate physical strength above their condition or age, exhibit hatred toward priests and holy objects, may sink into melancholy and desperation, explode in rage and blasphemous outbursts, and, finally, they vomit sharp objects, including knives and pieces of glass.[45] There was nothing new in any of these signs, and, interestingly, Menghi ignored almost completely the issue of discerning between divine and diabolic spirits. He did admit, however, that in some rare cases the very same signs that he listed as clear marks of diabolic possession could indicate divine grace. Exorcists should therefore be trained and experienced enough not to lead spiritual people into despair and damnation due to their mistrust and misdiagnosis of their experiences (*Compendio*, 152). From a historical-theological perspective, the parallels between the morphological signs of both forms of possession are not surprising, Menghi reminded his readers. Demons, after all, are fallen angels, and as such possess all the powers and attributes of good angels. They have perfect intelligence, memory, and will, and can predict the future (but only of natural events). They know human inclinations and dispositions, and do not err (1, 21–29, 33). Like good angels, they can appear as angels of light, and even as Christ, the Virgin Mary, or saints (42–43).[46] But while good angels possess people for the glory of God and induce good feelings, fallen angels harm and cause pain.[47]

Given the abstract and subjective nature of the latter distinctions, it is not surprising that the only practical advice the Italian exorcist had for his disciples was to examine the bodies, rather than the souls, of the possessed and to look for clear signs of physical pain, such as stomachaches. Confession was a reliable remedy for possession-related pains, he stated. Therefore, if a confession reduces the aches, the patient is, indeed, possessed by evil spirits, and the exorcist can set himself to work expelling the possessing demons.[48] Thus, bodily pain becomes the key for spiritual discernment, in complete contradiction to Menghi's own warning that bodily

affliction is just as likely to derive from natural causes and should therefore not be trusted as a mark of genuine diabolic possession.

Writing a few years later, Brother Francesco Maria Guazzo summarized the discourse of discernment on the eve of the publication of the official and authorized papal guide for exorcists, the *Rituale Romanum* of 1614. Guazzo divided his discussion of discernment into two separate parts, and his *Compendium maleficarum* (Milan, 1608) distinguished between the discernment of visions and differentiating between witchcraft and possession. Alas, it offered nothing new concerning either type of these discernments. "Touching revelations or visions and as to the character of the person who sees them, much must be taken into consideration if the true is to be distinguished from the false."[49] It must first be determined whether the visionary or demoniac is a good Catholic and "whether the person's honesty and virtues point to the sincerity of his faith . . . for we must not believe the proud and ambitious, the impatient, the carnally minded, drunkards, those who cherish anger or stir up hatred and spread dissent, or those who defame others; nor hypocrites who display and parade some exceptional proof of devotion and penitence, against the approval of their superiors in the Church" (136–37). The exorcist should then examine whether the person in question does not suffer from poor health, black bile, excessive fasting, or want of sleep. Brain damage may cause "clouding of the imagination," and people who suffer from any of the above symptoms sometimes see, hear, or taste things that are not there, "for the devil easily deludes them, since they eagerly accept and believe the images of false appearances" (137). The age and sex of the person are also crucial. The old are known to be delirious, the young stupid, and "as for the female sex, it is agreed that it must be regarded with the greater suspicion."[50] People who practice spiritual regimens are especially suspect, and it is interesting to note that when Guazzo talked about such people, he slipped from the generic masculine to the feminine: "If the person is an old practitioner of spiritual exercises, or whether *she* [emphasis mine] is only a novice; whether the devil has in other ways attempted, with or without success, to deceive her; and whether her former prophecies were true . . . there must be suspicion of fraud" (137). Quoting Apollonius, Tertullian, Johannes Nider, Jean Gerson, and Giovanni Francesco Pico della Mirandola, Guazzo repeated the familiar litany: women's fervor is too eager; their bodies are too humid, more prone to perceive phantoms, and slower to resist temptations. Women are more lascivious, luxurious, and avaricious. They are also more foolish than men, have less reasoning power, and are "more apt to mistake natural or demoniacal suggestions for ones of Divine origin" (137).

It was clear, then, that women were less trustworthy than men and that their visions should be examined more carefully. But what indicators would enable such discernment? Unsurprisingly, Guazzo did not offer an answer. He recorded a few famous cases of demonic deceptions, stretching all the way from the early martyr Saint Simeon to recent cases in Peru and the Spanish Netherlands. In this latter case, a possessed nun spoke alternatively in a gentle voice, claiming that she was Jesus Christ, and in a harsh voice, "more like a demon." In the divine voice, she pronounced devout words and even consecrated the Eucharist, while in the demonic voice, she cursed and blurted out impieties. People believed her to be a priestess and adored the Eucharist she had blessed. Luckily, it was then found out that she was an impostor. Two things indicated it: the first was that she had in the past been possessed; the second that "she dared to usurp the priestly office which belongs to men, not women" (141). Guazzo's argument was, in fact, a completely circular syllogism: the woman was discovered to be possessed because she had already been known to be possessed, and her devotion was exposed to be a fake because she went too far and crossed the demarcation line between the realm of women and the clerical male monopoly. But there was nothing inherent in her pronouncements themselves that enabled her exposure.

Guazzo, then, while admitting the possibility of divine possession, posited that all cases of possession, both divine and diabolic, were much more likely to be deceptions, voluntary simulations, or simple natural illnesses, and that women's experiences should not be trusted. After failing to give a satisfactory technique to distinguish divine from diabolic possession, Guazzo proceeded to his second concern, arguing that it was also not any easier to discern between the possessed and the bewitched. He listed forty-seven different physical signs of possession, among them "if something moves about the body like a live thing, so that the possessed feels as if ants were crawling under their skin"; pains, palpitation, pricking, or swelling in different body parts; and blisters or swelling of the tongue or throat. Another group of symptoms includes not physical but preternatural signs, among them the ability to speak foreign languages (especially the ability to speak "literary and grammatical Latin"), hearing voices while being possessed but not remembering anything afterward, and a temporary inability to attend Mass or to recite specific prayers. Abstinence from food for more than seven days is another clear sign, as is temporary paralysis, vomiting, and indigestion (167–68). Guazzo, whose concern in this section of his *Compendium* was to distinguish between demonic possession and witchcraft, totally overlooked the fact that the last group of symptoms

characterized divine possession or ecstasy as much as it described diabolic possession.

Guazzo conceded at this point that some of the signs that he had just listed as clear signs of demonic possession were also common in cases of bewitchment (169). It was nonetheless possible to tell a person who was "simply bewitched," because such a person suffered from a severe illness that was not easily diagnosed, or that the medication the physician applied did not help. At other times, the patient "gives the most mournful sighs without any manifest cause" or loses his appetite and is wasted or emaciated (169–70). Needless to say, there was not much in this list that could help either a physician or an exorcist. It is likely that Guazzo himself was aware of the shortcomings of his list, because he went on to add a few additional marks. Those who are bewitched cannot bear to look at the face of a priest (but, he admitted, neither can possessed people who are not bewitched). A more promising sign is the recognition that if by chance the witch who cast the spell visits the sick man, "the patient is at once affected with great uneasiness and seized with terror and trembling" (170). In his discussion of the discernment of visions, Guazzo insisted on the futility of trying to use physical qualities and external bodily signs as markers for genuine possessions and visions. In his attempt to distinguish between demonic possession and bewitchment, however, he relied almost exclusively on physical symptoms, many of them the same symptoms that he himself had decried as insufficient in the previous section of his discussion. What he was left with was the hope that the witch, rather than the discerning exorcists or physician, would pay a visit to her victim and thus trigger a dramatic self-discernment by the sick person, whose own horror of the visiting witch would expose the demonic cause of the possession.

In the last years of the sixteenth century, then, we can detect a clear shift in both Italian and Spanish treatises concerning the discernment of spirits. Exorcists were advised to distrust external manifestations of possession, be it divine or diabolic. The traditional anxiety concerning "simulated possession" matured into a legal category and was augmented with "simulation of sanctity." Together, both categories led to discrediting forms of interiorized spirituality that people like Langenstein and Gerson had taken seriously, but that since then had grown so popular that they threatened the right balance in the church between hierarchy and individual initiatives and between interiority and good works. Langenstein and Gerson were also the first to teach that women's visions were less trustworthy than men's and should be scrutinized more carefully. It was Gerson who also suggested discerning the female visionary's personality, and not just the

content of her experience. By the last years of the sixteenth century, the behavior of the allegedly possessed woman became the very center of the practice of discernment, and the original suspicion had transformed into a preconceived notion that women were likely to deceive and to fake spiritual experiences maliciously and intentionally.[51]

* * *

The history of discernment of spirits in early modern France was similar to developments in Italy and Spain, and can therefore be summarized briefly. Throughout most of the sixteenth century, the Catholic Church in France encouraged and propagated cases of demonic possession in which the possessing demons revealed their true identity as agents of Satan and his disciples, the Protestants. Tortured and threatened by Catholic exorcists, possessing French demons admitted that the devil resides in Geneva, that their main fear was of the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, and that invoking the Virgin Mary and other saints was a guaranteed remedy against Satan's machinations.[52] Very few French theologians in this period bothered to participate in the larger Catholic discussions concerning the etiology of possession, the clericalization of exorcism, and the discernment of spirits. In fact, they welcomed the political and religious expediency of demonic possession, and any attempt to question such cases too thoroughly endangered the efficiency of this means of religious propaganda. But the attitude of the Gallican Church started to change in the last quarter of the century, when the fear of a Protestant takeover subsided. Thus, in 1583, the National Synod of the church met in Rheims and ordered that "before the priest undertakes an exorcism, he ought to inquire diligently about the life of the possessed person, his status, reputation, health, and other circumstances; and to get in contact with intelligent, prudent, and well-advised people, because often the more credulous are deceived, and often melancholics, lunatics, and the bewitched deceive the exorcist, saying that they are possessed and tormented by the devil; and in these cases they need medical remedies rather than prayers or exorcisms." Consequently, national and provincial synods repeated this and similar warnings throughout the following two centuries.[53] As these rules made clear, the dangers of fraudulent possessions and the likelihood of a purely natural etiology of alleged possessions were thus introduced to France. This could have been due to developments in Italy and Spain or to the popularity of Menghi's writings. In addition, the scandals and debates that accompanied cases of possession and exorcism that were used as propaganda (such as the case of

Nicole Obry, which we have encountered in chapter 1) might have led some elements within the French church to distance themselves from overzealous and unrestrained overuse of exorcism. In 1587, shortly after the church council of Rheims, the moderate (*politique*) French philosopher and judge Jean Bodin echoed the new skeptical approach, warning French theologians how difficult it was to discern spirits. But Bodin, too, stumbled into the same impasse that had characterized all previous attempts to discern spirits. The diagnosis of good and malevolent spirits could not be based on observable actions, he said, but required the assessment of the intentions behind them. Drawing on his legalistic notion of guilt, he explained that "to say that the sign of good or evil spirits must be determined by good or bad works is certainly true. But the difficulty is what are good works? For although fasting, prayers, chastity and modesty, solitude, contemplation, and curing the sick are good works in themselves, however, if they are done to honor Satan or an idol . . . far be it that these are good, rather they are despicable, diabolic, and damnable."[54] While on its face there was nothing new in Bodin's formulation, his statement can be read as a further undermining of the entire attempt to discern spirits based on external manifestations. Only intentions can indicate the presence of divine grace within a person. Like Castañega and Ciruelo in Spain and Scaglia and Santori in Rome, Bodin shifted the focus of discernment from signs and decipherable actions to the claimants' internal motivations and, by so doing, turned discernment into a judicial undertaking.

Concrete cases of fraud contributed to a growing skepticism concerning the reliability of existing methods of discernment or, put more bluntly, the willingness of some individual exorcists and religious orders to perform exorcism without, first, determining the trustworthiness of the demoniac and the preternatural essence of her symptoms. In 1587 a young woman was brought from Amiens to Paris to be exorcised by the Capuchins. The woman manifested the clear marks of diabolic possession, and during exorcisms she screamed, trembled, and spoke some Latin. A physician who was present suspected fakery, but only the appearance in Paris of the bishop of Amiens unmasked the possessed woman as simulating. The bishop recalled that two years before, the same woman had been brought in front of him, escorted by a large crowd of followers. The bishop then ordered one of his servants to dress up as a priest and exorcise the woman reading Cicero rather than the Bible. Since the young woman got agitated when the servant read secular literature and performed simulations of exorcismal practices, her lie was exposed. She had been severely punished at the time, but it did not prevent her from reappearing in Paris two years

later, to be unmasked yet again. This time the king ordered her entire family incarcerated.[55]

In 1599 a major debate erupted in Paris between physicians and theologians concerning the demoniac Marthe Brossier. Exorcism of this young woman became a theatrical performance that drew large crowds and threatened the fragile peace between the Catholics and the Huguenots. Brossier was arrested and was examined by both theologians and doctors, who agreed, almost unanimously, that she was simulating her demonic possessions and that the cause of her affliction was natural rather than diabolic.[56] Responding to a physician's claim that the young Brossier was ill, rather than possessed by the devil,[57] Pierre de Bérulle (1575–1629) came to the rescue of possession and exorcism. Writing in 1599 under the pseudonym Léon d'Alexis, Bérulle described the long and venerable history of demonic possession. Comparing demonic possession to the Incarnation, he explained that the mystery of the Incarnation served Satan as the model for diabolic possession, and hence the similarity between these events: "In one it is God, in the other it is a demon, [who are] reclothed by human nature."[58] Like other theologians who had preceded him in attempts to discern spirits, and against voices that advanced naturalistic or medical causes for most alleged possessions, he warned that possessing demons often disguise themselves in the form of natural or "ordinary" illnesses such as epilepsy and lunacy. Bérulle, obviously, repeated the assertions of leading authorities such as Silvestro Prierio and Andrea Cesalpino. (The Jesuit Martín Del Rio was to publish similar views the following year.) But after attacking physicians, who often mistook external manifestations for internal hidden causes of affliction, Bérulle had to admit that exorcists, too, could not, in fact, discern the nature of possessing agencies, nor could they discover the moral and psychological motivations of a person's behavior.[59]

Bérulle's contemporary, François de Sales, also tried his hand at developing a method of discernment of spirits. In his *Treatise on the Love of God*, he devoted an entire section to the "signs of good rapture" (bk. 7, chaps. 6–7). Like Bérulle, he was writing under the impact of recent events. But unlike Bérulle, who responded to a case of diabolic possession, de Sales was more concerned with the reliability of divine possessions. "There have been many in our age who believed, and others with them, that they were very frequently ravished by God in ecstasy, and yet in the end it was discovered that all were but diabolical illusions and operations."[60] There is nothing mysterious about this confusion, he explained. The devil, wishing "to play the ape, to beguile souls, to scandalize the weak, and to transform himself into an angel of light, causes raptures in certain souls who are

not solidly instructed in solid piety." There are, however, two marks of genuine divine ecstasy. True ecstasy does not affect the understanding, but only the will, which it fills with warmth and affection toward God. Hence, if an ecstasy is "more beautiful than good, more bright than warm, more speculative than affective, it is very doubtful, and deserving of suspicion." Thus, better understanding is a sign of false rapture, and only ecstasy that affects the emotions is likely to be divine. The second mark is the ability to live a life that is above and beyond the natural human condition. To live according to God's commandments is difficult enough but is within the natural order. To love poverty, martyrdom, resignation, chastity, and to live "against the current of the river of this life" is a mark of divine grace. A soul that enjoys raptures in prayer but is not elevated in life and lives in a manner that shows its unity with God is always suspect.[61]

Both Bérulle and de Sales were proponents of the new forms of Spanish spirituality that were being introduced into France by the Discalced Carmelites.[62] Bérulle's and de Sales's defense of genuine possessions—in both divine and diabolic configurations—was directly related to their promotion of interiorized affective spiritual exercises and of the women who promoted them. But other French theologians maintained their ambivalence toward possessions. In 1612 Pierre de Lancre addressed the growing presence of impostors and, in his *Description of the Inconstancy of Evil Angels and Demons* (*Tableau de l'inconstance des mauvais anges et démons*), attacked their "fake and simulated devotion."[63] A few years later, the French Minim brother (soon to become a Protestant professor of philosophy) Claude Pithoys (1587–1676) authored his *The Discovery of Fake Possessions* (*La descouverture des faux possedez*, 1621). This treatise, like so many other discussions of possession and simulation, was written as a direct response to another celebrated case of diabolic possession. In 1620 Elisabeth Ranfaing, a young widow from Nancy, exhibited the signs of diabolic possession and was exorcised by local exorcists. Pithoys, however, doubted the demonic origins of Ranfaing's affliction and argued that natural causes, rather than demonic intervention, were responsible for her condition. He further warned that her exorcism could damage the reputation of the Catholic Church, which had already suffered from a series of fraudulent cases of both divine and diabolic possessions. Pithoys's arguments were rejected by the bishop of Toul, who was Ranfaing's leading promoter, but rather than obeying his superior and submitting to his authority, the Minim brother wrote a systematic defense of his view.[64] He focused his discussion on the question of how to distinguish between genuine demonic possession and "simple" demonic illusions, on the difference between natural and demonic

etiologies of afflictions, and on simulated possessions. Repeating established theological notions, he explained that the demon's ability to deceive makes it "very difficult to be able to discern with certainty between a real possession and a diabolic illusion" (10). Pithoys then enumerated the traditional external signs of possession, among them the transformation of a gracious manner into an aggressive and violent one, the ability to understand foreign languages, and the ability to hear whispers that others cannot hear and to know secrets. Interestingly, Pithoys dismissed all these signs. Only ignorant and simple people are not aware that all of these transformations can happen without actual possession of the body and can result from illusions and demonic obsession (11). Pithoys, however, also distanced himself from naive naturalists. Anger and impudence can, indeed, result from humoral imbalance, he acquiesced. But they can equally be caused by diabolic excitation of the imagination. Similarly, the knowledge of Latin can result from either its affinity with French or from diabolic infusion of knowledge (14). Simulation is also common, Pithoys warned, for both financial gains and fame, but also as a result of demonic illusions. But this should not detract the exorcist from trying to discern spirits and from practicing his art, because this will leave afflicted individuals without recourse (27).

Only divine grace, then, can discern spirits, and this "grace gratuite" is given to some exorcists, but not to others (22). Experience, rather than doctrine, is the only guarantee of successful discernment (16), but there remain nonetheless a few aids that exorcists can use. First among them is the exorcist's obligation to consult with physicians and with people familiar with the energumen and her reputation. Equally important is to warn the patient against simulation and to isolate him or her from relatives (17). The alleged possessed person should be instructed in self-observation and mortification, and his or her behaviors should be scrutinized by reliable persons (18). The exorcist should address the demon not in Latin, but in Greek or Hebrew (languages that are less familiar to French-speaking deluded or simulating individuals) and administer both consecrated and unconsecrated Eucharists and both genuine and fake relics to the victim, to examine whether the alleged demon is genuine (and notes the difference) or an impostor (and does not). The exorcist's own behavior should also be regulated. He should not have any personal ambition to advance his own reputation or that of the church, nor should he exhibit too much zeal or too much compassion toward the energumen.

There was nothing original in Pithoys's doubts concerning the authenticity of Elisabeth Ranfaing's possession or in his warning against deception, delusion, and the confusion between natural and preternatural

causes of possession. Nonetheless, Pithoys was reprimanded by the other participants in this exorcism, and his arguments were attacked by defenders of exorcism. His major opponent, Remy Pichard, penned a 300-page defense of the authenticity of Ranfaing's possession.[65] Pichard agreed that it was difficult to distinguish between sincere and fraudulent possessions and between natural and supernatural causalities. Hysterical affects, epileptic convulsions, and diabolic afflictions not only resemble each other, but are used by demons to prevent accurate discernment (43). Ranfaing, however, was a genuine possessed woman, and Pithoys ignored how her symptoms—which Pichard described in detail (93–300)—paralleled all the obvious marks of diabolic possession. Elisabeth was, in fact, exorcised successfully and went on to found the religious community of Notre-Dame du Refuge of Nancy. Her Jesuit exorcists, in fact, developed an entire cult around her and issued medallions that in and of themselves had healing and exorcismal power.[66]

* * *

Both a search for truth and a systematic effort to control and define the veracity of interiorized spiritual experiences, then, motivated the elaborate endeavor to develop a theology of discernment of spirits. Equally, between the establishment of the Congregation of Sacred Rites and Ceremonies in 1588 and the publication of the papal bull *Coelestis Hierusalem cives* of 1634, new rules for canonization of saints were put into effect.[67] In fact, heroic resistance to excessive spirituality became a model for sanctity, while marks that in the past had characterized forms of charismatic gifts were now deemed clear signs of demonic temptation or simulation and hindered canonization.[68] These new rules made the approval of ecstatic interiorized spirituality as a form of divine possession extremely rare. The new rules for canonization were part of a larger regulatory effort to control and centralize the church's activities and were directly related to the clericalization of exorcism and the sacramentalization of the rite that had been discussed in previous chapters. The centralizing efforts also led to the promulgation and publication of the official Roman Rite of 1614. A section in this long document deals with exorcism and opens, unsurprisingly, with the admonition to exorcists "not to assume too easily that someone is possessed (Rule 3)." The Rite returned time and again to the complex relations and external similarities between natural illness and demonic possession (especially melancholia).[69] Unlike people who are sick, however, possessed people can speak foreign languages, reveal secrets, and exhibit

physical strength beyond their age or condition (Rule 3). All three signs are preternatural and not natural, and therefore cannot be attributed to physical illness. Rule 7 warns that sometimes demons try to deceive exorcists to believe that possession is a natural affliction or by pretending to be revenants or even saints, while Rules 11 and 18 address people who are *infirmo obsesso*—concurrently physically ill and possessed. The admission in the Roman Rite that diabolic possession and natural afflictions can at times resemble each other should not, however, be viewed as a move toward disenchantment. The attention to medical causes of possession-like behavior had, by the early seventeenth century, been a long and established tradition in writings about possession. Furthermore, as we have seen in chapter 3, demonic and naturalist explanations did not preclude but rather reinforced each other.

What is interesting about this Rite is not what it included, but rather what was excluded: There was no reference in this official document to the possibilities of divine possession or simulations of sanctity. Nor was any attention paid to the careful examination of the personality of the alleged possessed woman, an issue that was obsessively addressed by some Roman Inquisitors during these very same years. In other words, according to the Roman Rite, the discernment of spirits should deal with discerning between natural and preternatural causes of possession, and no longer between divine and diabolic possessions. This was a result of the liturgical nature of this document, which only intended to lay out the most general rules, and to supply exorcists with liturgical formulas, while ignoring the minutiae of discernment and the theological problems it raised. Implicitly, the task of discerning simulation and punishing it was now delegated to the Inquisition. And while the Inquisition, as we have seen, put much effort into prosecuting impostors and practitioners of unauthorized forms of interiorized spirituality, and numerous guides for exorcism penned by members of religious orders continued to pay much attention to the anxiety concerning the inability to distinguish between divine and diabolic possessions, a new attitude toward claimants of divine possession was slowly asserting itself. By 1630 the French word *visionnaire* acquired a new meaning and became synonymous with "crazy," while in Spain, by the same time, a popular saying described the life cycle of a poor woman as "a prostitute in the spring, a procuress in the autumn, and *beata* in the winter" ("Puta primaveral, alcahueta otoñal y beata invernal").[70] A Jesuit father complained in the 1630s that in Spain "this business of stigmata is becoming so widespread that it has reached the point that a woman who does not have the five wounds no longer considers herself a servant of

God."[71] And a few years later, even Jean-Joseph Surin, the Jesuit promoter of the possessed-turned-mystic Jeanne des Anges, said dismissively that female followers of the new mysticism were "visionaries."[72] And yet spirits continued to evade exorcists, bishops, and theologians. Even a fierce enemy of all unregulated and unsupervised mystical experiences like the Capuchin Archange Ripaut had to admit in 1632 that "nothing resembles truth as much as false, or good as much as evil." Simulated spiritualists cannot be distinguished from sincere mystics, nor can real saints be discerned from heretic Illuminists.[73] This is why they are so dangerous and this is why they should be unmasked and prosecuted by the authorities.[74] In 1675 the French Cartesian Nicolas de Malebranche equated "fous" and "visionnaires," and at the very end of the century, Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet, the fiercest enemy of all forms of ecstatic spirituality, argued that the church had never accepted women's bodily manifestations as signs of divine grace. Referring explicitly to the Beguines, but implicitly arguing that female visionaries and ecstatics, and all the forms of spirituality that had been the center of the attempt to discern spirits throughout the early modern era, were nothing but an avatar of the same movement, Bossuet said: "They were never listened to at the Council of Vienne [1311]; and despite their boasts concerning their [bodily manifestations], [the Council] looked upon [them] as signs of the Devil's deception, and in any case as vain transports of an overheated imagination."[75]

Thus, the process of growing suspicion toward all unsupervised and interiorized spiritual experience that had started with Langenstein and Gerson in the first half of the fifteenth century came to fruition two hundred years later. Due to the inability to discern spirits based on their origins and sources, morphological types, or even content of experiences, the personal traits of the visionary/possessed became the only reliable guide. Granted, the preoccupation with the content of experience did not disappear altogether. Instead it became gendered. A female visionary who addressed issues that were too abstract philosophically or theologically or issues that were debated among theologians could only very rarely, if at all, be ruled genuine. Exorcists and theologians were instructed, in fact, not to discern spirits, but to discern individuals (mostly, but not only, women) and to question whether they were worthy of divine favors. Individuals who tried too hard, those who argued that their visions supported or were supported by biblical examples and quotations, or who believed that they were worthy of such divine gifts or tried to increase them by spiritual exercises and mortifications were all suspect, whether they followed the extreme forms of passive interiorized spirituality and waited motionless to infused

contemplation, or whether they followed the more regulated Jesuit, Teresian, and Salesian exercises. Being proud of one's experiences meant lacking humility. Pride, after all, was what doomed Satan to expulsion in the first place, and pride was now also perceived as the main motivation of these malicious women (and the few men) who were faking their possessions and claimed to be taken over by demons or to enjoy divine grace.

* 7 *

Discerning Women

The early modern guides for exorcists and the manuals for the discernment of spirits examined in the previous chapter were addressed strictly to male clerics—theologians, Inquisitors, and exorcists. Their descriptions of discerning activities, just like their instructions concerning the performance of exorcism, assumed the familiarity of the practitioner with specific bodies of knowledge, among them the structure of the soul, the multiple names or residences of demons and their history, and chapters in Satan's permanent struggle to deceive humans. Probative exorcisms and instructions for the discernment of spirits also assumed the ability to read and pray in Latin and, often, to administer the Sacrament. Some theologians, as we have noticed, even argued implicitly but persistently that exorcism was, in fact, the eighth sacrament. The growing use of exorcism as a major means of probing interiority and the clericalization of the discernment of spirits, then, went in tandem. In fact, all of the new qualifications that were now attached to probative exorcism and to discernment were gendered. Women could not administer the sacraments or conduct adjurations in Latin, nor did they enjoy access to theological, philosophical, or demonological knowledge. As such, they should have been excluded from discerning spirits, just as they were barred from performing clerical exorcism. But the fact that most of the literature about exorcism and discernment was written by and for male clerics should not distract us from remembering that discernment of spirits was a divine grace, one of the seven gifts. And while late medieval and early modern theologians were hesitant to grant women access to this free grace, they never forgot this basic truth. Jean Gerson, as we have seen, was the most important authority

to address the issue of women's access to prophecy and their reliability in matters of discernment. His ambivalence concerning discernment by women was then transformed by later generations of theologians into a general mistrust of women's spiritual experiences and a dismissal of their trustworthiness as deciphers of such experiences. While Gerson admitted that at times, in fact, it was "easier for [women] than for men of great intelligence who are learned in theology" to enjoy direct access to the divine, by the late seventeenth century most women who claimed such interactions were likely to be unveiled as deluded, possessed by demons, or impostors, and their credibility in such matters was repudiated.[1]

Discernment of spirits, however, just like exorcism, was always a social praxis and not merely an abstract theological enterprise. And, like exorcism, it is better understood as a spectrum or continuum of routine activities, stretching from self-discernment to the discernment of others, and from intuitive ("grace-induced") discernment to a learned activity. It was practiced by learned theologians and illiterate peasants, by men as well as by women, by monastic communities and lay families. The cases that we will examine in this chapter remind us that the process of distinguishing among visions and between divine and evil spirits was a complex one, involving living human beings, with their fears and hopes, confidence and self-doubt. Each case was also shaped by the visionary's social networks of friends and supporters and her position in society at large or within the convent. Finally, practices of discernment and their legitimacy were shaped by the social position, claims for grace, fame, and the political and social connections of the discerning individual who was examining the alleged visionary.

There had always been a discrepancy between what exorcists' guides and the theological treatises propagated and mandated, and what took place when specific cases of natural affliction and preternatural and supernatural behavior were to be discerned. This last observation often gets lost in historical discussions of the discernment of spirits. By widening the scope of the previous chapter and presenting the discernment of spirits not as a purely theological and hermeneutic enterprise but as a practice, this chapter attempts to remedy this historical oversight. Gerson and other theologians' opposition notwithstanding, from the fifteenth through the seventeenth century many female visionaries, mother superiors, and other women of spiritual worth (including pious laywomen) discerned spirits. Their activities included both discerning spirits that resided within themselves and judging and evaluating the spiritual experiences of fellow nuns and laywomen (and in some rare cases even of men). They wondered about the content of specific visions and whether the clear signs of divine grace

were demonstrated in them, and they questioned the worth and credit, the humility and the manners of the beneficiaries of mystical or supernatural experiences (the visionary or the demoniac). Like the male clerics we looked at in the previous chapter, they compared new experiences to old ones to see whether they resembled other divine or demonic precedents. But even assuming that the alleged vision looked authentic and the visionary seemed to be worthy of such a rare grace, discerning women pondered additional questions: Did women have the authority to rule on such matters? Should they go public with a verdict on their own and other women's experiences? Or should they keep quiet to avoid attracting attention? Should they consult with male clerics and leave to them the right to rule on the validity and origins of spiritual (and demonic) experiences? Or should they use their positions as spiritually graced individuals or as authorized spiritual directors to claim authority for themselves?

Women's practices of discernment, as we shall see, were restricted by women's self-doubts, by their discretion, and by their careful avoidance of crossing an invisible line and stepping into the domain of male clerics. Generally speaking, male clerics maintained a monopoly on the definitive ruling on cases of discernment, while women's activity was construed more commonly as an advisory role. Obviously, female visionaries or mother superiors could not claim theological knowledge as their inspiration in matters of discernment. But they could, and did, rely on their own self-confidence in the divine grace they enjoyed, on precedents of other women who had enjoyed such divine grace, and on the collective memory of religious orders as they had been recorded in the numerous books and manuscripts that documented similar cases in other nuns' hagiographies and biographies. Using these sources of authority, they commonly insisted that they were not discerning spirits but merely dispensing advice. Disputing the accusation that she was conducting spiritual advising, Madame Guyon argued that "God has not deserted me to such a degree that He would allow me to meddle in spiritual direction."[2] Her protestation notwithstanding, she and fellow female mystics and mother superiors pursued what I will call a feminine form of discernment of spirits, using the very same authority Guyon denied.

In early modern letters, (auto)biographies, and instructions of spiritual direction penned by women, we discover an entire hidden theology of discernment of spirits, written by women for women. This theology was articulated in narrative and stylistic forms that distinguished it from male writings on the topic. It was almost always *ad hominem* (*ad feminam*?) and *ad occasionem*, as opposed to male treatises that addressed general issues; its language used hints and circumspect terms rather than explicit words;

and it tried to pretend that it was not what it actually was, namely, the practice of discernment of spirit. In fact, most discerning women and their male clerical promoters avoided using the term "discernment" to describe such activities and presented them as merely an aspect of the spiritual directional activities of mother superiors and other nuns in positions of spiritual authority. Some discerning women, however, were less hesitant. Finally, while discernment by men was often a public performance of authority and learning, discernment by women was conducted in private: in letters, whispered advice, or even in secrecy. Humility and the need to avoid scandal lay heavily on the shoulders of the female practitioners and authors who engaged in both the discernment of spirits and in writing about it.

In this chapter we will look closely at the discerning theology and activities of three women—one lay: Barbe Acarie (1566–1618), and two religious: Teresa of Ávila (1515–1582) and Jeanne-Françoise Frémyot de Chantal (1572–1641). We will first examine Teresa's theology of discernment as it was articulated in her instructive writings for her spiritual daughters. Madame Barbe Acarie was a Parisian lay mystic (later to join the Carmelites), who is best known for her role in introducing the Discalced Carmelites and the Ursulines to Paris. We will look closely at her discerning activities as they were portrayed in hagiographical and edifying descriptions by Acarie's contemporaries. Finally, we will analyze the discerning practices of another founder and mother superior, Jeanne de Chantal, the founder and first mother superior of the Order of the Visitation. All three women claimed spiritual graces that enabled them to discern not only their own spirits, but also those of others, a prerogative that clerical writings questioned. What is missing from Acarie's activities, from much (but not all) of Teresa's guides, and from much of Chantal's correspondence is any notion that they and their protégées were dealing with issues that were beyond the reach of women and should therefore have been left strictly to male clerics.

* * *

Saint Teresa of Ávila's writings reveal the immediacy and concreteness that gave birth to much of her preoccupation with the topic of the discernment of spirits. Clearly, she was thinking and writing about discernment as a direct result of her own experiences, her direct knowledge of other Carmelites' experiences, and her need to dispense spiritual advice to her daughters. Early in her spiritual development, when Teresa had just started receiving "inner visions and revelations with the eyes of the soul," she consulted with male theologians, both *letrados* (those who emphasized matters

of doctrine over experience) and *espirituales* (mostly Dominicans, who believed that all Christians can grow in knowledge of God through prayer). But even at this early stage, she doubted the male experts' inherent superiority in such issues, because "however much learning one may have, there are things that cannot be comprehended" ("Así como aunque más letra tengan, hay cosas que no se alcanzan").[3] As Alison Weber has pointed out, Teresa rejected Jean Gerson's attempt to restrict women's ability to discern. Article 41 of the Carmelite order's Constitution of 1567 instructed that "all the sisters should give the prioress a monthly account of how they have done in prayer, of how the Lord is leading them, for His Majesty will give her light so that if they are not proceeding well she might guide them."[4] Prioresses, no less than priests, were capable of discerning spirits through special grace. Theologically speaking, there was nothing radical in this view, which was, of course, in accordance with Saint Paul's teaching. But it was nonetheless perceived to be subversive or problematic enough that the paragraph was revised in the 1581 edition. A "strategic retreat," to use Weber's term, changed the line "His Majesty will give her light [la dará luz] [to discern others]" to "His Majesty will give them light [las dará luz]." Discernment of others, suspect when practiced by women, was transformed into self-discernment, which could not be denied to women.[5]

Similarly, in her spiritual guide, *The Interior Castle* (*Moradas del castillo interior*) (1577–80), Teresa, drawing on her own mystical experiences and fearing Inquisitorial silencing and discrediting of the Discalced Carmelite order, instructed her nuns not only how to pray and enjoy spiritual and interior experiences, but also how to discern their experiences in order to validate their orthodoxy. Like all of the saint's writings, Teresa's guide moves back and forth between humility and self-doubt, on the one hand, and self-confidence, on the other. She laments how difficult it is for a woman to discern spirits at one moment but ridicules learned male confessors, who lack spirituality and therefore make mistakes in discerning spirits, in another. Teresa returned to these issues again and again, obviously pushed to clarify specific aspects of the discerning activity that were not clear to her or to her nuns, or to offer new and safer formulations (as she did with the *Constitution*). It is worth quoting at length some of her observations:

> There is one danger I want to warn you about (although I may have mentioned it elsewhere) into which I have seen persons of prayer fall, especially women, for since we are weaker there is more occasion for what I'm about to say. It is that some have a weak constitution because of a great amount of penance, prayer, and keeping vigil, and even without

> these, in receiving some favor, their nature is overcome. Since they feel some consolation interiorly and a languishing and weakness exteriorly, they think they are experiencing a spiritual sleep (which is a prayer a little more intense than the prayer of quiet) and they let themselves become absorbed. The more they allow this, the more absorbed they become, because their nature is further weakened, and they fancy that they are being carried away in rapture [arrobamiento]. I call it being carried away in foolishness [abobamiento] because it amounts to nothing more than wasting time and wearing down one's health. . . . For this reason let them take the advice that when they feel this languishing in themselves they tell the prioress and distract themselves from it insofar as they can. The prioress should make them give up so many hours for prayer so that they have only a very few and try to get them to sleep and eat well.[6]

Teresa described the dangers that await contemplative persons on their ascent toward union with the divine. With the growth and popularity of contemplative techniques in women's religious communities, such concerns became urgent. As we remember, it was understood by both practitioners of contemplation and by theologians that as the soul approaches the divine, the devil increases his attacks. Teresa knew only too well that it was the tendency of contemplatives to pay close attention to their interiority and to discern the movements of the spirit within them. "Beware!" she instructed her nuns. Getting carried away in spiritual exercises can be as harmful for the body as for the soul. When the nun adopts passivity as a mystical technique and languishes within her soul, she should understand that this is not a spiritual favor. Rather, it is likely to be a demonic distraction or just a human self-delusion. It is, therefore, the responsibility of the mother superior to restrict the number of hours the spiritually inclined nun is allowed to contemplate and, by so doing, prevent her from religious frenzy and demonic temptations.

We would have expected Teresa to recommend what should be the most obvious solution concerning interior movements, namely, a confession to a male confessor or a consultation with a male spiritual director. Rather, she uses the passive undefined form to avoid specifying who is the recommended counselor in such matters: "It must be understood" ("hase de entender"), she says. The instigator of this understanding is, obviously, Teresa herself. "Let them take the advice" ("por eso tengan aviso"), she goes on to tell the prioresses. Again, the agent of the advice, Teresa, herself, is the "absent presence" of this sentence. The erasure of male confessors from this linguistic formulation was not accidental. Teresa was, in fact, ambivalent about the value of male confessors and spiritual directors at such times.

On the one hand, she did warn of the devil's cunning and instructed her nuns to get advice from male clerics: "The Devil can play many tricks; so there is nothing more certain in this matter than to have a master who is a learned man, and to hide nothing from him. In this way no harm can come." But she went on immediately to undermine her own statement, revealing to her followers that her own experience with male clerics was disastrous. "A lot of harm was done to me through these excessive fears that some persons have."[7] For "some persons" ("algunas personas"), we should read inexperienced male confessors. Thus, male clerical authority per se provides no guarantee in matters of spirituality. Experience, rather than bookish learning, is presumably just as important a guide in matters of discernment. In the *Interior Castle*, Teresa described in detail her own torment at the hands of unqualified confessors. Some are too fearful of spiritual experiences, and others condemn everything as melancholy or demonic.

> But the poor soul that walks with the same fear and goes to its confessor as to its judge, and is condemned by him, cannot help but be deeply tormented and disturbed. Only the one who has passed through this will understand what a great torment it is. For this is another one of the terrible trials these souls suffer, especially if they have lived wretched lives; thinking that because of their sins God will allow them to be deceived. . . . When the confessor assures it, the soul grows calm, although the disturbance will return. But when the confessor contributes to the torment with more fear, the trial becomes something almost unbearable.[8]

Teresa's ambivalence toward male confessors as discerning masters was clearly felt deeply. Confessors torment spiritually inclined souls by doubting and condemning their experiences; they expect perfection when no perfection exists; they do not understand the internal obsessive fears of the practitioner or the shortness of the moments of calm she experiences. They fear melancholy, but increase it; fear that the demons are tormenting the nun, but end up contributing to her torments. Finally, even more amazing than Teresa's own condemnation of male clerics is her willingness and audacity to share this mistrust with her nuns. And they did learn from her. In her *Book for the Hour of Recreation* (*Libro de recreaciones*), Teresa's follower María de San José Salazar (1548–1603), prioress of the Discalced convents of Seville and Lisbon, described the first confessor of the Sevillian convent as narrow-minded and ignorant. "He did not act as a simpleton, for he was very far indeed from any such things; but there are people who are shocked by a puff of wind, and if I were to relate to you all the trials and persecutions we underwent in that foundation, with these sorts of

dispositions, I should never finish telling them all." She then went on to declare: "I consider it a great folly to create obstacles where there are none, giving these poor women to think that everything is a heresy."[9]

But if male confessors cannot be trusted, who should be entrusted with the discernment of spirits? Teresa's answer to this question is as follows: "I firmly believe that anyone who has talent in discerning spirits and to whom the Lord may have given true humility will not be deceived in this matter. For such a person judges by the good effects, resolutions, and love; and the Lord gives him light that he may recognize them" (*Life*, 39:10). "Anyone who has talent in discerning spirits" ("quien tuviere talento de conocer espíritus"). Thus, Teresa's definition of the successful discerning personality is not bound by gender, position in the church, or degree of learning (which, as we have just seen, was not a guarantee in such matters, as even Gerson admitted). She repeated the adamant opinion on the matter again and again. Nuns themselves "should use discernment [discreción] to observe when [their] bodily disorders" are from God or from natural causes (*Life*, 11:15); and "we can discern, in my opinion, whether this quiet comes from the spirit of God or whether we procure it ourselves. . . . If the quiet is from the devil, I think an experienced soul will recognize this" (*Life*, 15:9–10).

There is, however, no escape from self-doubt, whether the discernment is done with or without clerical guidance. Once again, using her own experience to draw a general rule, Teresa described her first ascent to the Sixth Dwelling Place within the soul, the place of love. She was "quite worried in the beginning," she admitted,

> because she could not understand the nature of this vision. Nonetheless, she knew so certainly that it was Jesus Christ, our Lord, who showed Himself to her in that way that she couldn't doubt; I mean she could not doubt the vision was there. As to whether it was from God or not, even though she carried with her great effects to show that it was, she nonetheless was afraid. (*Interior Castle*, 6:8)

Teresa's ambivalence would not go away: "It is always good that we walk with fear and caution, for, although the work may be from God, the devil at times can transform himself into an angel of light; and if the soul has not a great deal of experience, it will not discern the devil's work" (*Life*, 14).[10]

There is no indication in Teresa's writings that her advice concerning discernment is or should be restricted only to unique souls who reach the highest level of contemplation, or that self-discernment, albeit with fear and doubt, is unavailable for lesser souls. And, in fact, other mother

superiors also practiced discernment of spirits while dispensing spiritual advice to their nuns. When Catherine de Jésus (1589–1623), a nun in the convent of the Discalced Carmelites in Paris, had a vision in which Jesus, the Virgin, and numerous saints appeared to her, she consulted with her prioress, Madeleine de Saint-Joseph de Fontaines (1578–1637). The latter unveiled the visions to be an illusion, whose instigator was the Evil One, "transformed into an angel of light." It did not occur to Catherine de Jésus or to the prioress that Madeleine de Saint-Joseph, being a woman, was incapable of making a judgment concerning such an experience. Similarly, when the mother superior of the convent had a vision of her own death, she "sent to fetch the Mother Prioress to hear what she thought of this experience, *as she was doing ordinarily in everything that happened to her* [emphasis mine]" ("comme elle faisoit pour l'ordinaire en tout ce qui lui arrivoit"). In fact, Mère Madeleine did no shy away even from counseling male clerics who asked her advice concerning spiritual matters.[11]

Thus, the popularity of new forms of spirituality that encouraged interior "movements" among nuns decreased dramatically male clerics' trust in women's visions. But, paradoxically, it concurrently fostered women's discerning practices. Once alerted to the presence of an unquiet soul in the community, a mother superior based her discernment of spirits on divine inspiration, but she also had a few concrete hermeneutic techniques at her possession. Mother Alix le Clerc (1576–1622), the founder and mother superior of the Order and Congregation of Notre-Dame in Nancy, believed that a careful examination of the afflicted nun's behavior was the first means of discerning her spirits. Good deeds, acts of charity, and signs of humility and patience were obvious indications of divine favor. But the mother superior also enjoyed a "don de discretion."[12] This enabled her to see, in addition to external signs, the nuns' interiority and even the source and origins of their thoughts. Since this was a divine grace, Alix le Clerc asked for it to be granted to her only rarely and with much humility, and preferred, whenever possible, to rely on manifested somatic behavior.[13]

Marguerite-Marie Alacoque (1647–1690), the famous Visitandine, recalled in her autobiography *Relation à la gloire de Dieu* that her own mother superior had used a different technique. Describing her spiritual trials as a young nun, she remembered that once her "infirmities lasted continuously . . . the Mother came to meet me one morning and gave me a card, and told me to follow the instructions that were contained in it; this was because she needed to make sure whether all that was happening to me was from the Spirit of God. If it was, [the charm] should put me in perfect health for five months . . . but if, on the contrary, it was the evil spirit or

natural causes, I will stay forever in this condition." It is not clear from Alacoque's description whether the charm contained a prescription for a medication or a combination of specific prayers. But since the anecdote intends to edify the mother superior's spiritual capabilities, it is more likely that the charm contained spiritual invocations. In any event, the discerning card healed the afflicted nun.[14]

* * *

Laywomen also were sometimes given the gift of discernment, and their discerning practices, too, were not automatically challenged. One of them was the famous devout Parisian Barbe Acarie, whose house became the center of the revival of French spirituality following the religious civil war and the ravage of the rebellious Catholic League.[15] Acarie (Barbe Avrillot) was the daughter of a prominent Parisian notable. She married Pierre Acarie, a *conseiller du roi*, who was expelled from the city following the defeat of the Catholic League.[16] While some argued that her own spiritual life had started in 1588, when she was first exposed to religious literature—including the writings of the Rhino-Flemish mystics, Catherine of Genoa, and Angela of Foligno (the latter in a translation that Acarie's husband commissioned for her)—others insisted that she had never read these books, which distracted her from her contemplation. Be that as it may, in the early 1590s it was already claimed that she enjoyed "extraordinary graces," had revelations and ecstasies, and performed miracles. Some people compared her to Catherine of Genoa, while others exulted that she was even "more interior, more intelligent, and more worthy of admiration" than the renowned mystic.[17] During the same years, she befriended the English Capuchin Benoît de Canfield, who became her spiritual director, and Pierre de Bérulle, who became another daily fixture in her devout salon. In 1593 she received the (invisible) stigmata, and sometime in the late 1590s or early 1600s she composed a short devotional book that summarized contemporary French understanding of the contemplative life.[18]

Prominent among Acarie's spiritual powers was the divine "grace of discernment of interior movements of spirits." She could tell what was inside a person's heart or soul, unveil secrets, prophesy, and discover whether a divine or evil spirit was operating within a person.[19] Thus, when a very wealthy woman wanted to join the Carmelites and to bring her huge dowry with her, Acarie, who had helped to found the Carmelites in the city, refused, knowing "because of the grace of the discernment of spirits that she had to a very eminent degree" that the cloister was not right for this

woman. Another time she wrote a letter to Pierre Coton (1564–1626), a leading Jesuit theologian and prolific spiritualist—soon to become confessor to Henry IV—in which she described to him in detail his thoughts and the state of his soul.[20] Documenting these and other cases, Acarie's hagiographer André Duval (1564–1638), a doctor of theology at the Sorbonne and the first superior of the Carmelites in France, explained that Acarie had never dispensed advice before praying for God's help: "This precious grace of the discernment of good and evil spirits had numerous origins, but resulted above all from the admirable purity of her heart, which served her as a light to discern even the smallest imperfections, whether within herself or in others. It also arrived from the extreme confidence she had that God would enlighten her eyes according to [her] needs, to a continuous practice of interior perfection and solid usage of virtue, through which she acquired the ability to distinguish even the smallest things."[21]

But nothing contributed more to Acarie's reputation than the celebrated events surrounding Nicole Tavernier, a young woman from Rheims who arrived in Paris in the 1590s and established her reputation as a mystic and "almost a saint." Tavernier explained that the current troubles were God's retribution for the sins of his people, and she called upon Parisians to atone. Mass confessions, public prayers, and penitential processions followed her invocations, and even the Parlement of Paris itself ordered a public procession. Tavernier exposed hidden sins, predicted future events, and interpreted the Song of Songs in such a subtle manner that even Bérulle and Coton were convinced of the divine grace she enjoyed. She experienced frequent ecstasies, revelations, and visions, and dispensed advice to the grandest men, both French and foreign. Once, when she was on her deathbed, she prayed God to give her back her life, and even this request was granted. Another time the Host inserted itself into her mouth. One day, while on her way to pray in the Capuchin monastery in Meudon, she disappeared, only to reappear an hour later and tell her companions that she had just been to a conference in Tours, where her intervention had prevented a Huguenot plot to expel the Capuchins from France.[22]

There was only one prominent person in Paris who doubted Nicole Tavernier. In a letter to Madame de Chantal, his friend, mentor, and devotee, Saint François de Sales reminded Chantal of Barbe Acarie's success in discerning spirits:

> In the time of the blessed Sister Marie de l'Incarnation [Acarie's name after she joined the Carmelite Order], a young woman of low birth was deceived by the most extraordinary deception that one can imagine. The Enemy,

> disguised as Our Savior, spent much time reciting her Hours with her, in such a melodious chant that kept her in perpetual rapture. Appearing as a silvery and magnificent cloud, he inserted fake hosts into her mouth, and he made her survive without any food. When she delivered alms, he multiplied the bread in her apron. If she only had bread for three paupers, but thirty were waiting at her door, there was enough to feed them with largesse, and with such delicious bread that even her own confessor, who was a member of a Reformed Order, sent some of his spiritual friends to her [to learn from her] devotion. This girl had so many revelations that at the end it made her suspected by some devout people. Due to the extreme danger that was involved in all of that, it was decided to put the sanctity of this creature into a trial. For this goal, she was put under the supervision of Sister Marie de l'Incarnation, who was, at the time, still married, [in whose house] she became a maid and was treated somewhat strictly by Mr. Acarie. Then it was discovered that there was nothing saintly about this girl and her visions were false.[23]

While male clerics discerned Tavernier to be possessed by God, it was the lay Acarie whose discernment led others to start doubting the source of Tavernier's experiences. Acarie was so insistent on the demonic nature of the girl's revelations and experiences, that her words functioned like arrows and penetrated the souls of those who were willing to listen to her. Slowly, others, too, started to doubt Tavernier. They found some inconsistencies in some of her revelations but admitted that this was common enough in prophecies of genuine visionaries. So while doubts grew, no one was ready to dismiss Tavernier's spiritual prowess just yet. Again, it was left to Acarie to find a solution. Tavernier was working at the time in the Acarie household, where she could be closely watched by the doubting Acarie. One day Acarie put some small pieces of paper inside an unsealed letter and asked Tavernier to deliver it. Tavernier opened the letter, the small pieces of paper fell out and dispersed, and Acarie could now attack Tavernier with justification, accusing her of curiosity and disobedience. Satan, furious that his loyal agent was thus exposed, also deserted Tavernier, who was unveiled to be a rude and simple woman, lacking all virtues, who even disobeyed her parents and plotted to get married against their will. Worse yet, she was even weighing the possibility of converting to Calvinism, and only the efforts of a Jesuit priest prevented it.[24]

Let us remind ourselves that while the "plus celebres Docteurs & les plus avancez en la vie interieure" believed Tavernier, it was Acarie whose penetrating "completely supernatural light" revealed the true identity of the spirit within the impostor.[25] The movements of divine and evil spirits

within the soul resemble one another like two drops of water, or peas in a pod, and only divine grace can discern them. And no one, concluded Duval, had the grace of discernment to such a degree. In fact, following the drama, it became common in Paris, when trying to decide whether a visionary was genuine or fake, to send them first to be discerned by Acarie.[26]

Admittedly, the records of this event are all edifying documents designated to ensure Acarie's beatification. We do not know what really happened in Paris in these last years of the sixteenth century regarding Acarie's actual discerning activities and what was later attributed to her to increase her renown and facilitate her beatification. But we do know that these documents were composed by some of the leading French theologians of the first half of the seventeenth century. Cardinal Bérulle was the founder of the Oratory; Duval was the first prior of the Carmelites in France; and Coton was a leading anti-Huguenot controversialist. De Sales was more careful, and in his letter to Chantal only mentioned that "then it was discovered" ("on descouvrit"). None of these male clerics had any difficulties portraying and promoting a woman whose discerning activities were based solely on divine favor and whose knowledge from direct grace proved theologians and Sorbonnists wrong. Duval's Acarie never doubted her capabilities or the legitimacy of her actions, and Duval himself, rather than admonishing this feminine "asseurance grande," celebrated it. Imagine what could have happened if Acarie had listened to male clerics. Satan's designs could have led to the expulsion of the Capuchins from France and, with them gone, maybe even to the recovery of Calvinism. But this was not the last of it. Another witness in the beatification dossier testified that the Enemy's plan had also included the assassination of both Bérulle and Acarie, the two movers and shakers of the new Catholic spirituality.[27] Duval concluded that all these threats had been diverted due to the discerning powers of a laywoman.

* * *

The anecdotes recorded in the edifying stories of Catherine de Jésus, Alix le Clerc, and Marguerite-Marie Alacoque, just like the dramatic narration of Acarie's victory over Satan and Nicole Tavernier, were meant to prove the unique spiritual supernatural powers of these women and were written down to promote their commemoration, beatification, or canonization. It is for that reason that the letters of Madame de Chantal are so interesting.[28] Her correspondence allows us to peer through the protective walls of one religious order, the Visitation, and see the routine practices of discernment that took place there. Whether they found themselves enjoying divine

grace and reaching high states of tranquillity and calm during prayers or, on the contrary, being attacked and prosecuted by diabolic temptations, the nuns of the Visitation struggled to define and to make sense of their experiences. Discerning the source of their interior "movements" was a first step toward recognition of a special grace or, alas, an admission that the demon had gotten ahold of a nun's soul, and that she had to go through the rituals (communal masses, manual labor, disciplinary self-afflictions, or exorcism) that would put an end to the diabolic attack. Whenever a nun experienced unnatural physical or mental "movements," her mother superior was among the first on the scene. The Constitution of the Visitations demanded explicitly that the sisters "lay bare their heart" to their mother superior.[29] Mother superiors therefore witnessed states of extraordinary behavior, heard about them during the time they spent dispensing spiritual advice to the sisters, and, in some convents, read about them in the spiritual journals that nuns were required to keep and to present to their mother superiors and male confessors.

It was only when mother superiors confronted cases that they deemed challenging or difficult to discern that they consulted with Chantal. For every case that found its way into Chantal's letters, many, we may assume, have been lost within the routine struggles for spiritual perfection that was the essence of reformed monastic life. Every so often, Chantal also heard directly from Visitandines who addressed her, seeking her blessing and support, or describing their difficulties in adjusting to monastic life. Such nuns developed intimate spiritual relations with the founder. Critical to the main theme of this chapter is the fact that never in her immense correspondence do we witness Chantal doubting her prerogative to discern spirits or to dispense advice on such matters. Neither did she raise doubts as to whether her discernment—which was, significantly, secondhand discernment by mail—was a legitimate form of determining the nature of her daughters' spiritual experiences. The magnitude of Chantal's correspondence allows us to reconstruct both her theology and her practices of discerning spirits. More important, the immediacy of the letters—the fact that they were written as direct responses to explicit questions concerning individual nuns—separates them from edifying documents that form the basis of most biographies of nuns.[30] Rather than reading hagiographical reconstructions of a mother superior's life, we encounter in these letters Chantal's mundane—sometimes even dismissive—attitude toward many occurrences of alleged supernatural events in the lives of her daughters.

Chantal was extremely secretive in her correspondence. The most important rule to observe whenever a nun behaved in the manner that initiated

an act of discernment was to maintain discretion and secrecy. In her responses to mother superiors who asked for her advice concerning specific experiences of specific nuns, Chantal never referred to her activity as discernment of spirits. (Teresa, too, as we have seen, avoided the term except for a few slips.) Françoise-Madeleine de Chaugy, who served as Chantal's secretary and scribe before being herself appointed mother superior of the Visitation convent of Annecy (the crown jewel of the order), was less circumspect, and in her biography/hagiography of Chantal (1642) did not shy away from using the term.[31] Chantal also used qualified terms to refer to the nuns themselves, who are described as "troubled" ("troublées"), "worked upon" ("travaillées"), or "exercised" ("exercées"). More explicit terms—such as diabolic possession, mystical rapture, and the rich vocabulary that had been developed over the years to describe and analyze encounters with the supernatural—never found their way into Chantal's letters. Issues of divine or diabolic interventions, she strongly believed, were better kept hidden not only from the outside world, but even from other nuns within the convent itself, especially the younger nuns, "whose opinions are not yet firmed, and who are easily given to awe and impressions," and are likely to imitate their afflicted or blessed sisters.[32] Thus, addressing a case of a nun who was suffering from a supernatural (probably demonic) behavior, she advised the nun's superior to teach the afflicted nun to resist her temptations and to pray more often. "All has to be accomplished in utmost secrecy," she emphasized.[33] And when Mother Barbe-Marie Bouvard of Mans questioned Chantal as to how to react to miracles that were allegedly being performed within the convent by a young nun, Chantal warned that such cases should not be aired outside the monastery walls, and that, even within the convent, they should be kept secret as long as this young nun was alive.[34] In a circular letter of November 1629 to all mother superiors of the order, Chantal repeated her warning that supernatural events like possession, sanctity, and fakeries should be kept secret from both the outside world and the rest of the community. Mother superiors "should practice their governance with such prudent charity that no one would ever perceive the temptations and incidents that took place in the body or soul of another sister." Rumors should also not leak outside, because such rumors discredit and bring scorn on religious houses.[35]

As a rule, Chantal distrusted all supernatural experiences and tried to prevent her nuns and novices from any exposure to spiritual overexcitation.[36] "Folie toutes ces délicatesses d'esprit!" she exclaimed in one of her letters.[37] Thus, her attitude reflected the growing anxiety concerning interiorized spirituality in general and its popularity among women in

particular. This skepticism was shared by Chantal's collaborator François de Sales. In his *Les vrays entretiens spirituels*, a collection of the spiritual conferences that he held regularly with the Visitandine nuns in Annecy, the bishop of Geneva warned of the danger of trying to achieve perfection and supported his admonition with two examples. One was a case of a nun whose devotion to Teresa of Ávila was such that she believed herself to be as qualified for the highest forms of spiritual experiences as Teresa was and thus embarked on imitating the saint's raptures. Another nun thought that she herself was none other than Saint Catherine of Siena. Both nuns deluded themselves and exposed the vanity that was governing them, wrote de Sales. Souls that are truly graced, explained de Sales, exhibit humility and simplicity, not perfection.[38] The bishop of Geneva believed strongly that passive acceptance of interior "exercises" was a mark of divine grace, but he was also wary of the dangers that await the practitioner. He also shared Chantal's aversion to extreme forms of bodily mortification and interiorized spiritual exercises. Even when considering the admission into the Visitation of Mother Isabeau de Romillon, who had already founded three tertiary Franciscan convents in Toulouse, de Sales hesitated: "People in Paris and Rome ascribe to her miracles . . . but I say marvelous and extraordinary occurrences, or maybe raptures and illusions. It causes me a lot of anxiety, because if she comes here with these kind of mysterious things, instead of benefiting from our solace, she will give us much to do, and will force us to discern whether she is a saint or simulating, and will significantly disturb [our] poor little flock of innocent doves."[39]

In a letter to Mother Anne-Marguerite Clément of the convent of the Visitation in Montargis, Chantal elaborated on the reasons for her own ambivalence toward mystical experiences: "I have been informed, my dear daughter, of the fear that you have fallen ill and that your health has deteriorated. I have seen the cause in your letter, namely, your interior occupation. . . . Be careful not to converse too much with God, to always examine yourself, and consult with spiritual advisers."[40] Prayer, meditation, and self-doubt ("interior occupations") are, of course, major activities within the monastic walls. But Chantal warned her reader that there was also too much of a good thing; too many prayers, too much self-examination, and contemplation rather than meditation could lead to declining health. Teresa also warned against too much prayer and introspection among members of her contemplative order. But Chantal's opposition to extraordinary spiritual experiences went even further. Following Saint Teresa and what had become by her time a widespread and lingering anxiety, she tended to assume that every occurrence of the

supernatural was more likely to be of demonic origin or a result of deception and simulation by unworthy nuns.[41]

For Chantal, the best way to halt diabolic temptations and possessions and/or visionary experiences in convents was to attempt to prevent them before they even started. This was to be achieved by blocking the admission of unquiet souls to the convent. "Every day I am more and more aware of the importance of not admitting young women who behave in a bizarre manner," nuns who are too young, or nuns who are forced to join the community against their will. "One troubled spirit is capable of turning an entire monastery upside down."[42] In the circular letter of November 1629, she elaborated, for the first and last time, a systematic rationale for her vehement anti-mystical stand and detailed the responsibility of mother superiors to expose the cunning, fakery, and deceptions of self-love that are common among feeble, soft, and useless souls. Chantal goes on to instruct mother superiors that they should be extremely prudent and gracious in their dealings with nuns and novices who do, alas, exhibit such extraordinary behaviors. Unlike Teresa, who was full of understanding and empathy toward such nuns, and unlike her own advice to the mother superiors of her congregations, Chantal's discussion of such matters was neither gracious nor prudent. In fact, she had nothing but harsh contempt and hostility to spiritually inclined nuns. The reason for her impatience becomes clear when she elaborated on her own experiences in confronting such souls. Such nuns, whose souls and hearts are useless and void of God, entertain extravagant idle fancies and invent thousands of chimeras: "Some of them disfigure their bodies as if they were possessed; another one refused for many months to eat or sustain herself; others fake paralysis, terminal illnesses, looseness of the bowels, shortness of breath, and similar psychological or imaginative illnesses," enough to put entire religious communities into unrest. The well-being of entire convents, Chantal wrote, repeating her warning of 1625, depends on the elimination of such supernatural behaviors from the community.

Chantal was as adamant in her opposition to and mistrust of extraordinary interiorized spiritual behaviors as she was concerning physical signs. She accused nuns who experienced them of lies, fakeries, false visions, imaginary raptures, obstinacy, disrespect, disobedience, and arrogance. Such nuns indulge in the attention they attract, and the right remedy for their spiritual ecstatic experiences is therefore to disparage their experiences, dismiss their claims, and be very strict with such sisters, thus denying them the pleasures they seek in admiration and attention. Chantal then articulated precise etiologies of and treatments for different forms

of such behaviors. Some nuns fall into simulation and deceit because of innocent hypocrisy or infantilism; others, due to indolence, sensuality, or melancholy; and others yet—the more calculated even—simulate their behaviors, hoping to get expelled from the community or to hide sins that they have committed. Feebleminded and weak nuns, who are innocent of bad intentions and sincerely believe that they hear or feel many things, belong to a different category and deserve better treatment. Rather then being laughed at or dismissed, they should be treated carefully and slowly led to apprehend that the demonic, rather than the divine, was the likely cause of their experiences.

Chantal herself was a mystic and a proponent of the new forms of interiorized spirituality. But, like the large majority of her contemporaries, she was extremely preoccupied with the danger of voluntary or involuntary simulation among nuns. She returned to issues of the ingenuity and cunning of simulating nuns in a letter to Abbess Claire-Madeleine de Pierres of Angers. This letter takes us back from Chantal's general theology of conventual spirituality and discernment to individual cases and the need to discern them. Mother Pierres asked Chantal for advice concerning a "worthless and lamentable" nun. This nun had already been exposed in the past as simulating sanctity, and she had already led astray both male and female superiors, faking both illnesses and miraculous recovery. (Note that there is no distinction here between the susceptibility of male and female superiors to being deceived.) In her response, Chantal recounted similar cases in which sisters' spiritual experiences were revealed to be counterfeit. Once, she remembered, a nun had exhibited a behavior that convinced her sisters that she was enjoying special grace and communication with God, and they even found some divinely inspired writings in the nun's cell, writings that further supported the nun's claim to divine grace. Her sisters were so impressed that they informed the mother superior. Luckily, the mother superior's diligence and her discerning spirit immediately exposed this sister's "artificiality." She was defrocked and sent back home to her parents. A similar case took place in another convent where the visions and spiritual communications of two nuns were exposed as artificial. It is therefore extremely important to always suspect and doubt mystical experiences, Chantal instructed Pierres, repeating one of her deepest convictions. Mother superiors—being tender, compassionate, and loving toward the nuns under their supervision—tend to believe such occurrences. However, they can be deceived, and then in their turn deceive others. Instead, the right attitude is to invoke God and his grace to unveil such simulations.[43] The letter did not advise Mother Pierres to share her suspicion with a male

cleric. It was clearly within the powers of mother superiors to discern such cases and solve them on their own.

Chantal, then, was convinced that simulation was much more prevalent among nuns than divine grace, and that the few cases of genuine extraordinary experiences in convents were more likely to be demonic in origin than divine. Writing to Mother Anne-Marie Rosset of Bourges, Chantal referred to a question that had been posed to her by Rosset concerning a young nun in her convent, who had exhibited what looked like marks of divine selection. Warning Rosset not to rush to conclusions, Chantal explained that more time and more signs were needed before it would become possible to determine the nun's spiritual state. "Often, there are delusions [trumperies] amidst such excellence."[44] Genuinely divine inclinations cannot be jeopardized, she went on to explain, and the best way to deal with the nun is to keep her involved in all the regular monastic activities. Similarly, in a letter to another mother superior concerning a nun who exhibited extraordinary behaviors, Chantal's advice was to follow the young nun closely and discreetly. Tender souls, she explained, fall often into illusions of rapture and visions, and only time can tell the true meaning of her experiences.[45]

When Mother Anne-Marie Bollain in Paris asked Chantal about her own supernatural experiences, she got different advice: "Don't bother your mind discerning if the presence of God that you have been feeling lately is a result of special graces or of natural causes." Instead, follow the example of François de Sales, who had himself benefited personally from numerous divine graces. Like him, Bollain should say: "I do not know whether this is a result of divine grace or natural causes, but blessed be God."[46] Significantly, Chantal did not even raise the possibility of a demonic possession in this case. This was due, I suppose, to Bollain's position as a mother superior, whose years of spiritual growth and combat with temptations and delusions had shielded her from attacks. In a letter to the mother superior of Lyon in October 1624, Chantal gave a similar suggestion of passive acceptance even in a case of a possible demonic attack. Addressing the case of a nun who showed signs of demonic possession, Chantal said: "She [should] neither argue with him, nor [should] she compete with him. She [should] not respond to him, except for saying May God be blessed and similar invocations. . . . She [should try] not to worry, because the devil wants nothing more than to agitate her; she [should] not do it, but carry this cross with humility and docility. . . . And if she cannot avoid being troubled, she [should] at least avoid being troubled by being troubled [ne se trouble pas d'être troublée]."[47] To Mother Marie-Augustine d'Avoust she advised

that whenever she finds herself in self-doubt, she should try neither to resist this state, nor to exit it. Nor should she try to reflect on it but instead submit herself to God and carry this cross peacefully and with docility.[48]

Chantal's theology of discernment, as we have seen so far, had two stages. The first stage was to delay any discernment and wait for further experiences, which would expose the devil's cunning and delusions or the nun's aspiration for self-aggrandizement. If, however, the soul did not quiet down, the second stage was to remain passive and to accept the interior "movements" without wondering about their meaning. But Chantal went even further. Writing to a lay correspondent, Victoire Marie-Anne de Savoie, princess of Carignan, who asked Chantal for the best way to resist temptations, she advised her "to perform acts of love, to turn your heart toward God with love, confidence, and abandonment, neither paying attention nor disputing temptations or offenses."[49] Chantal's response here resembled François de Sales's own theology, which advocated passivity as the best means to ascend toward divine union.[50] The best remedy against demonic temptations during contemplation and other spiritual experiences was to inculcate the virtues of humility, simplicity, and docility in young nuns.[51] These, rather than supernatural behaviors, were the genuine marks of the divine. In a letter to a nun who consulted with Chantal concerning her inclination toward mortifications, Chantal elaborated some of the basic rules of discernment. Combining her fear of delusions and doubts of divine grace with the importance she ascribed to authority and to passivity, she explained that the inclination itself is a positive sign and shows that "the fire of divine love" is within your heart. However, if this inclination is not totally submitted to the superior's instructions, and if it leads to hastiness and to alacrity rather than to tranquillity, then it is likely these are marks of demonic temptation and human vanity. This is so because "God's spirit leads us toward submission" and toward equality and conformity with the lifestyle and experiences of other nuns. Trying to excel in mortification and do better than others should be resisted. "Do not ask for anything and do not refuse anything. But be ready to do whatever pleases God and the divine obedience."[52]

Thus, Chantal's instructions combined Jean Gerson's rules for discernment of spirits, especially his emphasis on humility as the clearest mark of divine grace, with the post-Tridentine model of "virtuous heroism"—the new importance of the values of submission and humility as the clearest marks of sanctified behavior—and with the new form of interiorized spirituality that was becoming popular in France right at the time Chantal was dispensing her advice.[53]

All of Chantal's warnings against diabolic illusions, simulations, and just sheer mistakes did not, however, exclude the possibility that some nuns might become possessed by a spirit, be it divine or diabolic. Chantal had to admit that sometimes God "does favor some souls with extraordinary gifts." In such rare cases, the mother superior should put these nuns through probative tests. Their submission to such tests is in and of itself a possible sign of divine favor, because it is well known that God's favors are more likely to occur to solid and sincere, virtuous souls.[54] Writing to Mother Marie-Aimée de Rabutin of Thonon, concerning a novice who exhibited strong internal and external signs of agitation, Chantal did not hesitate to rule hastily that these marks were obviously divine and that the novice was "chosen by God."[55] And in a letter to Mother Anne-Marguerite Clément, who was weakened by her own spiritual experiences, Chantal consoled the mother superior, assuring her that those experiences had divine origins, since they had led Clément to greater purity, tranquillity, and humility. Clément should be like an empty vessel, which lets itself be filled with whatever contents are poured into it. "Do nothing," she went on to say, "and leave yourself at the mercy of love, and receive with humility the light and graces that God wants to give you. Because the signs that you have described to me are solid, and there is no doubt about it." And Chantal is confident enough in her discernment to repeat her diagnosis: "No doubt, God is there [inside you]."[56]

As we have seen, Teresa of Ávila advised her spiritually inclined nuns to consult with male confessors, at the same time that she admitted great ambivalence, comparing some male confessors to "a great torment," whose lack of spiritual experience made them hesitant and fearful of discernment of spirits, while at other times simply wrong. Chantal shared Teresa's ambivalence toward male confessors' expertise in matters of discernment of spirits. Chantal was always careful to recognize male clerical authority and always submitted herself and the Order of the Visitation to such authority. She herself consulted with François de Sales and with other male clerics concerning the discernment of spirits, especially her own mystical experiences.[57] In a letter to a mother superior, she advised her addressee not to pay too much attention to a nun's revelations and visions, to withhold judgment, and to consult with a "capable Father."[58] Mother superiors' ability to discern spirits should not, it seems, be equated with the capacity and authority of learned men. But Chantal's position on the matter was more nuanced than mere acceptance of males' authority. In a letter to an anonymous abbot, who had written Chantal asking her advice concerning a woman who was his spiritual advisee and showed

signs of supernatural behavior, Chantal used what Alison Weber called the "rhetoric of femininity" to balance orthodox obedience to male clerics and her own self-confidence as an experienced mother superior and mystic. This is a unique example of a male abbot addressing the abbess and asking for her opinion in a matter of discernment, but, as we have seen, male clerics did not hesitate to consult with Mère Madeleine de Saint-Joseph, Madame Acarie, and other women known for their discerning powers. Basing her judgment on the abbot's description of his advisee's lack of devotion, her actions, and her words, Chantal reached a conclusion: "It makes me believe that there is nothing in the pains she describes." Based on her experience, Chantal explained, the inventions and lies that the nun exhibited are common among feebleminded souls, who invent fantasies to attract attention. Just last year, she recalled, a similar case of simulation had taken place in a reformed convent in Savoy, and she knew of other similar cases of simulation and lies. Chantal then went on to advise the abbot as to how to treat the woman. "I would say to her that we do not believe anything she says, that these are nothing but illusions, and [would] try hard to lead her to a recognition of her faults, to humility, and to sincere belief in God." The fact that Chantal's advice was based solely on personal experience and precedents, and not on learned theology, did not prevent her from stating her opinion very clearly. But ending her letter, Chantal did not forget to humble herself vis-à-vis male authority: "I am simply telling you my thoughts, that I submit with all my heart to Your Reverence's judgment and to [the judgment] of those who are more capable and have more experience than I."[59] The letter summarized, I believe, Chantal's understanding of discernment. For Chantal, discernment was not only the concern of high theology. It was also a practice of experience. Lacking access to the body of theological writings on the discernment of spirits, Chantal preferred and advocated an attitude of "wait and see." Let the experience unfold by itself. But there was never any doubt in Chantal's mind that she was entitled to discern spirits and that her method was valid, even given the amazing fact that most of it was based on short written descriptions, and that she had never actually examined the graced or afflicted individuals in question.

Chantal was always more likely to dismiss spiritual experiences than to approve them, and she preferred secrecy to fame or scandal. But we should not confuse her aversion to physical and interiorized spiritual mystical experiences with a rejection of the possibility that some nuns might, in fact, enjoy divine grace. On the contrary, mother superiors had to be vigilant not to discredit a mystical experience as much as they should keep

guard against demonic temptations, simulations, or physical and mental illnesses. Like female preachers who denied that they were sermonizing and insisted that they were merely exhorting the faithful to virtue, Chantal, Acarie, and Teresa of Ávila claimed that they were merely dispensing advice or instructing their spiritual daughters. Under the guise of enjoying the gift of counsel that was attainable by both men and women, and by the laity as well as the clergy, and that was never challenged the way the discernment of spirits was challenged in the early modern period, these women were, in fact, discerning spiritual interiority.

Admittedly, their advisees were themselves almost all women, and much of their activity was done in private or within the confine of convents. Their discernment was discrete (and remember the dual meaning of the term *discretio*). Their success in masking and humbling the meaning of their activities should not, however, mislead us to believe that the theological treatises of the early modern period that tried to restrict the discernment of spirits to learned male clerics succeeded in their effort to clericalize this social practice. Just like the history of exorcism analyzed in chapter 2, the history of discernment of spirits is a history of practices and, as such, has been more diverse and widespread than theological writings lead us to believe. There is no denying that the shift in the configuration of exorcism—from mostly a healing technique to a mechanism of probing interior movements and occurrences—assigned new importance to male clerics and posited that they possessed a unique body of knowledge, both theoretical and experiential, to discern spirits. And some unique women, like Madame Acarie, continued to enjoy the traditional charismatic ability to discern spirits, notwithstanding their lay status. But, more importantly, the very same anxiety concerning new forms of spirituality and contemplation that gave rise to the growing clericalization of exorcism and to its transformation into a probative rite also necessitated a more active involvement of women themselves in introspective techniques. Nuns and other spiritually incline individuals were now required to record and interrogate their interior movements lest they fall into the Enemy's trap. By acquainting themselves with the minutiae of their innermost self, they gained experience in self-discernment. Equally, mother superiors were at the forefront of the battle against fraudulent and deceived souls, who, while advancing toward God, encountered the devil. It was their responsibility to discern such nuns' interiority, to lead them away from temptation, and to measure their advance on the spiritual route. Paradoxically, the new restrictions on some forms of unsupervised (feminine) spirituality also gave spiritual women new discerning skills.

PART FOUR

Intersections

* 8 *

The Devil in the Convent

The mass demonic possession of the Ursuline nuns of Loudun in 1633–40 is among the most famous (or infamous) episodes in the history of diabolic possession and witchcraft accusations in early modern Europe. Too often, in fact, this event has been portrayed in the literature as paradigmatic of the inherent relations between demonic possession and witchcraft, and of the sexual and histrionic nature of possession in early modern Europe. My intention in this chapter is to use the Loudun case and similar cases of possessions of nuns to weave together the different themes that have been developed in the previous chapters. I argue that conventual possessions, even more than cases of possessions among the laity, demonstrated the difficulties of discerning between divine and diabolic spirits, between truth and fraud, and between licit and illicit spiritual practices. It was in convents, more than in any other space, that women pursued the new spiritual exercises and techniques that characterized interiorized contemplation in all its different configurations: passive, Jesuit, Teresian, Salesian, Theatine, and so on. It was therefore in convents that the growing anxiety concerning unauthorized practices, with its accompanying fears of diabolic illusions and temptations, came to the fore. And, lest we forget, convents were gendered spaces, and women, as we have seen repeatedly, were regularly assumed to be deceived and/or deceivers, to mistake the diabolic for the divine, and to pursue spiritual exercises above their mental and biological capacities. Convents, more than other spaces, became, by the second half of the sixteenth century, sites of contention and confusion. They also became sites of ecclesiastical (male) interventions, when male clerics, be they exorcists or Inquisitors, pondered the nature and reliability of possessions. The

male clerics cast out demons, reprimanded simulating nuns, and, importantly, left written records of the unfolding of such events.

Let us start, then, by summarizing the events at Loudun. During the night of September 22, 1632, two nuns encountered a spirit. Two days later, a large black ball traversed the refectory, pushing some nuns to the ground. The following week, a human skeleton was seen walking in the convent's corridors. Two more weeks passed before the spirit acquired the clear image of the priest Urbain Grandier, the *curé* of the Loudunais parish of Saint-Pierre-du-Marché and a controversial figure in town. In the following weeks, numerous nuns were attacked and possessed by evil spirits. Some sisters heard voices, some were beaten and slapped by invisible entities, while others laughed immodestly and involuntarily. Exhibiting supernatural physical strength, screaming, crying, fainting, exposing themselves, and suffering from uncontrollable seizures and convulsions, the sisters showed all the traditional marks of diabolic possession. The local clergy organized exorcism rituals, during which the nuns accused Grandier of having signed a pact with Satan and initiating the nuns' possession. The demons, speaking through the sisters' mouths, supported these claims and even supplied the exorcists with a signed copy of the pact between Grandier and the devil, the original of which had been signed with Grandier's own blood and was kept in hell. Grandier had had a long-standing quarrel with the local ecclesiastical hierarchy. Once accused, and aware that he was not to get any help from his fellow Loudunais, he tried to mobilize patronage and support in Paris, but he failed there too. Following a series of trials, he was found guilty and executed on August 18, 1634. The possessing demons then began to depart from the nuns' bodies, and the town of Loudun could have expected to calm down and regain its pleasant obscurity.

But this was not to happen. Jeanne des Anges, the mother superior of the community, remained possessed by seven different demons. Repeated attempts to dispossess her failed. In fact, things went from bad to worse when the Jesuit Jean-Joseph Surin (whom we have met before in chapter 5) arrived in Loudun in December 1634 to help with her exorcism, but instead started himself to experience visions and hallucinations, seizures, temporary paralysis, and was slowly losing his verbal capabilities. It looked as if he and Jeanne des Anges were exchanging roles, and while she was slowly recovering, he was losing his mental capacity. "During my ministry, the devil passed from the body of the mother superior to that of [myself]," lamented Surin to his friend, the Jesuit father Achille Doni d'Attichy.[1]

In October 1637, the mother superior regained her health. The last departing demons left clear signs of their exit from her body, when the

names Joseph and Mary miraculously appeared inscribed on Jeanne des Anges's left arm. Shortly afterward, the names Jesus and F. D. Salles also appeared. The last name commemorated François de Sales, the recently deceased French proponent of passive contemplation and female spirituality, in whose shrine in the city of Annecy Jeanne des Anges was promised, in a vision, that she would make a full recovery. Jeanne des Anges spent the next few years of her life traveling around France and showing the divine marks on her hands to believers, among them the royal couple and Cardinal Richelieu. She then retired to Loudun, where she spent her remaining years as a mystic, communicating through her guardian angel with the divine, having visions, and sending messages back and forth between the worlds. She also excelled in discerning possessing spirits.[2] Surin himself, as we remember, spent most of his remaining years in a state of infantile mutism.

The diabolic possessions and exorcisms in Loudun became an instant sensational drama. Detailed reports and letters were sent from the small town describing the mysterious events, and people came from all over France, and even as far as England and Italy, to witness the strange occurrences. Later on, the case played a major role in Enlightenment anticlericalism and in nineteenth-century positivist attacks on the alleged fanaticism and ignorance of the Catholic Church. The possession in Loudun is also a prominent feature in recent interpretations of both the witch craze that had swept Europe in the early modern period and of the transition from the alleged homogenous theological worldview of the medieval church toward the modern world, with its competing theological, medical, and scientific discourses. The dramatic episode has also served as the core of a number of novels (among them, Aldous Huxley's *The Devils of Loudun* 1952), an opera (Krzysztof Penderecki's *The Devils of Loudun*, 1969), a movie (Ken Russell's *The Devils*, 1971), and even a Broadway play (John Whiting's *The Devils*, 1965).

The mass possession in Loudun, however, was only one among numerous possessions in religious female congregations, most of which had nothing to do with witchcraft and with witchcraft accusations. Out of more than fifty European cases of group possessions in convents and hundreds of cases of possession of individual nuns, only a few developed into witchcraft accusations. It was these few, rather than the majority of cases, that proffered a dramatic narrative both to contemporaneous observers and recorders of these events and to historians, who mistook the voluminous documentation of these exceptional cases for standard dynamic. By so doing, they removed conventual possession from its contexts—namely, the late medieval spiritualization of possession, the history of pre-Quietist and

Quietist spirituality and the anxieties it generated, and the susceptibility of humans in general, and women in particular, to possessions by both divine and demonic spirits. Given theologians' growing conviction that there were inherent connections among new forms of interiorized passive spirituality, femininity, and the ever-increasing fear of Satan, it is not surprising that in the early modern period nuns were found to be more prone to become possessed by demons. Possession, after all, was a hermeneutic and labeling mechanism that was employed more often in the early modern period than in any other time before or after. All the descriptions of demonic possession in our possession are ex post facto explanations by theologians and Inquisitors, once they had determined that the etiologies of the afflictions and behaviors under investigation were preternatural or spiritual rather than natural, and demonic rather them divine. But in order to capture the reality of the events, we should read them against the grain and reintroduce the anxieties and hesitations that accompanied the events and that the texts themselves repressed.

We have seen repeatedly that contemporaries had no doubt that women were more likely than men to get possessed. The Bolognese exorcist Girolamo Menghi discovered it during his many years of service, and the late sixteenth-century French jurist Jean Bodin wrote that "there are fifty females witches or demoniacs for every man." His compatriot Jean Le Breton concurred. Men could become obsessed, but actual possession of the faculties occurs only to women. Cardinal Giovanni Bona, a member of the Congregation of Rites and a consultant to the Congregation of the Index, also reached the same conclusions, arguing that women in general and nuns in particular, due to their very nature and imbecility, should always be regarded with suspicion. Their humidity creates overexcitation and perturbations that reduce their rational capacities, he explained.[3] Theologians were also aware that "voluntary life imprisonment" was an extremely harsh condition, which often caused melancholy among nuns. The post-Tridentine strict enforcement of enclosure, obviously, increased many a nun's unhappiness. Poor living conditions, meager diet, and rivalries among nuns further contributed to restlessness and, at times, melancholy and psychological malaise. It is important to note that the possible impact of these social, sociological, and psychological preconditions on the mental and spiritual climate within convents was already articulated by early modern religious people—nuns, mother superiors, and male clerics. But in and of themselves, these were merely preconditions rather than causes of possessions. Only rarely did contemporaries dismiss possessions by either divine or diabolic spirits as simply biological, medical, or psychological events.

They persistently and regularly looked for preternatural or supernatural explanations, expecting convents to be not only spaces of psychological and physiological restlessness, but also sites of supernatural interventions.[4]

There are literally hundreds of cases of individual nuns getting possessed. Due to the sheer number of such cases, it is impossible to generalize on all of them beyond falling back into misogynistic and psychopathological clichés. Cases of group possessions in convents, on the other hand, were both common enough to enable us to speculate on the dynamics of these possessions and rare enough to permit a systematic analysis of all the known cases. And while group possessions were unique events, they also shed light on the general characteristics of demonic possession among all religious people. In my discussion, I will therefore use all the available data from all the cases of mass possessions in convents, adding, at times, examples from cases of possession of individual nuns. While each group possession was determined by very specific historical events, by unique geographical and theological circumstances, and by an infinite number of idiosyncratic personal, social, and psychological variables, it is nevertheless possible to present a set of preconditions and conditions that were the sine qua non for the eruption of mass possessions in late medieval and early modern convents. Such a discussion, while general and generalizing—thereby risking the danger of overlooking the wide diversity of and numerous differences among specific cases of group possession—offers a coherent wider context for the understanding of the phenomenon, which often gets lost in detailed explanations of each specific outburst.

* * *

In 1320–22, Saint Nicola of Tolentino exorcised the Cistercian nuns of Santa Lucia in Pian di Pieca near San Ginesio, who were being pursued by demons, incubi, the spirits of two local tyrants, and other deceased murderers. The case is recorded in the canonization record of Saint Nicola, and it is important to note that the compiler of the dossier relates the possession as a series of separate incidents of possession and exorcism of individual nuns. There is no notion yet, in this early report, of a communal diabolic invasion. A few years later, the Franciscan theologian Alvarus Pelagius (c. 1275–c. 1349) recorded in *De planctu Ecclesiae* that he had great difficulties expelling demons from the bodies of Tertiary Franciscan nuns in an Italian convent. The nuns, wrote Pelagius, had gotten so accustomed to the demons' presence that they had stopped fearing them.[5] Additional cases are mentioned briefly in the *Life* of Saint Columba of Rieti and in

The Decameron of Giovanni Boccaccio.[6] Johannes Nider, the Dominican theologian (1380–1438) who contributed much to the development of the early modern concept of the maleficent witch and to the early attempts to develop a theology of discernment, was also responsible for shaping the late medieval and early modern narrative of mass demonic possession. Nider reported in his *Formicarius* a case of mass possession and exorcism that took place sometime around 1428 in the convent of St. Catherine in Nuremberg. Nider, the prior of the Dominican monastery in town, intervened and by successful exorcisms put an end to the nuns' torments.[7]

Half a century later, in 1491, the nuns of the Augustinian convent at Quesnoy le Conte in Cambrai (Flanders) were attacked. For four (and some contemporary chroniclers say seven) years, demons caused the sisters to run amok in the fields like dogs, to fly in the air like birds, to scamper up trees like cats, and to prophesy the future and reveal secrets. One demon even appeared in the shape of the recently deceased confessor and possessed one of the nuns 434 times! Rituals of exorcism, conducted by local priests and the bishop of Cambrai, delivered only some of the nuns, and even the celebration of a special mass in Rome by Pope Alexander VI himself, who asked for the nuns' deliverance and read their names out loud, did not succeed in relieving all the sisters of their possessing demons. During the exorcism, the demons explained that they tormented the nuns because of jealousy: while they themselves had committed only one sin and are "perpetuelement dampnéz," Christians commit sins regularly but are pardoned by grace, contrition, confession, and satisfaction.[8] During the 1490s, mass demonic possessions also took place in the pro-Savonarolan convent of Santa Lucia in Florence, where forty nuns were possessed. Fra Domenico da Pescia and other Savonarolans conducted exorcisms, which were only partially successful. Then in 1498, immediately following the execution of the Florentine prophet, a new outbreak of demonic possession afflicted nearly all the nuns. Exorcism rituals failed, and many of the nuns were sent back to their families or were transferred to other nunneries.[9]

In the sixteenth century, other group possessions by evil spirits took place in Xanten (1516), Lyon (1526), Wertet (Ubertet) in Brabant in 1550, Rome (1555), and in at least fifteen additional monasteries and convents in Holland, Germany, France, Spain, and Italy.[10] Group possessions among nuns peaked in the seventeenth century, when more than twenty outbursts of mass possessions took place in western Europe. In France and the Netherlands, group possessions occurred in the convent of the Grey Sisters of Bethlehem in Louvain in 1606, at the Ursuline convent in Aix-en-Provence (1611–13), among the Brigitines of Lille (1608–13), at the

Cistercian nunnery in Oisy-le-Verger (between Douai and Cambrai, diocese of Arras, 1613), among the Carmelites in Paris in 1609, and among the Parisian Ursulines in 1621–22. The early Visitandines were attacked in the 1620s and again in 1637. In the Hospitaler convent in Louviers, fifteen nuns became possessed (1643–47), and similar cases followed among the Ursulines in Auxonne (1658–63), Lille (1661), Toulouse (1681), and Lyon (1687–90), where fifty nuns were possessed. Additional cases took place in the Holy Roman Empire in Strasbourg, Cologne, and Paderborn. Two events occurred in Madrid in 1628 and again in 1652, two others in a convent in Las Palmas (1622) and in Cangas (Oviedo, 1698), and other cases took place in Trujillo (Peru) and among Franciscan tertiaries in Querétaro (Mexico). At least six cases of group possessions in convents took place in Italy during this century: in Bergamo in 1614 and then again in 1622, in Reggio Emilia, Piacenza, and Celenza (near Naples) (all in 1625–27), among the Poor Clares in Carpi (near Modena) ten years later, and in Turin at about the same time.[11] I have so far found only four cases that occurred in the eighteenth century (in the convent of Santa Annunziata in Marradi, Tuscan Romagna, in 1721, in the convent of Unterzell, in Lower Franconia, in 1738–49, in the Jeronymite convent in Puebla, Mexico, in the 1750s, and in Rio de Janeiro in the 1750s–1760s), before mass conventual possessions disappeared.[12]

We have records of mass possessions in convents, then, only from the fourteenth century, with all but seven of the cases taking place between 1435 and 1690, particularly after 1550, when such cases were integrated into the cultural imagination and became frequent enough to join the repertory of the commonly possible. It is important to note that most of the reported cases remained hidden in monastic chronicles and Inquisitional records and did not attract much attention at the time or since. Some, in fact, are only known to us only from a single source, a list compiled by the Protestant physician Johann Weyer, in his 1568 discussion of witchcraft and demonology. Of more than fifty cases, only six—five of them in France and one in Madrid—became causes célèbres. All of these cases took place in the first half of the seventeenth century. The renown of the French cases was due to the witchcraft accusations, while the Spanish case evolved into a political affair, which, as we have seen in chapter 5, led to the arrest of the abbess on charges of heresy and was incorporated into a political vendetta against Don Jerónimo de Villanueva, the founder of the convent and a favorite of Count-Duke Olivares. Hundreds of pamphlets, theological treatises, medical speculations, eyewitness accounts, epistolary reports, and juridical briefs described and analyzed the few cases that evolved into

witchcraft accusations, while all other forty-something events remained "cloaked in silence" (to use Weyer's own term)[13] and confusion at the time and in oblivion ever since. In other words, contemporaries did not regard most group possessions in convents as something so exceptional and so dramatic that it necessitated a new theological or medical explanation. This was due, I believe, to their understanding of group possession in convents as just another manifestation of the very common phenomenon of diabolic possession among women in general and nuns in particular. As such, the etiology, the diagnostic tools (discernment of spirits by abbesses, exorcists, bishops, and theologians), and the remedy (exorcism or the discovery of simulation) were part and parcel of the means that had been used by the Catholic Church in the early modern era and that we have discussed in previous chapters.

All conventual diabolic possessions, whether they enjoyed publicity or were hushed by the authorities, shared the characteristics of all cases of possession. During these episodes, nuns exhibited both preternatural signs such as physical strength and aversion to sacred objects such as the Eucharist, and natural signs, among them fainting, vomiting, fits, paralysis, contortions, and convulsions. During some exorcism ceremonies, many possessed nuns cursed their confessors and priests, screamed and shouted, lost consciousness, and even sank into coma. Some even tried to kill themselves. But after long struggles, the clerical interventions usually achieved their goals and the nuns were cured. In some cases, the recovery was accompanied by the unveiling of the possessing agents' identities, who were all familiar demons such as Beelzebub (Satan's second in command), Asmodeus (the demon of lust), Behemoth, Leviathan, Balaam, and Legion.

Michel de Certeau and Robert Mandrou developed the paradigm of current historical thinking about the mass possession at Loudun and similar cases, and it is worth summarizing their main arguments. Echoing many seventeenth-century physicians and even a few theologians, and following a French school of anti-Catholic medical positivism of the nineteenth century (Jean-Martin Charcot comes to mind), Mandrou and Certeau argued that mental disorders—hysteria first and foremost—triggered the bizarre behaviors that characterized these possessions. Like other scholars, Certeau also suggested that rivalry among religious orders, combined with political tensions, transformed the events into major witch hunts. Both Certeau and Mandrou agreed that the events marked a Foucauldian discursive transition from one system of thought to another: from theological to rational, or from the Middle Ages to the Enlightenment. The mass possessions, they argued, marked the collapse of a religious orthodoxy and

the rise of the political sphere as we know it, and a shift from a devotional cosmology to a scientific organization of the natural world. Certeau augmented this explanation by paying attention to the spiritual climate of life within the convent, suggesting that being possessed by demonic spirits enabled some nuns to participate in a discourse on topics from which they were normally excluded. By speaking as others rather than as themselves, possessed nuns voiced their theological and mystical ideas concerning divine love. They expressed their despair, doubts, fantasies, and confusion during a transitional period, a period in which the traditional medieval cosmology was falling apart, and a new theological discourse and language of the self and of its relations with the divine was being configured and produced. By being possessed, the nuns could project their panic outside themselves, thus shedding their responsibility for the content of their fantasies and anxieties.[14] Certeau echoes here a major concern of early modern female mystics, as expressed, for example, by the Spanish Carmelite María de San José Salazar (1548–1603):

> We are but women! So I ask:
> How then shall we be heard?[15]

There is no denying the psychological distress and suffering of possessed women. Certeau is also right in emphasizing the spiritual upheavals that characterized the seventeenth century and shaped events in women's monasteries. Certeau is wrong, however, in connecting the restlessness in convents with a new scientific/naturalistic paradigm and the anxieties it generated. As Nancy Caciola has shown, medical and naturalized explanations were part and parcel of the confrontation with possession throughout the later Middle Ages and were not a novelty of the early modern era. Furthermore, awareness to medical causality did not preclude supernatural first causes. As we have seen numerous times, both physicians and theologians agreed that a demon could possess an individual by taking advantage of this individual's natural physiological feebleness or by stirring black bile and uterine vapors, thus causing melancholy and the suffocation of the womb.[16] Theologians and bishops, abbots and abbesses, confessors and spiritual directors were constantly on guard to prevent melancholy from taking over nuns and had warned about the dangers of monastic lives well before the alleged collapse of the medieval cosmology during the seventeenth century.

Thus, we are still left with the crucial questions we have been pondering throughout this book, namely, what was unique to the experience of early

modern nuns and that differed from conventual experiences before and after? And why was the definition "diabolic possession" found to be more accessible or useful at this period? A unique psychological context was undoubtedly a precondition for the unfolding of possessions both inside and outside convents, as were issues of female sexuality, so often invoked by eighteenth-century novelists, modern historians, and other voyeurs.[17] Recent feminist scholarship, however, has exposed the misogynist overtones of the term "hysteria," which has usually been ascribed to the possessed nuns, and which has functioned, as it still does, to dismiss and prevent female access to speech, power, and equality.[18] Similarly, attributing conventual possessions to the alleged sexual frustration and/or debauchery and constant intellectual ennui that supposedly characterized convent life is equally demeaning and simplistic. The unique forms of psychological or psychopathological behaviors of nuns should be historicized within a cultural and spiritual context that could have made sense to early modern people. Recent work has unveiled the creative and fulfilling lives that nuns (or at least some nuns) enjoyed within their small worlds. They prayed, meditated, composed texts and music, copied manuscripts, painted, socialized, ran the business transactions and the daily life of their religious house, and even from within strictly cloistered communities found ways to participate in theological debates and ecclesiological controversies.[19] Possession, as I shall argue shortly, was one of these many forms of female monastic creativity. It was an expression of late medieval and early modern nuns' active participation in the promotion of new forms of spirituality; it expressed nuns' involvement in the reform movements of the period and demonstrated the earnestness of nuns' engagement in their personal spiritual well-being and—no less important—the well-being of the world at large.

Not all convents and nunneries were as likely to serve as stages for the theater of the devil. Demonic possessions in convents took place most often within the walls of new or recently reformed religious orders. When the German Dominican Johannes Nider was called upon to exorcise the nuns of Nuremberg in the late 1420s, the convent of St. Catherine was in the midst of a spiritual reform. Influenced by the spiritual reform of Raymond of Capua and other developments in Dominican spirituality, the convent became a center of Observance. Some nuns went on long fasts, while others had trances and ecstasies. In visions, the reformed nuns encountered the suffering Jesus, Mary, and the Apostles. Like most visionary nuns, those of St. Catherine doubted the source of their visions. The extreme hostility of Father Eberhard Mardach, their spiritual director, to ecstatic and

interiorized forms of female spirituality increased their anxiety.[20] The convent fell into disorder, and the nuns split between reformed and unreformed sisters, with the latter resisting the intrusion by the Observant nuns who joined their community and the restricting regime that the new nuns brought with them. The demons' attacks on the nuns started shortly after the reform, and, tellingly, it was the unreformed nuns who were tormented by the devil. The sacristan, who led the opposition to reform, was the first to be attacked by the devil and was so severely beaten that she almost died of her wounds. Nider's early attempts to convince the nuns to commend themselves to God and to adopt the new lifestyle failed, and the unreformed sisters did not hesitate to confront him: "When will we regain our former unrestricted freedom?" It was only after the devil increased his attacks and "tormented them day and night" that the recalcitrant nuns surrendered their arrogance, accepted the reform, and the Enemy disappeared.[21]

Similarly, the mass possession of the Florentine nuns of Santa Lucia in the 1490s took place within the tension-ridden atmosphere of the Savonarolan reforms. Santa Lucia was transformed in 1496 from a Tertiary Dominican establishment into a cloistered nunnery, whose nuns took solemn vows. The charismatic preacher enforced strict observance on the nuns, which included a rigid schedule and a complete abstinence from meat. Shortly after the reform of 1496, some nuns started exhibiting clear marks of disobedience, which suggested diabolic intervention. Among other forms of behavior, they insulted Savonarola and called him "Fra Giraffa"! The famed exorcist Fra Domenico da Pescia was called in and calmed the demonically possessed nuns, but conflicts between supporters and opponents of the Savonarolan reforms increased after the preacher's execution in 1498 and led to the most dramatic communal possession at Santa Lucia, when forty nuns became possessed. Even contemporaries realized the connection between the rigid regimen and the outbreak of possession, and the general of the Dominican order authorized a reform of the reform: the sisters were permitted to eat meat, some nuns were dispersed, and only those who accepted the reforms remained under Dominican rule.[22]

Similar divisions and tensions characterized the communal possessions in early modern French and Flemish convents. All were recent or recently reformed establishments. The nuns of Quesnoy le Conte belonged to the recently reformed Augustinian order, and the convent of Ubertet (Wertet) in Brabant, where mass possession took place in 1550, was under a strict reform, led by a mystically inclined priest, whose Lenten regimen for his nuns forbade them to eat anything but turnips throughout the fast. His severe

spiritual direction led to sudden outbursts of impiety and blasphemy among the nuns.[23] Anne du Bois, who in 1604 founded the Reformed Brigitine convent in Lille, was herself a mystic and was very close to Nicolas de Mortmorency, Count of Estaires, a leading politician in the court in Brussels and an author of several ascetic treatises. Du Bois had been established by her patron in a convent in Loos, but hostility to her reforms there led to her transfer to Lille. Here, too, she established a rigorous spiritual regime, based on excessive mortification and multiple mystical exercises.[24] Her "odor of sanctity" and princely patronage inspired many elite Lillois families to send their daughters to the Brigitines. But the families' aspirations for their daughters did not always accord with the girls' own hopes, and the abbess's regimen confronted growing opposition. The eruption of a group possession in this convent in 1608, only four years after its establishment, took place while these tensions and conflicting expectations were being hotly debated within and without the convent's walls. Similarly, we have already encountered Mathurin Picard, the spiritual director of the nuns at Louviers, where a mass possession erupted in 1643, and his predecessor, Father Pierre David, establishing a strict spiritual regimen in the convent and instructing the sisters in "self-examination, self-reflections [and] discernment of their actions . . . and talking to them about nothing but contemplation, meditation [inaction], enlightenment [lumière], ecstasy, mystical union [d'union], transformation," and other forms of mystical exercises.[25] According to a report by a physician who visited the sisters, meditations on hell and the devil were a major part of their spiritual regimen.[26]

Similar dynamics characterized Ursuline convents in which mass possessions broke out. The Ursuline order received papal approval in 1572 and was established in France in 1592. The Ursuline houses in Aix-en-Provence and Loudun, where the two most famous episodes of mass possession took place, were established in 1592 and 1626, respectively; nineteen and seven years prior to the possessions in these convents. The Ursulines were originally an active, uncloistered order but were forced into enclosure in the 1610s and 1620s. This was part of the movement toward enclosure that characterized monastic life after the Council of Trent.[27] Early Ursulines compared themselves to active Amazons, but, with enclosure, this image was abandoned, and the search for a new way of life at a time of transition was expressed in the Ursulines' new theology of "Mixed Life," the combined heritage of sisters Martha and Mary, the active and the mystic.[28] Attempts by the Ursuline directors in Paris to reform Ursuline convents and to install *clausura*, strict observance, and an austere lifestyle created tensions and fights among and within houses.[29] Jeanne des Anges

(1602–1665), mother superior of Loudun, testified in her autobiography that in the Ursuline convent of Poitiers, where she had spent her youth, she "went through these three years in *grand libertinage*, so much so that I had no concrete awareness of God's presence."[30] Jean-Baptiste Romillon, the Jesuit spiritual director of the convent at Aix, where a mass possession occurred in 1611, was a convert from Protestantism and responsible for bringing the Ursulines to Provence. A critic of Catholic laxity, he installed a strict regimen in the convent in Aix, a regimen that was opposed by some nuns and their parents.[31] Like the recently founded or recently reformed Ursulines and the Brigitines, the Hospitalers of Louviers were established in 1622, twenty-one years before the possession, and moved to their own building ten years prior to the drama. The Visitandines, among whom a group possession took place in the 1620s, were a very recent order, searching for the right balance between mysticism and activism and between claustration and service. Like other female orders, they, too, were engaged in an effort to balance active life with contemplation, and to find the right equilibrium among obedience, prayer, and work.

The demonic attack on the nuns of San Plácido in Madrid in 1628, as we have seen in chapter 5, also took place shortly after the establishment of this reformed Benedictine convent, an institution that was created and endowed especially to restore rigid observance to an order that had suffered from growing relaxation. The convent was, in fact, the only female religious establishment in Madrid that followed the very strict Benedictine reform, which emphasized (following Saint Teresa's reform of the Carmelites) *clausura*, discipline, and a literal compliance with the original rule of the order. Fray Francisco García de Calderón, the spiritual director of the convent, was himself a mystic, a promoter of female mystics, and led his followers, among them the abbess, in very rigorous spiritual exercises. According to the testimony of Sister Teresa Valle de la Cerda, the nuns were subjected to a rigorous regimen of discipline and mortification "that contributed to both the convent's reputation and to the nuns' own penance."[32] The convent of San Illdefonso in Las Palmas, too, was a recent establishment, and the convent of Poor Clares in Cologne was established eleven years prior to the outburst of the possession there in 1622. The group possession in the Capuchin convent in Forlì, whose nuns were possessed in 1596, followed the imposition of an extremely severe regimen, as was the case in the convent of the Poor Clares of Santa Chiara in Carpi, Italy. The possession there erupted in 1636 when a new spiritual director tried to put an end to the laxity that had prevailed in the convent under the abbacy of Eleonora d'Este (Sister Angela Caterina), daughter of Duke Cesare

d'Este of Modena. The abbess had brought her own servants with her and had organized cultural and musical events within the cloistered walls of the nunnery. She also installed Fra Angelo Bellacappa, an Observant Franciscan, as confessor to the nuns. During his tenure, the laxity in the convents bordered on sexual misconduct, and he was removed from office in 1636. The possession started as soon as a reforming priest was appointed as archbishop of Carpi, removed Bellacappa, and decided to establish his authority over the convent, which had become almost the private property of the d'Este family.[33]

There are different ways to account for the devil's appearance at the sites of these tensions. The inherent indeterminacy of the new contemplative techniques was itself a major course of spiritual anxiety among the nuns themselves and their superiors. The conflicting aspirations and confusions within the monastic communities concerning the project of *Renovatio Ecclesiae*, one might add, found expression in psychological and physiological behaviors that, at times, were explained as diabolic possession, while at other times similar somatic and mental behaviors and experiences could lead to a definition of divine intervention. By becoming possessed, some nuns could express their opposition to reform and to the introduction of a more rigorous regimen. Conversely, the fact that demons chose to attack the community could have served some reforming sisters as a proof that Satan, for one, took their vocation seriously. When asked why they possessed miserable nuns rather than warriors, the possessing demons in Quesnoy le Conte explained that "looters, ribald fellows and thieves already belong to us and they are our prey, our property and our conquest." Possessing riffraff, in other words, is a waste of the devil's time. Attacking nuns—who, in their prayers to the Virgin and in their invocations of saints, release people from the demon's control—was a more worthy challenge.[34] Verrine, one of the demons who possessed the sisters at Aix in 1611, when the debate about enclosure was at its peak, admitted that female activism was more than devils could tolerate. "It is true," it stated, that "I am angry with those who live in chastity in their monasteries; but the Ursulines make me more furious, because they save many souls from [the demons], be it by their Christian devotion or by their example, working as they do more than others to aid the needy. . . . All the demons have tried with all their might to persuade them to desert their vocation; we explained to them that monastic walls were most suitable for women, and that they were wrong, that their vocation was not approved."[35] And in Louviers "the devil could not tolerate the glare of as much virtue," as was demonstrated daily by the nuns of St. Louis and St. Elizabeth.[36]

Teresa of Ávila strongly believed that reformed and cloistered nuns—rather than their uncloistered and unreformed sisters—challenged and threatened the powers of evil. "The devil," she wrote, "cannot bear to see how much Discalced friars and nuns are serving the Lord."[37] The Jesuit Father Jean-Joseph Surin agreed and wrote to a Carmelite nun that Behemoth hates Carmelites, and that a relic of Teresa of Ávila that he had used during exorcisms at Loudun worked miracles and expelled one of the demons.[38] After the enclosure of the Ursulines, Mother Marie-Augustine de Pomereu, the historian of the French Ursulines, corroborated these observations. The possession in Aix, she wrote, "served the devil's mischievous designs against the order of St. Ursula," and in the convent in Loudun, she went on to explain, "God revealed his glory by the means that he chose to sanctify a large number of souls, allowing the possession and obsession of numerous young girls."[39] The Ursuline sisters at Auxonne, where a mass possession took place in 1658–63, similarly argued that their possession was a sign of divine favor and added to the "glory of their establishment."[40] Upon departure, the demons who possessed the Brigitines of Lille explained that their action had resulted from their hostility to saints Francis and Birgitta, their adversaries in heaven. They then went on to admit that the founding of the convent, and the exemplary piety of the abbess and the sisters, infuriated them.[41] The devils who possessed the Benedictine nuns in San Plácido in Madrid likewise explained that their intention was "to demonstrate the might of God's *Misericordia* . . . to represent the Passion of Christ," and to purify "nuns, so that their example would extend this work of reform throughout the entire world."[42] By terrorizing new orders, the devil legitimized them. He expressed the nuns' belief that their new vocation and regimen were feared by Satan and therefore must be approved by God.

As we have seen, nuns who pursued affective and passive spiritualities knew that the risk of demonic attacks increased as they advanced in the Way of Perfection. This recognition was affirmed time and again by advocates of new forms of spirituality, who consulted and consoled terrified nuns. The fear of demonic temptation and the inability to discern divine from demonic experiences is a central theme in nuns' letters to the Milanese Cardinal Federico Borromeo.[43] It was also a major motif in numerous instructional guides for nuns. Borromeo, for example, explained in his treatise devoted to feminine ecstasies and illusions that real visions and ecstasies are extremely rare, and that more often than not women think that they hear voices or see things while, in fact, they experience phantasms and imaginations. Due to their natural sensuality, feeble brains,

vanity, and perturbation, women are more likely to be deceived or to fake their experiences, and young and virgin women, whose sanguine nature increases ecstasies, are especially prone to such illusions and frauds. He went on to record numerous examples of women who suffered from demonic attacks, temptations, and delusions, to then offer the only available remedy, namely, humble submission to clerical supervision. The Mexican friar Agustín de Vetancurt (1620–1700) put it succinctly in his *Menologio Mexicano*, when he explained that combating the demons was the very thing that distinguished nuns from other women.[44]

Thus, whether he tormented nuns who opposed reform in order to break their resistance, as in Nuremberg and Florence in the fifteenth century, or attacked reformed convents, as was more common in the French and Flemish communities in the seventeenth century, by the end of the day and the exorcism, the devil found himself acting as a divine agent of reform, serving an edifying goal.[45] This was the power of the nuns, whose behavior initiated the theological/exorcismal intervention, and of the exorcists themselves, who, concurrently with healing the demoniacs, discursively and theologically shaped the events and gave them meaning. Just as the possession itself was a demonstration of a nun's spiritual engagement in and response to religious aspirations, new contemplative techniques, and the anxieties that were part and parcel of these endeavors, the exorcism was a dramatic external visualization of the struggle between God and the devil, a struggle that took place inside the nun's body and soul.

* * *

It is impossible to generalize about the social profile of possessed nuns. Our information is incomplete, and the following speculations are therefore tentative. Santa Lucia in Florence and the convents in Cilenza and Carpi, as well as San Plácido in Madrid and St. Clara in Cologne, recruited daughters from the highest echelons of the local nobilities, including members of the ruling dynasties.[46] The convents of Lille and Verger and the Ursuline convents of Aix and Loudun recruited many sisters from among the local nobility and the higher bourgeoisie, sisters who were also used to a comfortable monastic life prior to the reforms. Such, for example, was the social background and lifestyle of Madeleine de Demandolx de la Palud, the first novice to become possessed in Aix in 1609. The daughter of wealthy provincial noble parents, she had first joined the Ursuline convent in 1605 when she was twelve. There were only six nuns at the convent at the time, all daughters of the provincial Provençal nobility. Due to depression,

Madeleine de la Palud was sent back home, then joined as a novice in another convent in Marseille, and only then was transferred to Aix again. Shortly after her forced return to Aix, she smashed a crucifix, and this was the first sign of her diabolic possession. Adjustment to monastic life was obviously difficult for the young woman.[47] The Loudunais Mother Jeanne des Anges was the daughter of a provincial baron, and she described in her memoirs the easy life she had led prior to her appointment at Loudun. The spiritual struggle and the intersubjective confusion that arose from the contradictory tensions of activism and enclosure, and the lingering fear of the meaning of their spiritual experiences, were augmented then by the confused aspirations of some nuns' families, whose financial support was necessary for the convent's survival. With enclosure, wealthier families were more willing to send their daughters to new orders, and this was the secret of the Ursulines' popularity. But these families also wanted to preserve the right to visit their daughters and let their daughters maintain the lifestyle to which they had been accustomed, as the examples of Angela Caterina (d'Este) in Modena and Doña Teresa Valle de la Cerda in Madrid indicate. Thus both the nuns and their families had conflicting ideas about what life in the reformed convents should be like.[48] This class argument, however, could also be seen shaping possession from the opposite direction. For instance, all thirty Ursuline nuns in a convent in Milan, where a mass possession erupted in 1590, were poor.[49] The possession in the convent in Kentorp, near Strasbourg, in 1552, was initiated by Elsa von Kamen, the cook, whose jealousy of her noble and highborn sisters led her to invoke a demon to poison them.[50] Madeleine Bavent (Soeur de la Résurrection), who was exposed during the exorcisms in Louviers to be the witch who had brought about the possession of her sisters, was an orphan, raised by her aunt and uncle, and apprenticed to a dressmaker. She was of a much humbler social background than the other nuns, who were all "the best daughters of the place, carefully brought up by their parents and instructed from early age by nuns."[51] Similarly, the first two women to become possessed at the elite convent of San Plácido in Madrid were the novices María Anastasia, previously Jusepa, a slave or daughter of slaves, and Isabel de Frías, whose parents were Moriscos. Her father died in the Morisco uprising in Granada when she was only two years old, and she and her mother were taken prisoners. Isabel then married a practicing Morisco, who was condemned to the galleys. She herself was incarcerated again and then released to serve in the household of a Christian noblewoman.[52]

We should also keep in mind the possibility that the diagnosis of specific cases of conventual possession (and of possession in general) was

determined, among other variables, by the social position and network of the demoniac. Up until the second quarter of the seventeenth century, when "visionary" became a term of ridicule and derision, possessed upper-class nuns, with the right network of patrons and benefactors, were more likely to be labeled "visionaries" than diabolically possessed. This was true in numerous cases of individual possessions in Italy. It had also been the fate of Jeanne des Anges, who, after her possession, became a renowned mystic. Similarly, after fourteen years of trials, arrests, and political struggles, the Spanish Inquisition determined in 1642 that the upper-class nuns at San Plácido had never been actually possessed by evil spirits.[53]

While we cannot generalize about the social composition of afflicted convents, we are on safer ground when it comes to speculating about the spiritual-psychological profile of the female protagonists of these dramas. Possession and mass possession have been commonly associated with feminine sexual insatiability or sexual frustration. Jean-Martin Charcot ("C'est toujours la chose génitale, toujours, toujours, toujours")[54] and Sigmund Freud, however, did not invent the affiliation of nunneries with sexual hysteria or of female spiritual experiences with frustrated sexual desire.[55] Theologians, too, were aware that concupiscence does not desert nuns once they take their vows, but that their sexual drive is alive and well. Jean Gerson warned already in the fifteenth century that "some naive women confuse divine love with carnal love."[56] Jean Henry, author of one of the earliest printed guides to novices and nuns, explained that novices are more likely to be tempted by demons than other women, because it was a divine way to test them. "The crown of Victory is forged in the fire of temptation," he instructed. And like numerous other theologians, Henry, too, warned nuns that the more spiritually advanced they were, the more likely they were to be attacked.[57] The French seventeenth-century physician Claude Quillet, who examined the possessed nuns in Loudun, concurred with a "Freudian" explanation for diabolic possession, arguing that the nuns suffered from *hystéromanie*. His friend the Parisian erudite Gabriel Naudé elaborated on Quillet's diagnosis, arguing that "these diabolic and miserable nuns find themselves locked within four walls. They fall in love, sink into melancholic hallucinations, and are driven by the desires of the flesh. And truth must be said: what they need is a carnal remedy."[58] A physician who examined the possessed sisters in Louviers explained that "they were all young girls and it is likely that they had not yet experienced their natural purgation," while physician Guy Patin dismissed cases of group possession, explaining that "in all the recent possessions only women or girls were involved: fools [bigottes] or nuns . . . this is not a devil from Hell

but a devil of the flesh."[59] Both the famous and popular French preacher Jean Benedicti and Jean Bodin named the nuns' "parties honteuses" as the devil's favorite entry point. Bodin elaborated, explaining that "evil spirits possess women from 'down there' [là-bas] and speak through their shameful body parts [parties honteuses]." Jeanne des Anges's demon resided in her vagina, and the Milanese sister Clara Francesca Decia testified during the canonization process of Carlo Borromeo (1601) that her possessing demons exited from her shameful parts ("parti vergognose") "below the belly."[60]

Nuns' behaviors and personal testimonies confirmed the theologians' observations. During a mass possession in a convent in Hessenberg (near Nijmegen), the demons "played so sweetly upon the lyre and the cithara that the maidens might easily have been induced to dance in chorus. Then, in the form of a dog, he would leap into the bed of one of the nuns and the suspicion would fall upon her of having committed the 'silent sin'" (masturbation). In another convent, near Cologne, another demon in the shape of a dog penetrated inside the nuns' inner garments, and the movements of their habits "gave indications of a sordid sexual skirmish," while demons in the shape of cats did the same in yet another convent, this one at Hensberg in the duchy of Cleves. In 1564, during a mass possession in the convent of Nazareth, near Cologne, the nuns "were frequently thrown to the ground and their lower torso was made to thrust up and down in the way usually associated with sexual intercourse."[61] In Aix Sister Madeleine de la Palud testified that she felt "great warmth and swelling in her *parties honteuses*" and during her exorcism exhibited lascivious movements that "represented the sexual act, with violent movements of the lower part of her belly."[62] During her exorcism, Sister Marie de Hénin from the Cistercian convent in Verger (1613) confessed to having had sexual relations with demons, and that she "polluted herself with a certain laywoman of the abbey."[63] Jeanne des Anges blamed the devil for making her and her spiritual sisters desire Grandier, and the latter paid with his life for the sexual accusations of these nuns. "When I did not see him, I burned with desire for him," admitted the mother superior. Once she became possessed, seven demons moved freely inside her body, filling her mind with dishonorable thoughts. "Shame," she said, "prevents me from describing them in detail."[64] Ten years later, in Louviers, one nun reported having seen Christ descending from the cross, kissing her, and whispering sweet little things in her ear, and that a beautiful angel appeared to her and admitted his sexual attraction to her.[65] Madeleine Bavent recalled in her interrogations years of sexual debauchery with other nuns and with father

confessors, and the frequent use of the Eucharist for sexual acts.[66] During exorcisms, possessed nuns exposed themselves, simulated acts of copulation, and called their possessing agencies names such as *Queue de chien* (dog's dick), *Souvillon* (ash-colored pussy), Fornication, Impurity, Concupiscence, and Pollution.[67] In Auxonne, during the mass possession of 1658–63, nuns accused Mother Superior Barbe Buvée of having sexual contacts with them "comme un homme aurait faict" and that she "put a serpent inside their private parts." They further recalled her having sex (and forcing nuns to have sex) with demons, inserting Hosts into their "parties" and bewitching them to see Christ's "partie honteuse" in the Host![68]

Lest the latter hallucination seem too fantastical, we must remember that nuns routinely contemplated and gazed at the *Imagines nudae*, the naked body of Christ, which is also a near-naked body of a male. A few examples from cases of possessions of individual nuns add to the centrality of sexual imagery in nuns' lives. The seventeenth-century Benedictine Louise Boussard could not look at the crucifix because staring at it agitated her to imagine carnal scenes that she was too ashamed to name. Her mother superior had to calm her down, arguing that visions of the Lord are always pure, even when carnal or sensual.[69] Mother Marie Bon de l'Incarnation also realized one day, while meditating on a crucifix, that the man she was gazing at was attracting her to him, moving his body parts in ways that resembled a lover. This male object of desire was, clearly, the devil and not Christ, she concluded. Luckily, the Son of God then appeared and "immediately covered the enemy's artifact." Alas, she could never thereafter contemplate the image of Christ without being overwhelmed by shameful ideas.[70] The Colombian nun Francisca Josefa Castillo experienced "many temptations" when a devil by the name *Crecerà bulto* (Bulging crotch) mounted her while she was in bed. The Peruvian nun Luisa Benites, who was possessed by 6,666 demons, felt the male member inside her for entire days,[71] and Sister Juana Asensi, a Franciscan nun, was executed in Valencia in 1649 after describing a vision in which she had mystical/sexual intercourse with Christ. "The whole of Our Lord Jesus Christ's body had confronted her and united with her, face to face, eye to eye, mouth to mouth and the other parts of the body too."[72]

This having been said, I want to suggest that while it is obviously true that sometimes "a cigar is just a cigar," it is also important to contemplate the possibility that at other times even a penis can signify a cigar. In other words, we should think of a pre-Freudian world in which sex was not as central to self-identity as it has become for us, and where sexual and erotic symbolizations were natural means of expressions for nuns, who

were constantly warned of sexual temptation, who equated tensions with danger and therefore with the erotic, and who were all familiar to a certain degree with the mystical-erotic language of late medieval spirituality.[73] For over a thousand years, theologians created woman in the image of Eve, and nuns were even more exposed to these teachings than laywomen. They were repeatedly warned that the female body was more vulnerable to seduction by the devil than the male body; and that the female mind was too feeble to distinguish between fantasy and reality. The possessed nuns' incitement to sexual lawlessness—the clearest demonstration of women's weakness and culpability—therefore only affirmed further the theologians' view. But, as Caroline Bynum has convincingly argued in her critique of Leo Steinberg's *The Sexuality of Christ and Modern Oblivion*, when nuns meditated on the naked Christ, they might also have seen incarnation and redemption, and not—or not only—sex. Carnality and bodily images did not symbolize just sexuality or sex.[74] Theirs was *Luxuria spiritualis*, where visual desire was transformed into a mystical desire and when the eyes of the body became the means to activate the eyes of the soul.[75] Spirituality, sensuality, and sexuality coexisted in early modern mysticism and possession in ways that were more complex and more multidimensional than twentieth-century thinkers assumed, and we should not equate monastic carnality with the modern notion of sexuality (nor should we "purify" and desexualize carnality into pure spirituality).[76]

As we have seen repeatedly throughout this book, nuns and other spiritually inclined individuals expected to be attacked and tempted by demons while practicing their spiritual regimen. Such attacks confirmed the nun's worthiness and proved that she was following the right path toward the divine. Sexual images and "bodily movement" (as prudish nuns and their exorcists referred to the sexually explicit gesticulations of the possessed body) were road signs that further indicated to the nun that the Enemy was displeased with her progress. Thus, sexuality was a sign of spirituality just as much as spirituality was expected to be accompanied by (or even expressed through) sexual temptations. In addition, one should also contemplate the possibility that nuns started to exhibit sexual behaviors and that their gestures were read as sexual and obscene *only after* they already had been diagnosed as demonically possessed. In other words, once the possibility of divine possession was ruled out by the exorcists, and once the woman had been declared to be under Satan's control, the accused nun began to behave in the manner that was expected of an energumen, namely, without sexual restraint. Exorcism, as we have repeatedly argued, is a process in which the interaction between the afflicted person and the exorcist creates

the confabulation—the narrative that is constructed dialogically between them. During these negotiations, the possessed nun acquired meaningful explanation for her behavior but, in return, had to relinquish any spiritual aspiration and to accept the identity of a demoniac.[77] The sexualization of the possessed body could, at times, be a part of the process of exorcism, not necessarily a part of the original cluster of symptoms that had first given rise to the suspicion of a possession by an undetermined entity.

Sexual imagery could also be an expression of nonsexual tensions and anxieties within the monastic community. We should take seriously the sincerity of nuns' struggles with issues of chastity and humility during the spiritual pursuit and especially during the dark night. The distance between aspiration and actuality was a major theological concern of all religious people, and no less so of nuns who followed the new forms of interiorized spirituality. Through the practices of confession and reading lives of saints, nuns were trained to unveil every imperfection within themselves. They constantly examined their consciences, always finding themselves short of the vows of humility, obedience, and chastity. Their lives were a battle between divine grace and human nature, and the demonic, therefore, was always present within the monastic community, always a threat, always willing and ready to attack a nun whose arrogance, pride, disobedience, or duplicity was a proof of her imperfection.[78] Nuns' autobiographical writings present lives of self-discernment and self-doubt, lives in which nuns continually accused themselves of pride, duplicity, and arrogance. Admittedly, nuns' biographies and autobiographies are extremely problematic texts and should not be read at face value. They tell us what an exemplary life ought to be, rather than what it was, and they are characterized by lack of originality and by an adherence to established models of sanctity.[79] But reading against the grain, it is the human, rather than the superhuman, elements within these texts that shed light on convent life "as it really was." Lingering fears and self-doubt, as well as jealousies, competition, and degradation among nuns, stand out because these feelings should not have been there, because these emotions present the nun's sanctity as a constant struggle and failure rather than a triumph.

Self-doubt, competition, and mutual suspicion were especially the lot of nuns who aspired to or enjoyed mystical experiences, which they were taught to doubt, and who accused themselves and were accused of disingenuousness and fraud, and of self-fashioning as saints to convey a false impression of holiness. "There is a demon who spies upon [nuns'] sleep to infect them with evil [or dirty] fancies [mauvaises imaginations]," warned the rule of the Order of the Visitations.[80] Not surprisingly, demons appeared

to some nuns in Louviers as Angels of Light, and one demon even masqueraded as the Virgin Mary, which led the exorcist Esprit du Bosroger to warn that revelations are arrogance and clear evidence of diabolic delusions.[81] Doubting her own worth and aware of her imperfections, Teresa of Ávila suffered throughout her career from doubts and anxiety concerning her mystical visions, which she herself, as well as the Inquisition, suspected of being of demonic origins. "Since at that time other women had fallen into serious illusions and deception caused by the devil, I began to be afraid. I began to fear and wonder whether the devil, making me think the experience was good, wanted to suspend the intellect so that he could draw me away," she recalled.[82] Visions bespeak arrogance and should be resisted, she instructed, and in her guide to her followers she repeatedly warned against visions, while in her autobiography she recommended nuns to use "discipline"—the whip—to cure unregulated and proud spirits that disrupt the harmony of the monastic community.[83]

These tensions and doubts, however, extended far beyond the private psychological battle that took place within each nun. Convents were small worlds and, like every human community, were marked by intense friendships and support systems but also by daily conflicts and competition. As historian Craig Harline points out: "Factionalism versus common love, dissent versus obedience, the rights of the individual versus the demands of the community, the drawing of the line between temporal needs and extravagance . . . have always been the central tensions of monasticism."[84] These tensions were amply evidenced in the Ursuline convent at Erfurt, according to the testimony of ex-nun Martha Elisabeth Zitter, who left the convent in 1678 and converted to Protestantism: "Pride and arrogance make the four oldest [nuns] . . . hateful and bitter toward each other (though otherwise they are very harmonious when it serves to the detriment of the younger [nuns]). . . . It has certainly been a half year that they have not come together, and spoken nothing but prickly and quarrelsome words to each other or told very annoying things about each other."[85] A very experienced mother superior even compared common life in convents to purgatory and to the Crucifixion, and one nun, who was forced into a Venetian convent against her will, compared it to an infernal abyss.[86] Jeanne des Anges described a similar world of petty quarrels in her autobiography, as did Saint Teresa and her two followers, María de San José Salazar, the founder of the Discalced Carmelite convent in Seville and Teresa's biographer, and Ana de San Bartolomé (1548–1603), the prioress of the Carmelites in Paris.[87] "The quarrels increased from day to day. And the devil did all he could in my soul," the latter wrote, casting the devil as

the instigator of the convent's tensions.[88] In Louviers the devil appeared to some nuns disguised as other nuns and ignited perpetual dissension.[89] Sister Francisca Josefa de la Concepción, also known as Madre Castillo of New Granada, Colombia (1671–1742), similarly described the cruelty of her companions to her in the convent of Santa Clara in Tunja and accused the devil of inciting other nuns against her. Her spiritual sisters, on the other hand, blamed her arrogance and hypocrisy, and were convinced that she was possessed by evil spirits.[90] Tensions and competition were endemic in the Tertiary convent of Bethlehem in Louvain when sisters Margaret and Lesken became possessed there in 1606, inciting a disharmony that continued until the 1630s.[91] In Louviers the devil appeared to some nuns disguised as other nuns and ignited perpetual dissension among the sisters. Tensions and conflicts were so endemic that Simonne Gaugain (Mother Françoise de la Croix), the very strict mother superior, and some of the nuns left shortly before the outburst of the possession, installing themselves in the Hospitaler convent in Paris, while other nuns accused each other of witchcraft and infanticide. These contestations and *ligues* among the sisters led to the accusation of witchcraft against Sister Madeleine Bavent.[92] Similarly, the mass possession at the Ursuline convent at Auxonne (1658–63) erupted soon after a new mother superior, Barbe Buvée, arrived and attempted to reform the convent. She met with the hostility of her daughters and the spiritual director (whose biological sister was the first to get possessed). They beat her, threw burning candles on her, and accused her of witchcraft, infanticide, and lesbianism. During two long years of possession and exorcism, her spiritual daughters piled new accusations against her, until the Parlement of Dijon dismissed the charges against Buvée, and she herself was transferred to another convent.[93]

If lack of devotion or humility was a mark of laxity, too much devotion and humility meant a retreat from the community into internal life of spiritual exercises and of obedience to divine orders, which could be construed as self-indulgence, thereby sidestepping the authority of the mother superior and the church hierarchy. A mystical regimen meant exclusion and individuality, and when a sister experienced private ecstatic moments—possession by either good or evil spirits—it inevitably exacerbated preexisting tensions within the monastic community. Humility and claims of divine inspiration were difficult to reconcile. It is therefore not surprising that the Spanish theologian Diego Pérez de Valdivia found it advisable to exhort and admonish the brides of Christ "that they zealously call on Him that he not give them visions, nor revelations, nor ecstasies, nor transportations, nor any such thing that singles out one from the

other."[94] The visionary or possessed nun had to navigate between pursuing and experiencing extraordinary intersubjective events and the bonds of sisterhood, between her outstanding behavior and her need to conform. A state of heightened spirituality might well result in a rupture between the mystic and her milieu. Ascetic behavior, claims of visions, physiological manifestations of either divine grace or demonic possession, extraordinary somatizations such as a mysterious sickness that could not be diagnosed, inability to digest food, convulsions, and ecstasies created a scandal in the convent, and hence such events were regarded by other nuns with suspicion, envy, competitiveness, and fear. At least two theologians who composed guides for exorcists warned explicitly that mass demonic possession in convents were likely to be a result of "womanish wars and rivalry" among nuns.[95] It was therefore important to keep demonic possessions in convents secret. In 1611, when Madeleine de la Palud of Aix first became possessed, her devil expressed his opinion that she was a disgrace, that she betrayed the Ursulines' vocations, and that her fellow Ursulines should not retain her in their company.[96] Saint Teresa remembered that even her own disciples were hostile to her revelations: "The devil," she wrote in her autobiography, "began striving here through one person and another to make known that I had received some revelation. . . . Some persons came to me with great fear to tell me we were in trouble and that it could happen that others might accuse me of something and report me to the Inquisition."[97]

One should also not ignore the financial aspect of the intermonastic tensions and the risk involved in keeping an ecstatic sister in the convent. Secrecy and the prevention of scandal were major concerns of mother superiors, confessors, and exorcists (even if this chapter is a proof that these attempts at secrecy failed). In 1574, during the demonic possession and exorcism of Sister Mansueta of the Order of the Poor Clares in Santa Croce in Venice, special attention was paid "to prevent, as much as possible, scandal and people's murmurings."[98] Cardinal Scaglia agreed, warning that since nuns were too credulous and should not be trusted, it was crucially important to keep the possession (or alleged possession) secret. Concern with *fama* also led bishops to make sure that exorcism violated enclosure as little as possible. The exorcist was required to obtain a special license to enter the convent. He had to be an older and experienced man, of unapproachable reputation, who was allowed to conduct the rites only in the exterior chapel, and had to be accompanied by female relatives of the demoniac or other mature women. The church was to be closed, secrecy had to be kept, and as soon as the ceremony was over, the nun was rushed back into the cloistered sections of the convent. Mother Gautron—prioress

of the Benedictine convent of Saumur, who recognized that "this type of illness is often contagious"—went further, simply disallowing any exorcisms in her convent. Nuns' imaginations are too strong and "watching another nun being exorcised could make other nuns imitate her as if they, too, were possessed," she ruled.[99] Alas, from the early case in Lyon in 1526, to the famous cases in Aix and Loudun, eyewitnesses by the thousands gathered at the convent doors. In some cases, as in Loudun, the demons were even asked to "put on a show" and perform for dignitaries, and some visitors were encouraged to put their hands on the demoniacs' body parts to feel the demons' movements.[100]

Describing the impact of the scandal in Loudun, Jeanne des Anges recalled that during the period of the possession, the nuns were reduced to extreme poverty. "We lacked bread; we lived for days without eating. For lack of provisions we were reduced to survive on cabbage and vegetables from our garden."[101] Notions of fame due to collective honor of a religious community guaranteed spiritual and social conformity, and hence steady income from wealthy patrons. A nun who behaved in an inappropriate or suspect manner put the entire community at risk. Because of the growing fear of pre-Quietist and Quietist forms of interiorized spirituality, abbesses and spiritual directors imposed decorum and regimen to discourage expressions of individuality, including visions and other mystical experiences. This regimen typically included prayers, penance, fasting, long periods of silence, and "discipline."[102] But this very same regimen could also, once again, play into the devil's hands, by encouraging private meditation, loneliness, and physical and bodily sensations that could have resulted in the very same behaviors that it tried to prevent. Saint Teresa—always doubting the fine line between divine and diabolic strenuous self-mortification, and an enemy of all fashionable spiritual trends—was overwhelmed by the strict self-imposed discipline of her followers in the Carmelite convent in Mancera and asked them "not to practice such severity in matters of penance . . . afraid that the devil might be trying to bring their work to an end."[103] Visions that result from self-mortification, she warned, are *abobamiento* (silliness) rather than *arrobamiento* (ecstasy, rapture).[104]

Invisible, numerous, everywhere, and always present, the devil and his disciples are repeatedly mentioned in nuns' writings as the major source of distractions in monastic life. Following Jo Ann McNamara, we can read them as a metaphor for the ever-present competition and hostility of sister nuns.[105] But they were also a metaphor for the nun's self-doubts concerning her own worthiness. Finally, the closed world of the convent encouraged imitative behavior, in which one nun's manifested anxieties were imitated

and reenacted by her sisters. Again, listen to Saint Teresa: "So miserable is our nature that when a person suffers in this way [melancholy] . . . all her companions, having no idea of the seriousness of her inward malady, will think that they too are afflicted by melancholy, and that their little ways may be put up with too."[106]

The ambiguity of the divine/diabolic distinction—which, as we have seen throughout this book, has characterized both the discourse and techniques of interiorized passive spiritual exercises and the discernment of spirits—was also the spiritual sine qua non of possessions in female monastic communities. Demonic and divine possessions were two competing but also complementary definitions that tried to make sense of spiritual experiences and techniques that were becoming more and more common in the early modern period and were raising both support and opposition. Both morphologically and somatically, the similarities between "positive" and "negative" possessions were such that it was impossible to determine the origins and identity of the possessing entity merely by observing the external behaviors of the energumen. Theologically, too, there was no clear demarcation line between the two phenomena, because the devil's trickery and cunning, his joy in disguising himself and in leading humans astray, along with the demoniacs' own frailty and indeterminacy, made the diagnosis of possessing agents extremely difficult, sometimes impossible. Suffice it to recall yet again the seventeenth-century Spanish theologian Diego Pérez de Valdivia's assertion that "no vision can be absolutely certain,"[107] or Saint Teresa's warning to her Carmelites not "to try to raise up the spirit because the devil would be able to cause some illusion."[108] Women, she knew, are more vulnerable than men to be deceived by the demon, and nuns' spiritual exercises of passive contemplation and self-denying regimen further increased their vulnerability to demonic temptations and possessions.

The discernment of spirits was a process of examination and self-examination, of ambiguities and indeterminacies. In this process, some participants had more power than others. It was the exorcists and the theologians who determined the identity of the possessing entity, and it was the compilers of monastic chronicles that wrote down the records of the possession and of the exorcism in a manner that guaranteed their adherence to established and gendered constructs of demonic possession. But their decisions did not necessarily corroborate the possessed nuns' original etiology of the nature of their own possessions. What could have been—hesitantly and cautiously—experienced originally by the nun herself as a spiritual experience, often ended up being discerned as a diabolic deception, a malicious fraud, or even a bewitchment. Let us recall that, prior to Nider's

intervention, the nuns of St. Catherine in Nuremberg in the 1420s experienced ecstasies and had visions of Jesus, the Virgin, and the Apostles, not of demons. Mystical experiences and the "odor of sanctity" also characterized the Lillois Brigitines, the Hospitalers of Louviers, and the Benedictines of Madrid. Similarly, in Milan in the 1590s, Saint Ursula appeared in visions to the nuns, only to be unveiled, once exorcism started, as the devil. All of these cases, then, showed characteristics of exalted spirituality and divine approval. Admittedly, in all of these cases, the possessing agencies were later exposed to be demonic. But each case demanded a discernment of the possessing spirits as demonic even though the symptoms themselves could have equally been diagnosed as divine. Of all the cases of communal interactions with the divine I have been able to find, only the nuns of a Dominican convent in Arezzo escaped the discernment of their possessing spirits as diabolic. This exceptional case proves the rules of discernment and narration that have been elaborated above. One night these sisters had a joint vision in which they saw some Florentine Dominicans carried by angels to the sky. The following morning, Arezzo learned of the burning at the stake of Savonarola and other leading Piagnoni.[109] In this case, the hagiographical imperative of proving Savonarola's legacy determined the prophetic, rather than diabolic, nature of this collective possession.

Conventual possessions, then, resulted from an amalgamation of preconditions and conditions, social, psychological, and, above all, spiritual. Social tensions centered on attempts at reform and opposition to them, and on nuns' and their families' ambivalences concerning issues of enclosure. Psychological anxieties and unrest were directly related to the constant occupation with issues of worthiness and unworthiness, humility and pride, exaltation and temptations. But, above all, possessions were a direct result of the spiritual environment in reformed convents, where new forms of contemplation were practiced. These new techniques of spiritual pursuit were not all pre-Quietist or Quietist. Far from it. The early modern spiritual and mystical reform included many techniques—among them Teresian, Jesuit, and Salesian—that emphasized moderation, gradual advance, and the avoidance of abnegation or annihilation of the soul. But it is only in hindsight that the exact boundaries among the different schools can be drawn clearly. Teresa, after all, repeatedly warned her own nuns against risky techniques, the Jesuit order debated its own spirituality, and de Sales was promoted by both proponents and opponents of Quietism as a precursor. Regardless of the precise practice a convent was following, a generalized fear of passive mysticism was so widespread that it put all new forms of spirituality under suspicion. All of these developments led to

intersubjective spiritual tensions due to the indeterminacy of all possessing agents and to the nuns' own self-doubts concerning their possessing agents, as well as to social tensions and petty jealousies that spiritual quests and experiences ignited. Nuns in quest of spiritual perfection expressed physiological and psychological behaviors that could be discerned (by the nuns themselves, by members of their community, and/or by theologians and exorcists) as either diabolic or divine possession. But by the last quarter of the sixteenth century and the first half of the seventeenth, these behaviors were much more likely to be ruled diabolic.

Why, then, were male monasteries—which also experienced reforms, tensions, and competitions, and whose members also practiced forms of contemplation—immune to mass possession? In fact, there are a few cases of what appears to be group possession of monks (and a few cases of individual monks becoming possessed). Sometime in the first half of the thirteenth century, the brothers in the recently established Dominican houses in Paris and Bologna were attacked by evil spirits. The friars' attempts to cast out the evil spirits failed, until a procession of the image of the *Salve Regina* was organized, and the Virgin's intervention put an end to the Dominicans' afflictions. In the early years of the Franciscan order, a monastery in the Auvergne was similarly attacked by a demon that terrorized the friars. It appeared to them as a wealthy patron of the community and invited them to feast on luxurious food, thus leading them to become lax in their vow of poverty. Another demon attacked early Franciscans in Portugal. These early examples of diabolic attacks on religious establishment became founding myths of the mendicant orders. The Dominican tale, especially, was incorporated into Geraldo (Gerardo) di Frachet's (1195–1271) collection of the 1250s *Vitae fratrum* and served, like numerous other miracle stories in this collection, to prove the order's divine election and sanctity.[110] Significantly, the authors of these edifying tales never use the term "possession" in their description of the events. The friars were horribly vexed, terrorized, and attacked, and they suffered from diabolic delusions and nightmares, but their bodies were not actually possessed by the Enemy.

Years later, when demons appeared in the Observant Dominican priory in Nuremberg and in a reform Dominican priory in Savoy, they attacked novices rather than professed brothers. In both cases, they tried to prevent the novices from joining the order. Similarly, when demons attacked the Jesuit college in Loreto in 1555, they targeted novices. They showed them specters and other visual mirages ("spectrorum e phantasmatum") but did not violate their bodily integrity.[111] Emphasizing that the clerics under

attack were novices was another strategic rhetorical decision, which should be questioned rather than taken at face value.

A very detailed report of a case of diabolic possession of two Capuchin novices in 1671 in a monastery in Caltanissetta (Sicily) allows us to further pursue the erasure of group possession of monks. Here, too, the chroniclers who recorded the events never used the term "possession." Instead, the two novices (and this report, too, emphasizes time and again that they were merely novices and not yet brothers) were "invested by internal spirits" and "obsessed."[112] The novices' behavior resembled the behavior of possessed nuns. Like all demoniacs, the two novices exhibited unnatural bodily strength, shouted and screamed, and reacted with horror and involuntary seizures to relics. But nowhere in the encounter was there any mention of sexually explicit behaviors or fantasies, and the novices never showed any of the forms of lack of control or loss of consciousness that were so common during possessions in female convents. Here, too, it seems that the author was invested in constructing a narrative that created the impression that the Sicilian novices' bodies and souls remained intact; that, unlike possessed women, these male protagonists, young as they were, did not lose control over their bodies and souls. Masculine and monkish decorous requirements of bodily integrity and control prevented diabolic possession from becoming a monastic option. Theologians and exorcists, themselves often members of religious orders, refused to admit the possibility of lack of sexual and mental self-possession among their brethren. The sexual metaphors that were a normative part of nuns' articulation of their tensions and anxieties were always heterosexual, with a male entity taking possession over the female body. The gendering of this sexual imagery, which made nuns so susceptible to demonic possession, was exactly what prevented it from becoming a possibility for a monk's own metaphorical vocabulary and for the metaphorical vocabulary of their fellow theologians who recorded their "obsessions." A penetration and possession of the body of a monk was—for the author of the Sicilian report, as they were for male chroniclers of similar occurrences in male monasteries—unacceptable and therefore unimaginable. A medieval exemplum puts it succinctly. When a male saint, exorcising a female demoniac, asked the possessing spirit to exit the woman's body and enter his own instead, the spirit tried to oblige but failed. "Your body is sealed and closed off in all its parts; I cannot enter into this vessel," it explained.[113]

The chroniclers' insistence that the novices' bodies were not violated is only one of the many unique characteristics of this record. This is also the only case I have encountered in which the possessing agents declared

as soon as they appeared that they had been sent by a divine mandate and "at the request of Our Saintly Father" (Saint Francis) to convert three sinning religious. In fact, the demons went on to say, they possessed the novices against their own will. They fulfilled a divine command that was usually carried out by angels rather than by demons, because in this particular case, "the Almighty ordered infernal spirits rather than divine angels because the latter cannot tolerate such offensive sins."[114] Once they made this clear, the rest of the interaction between the demons and the Capuchins was, in fact, a long sermon by the demons, which admonished the order, the city, and all of Sicily against sins, especially against lechery and charging financial interest. The demons reminded their listeners that Cicco (Saint Francis) had taught poverty, humility and obedience, and that they needed to reform their souls and the entire order. They then preached a long sermon on usury and concupiscence, the two sins that had led astray the sinning Franciscans, and before their departure described the punishments that await sinners in hell, and even composed a poem on the pains of purgatory.[115]

The sermonizing nature of this case of possession is significant. It reminds us of the learned dimension of much male spirituality and of male mystics' access to alternative forms of interactions with the divine that were not commonly available to women. The gendered difference was multidimensional. Men were less likely to be deceived by Satan and were not likely to engage in voluntary simulation. Their biology, physiology, and mental capacities all determined that moderation, rather than access, would characterize their behaviors. As such, they generated less fear among theologians, and their spiritual experiences were scrutinized with less predetermined hostility.

* * *

Living in a small world where interiorized contemplation was a persistent spiritual occupation, and where demonic temptation was regarded as an indication of one's worth, wishing for God but most likely encountering the devil, nuns were regularly examining their inner lives and finding them falling short of their aspirations. They practiced exercises that made them vulnerable for possessions—be they divine or diabolic—at the very same time that the theological discourse about their experiences argued more and more forcefully that the supernatural was more likely to be demonic than divine, and at the same time that the techniques they were practicing were coming under growing suspicion. Doubting their own worth, concerned

about the identities of their possessing entities, and used to obeying theologians, superiors, and exorcists—who were more and more likely to identify the nuns' experiences as demonic—it was only logical for nuns to accept the discovery of the true identity of their possession as diabolic. Being discerned as demonically possessed gave meaning to these nuns' suffering. By corroborating the demonic origins of their visions, and by subsequently collaborating with their sisters, confessors, and exorcists in naming (and somatically proving) their possessing agents to be diabolic rather than divine, nuns comprehended and valorized their own experiences. Often possessing demons even validated the painful choices and sacrifices that nuns had made to become members of monastic communities. Thus, even when they had to admit that their spiritual pursuit failed to lead them toward God, and instead led them into temptation and diabolic illusions, being possessed by demons could still be a spiritually rewarding experience. The demons' interest in the nun and the great efforts they put into distracting her from her spiritual goals only affirmed the nun's vocation and her important role in the economy of spiritual salvation.

* 9 *

Conclusions

After 1650, as the campaign against contemplative pre-Quietist and Quietist forms of spirituality progressed, an ever-decreasing number of nuns and other spiritual people were practicing the types of passive contemplation that were most likely to cause or to be attributed to demonic attacks. We have seen throughout this book that diabolic possession often served as a linguistic construct that could be mobilized to question and discredit practitioners of such forms of spirituality. Now, when religious orders that had developed such interiorized techniques and exercises purged themselves of the more extreme and therefore more suspicious practices, the designation of demonic possession lost much of its utility. The number of group possessions in convents decreased accordingly, and they were soon to disappear altogether. The slow but systematic eradication of passive contemplation was also, as we have seen, closely related to a growing mistrust of feminine reliability and women's trustworthiness in all matters spiritual. These processes, however, should not be equated too easily with a "devaluation of feminine mysticism" tout court, as some historians have argued.[1] Rather, it was accompanied by a shift from one form of mysticism to others, and by the growing popularity of more moderate forms of meditative techniques in female congregations. Ignatian, Teresian, Salesian, and Theatine spiritual techniques—as elaborated, for example, in Teresa of Ávila's *Way of Perfection* and in the Jesuit authorized (ascetic) interpretation of Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises*—instructed practitioners to visualize concrete images (the Passion, the life of the Virgin, the Holy Infancy, the Rosary, and the Secret Heart) and to advance slowly, moderately, and

under tight supervision toward their goal, rather than empty their souls and wait passively for the encounter with the divine.

These new spiritual schools were accompanied by new introspective practices. Starting in the 1550s, spiritual direction through personal contact and through epistolary guidance gained popularity in conventual communities. The medieval practice was put now into wider usage, when spiritual fathers and father confessors instructed their protégés on how to examine their interiority and make sure they did not fall into temptation. An equally influential new technique was the general confession. Unlike traditional confession, which took place once or twice a year and which offered pardon for specific sinful acts, this Jesuit practice regarded confession more as a method of self-examination and for changing one's conscience and one's life than as a sacrament.[2] Moderation, gradual progression, continuous self-examination, and constant inspection guaranteed that the practitioner remained within the realm of meditation and did not pursue more dangerous forms of passive acquired contemplation. The new techniques encouraged humility on behalf of the practitioner, and solidity and circumspection on behalf of the director. Obedience to a male director replaced enthusiastic individuality. But, these caveats notwithstanding, the new mystical schools still enabled women to pursue a spiritual path, and many nuns and other women participated actively in the propagation of the new forms of spirituality, while mother superiors took an active role in scrutinizing their daughters' interior life.[3]

Following Michel Foucault, it is possible to view the discernment of spirits—like the practices of general confession, auricular confession, and examination of conscience—as new disciplinary techniques, meant on interiorizing a new notion of a self that polices itself and a new notion of truth that locates truth within the modern soul. But, as we have seen, the process was much more complex. The discernment of spirits, the writing of spiritual letters and diaries, and the entire process of negotiation and interaction among spiritual advisers, father confessors, and mother superiors, on the one hand, and spiritually inclined women, on the other, did indeed restrict some women's spiritual aspirations by encouraging them to doubt their worth and the validity of their experiences. But it still endowed other women with a new spiritual language. The new vocabulary of interiority and the new practices of deciphering interiority enabled these women, at times, to convince authorities of the authenticity of their spiritual worth, to find collaborators and promoters among their alleged disciplinarians, and to benefit from the new and stringent rules of authentication to enhance their reliability.

As such, the silencing of passive and Quietist forms of interiorized spirituality and the growing suspicion of spiritual possession were part and parcel of much larger dramas that were reshaping post-Tridentine Catholicism, namely, the redrawing of boundaries between legitimate and illegitimate forms of personal pursuit of the divine, a demarcation of distinct feminine and masculine zones of involvement in this enterprise, and the growth of an entire new apparatus of knowledge about the soul and how to read its signs.

An equally important process was the reshaping of exorcismal techniques. As we remember, a distrust of exorcists has been brewing among Inquisitors since the last quarter of the sixteenth century, and it reached fruition in the first half of the seventeenth century. The Roman Rite of 1614, as well as official Inquisitorial and episcopal rulings, mandated exorcists to follow strict diocesan rites, not to converse or negotiate with demons, and to distrust testimonies and explanations of all possessed people, especially nuns and spiritually inclined women. Together with female mystics of the Quietist school, male exorcists themselves were now often targeted as untrustworthy. Some were accused of trusting women, or even being led and instructed by women. As such, they were contaminated by their contact with their protégées' active imaginations and humoral imbalances. Other exorcists were accused of naïveté, violation of enclosure, and the sexual abuse of women. Most common, however, were accusations of ignorance and superstition. Exorcists, far from being enforcers of new discipline, were themselves challenged by the new configurations of the boundaries between licit and illicit forms of spirituality. They were now demanded to pursue natural etiologies and to consult with physicians before they diagnosed possession, and they were encouraged to favor a natural explanation for all but the most exceptional occurrences. Rather than believing in diabolic possession, they were to assume that a woman who presented signs of possession—whether "physiological "or "psychological," divine or diabolic—was melancholy, physically ill, mad, or simulating her possession. These two overlapping developments—namely, the medicalization of demonic or divine possessions and the naturalization of most of the supernatural realm—further contributed to the decline in the prevalence of "spiritual" possession. Demonic possession was now defined solely by reference to a few preternatural signs, such as the ability to speak in tongues and to reveal hidden secrets. But these signs lost the ambivalence that had characterized them in the late fifteenth century and the early sixteenth. By the last quarter of the seventeenth century, these were obvious signs of demonic possession, and they no longer raised the suspicion or the possibility

of a divine possession. Exorcism, once again, became the mundane healing ritual that it had been in the Middle Ages, and that centered on curing an afflicted individual and helping her reintegrate into her society. It lost much of its broader religious meaning as a probative mechanism for discerning interiority. And even in this new restricted zone of activity, exorcists were scrutinized more than ever before, while bishops and local synods dictated precise rites and benedictions that exorcists had to follow.

Obviously, individuals have continued to become possessed, and exorcists are still performing exorcisms. In fact, as I write these lines, the daily newspaper announces that the Pontifical Academy *Regina Apostolorum* in Rome just opened a new course, training exorcists in how to combat Satan's growing presence in the world. Importantly, following the Roman Rite of 1614 (and the new guidelines of 1999) and the processes that were described in *Believe Not Every Spirit*, the new exorcists are instructed to consult with physicians and psychologists, and to exclude all natural explanations prior to embarking on their mission.[4] And they are to look for (and find?) Satan among heavy metal rock bands and their followers, rather than within the souls of devout nuns and other mystics.

Notes

INTRODUCTION

1. Arthur Kleinman, "Depression, Somatization, and the 'New Cross-Cultural Psychiatry,'" *Social Science and Medicine* 11 (1977): 4.

2. Émile Littré, "Un fragment de médicine rétrospective," *Philosophie positive* 5 (1869): 103–20; quoted in Jan Goldstein, "The Hysteria Diagnosis and the Politics of Anticlericalism in Late Nineteenth-Century France," *Journal of Modern History* 54 (1982): 235.

3. Diane Purkiss, *The Witch in History: Early Modern and Twentieth-Century Representations* (London: Routledge, 1996), 78.

4. The literature is immense, and the best place to start is Janice Boddy's bibliographical essay "Spirit Possession Revisited: Beyond Instrumentality," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 23 (1994): 407–34.

5. Erika Bourguignon, *Possession* (San Francisco: Candler & Sharp, 1976); Bourguignon, ed., *Religion, Altered States of Consciousness, and Social Change* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1973); Colleen Ward, ed., *Altered States of Consciousness and Mental Health: A Cross-Cultural Perspective* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1989).

6. I. M. Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion: An Anthropological Study of Spirit Possession and Shamanism* (London: Routledge, 1989); Michel de Certeau, *La possession de Loudun* (Paris: Gallimard/Julliard, 1970); English ed.: *The Possession at Loudun*, trans. Michael B. Smith (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

7. Bruce Kapferer, *A Celebration of Demons: Exorcism and Healing in Sri Lanka* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Press, 1991); See also Michael Lambek, *Human Spirits: A Cultural Account of Trance in Mayotte* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); and Nancy Caciola, *Discerning Spirits: Divine and Demonic Possession in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003).

8. Michel de Certeau, *The Mystic Fable: The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), and his "Mysticism," *Diacritics* 22, no. 2 (1992): 11–25.

9. This was the main argument of Foucault's third volume of the history of sexuality, a volume Foucault destroyed. But see his "What Is Critique?" in *What Is Enlightenment? Eighteenth-Century Answers and Twentieth-Century Questions*, ed. James Schmidt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 382–98; and his *Les anormaux: Cours au Collège de France,*

1974–1975 (Paris: Gallimard & Le Seuil, 1999); translated as *Abnormal: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1974–1975*, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Picador, 2003), for references to this argument.

10. Cf. Lyndal Roper, *Oedipus and the Devil: Witchcraft, Sexuality and Religion in Early Modern Europe* (London: Routledge, 1994), 21–26.

11. Certeau, *Possession de Loudun*, 327; *Possession at Loudun*, 227.

CHAPTER ONE

1. Jean Vincart, *Histoire de Nostre-Dame de la Treille* (Tournay, 1671; repr., Lille: Lelen, 1974), 89.

2. Wilhelm von Bernkastel, *Die Mirakelbücher des Klosters Eberhardsklausen*, ed. Peter Hoffmann and Peter Dohms (Düsseldorf: Gesellschaft für Rheinische Geschichtskunde, 1988), entry 831.

3. See, for example, L. J. Elmer, "Diabolic Possession (Theology)," in *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967), 4:839–40; and Adolf Rodewyk, *Possessed by Satan: The Church's Teaching on the Devil, Possession, and Exorcism*, trans. Martin Ebon (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1975), 21: "Possession is not an illness. It is, therefore, not a medical problem but a religious and consequently a theological problem."

4. The literature on the medieval constructs of womanhood is vast. Two recent works that are directly related to issues of possession are Nancy Caciola, *Discerning Spirits: Divine and Demonic Possession in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003); and Dyan Elliott, *Proving Woman: Female Spirituality and Inquisitional Culture in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), esp. 180–230. On the connection between physical suffering and femininity in twentieth-century Europe, see Mariella Pandolfi, "Boundaries Inside the Body: Women's Sufferings in Southern Peasant Italy," *Culture, Medicine, and Psychiatry* 14 (1990): 255–73.

5. For the orthodox Catholic view, see Jean-Claude Schmitt, *Ghosts in the Middle Ages: The Living and the Dead in Medieval Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); Nancy Caciola, "Wraiths, Revenants and Ritual in Medieval Culture," *Past and Present* 152 (1996): 3–45; Caciola, "Spirits Seeking Bodies: Death, Possession and Communal Memory in the Middle Ages," in *The Place of the Dead: Death and Remembrance in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. Bruce Gordon and Peter Marshall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 66–86; and Dyan Elliott, "True Presence/False Christ: The Antinomies of Embodiment in Medieval Spirituality," *Medieval Studies* 64 (2002): 241–65.

6. [Adrien de Montalembert], *La merveilleuse histoire de l'esprit qui depuis n'agueres c'est apparu au monastere des religieuses de Sainct-Pierre de Lyon laquelle est plaine de grand admiration; comme l'on pourra veoir par la lecture de ce present livre* (Paris, 1528), E iiii.

7. Jean Boulaese, *Le Thresor et entiere histoire de la triomphante victoire du corps de Dieu sur l'esprit maling Beelzebub, obtenuë à Laon, l'an mil cinq cens soixante six* (Paris, 1578); Boulaese, *L'Abbregee histoire du grand miracle par nostre Sauveur & Seigneur Iesus-Christ en la saincte Hostie du Sacrement de l'Autel, faict à Laon 1566* (Paris, 1573); Boulaese, *Le Manuel de l'admirable victoire du corps de Dieu sur l'esprit maling Beelzebub obtenue à Laon, 1566* (Paris, 1575); Christophe de Héricourt, *L'histoire de la Sacree victoire, obtenue a Laon, contre Beelzebub par la reelle presence du precieux corps de nostre Sauveur & Seigneur Jesus-Christ* (Laon, 1569). I offered a much more detailed analysis of this episode in my "A Divine Apparition or Demonic Possession? Female Agency and Church Authority in Demonic Possession in Sixteenth-Century France,"

Sixteenth Century Journal 27, no. 4 (1996): 1039–55. See also Irena Backus, *Le miracle de Laon: Le déraisonnable, le raisonnable, l'apocalyptique et la politique dans les récits du miracle de Laon (1566–1578)* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1994); Backus, *Guillaume Postel et Jean Boulaese: 'De summopere' (1566) et 'Le miracle de Laon' (1566)* (Geneva: Droz, 1995); Denis Crouzet, "A Woman and the Devil: Possession and Exorcism in Sixteenth-Century France," in *Changing Identities in Early Modern France*, ed. Michael Wolfe (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), 191–215; and Sarah Ferber, *Demonic Possession and Exorcism in Early Modern France* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 23–39.

8. Noel Taillepied, *Psichologie; ou, Traité de l'apparition des esprits* (Paris, 1588), 102, 289.

9. Petrus Thyraeus, *Loca infesta: hoc est, De infestis, ob molestantes daemoniorum et defunctorum hominum spiritus locis* (Cologne, 1598), 16–19; Pierre de Lancre, *Tableau de l'inconstance des mauvais anges et démons, où il est amplement traité des sorciers et de la sorcellerie* (1613; repr., Paris: Aubier, 1982), 252. See also Natalie Z. Davis, "Ghosts, Kin, and Progeny: Some Features of Family Life in Early Modern France," *Daedalus* 106, no. 2 (1977): 87–114.

10. Their trial records are reproduced in Marisa Milani, ed., *Antiche pratiche di medicina popolare nei processi del S. Uffizio (Venezia, 1572–1591)* (Padua: Centrostampa Palazzo Maldura, 1986); and Milani, ed., *Streghe e diavoli nei processi del S. Uffizio, Venezia 1554–1587* (Bassano del Grappa: Ghedina & Tassotti, 1994).

11. E. William Monter, *Witchcraft in France and Switzerland: The Borderlands during the Reformation* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1976), 60; H. C. Erik Midelfort, "The Devil and the German People: Reflections on the Popularity of Demon Possession in Sixteenth-Century Germany," in *Religion and Culture in the Renaissance and Reformation*, ed. Steven Ozment (Kirksville, MO: Sixteenth Century Essays and Studies, 1989), 101; Benjamin J. Kaplan, "Possessed by the Devil? A Very Public Dispute in Utrecht," *Renaissance Quarterly* 49 (1996): 738; Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 389–422; Daniel P. Walker, *Unclean Spirits: Possession and Exorcism in France and England in the Late Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981). See also Cécile Ernst, *Teufelaustreibungen: Die Praxis der katholischen Kirche im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert* (Bern: Huber, 1972); Marc Venard, "Le démon controversiste," in *La controverse religieuse (XVIe–XIXe siècles): Actes du 1er Colloque Jean Boisset*, ed. Michel Péronnet, 2 vols. (Montpellier: Université Paul Valéry, 1980), 45–60; Henri Weber, "L'exorcisme à la fin du XVIe siècle, instrument de la contre réforme et spectacle baroque," *Nouvelle revue du seizième siècle* 1 (1983): 79–101; Jonathan L. Pearl, "Demons and Politics in France, 1560–1630," *Historical Reflections* 12, no. 2 (1985): 241–51; Pearl, "'A School for the Rebel Soul': Politics and Demonic Possession in France," *Historical Reflections* 16, nos. 2/3 (1989): 286–306; and Carleton Cunningham, "The Devil and the Religious Controversies of Sixteenth-Century France," *Essays in History* 35 (1993): 33–47. For Jesuit use of exorcism as religious propaganda, see Scipione Paolucci, *Missioni de padri della Compagnia di Giesu nel regno di Napoli* (Naples, 1651), 46, 206–7; Bernhard Duhr, *Geschichte der Jesuiten in den Ländern deutscher Zunge (im. XVI Jahrhundert)*, 4 vols. (Freiburg: Herdershce, 1913), vol. 2, part 2, pp. 499–507; and Alexandra Walsham, "Miracles and the Counter-Reformation Mission to England," *Historical Journal* 46 (2003): 801–5.

12. Giovan Battista Bellaver, *Theorica e pratica per la vera intelligenza et cognitione intorno agli spiriti maligni ch'entrano ne'corpi humani et anco intorno all'arte essorcistica per discaciarli da essi* (Venice, 1616), 131–32; André Thevet, *La cosmologie universelle d'André Thevet cosmographe du Roy. Illustree de diverses figures des choses plus remarquables veuës par l'auteur, et incogneuës de noz anciens et modernes* (Paris, 1575), 1:190v; 2:108v; cf. Thevet, *Les singularitez de la France*

Antarctique, autrement nommée Amerique: Et de plusieurs terres et isles decouvertes de nostre temps (Paris, 1557), 64v.

13. Ottavia Niccoli, *Prophecy and People in Renaissance Italy*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990).

14. Cf. Denis Crouzet, *Les guerriers de Dieu: La violence au temps des troubles de religion*, 2 vols. (Seyssel: Champs Vallon, 1990); Crouzet, "Sur la signification eschatologique des 'canards' (France, fin XVe–milieu XVIe siècle)," in *Rumeurs et nouvelles au temps de la Renaissance*, ed. M. J. Jones-Davies (Paris: Klincksieck, 1997), 25–45; Crouzet, *La sagesse et le malheur: Michel de l'Hospital, chancelier de France* (Seyssel: Champs Vallon, 1998).

15. Boulaese, *Thresor*; Boulaese, *L'Abbregee histoire*; Héricourt, *L'histoire de la sacree victoire*; Charles Blendec, *Cinq Histoires admirables esquelles est monstre . . . la vertu & puissance du S. Sacrement de l'Autel* (Paris, 1582); Jean Benedicti, *La triomphante victoire de la vierge Marie sur sept malins esprits finalement chasses du corps d'une femme, dans l'Eglise des Cordeliers de Lyon* (Lyon, 1611).

16. See, for example, *L'image representant au vif la triomphante victoire de grand miracle par nostre sauveur et seigneur Jesus Christ* (Paris, 1573) (Bibliothèque nationale de France, estampes AA2).

17. Boulaese, *Thresor*, 103, 139; [Louis de Berlaymont], *Discours admirable et veritable, des choses advenues à l'endroit d'une Religieuse professe du couvent des soeurs noires de la ville de Mons en Hainaut . . . possedee du maling esprit et depius délivrée* (Louvain, 1586); Martín Del Rio, *Disquisitiones magicae* (Louvain, 1599–1600), bk. 3, question 7, sec. 1; partial English ed.: *Investigations into Magic*, ed. and trans. P. G. Maxwell-Stuart (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 134.

18. My thinking on this issue has been shaped by George A. Nadel, "Philosophy of History before Historicism," *History and Theory* 4 (1964): 291–315; Jean Céard, *La nature et les prodiges: L'insolite au XVIe siècle* (Geneva: Droz, 1977); Marion Rothstein, "When Fiction Is Fact: Perceptions in Sixteenth-Century France," *Studies in Philology* 83 (1986): 359–75; Natalie Z. Davis, *Fiction in the Archives: Pardon Tales and Their Tellers in Sixteenth-Century France* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1987); Lorraine Daston and Katharine Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature, 1150–1750* (New York: Zone, 1998), 215–53 (and see there on the "Birth of Fact"); and Marianne Closson, *L'imaginaire démoniaque en France (1550–1650)* (Geneva: Droz, 2000). See also Malcolm Gaskill, "Reporting Murder: Fiction in the Archives in Early Modern England," *Social History* 23 (1998): 1–26; Marion Gibson, *Reading Witchcraft: Stories of Early English Witches* (London: Routledge, 1999); and Joy Wiltenburg, "True Crime: The Origins of Modern Sensationalism," *American Historical Review* 109 (2004): 1377–404.

19. Gregory Hanlon and Geoffrey Snow, "Exorcisme et cosmologie tridentine: Trios cas agenais en 1619," *Revue de la Bibliothèque nationale* 28 (1988): 23–25.

20. Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).

21. Ambroise Paré, *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. J.-F. Malgaigne (Paris: Baillière, 1840–41), 551; translation from *On Monsters and Marvels*, trans. Janis L. Pallister (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 88.

22. Benedicti, *La triomphante victoire*, 22.

23. Cf. anthropologist Janice Boddy's observation that possession is "part of the daily experience" of individuals in many societies. "Spirit Possession Revisited: Beyond Instrumentality," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 23 (1994): 414.

24. Augustine, *The City of God*, bk. 19: chap. 4; in *Basic Writings of Saint Augustine*, ed. Whitney J. Oakes (New York: Random House, 1948), 475.

25. Thomas of Cantimpré, *de Apibus*; quoted in Nancy Caciola, "Mystics, Demoniacs, and the Physiology of Spirit Possession in Medieval Europe," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 42, no. 2 (2000): 283; see also a detailed discussion and many additional quotations in Caciola, *Discerning Spirits*, 176–207; and Armando Maggi, *Satan's Rhetoric: A Study of Renaissance Demonology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

26. John Cassian, *The Institutes of the Cenobia Life* (New York: Newman Press, 2000), bk. 10, 219. I thank Peter Brown for his insistence on this point.

27. Barbara Newman, "Possessed by the Spirit: Devout Women, Demoniacs, and the Apostolic Life in the Thirteenth Century," *Speculum* 73 (1998): 733–70; Caciola, *Discerning Spirits*, 131–58; Elliott, *Proving Woman*, esp. 180–230.

28. Barbara Newman, "Hildegard of Bingen: Visions and Validation," *Church History* 54 (1985): 171; Anne L. Clark, *Elisabeth of Schönau: A Twelfth-Century Visionary* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992), 72–77.

29. Caterina Paluzzi, *Caterina Paluzzi e la sua autobiografia*, ed. Giovanni Antonazzi (Rome: Storia e Letteratura, 1980), 189; Eng. trans. from *Italy in the Baroque: Selected Readings*, ed. and trans. Brendan Dooley (New York: Garland, 1995), 546.

30. Francisco Peña, *Directorium inquisitorum F. Nicolai Eymerici cum commentariis Francesci Pegñae* (Venice: Zalterium, 1595), 438–39; Bernard Dompnier, *Le venin de l'hérésie: Image du protestantisme et combat catholique au XVIIe siècle* (Paris: Centurion, 1985).

31. Machiavelli, *The Prince*, chap. 18; Molière, *Tartuffe*, act I, scene V: "Vous ne ferez nulle distinction entre l'hypocrisie et la devotion? . . . Et rend même honneur au masque qu'au visage? Egaler l'artifice à la sincérité?"

On physiognomy, see Lucia Rodler, *I silenzi mimici del volto: Studi sulla tradizione fisignomica italiana tra Cinque e Seicento* (Pisa: Pachini, 1991); on simulation and impostors in the period, see Rosario Villari, *Elogio della dissimulazione: La lotta politica nel Seicento* (Rome: Laterza, 1987); and Perez Zagorin, *Ways of Lying: Dissimulation, Persecution, and Conformity in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990).

CHAPTER TWO

1. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologica*, 3 vols., II–II, question 92, article 1 (New York: Benziger, 1947), 2:1592. For discussions of medieval notions of superstition, see Jeffrey Russell, *Witchcraft in the Middle* Ages (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1972); Dieter Harmening, *Superstitio: Überlieferungs- und theoriegeschichtliche Untersuchungen zur kirchlich-theologischen Aberglaubensliteratur des Mittelalters* (Berlin: E. Schmidt, 1979); Mary R. O'Neil, "Superstition," in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Mircea Eliade and Charles J. Adams (New York: Macmillan, 1987), 14:163–66; Edward Peters, *The Magician, the Witch, and the Law* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1978); and Peters, "The Medieval Church and State on Superstition, Magic and Witchcraft: From Augustine to the Sixteenth Century," in *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: The Middle Ages*, ed. Bengt Ankarloo and Stuart Clark (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 173–245.

2. Helen Parish and William G. Naphy, eds., *Religion and Superstition in Reformation Europe* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 2. See also Silvana Seidel Menchi, *Erasmo in Italia, 1520–1580* (Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 1987), 102–12.

3. For systematic discussions of early modern thinking about superstitions, see Girolamo Imbruglia, "Dalle storie di santi a storia naturale della religione: L'idea moderna di superstizione," *Rivista storica italiana* 101 (1989): 35–84; Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997), 470–88; and, above all, Fabián Alejandro Campagne, *Homo Catholicus, Homo Superstitiosus: El discurso antisupersticioso en la España de los siglos XV a XVIII* (Buenos Aires: Universidad de Buenos Aires, 2002).

4. Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century England* (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1973); Natalie Zemon Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1975); Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Montaillou: Cathars and Catholics in a French Village, 1292–1324* (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1980); Carlo Ginzburg, *I Benandanti* (Turin: Einaudi, 1966); English ed.: *The Night Battles: Witchcraft and Agrarian Cults in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, trans. John and Anne Tedeschi (London: Routledge, 1983); Robert Muchembled, *Popular Culture and Elite Culture in France, 1400–1750* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1985).

5. Jean-Baptiste Thiers, *Traité des superstitions selon l'Écriture sainte, les décrets des conciles et les sentimens des saints Pères et des théologiens* (Paris, 1679); I have used the 1741 edition.

6. Hildred Geertz, "An Anthropology of Religion and Magic," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 6 (1975): 71–89; see also Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, c. 1400–c. 1580* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), chaps. 6–8; Stephen Wilson, *The Magical Universe: Everyday Ritual and Magic in Pre-Modern Europe* (London: Hambledon and London, 2000), xvii–xxx; Stuart Clark, "Witchcraft and Magic in Early Modern Culture," in *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe*, vol. 4: *The Period of the Witch Trials*, ed. Bengt Ankarloo and Stuart Clark (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 99–121.

7. For a typical attack by an exorcist on the atheism of physicians, see Candido Brugnoli, *Alexicacon; hoc est, Opus de maleficiis, ac morbis maleficis*, 2 vols. (Venice, 1668); and Albano Biondi, "Tra corpo ed anima: Medicina ed esorcistica nel Seicento (L''Alexicacon' di Candido Brugnoli)," in *Disciplina dell'anima, disciplina del corpo e disciplina della società tra medioevo ed età moderna*, ed. Paolo Prodi (Bologna: Mulino, 1994), 397–416. The most famous attack by a physician on exorcists is Pietro Pomponazzi's *De naturalium effectuum causis; sive, De incantationibus* (Basel, 1567; repr., Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1970) (and see below, chapter 3).

8. Giovan Battista Codronchi, *De morbis veneficis ac veneficiis* (Milan, 1618; originally published Venice, 1595), 213; Brugnoli, *Alexicacon*, 2:131.

9. Anne Jacobson Schutte, *Aspiring Saints: Pretense of Holiness, Inquisition, and Gender in the Republic of Venice, 1618–1750* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 112. See also Stuart Clark, "Demons and Disease: The Disenchantment of the Sick (1500–1700)," in *Illness and Healing Alternatives in Western Europe*, ed. Marijke Gijswijt-Hofstra, Hilary Marland, and Hans de Waardt (London: Routledge, 1997), 38–58; Laurence Brockliss and Colin Jones, *The Medical World of Early Modern France* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 78; and Franco Nardon, *Benandanti e inquisitori nel Friuli del Seicento* (Trieste: Università de Trieste, 1999), 194–99.

10. David Gentilcore, *Healers and Healing in Early Modern Italy* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), 3. See also Gentilcore, *From Bishop to Witch: The System of the Sacred in Early Modern Terra d'Otranto* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), 103–9;

Peter Burke, *The Historical Anthropology of Early Modern Italy: Essays on Perception and Communication* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), chap. 15: "Rituals of Healing in Early Modern Italy," 207–20; and Oscar Di Simplicio, *Inquisizione, stregoneria, medicina: Siena e il suo stato (1580–1721)* (Siena: Il Leccio, 2000), 99–110. For a different view, which emphasizes the division of labor and the distinctions among these practitioners, see Jean-Michel Sallmann, *Chercheurs de trésors et jeteuses de sorts: La quête du surnaturel à Naples au XVIe siècle* (Paris: Aubier, 1986), 173–76.

11. Adolf Franz, *Die kirchlichen Benediktionen im Mittelalter*, 2 vols. (Freiburg, 1909; repr., Graz: Akademische Druck, 1960), 2:572n2.

12. See especially Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); and Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).

13. Bell, *Ritual Theory*, 74; Stanley Jeyaraja Tambiah, *Culture, Thought, and Social Action: An Anthropological Perspective* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985).

14. Girolamo Bargagli, *The Female Pilgrim*, trans. Bruno Ferraro (Ottawa: Dovehouse, 1988); cf. the early fourteenth-century Tuscan guide for women by Francesco da Barberino, *Del reggimento e costumi di donna* (Bologna: Gaetano Romagnoli, 1875), 73–75.

15. Miguel de Cervantes, *The Trials of Persiles and Sigismunda*, trans. Celia E. Weller and Clark A. Cohahan (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 3:20–21. For a detailed discussion of this story, see Diana de Armas Wilson, *Allegories of Love: Cervantes's* Persiles and Sigismunda (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), 223–47. On Cervantes's interest in and representations of possession and exorcism, see also Hilarie Kallendorf, "The Diabolic Adventures of Don Quixote, or Self-Exorcism and the Rise of the Novel," *Renaissance Quarterly* 55 (2002): 192–223; Kallendorf, *Exorcism and Its Texts: Subjectivity in Early Modern Literature of England and Spain* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 99–125, 157–83.

16. Giuliana Zanelli, *Streghe e società nell'Emilia e Romagna del Cinque-Seicento* (Ravenna: Longo, 1992), 147–69.

17. Which is not to argue that there had not been sporadic attempts to restrict or punish lay exorcists. In 1231 Frederick II, Holy Roman emperor and king of Sicily, signaled out "illicita exorcismata" for condemnation. *Constitutiones regum regni utriusque Siciliae mandante Friderico II Imperatore* (Naples, 1786; repr., Messina: Sicania, 1992), 216. In 1384 the Florentine Niccolò Consigli was accused of necromancy and exorcism of demoniacs. His exorcismal practices included laying the possessed individual on a rug and murmuring diabolic incantations. The trial is reproduced in *The Society of Renaissance Florence: A Documentary Study*, ed. Gene A. Brucker (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 261–66.

18. Mary R. O'Neil, "Magical Healing, Love Magic and the Inquisition in Late Sixteenth-Century Modena," in *Inquisition and Society in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Stephen Haliczer (London: Croom Helm, 1987), 89; Willem de Blécourt, "Witch Doctors, Soothsayers and Priests: On Cunning Folk in European Historiography and Tradition," *Social History* 19, no. 3 (1994): 285–303; Campagne, *Homo Catholicus*, 191–292.

19. The two most popular collections are Laurent Joubert, *La première et seconde partie des erreurs populaires, touchant la médecine & le regime de santé* (Bordeaux, 1578) for France; and Scipione Mercurio, *Degli errori popolari d'Italia* (Rome, 1599; I have used the Padua, 1654 edition) for Italy.

20. "Processo a Giovan Giacomo Marsicano detto Cirignola" (1580), Archivio Storico Diocesano, Naples, *Sant'Ufficio*, 123a, fol. 21v; quoted in Giovanni Romeo, *Inquisitori, esorcisti*

e streghe nell'Italia della Controriforma (Florence: Sansoni, 1990), 109–30, quote p. 128, and an extract from the trial in the appendix, 289–91, and see additional cases of lay exorcists, 169–75, 204–9, 215–17.

21. Sallmann, *Chercheurs de trésors*, 9–33. At around the same time, a cobbler by the name of Danese di Giovanni Francesco was discerning possessing spirits and expelling them in Rome. He, too, was popular among his neighbors, who needed and trusted his curative services. See Thomas V. Cohen and Elizabeth S. Cohen, *Words and Deeds in Renaissance Rome: Trials before the Papal Magistrates* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 201–41.

22. Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Sant' Uffizio, b. 30, 47, and 49; reprinted in Marisa Milani, ed., *Antiche pratiche di medicina popolare nei processi del S. Uffizio (Venezia, 1572–1591)* (Padua: Centrostampa Palazzo Maldura, 1986), 32–50. I thank Guido Dall'Olio for photocopying this document for me. A partial English translation is supplied by Ruth Martin, *Witchcraft and the Inquisition in Venice 1550–1650* (London: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 142, 145; see also Guido Ruggiero, *Binding Passions: Tales of Magic, Marriage, and Power at the End of the Renaissance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 143–66.

23. Trial of Antonio de Correggi, Archivio di Stato di Modena, Fondo dell'Inquisizione, b. 9, fol. 1 (1595); quoted in Mary R. O'Neil, "'Sacerdote ovvero strione': Ecclesiastical and Superstitious Remedies in Late Sixteenth Century Italy," in *Understanding Popular Culture: Europe from the Middle Ages to the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Steven L. Kaplan (Berlin: Mouton, 1984), 57. For additional cases from other parts of Europe, see E. William Monter, *Witchcraft in France and Switzerland: The Borderlands during the Reformation* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1976), 110, 168–69; Gentilcore, *From Bishop to Witch*, 128–44.

24. Thiers, *Traité des superstitions*, 1:509–11; Martín Del Rio, *Disquisitiones magicae* (Louvain, 1599–1600), bk. 1, chap. 3, question 4; partial English ed.: *Investigations into Magic*, ed. and trans. P. G. Maxwell-Stuart (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 50; Ginzburg, *I Benandanti*; Romeo, *Inquisitori*, 128–29. The confusion over what is superstitious and what is licit was such that the Franciscan exorcist and theoretician of exorcism Candido Brugnoli defended the theological base of the magical powers of seventh sons. See his *Alexicacon*, 2:74.

25. O'Neil, "'Sacerdote ovvero strione,'" 56.

26. Sallmann, *Chercheurs de trésors*, 145, 150; Martin, *Witchcraft and the Inquisition in Venice*, 139–40.

27. Archivio di Stato di Mantua, sezione Archivio Gonzaga, busta 1246, fols. 106–8. I thank my colleague Tamar Herzig for bringing these documents to my attention.

28. Giovanni Levi, *Inheriting Power: The Story of an Exorcist* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 177n6. For other Italian cases of priests who practiced unauthorized forms of exorcism, see Nardon, *Benandanti e inquisitori*, 199–201.

29. Nicolas Rémy, *La démonolâtrie*, bk. 3: 3 (1595; repr., Nancy: Presses Universitaires de Nancy, 1998), 279; English ed.: *Demonolatry*, trans. E. A. Ashwin (Secaucus, NJ: University Books, 1974), 150; Étienne Delcambre, *Le concept de la sorcellerie dans le duché de Lorraine au XVIe et au XVIIe siècle*, vol. 3: *Les Devins-guérisseurs* (Nancy: Société d'Archéologie Lorraine, 1951), 15; Robin Briggs, *Witches and Neighbors: The Social and Cultural Context of European Witchcraft* (New York: Viking, 1996), 174–78.

30. See, for example, Martin, *Witchcraft and Inquisition in Venice*, 184; Di Simplicio, *Inquisizione, stregoneria, medicina*, 111–55; Campagne, *Homo Catholicus*, 247–66.

31. Matteo Duni, *Tra religione e magia: Storia del prete modenese Guglielmo Campana (1460?–1541)* (Florence: Olschki, 1999); Trials of Teofilo Zani, Archivio di Stato di Modena,

Inquisizione, b. 8, fasc. I, fols. 11–16, and Girolamo Azzolini, ASM, Inquisizione, b. 8; quoted in O'Neil, "'Sacerdote ovvero strione,'" 63–74. See additional examples in Gentilcore, *From Bishop to Witch*, 103–13; Juan Eusebio Nieremberg, *Curiosa Filosofia y Tesoro de las Maravillas de la Naturaleza* (Seville, 1681), fol. 280; quoted in Campagne, *Homo Catholicus*, 95–96; and Maria Sofia Messana, "Malattia, guarigione e pratiche terapeutiche magico-religiose nella Sicilia del Seicento," *Quaderni storici* 112 (2003): 93–116.

32. Codronchi, *Morbis veneficis*, 43–45, 215–17; Franz, *Kirchlichen Benediktionen*, 1:388–408.

33. Floriano Canale, *De secreti universali raccolti, et esperimentati trattati nove* (Venice, 1613), 179–81.

34. Sara T. Nalle, *God in La Mancha: Religious Reform and the People of Cuenca, 1500–1650* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 19; Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Inquisición, July 21, 1667, legajo 228, expediente 15; quoted in Stephen Haliczer, *Sexuality in the Confessional: A Sacrament Profaned* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 171; Gentilcore, *From Bishop to Witch*, 103; Trial of Fra Basileo da Parma, Biblioteca Communale di Bologna, ms. B1877, processo 6, 1584; quoted in O'Neil, "'Sacerdote ovvero strione,'" 71–73.

35. Craig Harline and Eddy Put, *A Bishop's Tale: Mathias Hovius among His Flock in Seventeenth-Century Flanders* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), 130.

36. Archivio di Stato di Modena, Inquisizione b. 80; quoted in Giovanni Romeo, *Esorcisti, confessori e sessualità femminile dell'Italia della Controriforma* (Florence: Le Lettere, 1998), 13–48, and the trial records themselves, 210–60.

37. Gentilcore, *From Bishop to Witch*, 109, quoting the Brindisi synod of 1623; *Acta ecclesiae Mediolanensis* (Milan, 1583), 119r; Girolamo Menghi, *Fuga daemonum, adiurationes potentissimas, et exorcismos formidabiles, atque efficaces, in malignos spiritus propulsandos, et maleficia ab energumenis pellenda* (Venice, 1596), 18r.

38. Girolamo Menghi, *Compendio dell'arte essorcistica, et possibilità delle mirabili, et stupende operationi delli demoni, et dei malefici: Con li rimedii opportuni alle infirmità maleficiali* (Bologna, 1576; repr., Genoa: Nuova Stile Regina Editorice, 1987), 185–86.

39. *Rituale Romanum Pauli V pontificis maximi* (Mechelen: Hanicq, 1851): "De exorcizandis obsessis a daemonio."

40. The circular letter is quoted in O'Neil, "'Sacerdote ovvero strione,'" 75; Candido Brugnoli, *Manuale exorcistarum ac parochorum, hoc est tractatus de curatione ac protectione divina, in quo, variis reprobates erroribus, verus, certus, securus, catholicus, apostolicus et evangelicus eijciendi daemons ab hominibus in cunctis necessitatibus propitium habendi modus traditur* (originally published 1651; I have used the Venice, 1683 edition), 146, 153–55, 169–78, 312. See also Massimo Petrocchi, *Esorcismi e magia nell'Italia del Cinquecento e del Seicento* (Naples: Libraria Scientifica, 1957), 29–48; and Ottavia Niccoli, "L'esorcista prudente: Il *Manuale exorcistarum ac parochorum* di Fra Candido Brugnoli da Sarnico," *Il Piacere del testo: Saggi e studi per Albano Biondi*, ed. Adriano Prosperi (Rome: Bulzoni, 2001), 1:193–215.

41. Heinrich Kramer, *Malleus maleficarum*, part 2, question 2, chap. 5 (facsimile of the Speyer 1487 ed.; Göppingen: Kümmerle Verlag, 1991), 168; English ed. by Montague Summers (London: Hogarth, 1948), 176.

42. Menghi, *Compendio*, 253.

43. But see Jonathan Sumption, *Pilgrimage: An Image of Medieval Religion* (London: Faber and Faber, 1975), 79–85; and H. C. Erik Midelfort, *A History of Madness in Sixteenth-Century Germany* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), 277–300.

44. Nancy Caciola, *Discerning Spirits: Divine and Demonic Possession in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003), 235–36.

45. André Goddu, "The Failure of Exorcism in the Middle Ages," in *Soziale Ordnungen im Selbstverständnis des Mittelalters*, ed. Albert Zimmermann (Berlin: Miscellanea Mediaevalia, 1980), 540–57, mistook this shift for a failure of exorcism itself.

46. See *Il primo processo per San Filippo Neri*, ed. Giovanni Incisa della Rocchetta and Nello Vian, 4 vols. (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1957–63), 1:100, 156–57, 214–15, 401, 412; 2:75, 136–39, 142–43, 170–71, 268; 3:290–91.

47. Pedro de Ribadeneyra, *Vita Ignatii Loyolae*, bk. 5, chap. 6, paras. 92–95, in *Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu: Fontes narrativi de S. Ignatio de Loyola* (Rome: Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu, 1965), 4:818–20. The earliest image was produced by Hieronymous Wierx, *Vita S. Ignatii de Loyola Fundatoris Societatis Iesu* (Antwerp, 1609); reprinted in Ursula König-Nordhoff, *Ignatius von Loyola: Studien zur Entwicklung einer neuen Heiligen-Ikonographie im Rahmen einer Kanonisationskampagne un 1600* (Berlin: Mann, 1982), abb. 308. Loyola's successful canonization in 1622 was celebrated with the unveiling of Rubens's famous *The Miracles of St. Ignatius* (today at the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna), which had been commissioned in 1617 and was itself part of the campaign. Self-censorship and hesitancy concerning the role of miracles in authentication of sainthood led the early Jesuits to claim and then disclaim Loyola's miracles, and the exorcisms do not appear in some editions of Ribadeneyra's work. Miguel Gotor, *I beati del papa: Santità, Inquisizione e obbedienza in età moderna* (Florence: Olschki, 2002), 236–37. Bernhard Duhr, *Geschichte der Jesuiten in den Ländern deutscher Zunge (im. XVI Jahrhundert)*, 4 vols. (Freiburg: Herdersche, 1907–28), 1:731, insisted that Loyola never performed exorcism. For Savonarola as exorcist and for his own relics exorcising demons, see Júlia Benavent, "Las reliquias de Fra Girolamo Savonarola," in *Frate Girolamo Savonarola e il suo movimento* (Pistoia: Provincia Romana dei Frati predicatori, 1998), 166–72. Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola, too, used the prophet's heart and relics to exorcise demons. See his *Vita Hieronymi Savonarolae* (Paris, 1674), 190–91.

48. For the latest theoretical exposition of the roles and historical transformations of shrines, see Dominique Julia, "Sanctuaires et lieux sacrés à l'époque moderne," in *Lieux sacrés, lieux de culte, sanctuaries*, ed. André Vauchez (Rome: École française de Rome, 2000), 241–95. The most systematic and thorough investigation of such shrines and the literary production that accompanied miracles that took place there has addressed German shrines and German Books of Miracles. See Steven D. Sargent, "Miracle Books and Pilgrimage Shrines in Late Medieval Bavaria," *Historical Reflections* 13 (1986): 455–71; Rebekka Habermas, "Wunder, Wunderliches, Wunderbares: Zur Profanisierung eines Deutungsmusters in der Frühen Neuzeit," in *Armut, Liebe, Ehre: Studien zur historischen Kulturforschung*, ed. Richard van Dülmen (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1988), 38–66; Philip M. Soergel, *Wondrous in His Saints: Counter-Reformation Propaganda in Bavaria* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); and Georg Brenninger, "Verzeichnis der Mirakelbücher im Erzbistum München und Freising," *Beiträge zur altbayerischen Kirchengeschichte* 41 (1994): 191–214. For Italy, see *La sagra degli ossessi: Il patrimonio delle tradizioni popolari italiane nella società settentrionale*, ed. Carlo Tullio Altan (Florence: Sansoni, 1972); and see now *Per una storia dei santuari cristiani d'Italia: Approcci regionali*, ed. Giorgio Cracco (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2002).

49. Archives nationals, Paris, JJ 125, fol. 72; quoted in Jean-Claude Schmitt, "Le suicide au Moyen *Â*ge," *Annales E.S.C.* 31, no. 1 (1976): 22n30.

50. Paul Masoin and Henri Meige, "Les possédés de l'Eglise Sainte-Dymphne à Gheel," *Nouvelle iconographie de la Salpêtrière* 16 (1903): 305–18. According to Catholic propagandists, when Martin Luther passed away, many expelled demons from Saint Dymphna rushed to his

funeral. See Del Rio, *Disquisitiones magicae*, bk. 3, question 7, sec. 3; Del Rio, *Investigations into Magic*, 134; Tommaso Malvenda, *De Antichristo* (Rome, 1604), 501.

51. Jacques-J. Moret, *Saint Menoux, sa vie et son culte* (Moulin: Ducroux & Gourjon-Dulac, 1893); Henri Meige and Fernand Rudler, "Deux saints guérisseurs des fous," *Nouvelle iconographie de la Salpêtrière* 18 (1905), 112–16. The term "débredinoire" that was the name of the healing stone comes from *Bredin* or *berdin*, meaning insane or "original" in the local dialect.

52. Francesco Maria Guazzo, *Compendium maleficarum* (1608), bk. 2, chap. 19; ed. and trans. Montague Summers (London: John Rodker, 1929), 158; Philippe Martin, *Pèlerins de Lorraine* (Metz: Serpenoise, 1997), 176–77.

53. Henri Boguet, *Discours des sorciers* (Lyon, 1602); English ed.: *An Examen of Witches*, trans. and ed. E. A. Ashwin (London: John Rodker, 1929), 10; Jean Lebeuf, *Histoire de la ville et de tout le diocèse de Paris*, 7 vols. (Paris: Féchoz et Letouzey, 1883–93), 5:129.

54. Philip Numan, *Historie vande Mirakelen die onlancx in grooten ghetaele ghebeurt ziin, door die intercessie ende voorbidden van die Heylighe Maghet Maria* (Brussels, 1604); Karl-S. Kramer, "Brauch, Sage, Glaube und 'Predigtmärlein' in einem Mirakelbuch der heiligen Anastasia zu Benediktbeuern," *Fabula* 32 (1991): 119–31; Karl-S. Kramer, "Ein Mirakelbuch der heiligen Anastasia in Benediktbeuern," *Bayerisches Jahrbuch für Volskunde* (1991): 11–36; David Lederer, "Reforming the Spirit: Society, Madness, and Suicide in Central Europe, 1517–1809" (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1995), 100–110, 123–31, 195–98; Midelfort, *History of Madness*, 280–83. On visits to shrines in the village of Pürten, east of Munich, and to Bogenberg, a Bavarian sanctuary on the Danube near Straubing (North Bavaria), see Gerhard P. Woeckel, *Pietas Bavarica: Wallfahrt, Prozession und Ex voto-Gabe im Hause Wittelsbach in Ettal, Wessobrunn, Altötting und der Landeshauptstadt München von der Gegenreformation bis zur Säkularisation und der "Renovatio Ecclesiae"* (Weissenhorn: Konrad, 1992). This catalog contains photographs of hundreds of ex-votos from these and other Bavarian shrines.

55. Among shrines that specialized in exorcisms in Spain were the shrines of Santa Orosia de Jaca (province of Huesca, in Aragon), Jesús Nazareno in Fiscal (in Jaca), Cristo de los Milagros in Yebra de Basa (Huesca), and San Urbez de Nocito (all in Aragon), and Santo Cristo de Calatorao in Zaragoza, Santo Cristo de Ambasaguas in Logroño, and Santa Xusta and Santa Eufemia in Galicia. See José Ido del Sagrario, "La procesión de los 'espirituados' en Jaca," in *Por Esos Mundos* 180 (August 1910): 447–72; Angel Gari Lacruz, *Brujería e Inquisición en el Alto Aragón en la primera mitad del siglo XVII* (Saragossa: Departamento de Cultura y Educación, 1991), 131–36; Carmelo Lisón Tolosana, *La España mental: Demonios y exorcismos en los siglos de oro* (Madrid: Akal, 1990), 8–9; and María Tausiet, *Los posesos de Tosos (1812–1814): Brujería u justicia popular en tiempos de revolución* (Zaragoza: Instituto Aragonés de Antropología, 2002), 50.

56. Romeo, *Inquisitori*, 109–10; Sallmann, *Chercheurs de trésors*, 32; Giovanni Romeo, "Una 'simulatrice di santità' a Napoli nel '500: Alfonsina Rispola," *Campania Sacra* 8/9 (1977/78): 159–218. Among other shrines in the south of Italy, the sanctuary of San Zopito in Loreto Aprutino in Abruzzo was popular in the eighteenth century, and the shrines of saints Filippo il Moro (*u nivru*, *il nero*), Vito, and Sant'Agrippina attracked possessed individuals from Sicily. An eyewitness who visited the shrine of San Filippo in Agira (Saint Philip Argyrius) during a pilgrimage on the saint's feast day on May 12, 1541, encountered over two hundred possessed women, all shouting and screaming, conversing fluently in Greek and Latin, and shamelessly tearing off their clothes. Michael P. Carroll, *Madonnas that Maim: Popular Catholicism in Italy*

since the Fifteenth Century (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 47; Tommaso Fazello, *Historia di Sicilia* (Venice, 1573), 314ff.; quoted in Giuseppe Pitrè, *Usi e costumi, credenze e pregiudizi del popolo siciliano*, in *Opere complete di Giuseppe Pitrè* (Florence: Barbèra, 1952), 17:52–65.

57. Vincenzo Lavenia, "'Cauda tu seras pendu.' Lotta politica ed esorcismo nel Piemonte di Vittorio Amedeo I (1634)," *Studi storici* 37 (1996): 557.

58. Pedro de Valder[r]ama, *Histoire générale du monde et de la nature; ou, Traictez théologiques de la fabrique, composition, et conduicte générale de l'universe*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1619), vol. 1, bk. 3, p. 2, chap. 9; Pierre-André Sigal, "La possession démoniaque dans la région de Florence au XVe siècle d'après les miracles de saint Jean Gualbert," *Histoire et société: Mélanges offerts à Georges Duby*, vol. 3: *Le moine, le clerc, et le prince* (Aix-en-Provence: Publications de l'Université de Provence, 1992), 101–12.

59. Ottavio Franceschini, "L'esorcista," in Giuseppe Adani and Gastone Tamagnini, eds., *Medicina, erbe e magia* (Milan: Silvana, 1981), 101–6; Giorgio Boccolari and Lorenzo Bossetti, "Aspetti di religiosità popolare nel culto di San Geminiano e altri santi nel Modenese," in *La religiosità popolare nella valle padana: Atti del II Convegno di studi sul folklore padano* (Modena: ENAL, 1966), 75–78.

60. Franceschini, "L'esorcista," 101–6.

61. Annabella Rossi, *Le feste dei poveri* (Bari: Laterza, 1969), 34.

62. Martin, *Pèlerins de Lorraine*, 105–11; Delcambre, *Le concept de la sorcellerie*, 3:48, 143–53; Briggs, *Witches and Neighbors*, 119.

63. *Coniuratio malignorum spirituum in corporibus hominum existertium prout in Sancto Petro* (Rome, 1492).

64. Kramer, *Malleus maleficarum*, part 2, question 1, chap. 10; 1487 ed., 127; Summers's edition, 131; André Schnyder, "L'inquisitore recconta: Osservazioni sugli aspetti dell'exemplum nel Malleus maleficarum di Institoris & Sprenger (1487)," in *Stregoneria e streghe nell'Europa moderna (Convegno internazionale di studi, Pisa, 24–26 marzo, 1994)*, ed. Giovanna Bosco and Patrizia Castelli (Pisa: Pacini 1996), 99–115. See also Menghi, *Compendio,* 159.

65. Jacques Le Saige, *Chy S'ensuyvent les gistes, repaistres et despens: Que moy Jasques le Saige marchant de draps de soye demourant à Douay ay faict de douay à Hiérusalem Venise, Rhodes, Rome, nostre dame de le Lorete. Avec la description des lieux: ports: cites: villes: et aultres passaiges* (Cambray, 1518), D iir; the letter to Venice was incorporated into Marino Sanuto's diary. See Marino Sanuto, *I diarii* (Venice: Deputazione Veneta di storia patria, 1879–1903; repr., Bologna: Forni, 1969), 27: col. 224.

66. The trial record is reproduced in Cohen and Cohen, *Words and Deeds in Renaissance Rome*, 207, 216–17, 225.

67. Martin Eisengrein, *Unser lieben Fraw zu alten Oetting: Das ist Von der Uralten, heyligen Capellen unser lieben Frawen und dem Fuerstlichen Stifft* (Ingolstadt, 1571), 248–49; Martha Schad, *Die Frauen des Hauses Fugger (15.–17. Jahrhundert)* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1989), 51–59. According to the canonization dossier of Filippo Neri, the Roman saint was instrumental in the exorcism. See *Il primo processo per San Filippo Neri*, ed. Della Rocchetta and Vian, 3:393.

68. Michel de Montaigne, *Journal de voyage en Italie par la Suisse et l'Allemagne en 1580 et 1581* (Paris: Belles lettres, 1946), 219–20.

69. Jacques-Auguste de Thou, *Historiarum sui temporis* (Geneva, 1620), 5:872–74; D. M. Congnard, *Histoire de Marthe Brossier, prétendue possedée, tiree du latin de Messire Jacques Auguste de Thou* (Rouen, 1652), 14–15; Pierre-Victor Palma-Cayet, *Chronologie septenaire de l'histoire de la paix entre les roys de France & d'Espagna* (Paris, 1605), fol. 194.

70. Joachim du Bellay, "Les regrets," sonnet 97, in *Oeuvres poétiques*, vol. 2: *Recueils romains*, ed. Daniel Aris and Françoise Joukovsky (Paris: Garnier, 1993), 87.

Douclin, quand quelquefois je voy ces pauvres filles,
Qui ont le diable au corps, ou le semblent avoir,
D'une horrible façon corps et teste mouvoir,
Et faire ce qu'on dit de ces vieilles Sibylles:

Quand je voy les plus forts se retrouver debiles,
Voulant forcer en vain leur forcené pouvoir:
Et quand mesme j'y voy perdre tout leur sçavoir
Ceulx qui sont en vostre art tenuz des plus habiles:

Quand effroyablement escrier je les oy,
Et quand le blanc des yeux renverser je leur voy,
Tout le poil me herisse, et ne sçay plus que dire.

Mais quand je voy un moine avec son Latin
Leur taster hault et bas le ventre et le tetin,
Ceste frayeur se passé, et suis contraint de rire.

71. On the Virgin as exorcist, see the fifth- or six-century apocryphal Arabic-Syrian Infancy Gospel; *Évangiles apocryphes, II: L'Évangile de l'Enfance*, ed. Paul Peeters (Paris: Auguste Picard, 1914).

72. Orazio Torsellino, *Lauretanae historiae* (Rome, 1597); Mercurio, *Errori popolari,* 13. Mercurio also mentions Marian shrines in Reggio, Rovigo, and Lendenara. On the popularity of Loreto in the early modern period, see Franceschini, "L'esorcista," 105–7; Floriano Grimaldi, *Il libro lauretano: Edizioni e illustrazioni (1489–1599)* (Macerata: Quondam, 1973); Grimaldi, *Pellegrini e pellegrinaggi a Loreto nei secoli XIV–XVIII* (Loreto: Tecnostampa, 2001); and Marta Pieroni Francini, "Itinerari della pietà negli anni della Controriforma: Pellegrini romani sulla strada di Loreto," *Studi romani* 35 (1987): 296–320. Menghi mentions another church of the Virgin near Ancona, in Monte Brandone, "where many possessed come from distant places to be freed of their malady." The shrine possessed a mantle of the Franciscan Blessed Jacob, which "as soon as it was placed upon the shoulders of the demoniac, caused him to be immediately delivered of the evil." See his *Compendio*, 46.

73. Fynes Moryson, *An Itinerary (Containing his ten yeeres travell through the twelve dominions of Germany, Bohmerland, Sweitzerland, Netherland, Denmarke, Poland, Italy, Turkey, France, England, Scotland, & Ireland)* (New York: Macmillan, 1907–8), 1:214.

74. Brugnoli, *Alexicacon*, 1:86.

75. Esprit du Bosroger, *La piété affligée; ou, Discours historique et théologique de la possession des religieuses dittes de Sainte-Elisabeth de Louviers* (Rouen, 1652), 104, 122, 149.

76. Paolo Morigia, *Historia et origine della famosa Fontana della Madonna di Caravaggio, con parte de grandissimi miracoli operati dalla Madre di Dio per mezzo dell'acqua di quella* (Brescia, 1626). The reputation of this healing Madonna was such that other small northern Italian communities of Fanzolo in Vedelago (Treviso), Gabbioneta, and Robecco d'Ogio also dedicated small chapels to the Virgin of Caravaggio, and there, too, exorcismal healings took place. See Anna Petroni Tocchini, "La sagra degli ossessi," in *La sagra degli ossessi*, ed. Altan,

283–86; Franca Romano, *Guartirici, vegenti, esorcisti* (Rome: Gangemi, 1987), 211–16, 224–38. In the diocese of Milan, the Madonna di Lezzeno (on Lake Como) and the Madonna della Neve in Rho attracted numerous pilgrims, and in Piedmont an image of the Virgin in the church of Santissima Annunziata in Chieri was known for its efficacy against possessing spirits. In Bologna an image of the Virgin in Santa Maria della Vita and a few additional Marian images in other churches performed exorcisms. In Sicily there were at least four Marian sanctuaries that specialized in exorcism, among them the shrine in Trapani, where a veiled image of the Virgin was unveiled once a year, on August 14. The possessed—screaming, shouting, and speaking in tongues—would invoke the Virgin until the demon's departure, while eyewitnesses kept their mouths shut to prevent the demons from entering them. T. Care, *Notizie istoriche della miracolosa imagine della Beat[issi]ma Vergine del'Annuncuiazione venerata nella sua Chiesa della Città di Chieri* (Chieri, 1753), quoted in Levi, *Inheriting Power*, 27; David Gentilcore, "The Fear of Disease and the Disease of Fear," in *Fear in Early Modern Society*, ed. William G. Naphy and Penny Roberts (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), 184–208; Maurizio Sangalli, *Miracoli a Milano: I processi informativi per eventi miracolosi nel Milanese in età spagnola* (Milan: Archivio Ambrosiano, 1993), 36–42; Gianna Pomata, *Contracting a Cure: Patients, Healers, and the Law in Early Modern Bologna* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 228n79; Pitrè, *Usi e costumi*, 17:52–65; Fortunato Mondello, *Spettacoli e feste popolari in Trapani* (Trapani: Stamperia Economica Trapanese, 1882), 48–58.

Among Marian shrines in Spain that specialized in curing possession were the Aragonese sanctuaries in Lietra, Olivar (Arascués), Viñedo (Sasamarcuello), Peña (in Alastruey), and the medieval hermitage of Mare de Deu de la Balma in Zorita (Castellón). In Catalonia the shrine of Nuestra Señora de la Fuenta de la Salud in the small village of Traiguera and the church of Santa María en Cervera in Lérida were equally famous. See Pedro Giscafré, *Triunfo de la Vera-Cruz del Santo Misterio de Cervera* (Barcelona, 1634); Antonio Vicens Domenec, *Historia general de los Santos y varones ilustres en sandidal del Principado de Cataluña* (Gerona, 1630); Francisco de Blasco Lanuza, *Patrocinio de angeles y combata de demonios* (San Juan de la Peña, 1652); Lacruz, *Brujería e Inquisición*, 131–36; Alardo Prats y Beltrán, *Tres días con los endemoniados* (Madrid: Cenit, 1929); R. Ejarque, *Historia de Nuestra Señora de Balma* (repr., Vilanova i la Geltrú: Vives, 1978).

77. Peter Krenn, "Der grosse Mariazeller Wunderaltar von 1519 und sein Meister," *Jahrbuch des Kunsthistorischen Instituts der Universität Graz* 2 (1966/67): 31–51; Sigmund Freud, "A Seventeenth-Century Demonological Neurosis" (1922), in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. J. Strachey, 24 vols. (London: Hogarth Press, 1953–74), 19:69–105.

78. Woeckel, *Pietas Bavarica*, 336–433; Barbara Schuh, "'Alltag' und 'Besonderheit' spätmittelalterlicher und frühneuzeitlicher Wunderberichte," in *Wallfahrt und Alltag in Mittelalter und früher Neuzeit*, ed. Gerhard Jaritz and Barbara Schuh (Vienna: Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1992), 255–76. The connection between Altötting and Loreto went further: Altötting was a major pilgrimage sanctuary on the route from Germany to Loreto and Rome.

79. Eisengrein, *Unser liebe Fraw zu alten Oetting*, 248–65. Schad, *Frauen des Hauses Fugger*, 67–70; Lyndal Roper, "Exorcism and the Theology of the Body," in *Oedipus and the Devil: Witchcraft, Sexuality and Religion in Early Modern Europe* (London: Routledge, 1994), 174–80; Soergel, *Wondrous in His Saints*, 99–158; Lederer, "Reforming the Spirit," 271–80; See also reproductions of sixteenth-century ex-votos in Philipp Maria Halm, "Die Mirakelbilder zu Altötting," *Bayerischer Heimatschutz* 21 (1925): 1–27. See also *Vermerckt dye Grossen wunder*

zaichen So dye Junckfraw Maria hye zu alten Öttingen würchen ist an Vil Cristen menschen (Augsburg, 1494); Jacobus Issickemer, *Das buechlein der zuflucht zu Maria der mueter Goes in alten Öding* (Nuremberg, 1497); and Bernhard Duhr, "Eine Teufelsaustreibung in Altötting," *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Renaissance und Reformation. Festschrift für Joseph Schlecht* (Munich, 1917): 63–76, on the possession and exorcism of Anna Mayer, who in 1666 was possessed by the same demons who had possessed Anna von Berhnausen and was exorcised 120 times!

Other shrines in Bavaria and Franconia were Our Lady of Tuntenhausen, southeast of Munich, which was especially popular against demonic possession in the seventeenth century, and the shrines of Telgte in the principality of Münster, and of Eberhardsklausen, near Trier, where an image of the Virgin performed healing miracles. Midelfort, *History of Madness*, 287–300, 307–13, and the bibliography there; Werner Freitag, *Volks- und Elitenfrommigkeit in der frühen Neuzeit: Marianwahlfahrten in Fürstbistum Münster* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1991), 223; Wilhelm von Bernkastel, *Die Mirakelbücher des Klosters Eberhardsklausen*, ed. Paul Hoffmann and Peter Dohms (Düsseldorf: Gesellschaft für Rheinische Geschichtskunde, 1988), entries 77, 81–83, 113, 175, 184, 214, 217, 246, 257, 375, 380, 386, 418, 505, 525, 529, 551, 589, 608, 648, 754, 816, 831.

80. Jean Delhotel, *Bref recueil de l'état de l'église de Notre-Dame d'Avioth* (1668; repr., Colmar: S.A.E.P., 1981), 13.

81. Bibliothèque nationale de France, ms. fr. 18453, fols. 7v, 63r–88v, 92r; see also Agrippa d'Aubigné, *Confession catholique du sieur de Sancy*, in *Oeuvres*, ed. Henri Weber et al. (Paris: Gallimard, 1969), 601. On this shrine, see *Histoire de l'Origine de l'image et de la chapelle de Nostre-Dame de la Fontaine des Ardilliers de Saumur en Anjou, et les plus signals Miracles que Dieu y a operez par l'intercession de la Sainte Vierge* (Saumur, 1637).

82. Jean Boulaese, *Le Manuel de l'admirable victoire du corps de Dieu sur l'esprit maling de Beelzebub* (Paris, 1575), 116–20; *L'Histoire veritable arrivée de nostre temps en la ville de Beauvais, touchant les conjurations et exorcismes faicts à Denise de la Caille, possedée du Diable, avec les acted et process verbaux faicts sur les lieux, par le commandement de M. l'evesque dudit Beauvais* (Paris, 1623); *Histoire miraculeuse de Nostre-Dame de Liesse* (Paris, 1672), 75–76; Emile and Aldoin Duployé, *Notre-Dame de Liesse: Légende et pèlerinage*, 2 vols. (Laon: Longuel-Robert, 1862–63), 2:78–81. Another popular shrine was the chapel of Notre-Dame-de-la-Trielle in the church of Saint-Pierre in Lille. See Jean Vincart, *Histoire de Nostre-Dame de la Treille* (Tournay, 1617; repr., Lille: Lelen, 1974), 89–103; Martin Lhermite, *Histoire des saints de la province de Lille-Douay-Orchiers* (Douai, 1638), 498–513.

83. Pierre de Marca, *Traité des merveilles opérées en la chapelle de Notre-Dame du Calvaire de Beth Aram* (Bétharram, 1648), 161–74; Joël Perrin and Jean-Claude Lassere, *Notre-Dame de Bétharrem* (Pau: Les Amis des Églises anciennes du Béarn, 1980).

84. On stench as a clear sign of possession, see Rémy, *Démonolâtrie*, bk. 1:10; Fr. ed., 102; Eng. ed., 38–40.

85. Pierre de Lancre, *L'incrédulité et mescréance du sortilège plainement convaincue, où il est amplement et curieusement traicté, de la vérité ou illusion du sortilège, de la fascination, de l'attouchement, du scopelisme, de la divination, de la ligature ou liaison magique, des apparitions, et d'une infinité d'autres rares et nouveaux sujects* (Paris, 1622), 106, 357; Isaac Sylvius, *Miracles des diables chasses à Bon-Encontre et Garreson, là où est traitée de la vertu des exorcismes et de la vérité des miracles de léglise romaine* (Montauban, 1620); *Les conjurations faites à un demon possedant le corps d'une grande Dame: Ensemble les estranges responses par luy faictes aux saincts Exorcismes en la chappelle de Nostre Dame de la Guarison, aen Diocese d'Auche, le 19 novembre 1618 & jours suivants* (Paris, 1619); Étienne Molinier, *Le lys du val de Guaraison; Ou il est*

traicté en general tous les points qui concernent la devotion des Chapelles votives de la Vierge, & en particulier de l'origine, & des miracles de la Chapelle de Guaraison (Toulouse, 1630); Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Jasmin's Witch: An Investigation into Witchcraft and Magic in South-West France during the Seventeenth Century* (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1990), 117–28; Gregory Hanlon, "Piété populaire et intervention des moines dans les miracles et les sanctuaries miraculeux en Agenais-Condomois au XVIIe siècle," *Annales du Midi* 97 (1985): 115–27; Gregory Hanlon and Geoffrey Snow, "Exorcisme et cosmologie tridentine: Trois cas agenais en 1619," *Revue de la Bibliothèque nationale* 28 (1988): 12–27.

86. Jean Benedicti, *La triomphante victoire de la vierge Marie, sur sept malins esprits finalement chasses du corps d'une femme, dans l'Eglise des Cordeliers de Lyon* (Lyon, 1611), 26, 33, 50–51, 72, 88–89.

87. Jean de Viguerie, "Le miracle dans la France du XVIIe siècle," *XVIIe siècle* 35, no. 3 (1983): 313–32.

88. Codronchi, *Morbis veneficis*, 124–25.

89. Nicolas Volcyr, *L'Histoire et recueil de la triomphante et glorieuse victoire obtenue contre les seduyctz et abusez Lutheriens mescreans du pays daulsays et autre par tres haut et tres puissant prince et seigneur Anthoine, par la grace de Dieu duc de Calabre, de Lorraine et de Bar* (Paris, 1529), in *Recueil de documents sur l'histoire de Lorraine* (Nancy: A. Lepage, 1856), 54; Rémy, *Démonolâtrie*, bk. 3:1; Fr. ed., 264; Eng. ed., 138; Henri Lepage, "Le bienheureux Bernard de Bade," *Mémoires de la Société d'Archéologie de Lorraine* 13 (1862): 5–36.

90. Among the best are Ernesto De Martino, *Sud e magia* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1959); Jeanne Favret-Saada, *Les mots, la mort, les sorts: La sorcellerie dans le bocage* (Paris: Gallimard, 1977); Lisón Tolosana, *España mental*; and Dominique Camus, *La sorcellerie en France aujourd'hui* (Luçon: Ouest-France, 2001).

CHAPTER THREE

1. Richard Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites: A Necromancer's Manual of the Fifteenth Century* (University Park: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997); see also Matteo Duni, "Esorcisti o stregoni? Identità professionale del clero e Inquisizione a Modena nel primo Cinquecento," *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome: Italie et méditerranée* 115 (2003): 263–85.

2. Adolph Franz, *Die kirchlichen Benediktionen in Mittelalter*, 2 vols. (Freiburg, 1909; Graz: Akademische Druck, 1960), 2:545–85; Nancy Caciola, *Discerning Spirits: Divine and Demonic Possession in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003), 235–73.

3. *Coniuratio malignorum spirituum in corporibus hominum existentium prout in Sancto Petro*. This popular conjuration was among the very first to find its way into print and was printed for the first time in Rome in 1477–78. See Jean-Baptiste Molin and Annick Aussedat-Minvielle, *Répertoire des rituels et processionaux imprimés conservés en France* (Paris: CNRS, 1984), 543.

4. Matteo Duni, *Tra religione e magia: Storia del prete modenese Guglielmo Campana (1460?–1541)* (Florence: Olschki, 1999), 230–33. The authenticity of the affiliation with specific sites or saints does not really matter. Enough is that practitioners believed in the power of these specific rites. The *Exorcismus beati Ambrosii archiepiscopi* was also included in Alberto da Castello's *Liber sacerdotalis* of 1523.

5. Archivio di Stato di Modena, Inquisizione di Modena, b. 80; quoted in Giovanni Romeo, *Esorcisti, confessori e sessualità femminile nell'Italia della Controriforma* (Florence: Le Lettere, 1998), 204.

6. Armando Maggi, *Satan's Rhetoric: A Study of Renaissance Demonology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 99.

7. I take issue with Stuart Clark's emphasis on eschatology as the most significant component of exorcismal rituals. While the Last Judgment was, obviously, mentioned in some rites, it was only a part of the scriptural readings and not necessarily a central one. The symbolism of the ceremony highlighted redemption, not punishment. Compare Clark, *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997), 393–422.

8. Biblioteca Vaticana, ms. Pal. Lat. 794; and Bäyerische Staatsbibliotek, Munich, Codex Latinus Monacensis (CLM), ms. 23325; both quoted in Caciola, *Discerning Spirits*, 244–45; Erasmus, "Exorcismus: sive Spectrum" (1524); "Exorcism; or, The Specter," in *The Colloquies of Erasmus*, trans. Craig R. Thompson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), 233.

9. Franz, *Kirchlichen Benediktionen*, 2:573; Heinrich Kramer, *Malleus maleficarum*, part 2, question 2, chap. 6; Latin ed. (Speyer, 1487; facsimile ed., Göppingen: Kümmerle Verlag, 1991), 175; English ed. and trans. Montague Summers (London: Hogarth, 1948), 183–84; *Il primo processo per San Filippo Neri*, ed. Giovanni Incisa della Rocchetta and Nello Vian, 4 vols. (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1957–63), 1:214–15, 412; 2:75, 276, 321–22; 3:96; Michel de Montaigne, *Journal de voyage en Italie par la Suisse et l'Allemagne en 1580 et 1581* (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1946), 219–20; Martín de Castañega, *Tratado de las supersticiones y hechicerías* (Buenos Aires: Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, 1997), 192. As late as 1627, Petrus Thyraeus still recommended beating the demon. See his *Daemoniaci cum locis infestis et terriculamentis nocturnis* (Cologne, 1627), 128–29.

10. *Liber exorcismorum*, in the Koningklijke Bibliotheek, The Hague, ms. NL-DHk 74 F 25: Rite of Saint Anthony, fol. 1; Rite of Saint Ambrose, 91; bewitchments, 186v, 197v; Gerson's treatise, 24. See also Hans de Waardt, *Toverij en samenleving. Holland 1500–1800* (The Hague: Hollandse Historische Reeks, 1991), 66–67.

11. See examples in José María Díez Borque, "La 'literatura' de conjuros, oraciones, ensalmos," in *Culturas en la Edad de Oro*, ed. José María Díez Borque (Madrid: Complutense, 1995), 11–44.

12. Caciola, *Discerning Spirits*, 239.

13. Johannes Nider, *Preceptorium divine legis* (Milan, 1489), 1.11.ii; Nider, *Formicarius* (Strasbourg, 1517), fol. 90r.

14. Nider, *Formicarius*, fol. 87v.

15. Kramer, *Malleus maleficarum*, part 2, question 2, chaps. 5, 6; Latin ed., 170–79; Eng. ed., 170–72, 179, 187. On Nider's and Kramer's treatment of superstitious practices, see Michael D. Bailey, "The Disenchantment of Magic: Spells, Charms, and Superstition in Early European Witchcraft Literature," *American Historical Review* 111, no. 2 (2006): 383–404. I thank Professor Bailey for allowing me to read his article prior to publication.

16. Bäyerische Staatsbibliotek, Munich, ms. CLM 10085, 3r; quoted in Caciola, *Discerning Spirits*, 242; Alessandro Albertini, *Malleus daemonum, siuè, Quatuor experimentatissimi exorcismi, ex Evangeliis collecti* (Milan, 1624).

17. Kramer, *Malleus maleficarum*, part 2, question 2, chap. 6; Latin ed., 176; English ed., 185.

18. Edward Peters, *The Magician, the Witch, and the Law* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1978), xv; cf. Ernesto De Martino, *Sud e magia* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1959), 121; Guido Ruggiero, *Binding Passions: Tales of Magic, Marriage, and Power at the End of the Renaissance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 160.

19. Kramer, *Malleus maleficarum*, part 2, question 2, chap. 6; Latin ed., 170–72; Eng. ed., 179–81.

20. Trans. and quoted in Peters, *The Magician, the Witch, and the Law*, 146.

21. Kramer, *Malleus maleficarum*, Latin ed., 1; Eng. ed., xix.

22. Nider, *Preceptorium divine legis*, 1.11.hh, 1.11.gg, 1.11.kk, 1.11.nn.

23. Kramer, *Malleus maleficarum*, part 2, question 2, chap. 6; Latin ed., 176; Eng. ed., 185.

24. Ibid.; Latin ed., 175; Eng. ed., 183–84.

25. "Libellus ad Leonem X," in *Annales Camaldulenses ordinis Sancti Benedicti* (Venice, 1723), 9:c. 688; see also Adriano Prosperi, "Intellettuali e Chiesa all'inizio dell'età moderna," in *Storia d'Italia*, *Annali 4: Intellettuali e potere*, ed. Corrado Vivanti (Turin: Einaudi, 1981), 177–79; Nelson H. Minnich, "Prophecy and the Fifth Lateran Council (1512–1517)," in *Prophetic Rome in the High Renaissance Period*, ed. Marjorie Reeves (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992), 63–87.

26. Pedro Ciruelo, *Reprouacion de las supersticiones y hechizerias* (Valencia: Albatros Hispanófila, 1978), 108–17; *A Treatise Reproving All Superstitions and Forms of Witchcraft, Very Necessary and Useful for All Good Christians Zealous for Their Salvation* (London: Associated University Press, 1977), 270–85. Martín Del Rio, writing in 1599, also emphasized the performative aspect of some exorcisms as a mark of heterodoxy. He admitted that some lay exorcists seemed to be successful in their actions, but, in fact, "the evil spirits' reasons for compliance is that while these conjurings are being conducted in front of a crowd, there is always money to be made from the throng of bystanders. Large numbers of people come to hear the sermons and the pseudo-exorcist and the Devil mingle with them, going back and forth, back and forth. The evil spirit is happy because he usually manages to sow some errors of faith and morals among them, or at any rate succeeds in making people do things which are superstitious, useless, or superfluous. He slanders the innocent and reveals the hidden crimes of wrong-doers, so that everyone else may have evil suspicion about them. He urges some people to carnality and others to avarice, and he pretends he is afraid of those who are good in order to push them into pride." Martín Del Rio, *Disquisitiones magicae* (Louvain, 1599–1600), bk. 6, anacephalaeosis, monit. 10; partial English ed.: *Investigations into Magic*, ed. and trans. P. G. Maxwell-Stuart (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 278–79. Pierre de Lancre, the Bordelais Parlementaire who conducted a witch hunt in the French Basque country, agreed that healings and exorcisms by magicians are short-lived and cause more harm than good, but he, too, had to admit in his treatise against Basque witches and healers that "there are some who have this *don de Dieu* (which I cannot explain)." *Tableau de l'inconstance des mauvais anges et démons, où il est amplement traité des sorciers et de la sorcellerie*, bk. 5, Discourse 1 (1613; repr., Paris: Aubier, 1982), 238–41.

27. Ciruelo, *Reprouacion*, 112–17; *Treatise*, 276–85.

28. Silvestro Mazzolini da Prierio, *De strigimagarum, daemonumque mirandis* (Rome, 1521), 202.

29. Most exorcists argued that asking demons to reveal names of witches was strictly forbidden. The devil is the father of lies and would use this opportunity to defame innocent people.

30. Silvestro Mazzolini da Prierio [Silvestri Prieratis], *Tractatulus. Quid a diabolo sciscitari. Et qualiter. Maligno spiritus. Possit quisqui expellere de obsessis* (Bologna, 1502). A second and much enlarged edition was published in Bologna in 1573 by Girolamo Menghi, the most prominent exorcist of the century. See Silvestro Mazzolini da Prierio, *Aureus Tractatus exorcismique pulcherrimi et efficaces in malignos spiritus effugandos de obsessis corporibus R. P. F. Sylvestri Prieratis Ordinis Praedicatorum; Liber sane adversus immundos spiritus admodum*

singularis, recognitus, auctus, atque a mendis innumeris repurgatus, suoque nitori, ac luci iterum restitutus.

31. Alberto da Castello, *Liber sacerdotalis nuperrime ex libris Sanctae Romane Ecclesie et quarundam aliarum ecclesiarum et ex antiques codicibus apostolice bibliothece et ex iurium sanctionibus et ex doctorum ecclesiasticorum scriptis ad reverendorum patrum sacerdotum parochialium et animarum curam* (Venice, 1523). I used the Venice, 1585 edition, published under the title *Sacerdotale Romanum ad consuetudinem S. Romanae Ecclesiae aliarumg[ue] Ecclesiarum*, 328–45.

32. Giovanni Matteo Giberti, *Constitutiones* (Verona, 1542), bk. 4, chap. 29; bk. 5, chap. 25; fols. 30r, 36v–37r. On Giberti's attack on superstitions, see Adriano Prosperi, "Credere alle streghe: Inquisitori e confessori davanti all 'superstizione,'" in *Bibliotheca Lamiarum: Documenti & immagini della stregoneria dal Medioevo all'Età Moderna* (Pisa: Pacini, 1994), 17–33.

33. Guido Dall'Olio, "Alle origini della nuova esorcistica: I maestri bolognesi di Girolamo Menghi," in *Inquisizioni: Percorsi di ricerca*, ed. Giovanna Paolin (Trieste: Università di Trieste, 2001 [should be 2003]), 110n75; I thank Professor Dall'Olio for sharing his work with me prior to publication. Anne Jacobson Schutte, *Aspiring Saints: Pretense of Holiness, Inquisition, and Gender in the Republic of Venice, 1618–1750*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 266n13; Giovanni Romeo, *Inquisitori, esorcisti e streghe nell'Italia della Controriforma* (Florence: Sansori, 1990), 149–51; Adriano Prosperi, *Tribunali della coscienza: Inquisitori, confessori, missionari* (Turin: Einaudi, 1996), 423.

34. *Acta ecclesiae Mediolanensis* (Milan, 1583), 16r.

35. Ottavio Lurati, "Supertizioni lombarde (e leventinesi) del tempo di San Carlo Borromeo," *Vox Romanica: Annales helvetici explorandis linguis romanicis detinati* 27, no. 2 (1968): 229–49, reproduces the Index.

36. Archivio arcivescovile di Milano, se. 14, ms. 80: "Pro Energumenis et Maleficiatis"; reprinted in Maria Rosario Lazzati, "'Pro Energumenis et Maleficiaties': Un progetto di assistenza per gli indemoniati a Milano tra XVI e XVII secolo," *Quaderni Milanesi* 3 (1982): 74–81.

37. Girolamo Menghi, *Compendio dell'arte essorcistica, et possibilità delle mirabili, et stupende operationi delli demoni, et dei malefici: Con li rimedii opportuni alle infirmità maleficiali* (Bologna, 1576; repr., Genoa: Nuova Stile Regina, 1987); Menghi, *Parte seconda del Compendio dell'arte essorcistica nella quale si tratta della natura delli Angeli cosi buoni, come rei, et della possibilità delle mirabili, et stupende operationi delli Demoni, et Malefici, et de i gravissimi peccati, et mali, quali procurano contra di Dio, et del genere humano* (Venice, 1601). It is possible that the first volume was published already in 1572, but no copies of the 1572 edition survived, and I have used the 1576 edition. On Menghi, see Massimo Petrocchi, *Esorcismi e magia nell'Italia del Cinquecento e del Seicento* (Naples: Libraria Scientifica, 1957); Ottavio Franceschini, "Un 'mediatore' ecclesiastico: Girolamo Menghi (1529–1609)," appendix to the 1987 edition of Menghi's *Compendio*; Giancarlo Volpato, "Girolamo Menghi o dell'arte esorcistica," *Lares* 57, no. 3 (1991): 381–97; Romeo, *Inquisitori*, 109–68; Maggi, *Satan's Rhetoric*, 96–120; and Dall'Olio, "Alle origini della nuova esorcistica," 81–129.

38. Mary R. O'Neil, "'Sacerdote ovvero strione': Ecclesiastical and Superstitious Remedies in Late Sixteenth Century Italy," in *Understanding Popular Culture: Europe from the Middle Ages to the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Steven L. Kaplan (Berlin: Mouton, 1984), 74; Romeo, *Inquisitori*, 122–27; David Gentilcore, *From Bishop to Witch: The System of the Sacred in Early Modern Terra d'Otranto* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), 108–11; Oscar Di Simplicio, *Inquisizione, stregoneria, medicina: Siena e il suo stato (1580–1721)* (Siena: Il Leccio,

2000), 107; Vincenzo Lavenia, "'Tenere i malefici per cosa vera': Esorcismi e censura nell'Italia moderna," in *Dal torchio all fiamme. Inquisizione e censura: Nuovi contributi dalla più antica Biblioteca Proviniciale d'Italia*, ed. Vittoria Bonani and Matilde Romito (Salerno: Biblioteca Provinciale di Salerno, 2005), 146–48. I thank Professor Lavenia for sharing his work with me.

39. Hieronymus Mengus [Girolamo Menghi], *Flagellum daemonum, seu exorcismi terribiles, potentissimi, et efficacies in malignos spiritus effugandos de obsessis corporibus, cum sui benedictionibus et omnibus requisites ad eorum explusionem* (Venice, 1577), 2; cf. Menghi, *Compendio*, Proemio, not paginated. On the mandate to own a copy of the *Flagellum*, see Gentilcore, *From Bishop to Witch*, 109.

40. Menghi, *Compendio*, Proemio.

41. Prierio, *De strigimagarum*; Castañega, *Tratado*, 193–95; Andrea Cesalpino, *Daemonum investigatio peripatetica, in qua explicatur locus Hippocratis in Progn: Si quid divinum in morbis habetur* (Florence, 1580); Giovan Battista Codronchi, *De morbis veneficis ac veneficiis* (Milan, 1618); Ambroise Paré, *On Monsters and Marvels*, trans. Janis L. Pallister (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982); Zaccaria Visconti, *Complementrum artis exorcisticae* (Venice, 1600), 23; Del Rio, *Investigations*, 127. And see discussions in Paola Zambelli, "Scienza, filosofia, religione nella Toscana di Cosimo I," in *Florence and Venice: Comparisons and Relations*, ed. Sergio Bertelli et al. (Florence: Nuova Italia, 1980), 2:3–52; Di Simplicio, *Inquisizione, stregoneria, medicina*, 39–78.

42. Stuart Clark, "The Rational Witchfinder: Conscience, Demonological Naturalism, and Popular Superstitions," in *Science, Culture, and Popular Belief in Renaissance Europe*, ed. Stephen Pumfrey et al. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), 222–48; Lorraine Daston, "Marvelous Facts and Miraculous Evidence in Early Modern Europe," in *Questions of Evidence: Proof, Practice, and Persuasion across the Disciplines*, ed. James Chandler et al. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 250–58.

43. Romeo, *Inquisitori*, 109–68; Dall'Olio, "Origini della nuova esorcistica," 85–124.

44. John Tedeschi, *The Prosecution of Heresy: Collected Studies on the Inquisition in Early Modern Italy* (Binghamton, NY: Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1991).

45. Girolamo Menghi, *Flagellum daemonum, seu exorcismi terribiles, potentissimi et efficaces; remediaque; probatissima in malignos spiritus expellendos; facturasque; et maleficia effuganda de obsessis corporibus; cum suis benedictionibus, et omnibus requisitis ad eorum explusionem* (Bologna, 1578), 9–45; for a partial English translation, see Girolamo Menghi, *The Devil's Scourge: Exorcism during the Italian Renaissance*, trans. and commentary by Caetano Paxia (Boston: Weiser, 2002).

46. Menghi, *Compendio*, Proemio; Menghi, *Flagellum*, 6.

47. Menghi, *Flagellum*, 2.

48. Menghi, *Compendio*, dedication to Giulio Feltrio dalla Rovere; Menghi, *Fuga daemonum, adiurationes potentissimas, et exorcismos formidabiles, atque efficaces, in malignos spiritus propulsandos, et maleficia ab energumenis pellenda* (Venice, 1596), 49v; Menghi, *Parte seconda*, 455–56, 633.

49. Girolamo Menghi, *Fustis daemonum, adiurationes formidabiles, potentissimas, et efficaces in malignos spiritus fugandos de oppressis corporibus humanis* (Bologna, 1584); *Eversio daemonum et corporibus oppressis, cum divorum, tum aliorum auctorum potentissimos, et efficacies in malignos spiritus propulsandos, et maleficia ab energumenis pellenda, continens exorcismos* (Bologna, 1588).

50. Menghi, *Fuga daemonum*, 53r; Menghi, *Parte seconda*, 590.

51. Among them were Valerio Polidori, *Practica exorcistarum . . . ad Daemones et Maleficia de Christi fidelibus expellendum* (Padua, 1587); Piero Antonio Stampa, *Fuga Satanae* (Como, 1597); and Zaccaria Visconti, *Complementum artis exorcisticae* (Venice, 1600), three works that were incorporated, together with Menghi's *Flagellum* and *Fustis daemonum*, into the *Thesaurus exorcismorum atque conjurationum terribilium, potentissimorum, efficacissimorum, cum practica probatissima; quibus spiritus maligni, daemones, maleficiaque omnia de corporibus humanis obsessis, tanquam flagellis fustibusque fugantur, expelluntur* (Cologne, 1608). See also Francesco Maria Gauzzo's *Compendium maleficarum* (Milan, 1608). Additional manuals are listed in Petrocchi, *Esorcismo e magia nell'Italia*, 21–26.

52. Valerio Polidori, "Dispersio daemonum" in *Thesaurus exorcismorum*, 202–3.

53. Pierre de Bérulle [Léon d'Alexis], *Traicté des énergumènes suivy d'un Discours sur la possession de Marthe Brossier, contre les calumnies d'un médecin de Paris* (Troyes, 1599); Del Rio, *Disquisitiones magicae*, bk. 6, question 3, sec. 3; English ed., 262–70.

54. Prosperi, *Tribunali della coscienza*, 424–28; Lavenia, "'Tenere i malefici per cosa vera,'" 145–50.

55. See the edict of the Sacred Congregation of November 1636, against exorcists who, by misdiagnosing melancholic women, increased their suffering, in Romano Canosa, *Storia dell'Inquisizione in Italia dalla metà del Cinquecento alla fine del Settecento*, vol. 1: *Modena* (Rome: Sapere, 1986), 167.

56. See, for example, Gaspar Navarro, *Tribunal de superstición ladina, explorador del saber, astucia, y poder del demonio; en que se condena lo que suele correr por bueno en hechizos* (Huesca, 1631), 35r; Albano Biondi, "L''inordinata devozione' nella *Prattica* del Cardinale Scaglia (ca. 1635)," in *Finzione e santità tra medioevo ed età moderna*, ed. Gabriella Zarri (Turin: Rosenberg and Sellier, 1991), 306–25. For the Carpi case, see Archivio di Stato di Modena, Inquisizione di Modena, busta 254, 108, filca 1C, fols. 4, 11–14.

57. Giulio Antonio Santori, *Rituale sacramentorum Romanum Gregorii XIII Pont Max iussu* (Rome, 1584), 672–706. On the history of the Roman Rite, see Herbert Haag, *Teufelsglaube* (Tübingen: Kaatzmann, 1974), 391–439; Patrick Dondelinger-Mandy, "Le rituel des exorcismes dans le Rituale Romanum de 1614," *La Maison-Dieu* 183/184 (1990): 99–121. On Santori, see Mario Rosa, "Carriere ecclesiastiche e mobilità sociale: dall''Autobiografia' del Cardinale Giulio Antonio Santoro," in *Fra Storia e Storiografia: Scritti in onore di Pasquale Villani*, ed. Paolo Macry and Angelo Massafra (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1994), 571–85.

58. On the history of exorcism in the rite of baptism, see Henry Ansgar Kelly, *The Devil at Baptism: Ritual, Theology, and Drama* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985).

59. *Rituale Romanum Pauli V pontificis maximi* (Mechelen: Hanicq, 1851): "De exorcizandis obsessis a daemonio," 416–50. See also Emil J. Lengeling, "Der Exorzismus der katholischen Kirche: Zu einer verwunderliche Ausgabe," *Liturgisches Jahrbuch* 32, no. 4 (1982): 249–57; and Adelbert Schloz-Dürr, "Der traditionelle kirchliche Exorzismus im Rituale Romanum—biblisch-systematisch betrachtet," *Evangelische Theologie* 52 (1992): 56–65. For a detailed analysis and interpretation by a practicing exorcist, see Adolf Rodewyk, *Die Dämonische Besessenheit in der Sicht des Rituale romanum* (Aschaffenburg: Paul Pattloch Verlag, 1963); English ed.: *Possessed by Satan: The Church's Teaching on the Devil, Possession, and Exorcism*, trans. Martin Ebon (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1975).

60. Carolus de Baucio, *Tractatus primus de miscellanies casuum conscinetiae . . . Alius tractatus de modo interrogandi daemonem ab exorcista* (Naples, 1643), 46; Candido Brugnoli, *Manuele exorcistarum ac parochorum, hoc est tractatus de curatione ac protectione divina, in quo, variis*

reprobates erroribus, verus, certus, securus, catholicus, apostolicus et evangelicus eijciendi daemons ab hominibus in cunctis necessitatibus propitium habendi modus traditur (Venice, 1683), 14; Brugnoli, *Alexicacon; hoc est, Opus de maleficiis, ac morbis maleficiis*, 2 vols. (Venice, 1668), 1:155, 2:153; Albano Biondi, "Tra corpo ed anima: Medicina ed esorcistica nel Seicento (L'ʻAlexicacon' di Candido Brugnoli)," in *Disciplina dell'anima, disciplina del corpo e disciplina della società tra medioevo ed età moderna*, ed. Paolo Prodi (Bologna: Mulino, 1994), 408.

61. *Rituale Romanum Benedicti Papae XIV* (Rome, 1757), 2:321.

62. Lavenia, "'Tenere i malefici per cosa vera,'" 140–72, details and analyzes these conflicts.

CHAPTER FOUR

1. Gabriella Zarri, more than any other historian, has chronicled this rise and fall of female spirituality in late medieval and early modern Europe. In addition to her own writings, Zarri is responsible for a large number of collections that totally reshaped our knowledge of the spiritual and social life of female mystics and nuns in the period. An incomplete list of her writings and collections includes *Le sante vive: Profezie di corte e devozione femminile tra '400 e '500* (Turin: Rosenberg and Sellier, 1990); an English shortened version in Daniel Bornstein and Robert Rusconi, eds., *Women and Religion in Medieval and Renaissance Italy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 219–304; "Les prophètes de cour dans l'Italie de la Renaissance," in *Les textes prophètiques et la prophétie en occident (XIIe–XVIe siècles)*, ed. André Vauchez (Rome: École française de Rome, 1990) [*Mélanges de l'École française de Rome, Moyen Âge* 102, no. 2 (1990): 359–85]; "Dalla profezia all disciplina (1450–1650)," in *Donne e fede: Santità e vita religiosa in Italia*, ed. Lucetta Scaraffia and Gabriella Zarri (Rome: Laterza, 1994), 177–222; *Donna, disciplina, creanza cristiana dal XV al XVII secolo*, ed. Gabriella Zarri (Rome: Storia e Letteratura, 1996). Dyan Elliott, *Proving Woman: Female Spirituality and Inquisitional Culture in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), 263, dates the decline of female spirituality even earlier, in the thirteenth century.

2. Jean-Michel Sallmann, "La sainteté mystique féminine à Naples au tournant des XVIe et XVIIe siècles," in *Culto dei santi, istituzioni e classi sociali in età preindustriale*, ed. Sofia Boesch Gajano and Lucia Sebastiani (Rome: Japadre, 1984), 681–702; Jodi Bilinkoff, "A Saint for a City: Mariana de Jesús and Madrid, 1565–1624," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 88 (1997): 322–37; and her "Navigating the Waves (of Devotion): Toward a Gendered Analysis of Early Modern Catholicism," in *Crossing Boundaries: Attending to Early Modern Women*, ed. Jane Donawerth and Adele Seeff (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2000), 161–72; Richard L. Kagan, *Lucrecia's Dreams: Politics and Prophecy in Sixteenth-Century Spain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990); Marie-Florine Bruneau, *Women Mystics Confront the Modern World: Marie de l'Incarnation (1599–1672) and Madame Guyon (1648–1717)* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998).

3. The term "Quietism" is a neologism of the late seventeenth century and was born only during the Molinist controversy of the 1680s. Jean-Robert Armogathe, *Le Quiétisme* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1973), 5. Pietro Pierri, "Il P. Achille Gagliardi, la dama Milanese, la riforma dello spirito e il movimento degli zelatori," *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu* 14 (1945): 6, mentions a rare use of the term in 1574.

4. Romeo De Maio, "Il problema del quietismo napoletano," *Revista storica italiana* 81 (1969): 721–44.

5. E. W. Trueman Dicken, *The Crucible of Love: A Study of the Mysticism of St. Teresa of Jesus and St. John of the Cross* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1963).

6. Teresa of Avila, *Interior Castle*, 6.1.1; in *The Collected Works of St. Teresa of Avila*, ed. and trans. Kieran Kavanaugh and Otilio Rodriguez, 3 vols. (Washington: ICS, 1976–85), 2:359.

7. The debate lasted well into the twentieth century. The Catholic apologist Augustin-François Poulin (1836–1919), for example, situated acquired contemplation as a separate stage between meditation and infused contemplation. Juan Gonzales Arintero (1860–1928), abbé Auguste Saudreau (1859–1946), and especially Cardinal Henri de Lubac (1896–1991), on the other hand, emphasized the historicity of the distinction. For the development of the concept of acquired contemplation, see Roland Dalbiez, "La controverse de la contemplation acquise," in *Technique et contemplation* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1949), 81–145. For a short summary of the twentieth-century debate, see Robert B. Eiten, "Recent Theological Opinion on Infused Contemplation," *Theological Studies* 2 (1941): 89–100; and Bernard McGinn, *The Foundations of Mysticism*, vol. 1 of *The Presence of God: A History of Western Christian Mysticism* (New York: Crossroad, 1992), 278–282, and the detailed bibliography there. See also Jean Krynen, *Saint Jean de la Croix et l'aventure de la mystique espagnole* (Toulouse: Presse Universitaire du Mirail, 1990), 7–11.

8. Melquíades Andrés [Martín], *Historia de la mística de la Edad de Oro en España y América* (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1994), 203–22.

9. Ronald E. Surtz, *Writing Women in Late Medieval and Early Modern Spain: The Mothers of Saint Teresa of Avila* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), 8–9. On Villacreces's role, see Melquíades Andrés Martín, *Los Recogidos: Neuva vision de la mística española (1500–1700)* (Madrid: Fundación Universitaria Española, 1975), 38.

10. Francisco de Osuna, *Tercer Abecedario espiritual*, ed. Melquíades Andrés [Martín] (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1972), treatise 4, chaps. 1–2, 196–97; I have used Mary E. Giles's English translation: *The Third Spiritual Alphabet* (New York: Paulist Press, 1981), 117–18. For additional examples of this anti-bookish attitude, see Henry Charles Lea, *A History of the Inquisition of Spain*, 4 vols. (1906–7; repr., New York: American Scholar Publications, 1966), 4:4–5.

11. García Jiménez de Cisneros, *Obras completas*, 2 vols. (Montserrat, 1965), 2:454; quoted in Krynen, *Saint Jean de la Croix*, 107.

12. Lea, *Inquisition*, 6.

13. Marcel Bataillon, *Erasme et l'espagne: Recherches sur l'histoire spirituelle du XVIe siècle* (Paris: Droz, 1937; 2nd ed. in 3 vols., Geneva: Droz, 1991), 1:53–54; Menéndez Pelayo, "La Estética Platónica en los Místicos de los siglos XVI y XVII" (originally published 1883), in his *La mística española* (Madrid: Afrodisio Aguado, 1956), 259–317.

14. Gillian T. W. Ahlgren, "Ecstasy, Prophecy, and Reform: Catherine of Siena as a Model for Holy Women of Sixteenth-Century Spain," in *The Mystical Gesture: Essays on Medieval and Early Modern Spiritual Culture in Honor of Mary E. Giles*, ed. Robert Boenig (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2000), 53–54. Cf. Alvaro Huerga, *Santa Catalina de Siena en la historia de la espiritualidad hispana* (Rome: n. p., 1969); Jodi Bilinkoff, "Charisma and Controversy: The Case of María de Santo Domingo," in *Spanish Women in the Golden Age: Images and Realities*, ed. Magdalena S. Sánchez and Alain Saint-Saens (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1996), 23–35; Jodi Bilinkoff, "Establishing Authority: A Peasant Visionary and Her Audience in Early Sixteenth-Century Spain," *Studia Mystica* 18 (1997): 36–59; and Elizabeth Teresa Howe, "Cisneros and the Translation of Women's Spirituality," in *The Vernacular Spirit: Essays of Medieval Religious Literature*, ed. Renate Blomenfeld-Kosinski, Duncan Robertson, and Nancy Bradley Warren (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 283–95.

15. Andrés Martín, *Recogidos*; Andrés Martín, *La teología española en el siglo XVI*, 2 vols. (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1976–77); Alastair Hamilton, *Heresy and Mysticism in Sixteenth-Century Spain: The Alumbrados* (Cambridge: James Clarke, 1992).

16. Andrés Martín, introduction to his edition of Osuna, *Tercer Abecedario espiritual*, 12–15.

17. On the centrality of the text and on Osuna's position within Recogimiento spirituality, see Andrés Martín, *Recogidos*, 107–67; and Giles's introduction to Osuna, *Third Spiritual Alphabet*.

18. I have altered the translation. Teresa, who read Osuna's guide and was influenced by it, similarly dismissed complete suspension of thinking. See *Interior Castle*, 4.3.7: "The soul should strive to cut down the rambling of the intellect—but not suspend either it or the mind; it is good to be aware that one is in God's presence and of who God is."

19. Giles, introduction to Osuna, *Third Spiritual Alphabet*, 7–8.

20. Lea, *Inquisition*, 10–16; Antonio Márquez, *Los Alumbrados: Orígenes y filosofía (1525–1559)* (Madrid: Taurus, 1972); Hamilton, *Heresy and Mysticism*, 25–114; Stefania Pastore, *Un'eresia Spagnola: Spiritualità conversa, Alumradismo e Inquisizione (1449–1559)* (Florence: Olschki, 2004).

21. Márquez, *Alumbrados*, 77–78, 276–78.

22. Andrés Martín, *Recogidos*, 172–75.

23. Furthermore, as Melquíades Andrés Martín, the leading authority on both the *alumbrados* and the *recogidos*, explained, Alumbradismo theology comes to us only from Inquisitorial records and we do not possess any documentation of their beliefs or practices that is not tainted by the Inquisition. Andrés Martín, *Recogidos*, 363–67; cf. Bataillon, *Erasme et l'espagna*, 1:116, 179, 195, 470–74; Pastore, *Un'eresia Spagnola*, 105–10.

24. Lea, *Inquisition,* 2:45–88; J. Ignacio Tellechea Idígoras, "Der Prozess gegen Bartolomé Carranza, Erbischof von Toledo," in *Ketzerverfolgung im 16. und frühen 17. Jahrhundert*, ed. Silvana Seidel Menchi, Hans Rudolf Guggisberg, and Brend Moeller (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1992), 87–102.

25. Melchor Cano, *Las Censuras del Catexismo de Carranza* of 1559; quoted in Márquez, *Alumbrados*, 197; cf. Andrés Martín, *Recogidos*, 427–33; and Andrés Martín, *Historia de la mística,* 270–74.

26. Andrés Martín, *Recogidos*, 387–91, supplied the titles of the Spanish spiritual works that were included on the list. For the Carmelites, see the discussion above. Since the Jesuits, too, fell under suspicion, they, maybe even more than any other order, dealt with refashioning themselves. See the Jesuit theologian Luis de la Puenta, *Guía Espiritual en que se trata de la oración, meditación, y contemplación* (Valladolid, 1609), 592–93. On the different schools of Jesuit spirituality in this time period, see Joseph de Guilbert, *La spiritualité de la Compagnie de Jésus* (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 1953); Pedro de Leturia, "Letcuras ascéticas y lecturas místicas entre los Jesuítas del siglo XVI," *Archivio italiano per la storia della pietà* 2 (1959): 1–50; Louis Cognet, *La spiritualité moderne*, vol. 1: *L'essor: 1500–1650* (Paris: Aubier, 1966), 187–230, 411–52; and Krynen, *Saint Jean de la Croix*, 157–71, 245–83.

27. Juan de la Cruz, *Obras completas*, ed. Lucinio Ruano (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1975); *The Complete Works of Saint John of the Cross*, trans. and ed. E. Allison Peers, 3 vols. (Westminster, MD: Newman, 1945), vol. 1. All the quotations are from this English edition.

28. John of the Cross is echoing here his mentor Teresa of Ávila, who used similar images in her description of the contemplative stage: "When God desires to suspend all the faculties,

as we have seen in the kinds of prayer that were mentioned, it is clear that, even though we may not so desire, [Christ's] presence is taken away. Then let it be so—gladly; blessed be such a loss, that enables us to enjoy all the more that which it seems is lost. For then the soul is occupied completely in loving the One whom the intellect labors to know, and loves what it did not understand, and rejoices in so great a joy that it could not have experienced it without losing itself in order to gain itself." Teresa of Avila, *Book of Her Life* 22.9, in *Collected Works*, 1:195. I have altered the translation. As Alison Weber recently pointed out, Teresa herself had made changes to earlier versions of her *Life*, censoring her own advocacy of total passivity. See Alison Weber, "The Three Lives of the *Vida*: The Uses of Convent Autobiography," in *Women, Texts and Authority in the Early Modern Spanish World*, ed. Marta V. Vicente and Luis R. Corteguera (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2003), 108–11.

29. E. Allison Peers explains, or explains away, the passivity, arguing that while it is indeed true that the faculties do not function in their regular manner in this stage, they nonetheless remain somewhat active—they are attentive to God and the will does not cease loving him. But she concedes that the soul is unaware of the faculties' continuous work. John of the Cross, *Mount Carmel*, 1:125n3.

30. "When it comes, I say that we neither act nor do anything; all seems to be the work of the Lord. It's as though the food were already placed in the stomach without our eating it or knowing how to get there. It is clearly known to be there, although the stomach does not know what food it is or who put it there. . . . Nothing is seen or understood, nor was the soul ever moved to desire it." Teresa of Avila, *Life*, 27.7; cf. 10:1: "The soul is suspended in such a way that it seems to be completely outside itself."

31. José C. Nieto, *Joan de Valdés and the Origins of the Spanish and Italian Reformation* (Geneva: Droz, 1970); Carlo Ginzburg, *Il Nicodemismo: Simulazione e dissimulazione religiosa nell'Europa del '500* (Turin: Einaudi, 1970); Silvana Seidel Menchi, *Erasmo in Italia, 1520–1580* (Turin: Bollati Boringheiri, 1987).

32. Juan de Valdés, *Dialogue on Christian Doctrine*, in *Valdés' Two Catechisms: The* Dialogue on Christian Doctrine *and the* Christian Instruction for Children, ed. José C. Nieto (Lawrence, KS: Coronado Press, 1981). The Spanish (and especially Franciscan) influence on Italian pre-Quietism is also addressed in Massimo Firpo, *Tra Alumbrados e "Spirituali": Studi su Juan de Valdés e il valdesianesimo nella crisi religiosa del '500 italiano* (Florence: Olschki, 1990), 9–125; and Paolo Simoncelli, "Il 'Dialogo dell'Unione spirituale di Dio con l'anima' tra Alumbradismo spagnolo e prequietismo italiano," *Annuario dell'Istituto storico italiano per l'età moderna e contemporanea* 29–30 (1977–78): 566–73.

33. See the recent critical edition: Achille Gagliardi, *Breve compendio di perfezione cristiana: Un testo di Achille Gagliardi S.I.*, ed. Mario Gioia (Rome: Aloisiana and Gregorian University Press, 1996). All the references are to this edition. See also short excerpts in *Italy in the Baroque: Selected Readings*, ed. and trans. Brendan Dooley (New York: Garland, 1995), 535–37. On Gagliardi, see also Mario Bendiscioli Mailand, *Der Quietismus zwischen Häresie und Orthodoxie* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1964), 22–26.

34. Interestingly, writing an *apologia* for his writings in 1601, Gagliardi insisted that "nothing of the content of my writings is my doctrine or belief, but was all extracted from this woman." Quoted in *Scrittrici mistiche italiane*, ed. Giovanni Pozzi and Claudio Leonardi (Genoa: Marietti, 1996), 393. See also Marcel Viller, "L'abrégé de la perfection de la dame milanaise," *Revue d'ascétique et de mystique* 12 (1931): 44–89; Henri Bremond, *Histoire littéraire du sentiment religieux en France depuis la fin des guerres de religion jusqu'à nos jours*, 12 vols. (Paris: Bloud et Gay, 1916–33), 11:3–56; and Mario Gioia's recent critical edition of Berinzaga's

writings: *Per via di annichilazione: Un testo di Isabella Cristina Berinzaga redatto da Achille Gagliardi S.I.* (Rome: Aliosiana, 1994).

35. Jean Dagens, "Notes bérulliennes: La source du 'Bref discours de l'abnégation intérieure,'" *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 27 (1931): 318–49.

36. Gagliardi, *Breve compendio*, 39–94; Pierri, "Il P. Achille Gagliardi," 1–72; Sabrina Stroppa, "L'annichilazione e la censura: Isabella Berinzaga e Achille Gagliardi," *Rivista di Storia e Letteratura Religiosa* 32 (1996): 617–25.

37. On the popular appeal of Quietist teachings in the third quarter of the seventeenth century among theologians, see Massimo Petrocchi, *Il quietismo italiano del Seicento* (Rome: Storia e Letteratura, 1948), 21–89; on its popularity among Roman nuns, see Luigi Fiorani, "Monache e monasteri romani dell'età del quietismo," *Richerche per la storia religiosa di Roma* 1 (1977): 63–111; and Adelisa Malena, *L'heresia dei perfetti: Inquisizione romana ed esperienze mistiche nel Seicento italiano* (Rome: Storia e Letteratura, 2003).

38. Petrocchi, *Quietismo*, 21–32; Malena, *L'heresia dei perfetti*, 112–28, 165–70, 253–83.

39. Gianvittorio Signorotto, *Inquisitori e mistici nel Seicento italiano: L'eresia di Santa Pelagia* (Bologna: Mulino, 1989).

40. Quoted in Petrocchi, *Quietismo*, 34.

41. See Lucien Ceyssens, *Le cardinal François Albizzi (1593–1684)* (Rome: Pontificum Athenaeum Antonianum, 1977).

42. Petrocchi, *Quietismo*, 147–55, 157. I used Brendan Dooley's translation in his *Italy in the Baroque*, 579–80.

43. On Petrucci, see Petrocchi, *Quietismo*, 66–67; Mailand, *Der Quietismus*, 26–32; Sabrina Stroppa, *Sic arescit: Letteratura mistica del Seicento italiano* (Florence: Olschki, 1998), 79–101. On his trial and retraction, see Paul Dudon, *Le quiétiste espagnol, Michel Molinos (1628–1696)* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1921), 209–26. Interestingly, Petrucci was also a renowned exorcist. See Giuliana Zanelli, *Streghe e società nell'Emilia e Romagna del Cinque-Seicento* (Ravenna: Longo, 1992), 160–61.

44. Not to be confused with the Molinism that refers to the writings of the Jesuit Luis de Molina.

45. Miguel de Molinos, *Guía espiritual*, ed. Claudio Lendinez (Madrid: Jucar, 1974).

46. Dudon, *Le quiétiste espagnol*; Paola Zito, *Il Veleno della quiete: Mistica ereticale e potere dell'ordine nella vicenda di Miguel Molinos* (Naples: Edizioni scientifiche Italiane, 1997).

47. John of the Cross, *Dark Night of the Soul*, 2:14:10: "The darkness and the other evils of which the soul is conscious when this divine light strikes it are not darkness or evil caused by this light, but pertain to the soul itself, and the light illuminated it so that it may see them. Wherefore it does indeed receive light from this divine light." *Complete Works*, 1:444.

48. Dudon, *Le quiétiste espagnol*, 80–125, summarizes the debate; cf. R. A. Knox, *Enthusiasm: A Chapter in the History of Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1950), 304–11.

49. Miguel de Molinos, *Defensa de la contemplación*, ed. Eulogio Pacho (Madrid: Fundación Universitaria Española, 1988), chap. 8, 131.

50. As we shall see shortly, Fénelon, in his turn, will distance himself from Molinos, arguing that the latter's complete passivity is, in fact, heretical, while Fénelon's is orthodox.

51. Zito, *Veleno della quiete*; Malena, *L'heresia dei perfetti*, 256–59; and quote from Albizzi, "Oratione di quiete" (April 12, 1682), reprinted in Petrocchi, *Quietismo*, 147.

52. The propositions are printed as an appendix to Dudon's *Le quiétiste espagnol*, 292–99. The Jesuit Dudon believes all the accusations, while Leszek Kolalowski, *Chrétiens sans Eglise:*

La conscience religieuse et le lien confessionnel au XVIIe siècle (Paris: Gallimard, 1969), 504–20, discredits most of them.

53. Reproduced in Petrocchi, *Quietismo*, 155.

54. Gagliardi, *Breve compendio*, 205–25.

55. Bremond, *Histoire littéraire*, 11:22-23. Bérulle was soon to change his mystical taste and shifted his spiritual practices and writings from a totally abstract contemplation to a Christocentric mysticism, focusing on the Incarnation. Jean Dagens, *Bérulle et les origines de la restauration catholique (1575–1611)* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1952), 136–39.

56. Pierre Sérouet, *De la vie dévote à la vie mystique* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1958), 62–109; Jean Orcibal, *La rencontre du Carmel thérésien avec les mystiques du Nord* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1959); Alphonse Vermeylen, *Saint Thérèse en France au XVIIe siècle, 1600–1660* (Louvain: Presse Universitaire de Louvain, 1958); Jean Baruzi, *Saint Jean de la Croix et la problème de l'expérience mystique* (Paris: F. Alcan, 1931); Henri Sanson, *Saint Jean de la Croix entre Bossuet et Fénelon: Contribution à l'étude de la querelle du Pur Amour* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1953).

57. Jean Dagens, *Bibliographie chronologique de la littérature de spiritualité et de ses sources (1501–1610)* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1952), 105–8.

58. Benoît de Canfield, *La règle de perfection. The Rule of Perfection*, ed. Jean Orcibal (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1982); Optat de Veghel, *Benoît de Canfield (1562–1610): Sa vie, sa doctrine et son influence* (Rome: Institutum historicum ord. fr. min. cap., 1949); Paul Renaudin, *Un maître de la mystique française: Benoît de Canfeld* (Paris: Spes, 1955); Daniel Vidal, *Critique de la raison mystique: Benoît de Canfield, possession et dépossession au XVIIe siècle* (Grenoble: Jérôme Millon, 1990); Nicholas D. Paige, *Being Interior: Autobiography and the Contradictions of Modernity in Seventeenth-Century France* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 65–71.

59. On the tension between Carmelite spirituality and Canfield's *Rule*, see Orcibal's introduction to the *Rule*, 33–36; and his *Rencontre du Carmel thérésien avec les mystiques du Nord*. But see Barbara B. Diefendorf, *From Penitence to Charity: Pious Women and the Catholic Reformation in Paris* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 89.

60. Osuna, *Third Alphabet*, prologue, 42.

61. Jean Orcibal, "'La règle de perfection' de Benoît de Canfield: A t'elle été interpolée?" *Divinitas* 2 (1967): 845–74.

62. Vermeylen, *Sainte Thérèse en France*, 87–188; M. M. Rivet, *The Influence of the Spanish Mysticism on the World of Saint François de Sales* (Washington, DC: Catholic University Press, 1941).

63. François de Sales, *Traité de l'amour de Dieu*, 2 vols. (Paris: Bonne Presse, 1925); English ed.: *Treatise on the Love of God*, trans. Henry B. Mackey, 2 vols. (London: Burns Oates and Washbourne, 1932–33). The English translation attempts to downplay the Quietist overtones of the work. But see Mino Bergamo, *L'anatomie de l'âme de François de Sales à Fénelon* (Grenoble: Jérôme Millon, 1994).

64. Sérouet's *De la vie dévote à la vie mystique* is a series of articles on specific aspects of Salesian Quietism.

65. Jacques Le Brun, "France: Le grand siècle de la spiritualité française et ses lendmains," *Dictionnarie de Spiritualité*, vol. 5 (1964), col. 949.

66. Archange Ripaut, *Abomination des abominations des fausses dévotions de ce tems* (Paris, 1632), 88.

67. Ibid., 224–99.

68. Ernst Werner, "Die Nachrichten über die böhmischen Adamiten in religionsgeschichtlicher Sicht," in Theodora Büttner and Ernst Werner, *Circumcellionen und Adamiten: Zwie Formen mittelalterlicher Häresie* (Berlin: Akademie, 1959), 73–141; Johannes Nider, *Formicarius* (Strasbourg, 1517), bk. 3:7, p. 97.

69. Ripaut, *Abomination*, 1–223; Bremond, *Histoire littéraire*, II:57–70, 103–56, and see discussion in the next chapter.

70. See also R.P.F.G. [François Guilloré], *Maximes spirituelles pour la conduite des ames* (Nantes, 1668), 47–52.

71. Henri Bremond, *La querelle de pur amour au temps de Louis XIII* (Paris: Bloud et Gay, 1932). This book was later incorporated into his *Histoire littéraire*, vol. II. Bremond, however, conflates the separate debates into one major confrontation between pro- and anti-mysticism, a generalization that obliterates nuances. More careful readings are suggested by Gabriel Joppin, *Une querelle autour de l'amour pur: Jean-Pierre Camus, évêque de Belley* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1938); Vermeylen, *Sainte Thérèse en France*, 226–34; and Mino Bergamo, *La science des saints: Le discours mystique au XVIIe siècle en France* (Grenoble: Jérôme Millon, 1992), 206–20.

72. On Chéron, *Examen de la théologie mystique* (1657) and his misogyny, see below, and see also Bergamo, *Science des saints*, 92–98.

73. Michel de Certeau, *The Mystic Fable: The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), and his "Mysticism," *Diacritics* 22, no. 2 (1992): 11–25, document the radicalization of mysticism and its enemies throughout the century. Cf. Bremond, *Histoire littéraire*, vols. 4–5, 11.

74. Ripaut, *Abomination*, 783–854.

75. Jeanne-Marie Bouvier de La Motte Guyon, *La vie de Madame Guyon* (Paris: Dervy-Livres, 1983); Guyon, *An Autobiography* (New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 1997), 47; quotations from the English edition.

76. Jeanne Guyon, *Les torrents et Commentaire au Cantique des cantiques de Salomon* (Grenoble: Millon, 1992); J. M. B. de la Mothe Guyon, *Spiritual Torrents*, trans. A. W. Marston (London: Allenson, n. d.). Quotations are from the English edition.

77. Jeanne Guyon, *Moyen court et très facile pour l'oraison: Approches du Quiétisme*, ed. Patrick D. Laude (Paris: PFSCL, 1991).

78. The best biography of Madame Guyon is Marie-Louise Gondal, *Madame Guyon (1648–1717): Un nouveau visage* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1989).

79. Louis Cognet, *Crépuscule des mystiques* (Tournai: Desclée, 1958), gives the best history of the early stages of the Bossuet-Fénelon confrontation until the publication of the *Maxims*. Jacques Le Brun, *La spiritualité de Bossuet* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1972) is crucial.

80. François de Salignac de La Mothe-Fénelon, *Explication des maximes des saints sur la vie intérieure*, ed. Albert Cherel (Paris: Bloud, 1911); English ed.: *The Maxims of the Saints Explained. Concerning the Interiour Life* (London: H. Rhodes, 1698). My quotations are from the English edition.

81. Gabriel Joppin, *Fénelon et la mystique du pur amour* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1938), offers the most detailed historical and theological reading of this text and of the debate that followed.

82. Le Brun, *Spiritualité de Bossuet*, 504–6. On the last stages of this confrontation, which became known in French as the *Querelle*, see there, 643–95; and Bergamo, *Science des saints*, 245–66.

83. Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet, *Avertissement*, no. 4, "Divers écrits ou Mémoires sur le livre intitulé Explication des maximes des saints," in his *Oeuvres complètes*, 31 vols. (Paris: Louis Vivès, 1862–66), 19:162.

84. The condemnation is published in Fénelon, *Maximes*, 312–17.

85. In a letter to Pierre de La Broue, bishop of Mirepoix (May 24, 1695), however, Bossuet explicitly dismissed John of the Cross's authority: "Pour le bien-heureux Jean de la Croix, je n'ai rien à dire, sinon que je ne le crois pas assez autorisé." *Correspondance*, ed. Charles Urbaine and Eugène Levesque, 15 vols. (Paris: Hachette, 1909–25), 7:105.

86. Jean Chéron, *Examen de la theologie mystique qui fait voir la difference des lumieres divines de celles qui ne le sont pas, & du vray, assuré & Catholique chemin de la perfection de celuy qui est parseme de dangers, & infecté d'illusions* (Paris, 1657), 22–63; Pierre Nicole, *Traité de l'oraison* (Paris, 1679), 42. A few years earlier, in 1667, Nicole wrote a defense of Port-Royal in which he defended the nuns by arguing that their nature and gender lead them to ignorance and lack of discretion in spiritual matters. See his *Les imaginaries et les visionnaires ou lettres sur l'hérésie imaginaire* (Paris, 1667).

87. Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet, *La relation sur le quiétisme*, in *Oeuvres*, ed. Bernard Velat and Yvonne Champailler (Paris: Pléiade, 1970), 1105. Bruneau, *Women Mystics*, 181–93, offers a very good reading of this text.

88. Jeanne Guyon, *Récits de captivité: Autobiographie*, ed. Marie-Louise Gondal (Grenoble: Millon, 1992); Fénelon, *Réponse à la relation sur la quiétisme*, in *Oeuvres*, ed. Jacques Le Brun (Paris: Pléiade, 1983), 1097–1199.

89. Bruneau, *Women Mystics*, 189; Paige, *Being Interior*, 168.

90. Bossuet, letter to his nephew, March 16, 1699, *Correspondance*, 11:221.

91. Cognet, *Crépuscule des mystiques*, 231–32.

92. Guyon, *Moyen court*, 99.

93. See, for example, the writings and activities of Serafina di Dio, a Neapolitan Carmelite (1621–1699). Stefano Passanzini, *La venerabile Serafina di Dio, Carmelitana: Una mistica che si e'opposta al Quietismo* (Fisciano: Sessa, 1992).

CHAPTER FIVE

1. Marie de l'Incarnation, *Correspondance*, ed. Guy Oury (Solesmes: Abbaye Saint-Pierre, 1971), 344; Pierre Nicole, letter 27 to Antoine Arnauld, September 23, 1687, in *Nouvelles lettres* (Paris, 1735), 195.

2. Gérard de Frachet, *Vitae fratrum ordinis praedicatorum*, ed. Benedictus Maria Reichert, vol. 1 of *Monumenta ordinis fratrum praedicatorum historica* (Louvain: Charpentier, 1896), passim.

3. Johannes Nider, *Formicarius* (Strasbourg, 1517), bk. 1:10, p. 15; Bernardino of Siena, *Le prediche volgari*, ed. Ciro Cannarozzi, 3 vols. (Florence: Libreria Editrice Fiorentina, 1940), 1:204, 215–16. See also Werner Tschacher, *Der Formicarius des Johannes Nider von 1437/38: Studien zu den Anfängen der europäischen Hexenverfolgungen im Spätmittelalter* (Aachen: Shaker, 2000), 379–82.

4. Alvaro Huerga, *Historia de los Alumbrados*, vol. 1: *Los Alumbrados de Extramadura (1570–1582)*, 331–33; quoted in Alison Weber, "Demonizing Ecstasy: Alonso de la Fuente and the *Alumbrados* of Extramadura," in *The Mystical Gesture: Essays on Medieval and Early Modern Spiritual Culture in Honor of Mary E. Giles*, ed. Robert Boenig (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2000), 144–45.

5. María de San José Salazar, *Book for the Hour of Recreation* (1585), ed. Alison Weber, trans. Amanda Powell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 94.

6. See Joseph de Guibert, "Le cas du Père Surin: Questions théologiques," *Études Carmélitaines* 23, no. 2 (1938): 183–89.

7. Paul Dudon, *Le quiétiste espagnol, Michel Molinos (1628–1696)* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1921), appendix, 292–99, paras. 41–53.

8. Francisco de Osuna, *Tercer Abecedario espiritual*, ed. Melquídes Andrés [Martín] (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1972), 255–56; translation from *The Third Spiritual Alphabet*, ed. and trans. Mary E. Giles (New York: Paulist Press, 1981), 183.

9. Teresa of Avila, *The Book of Her Life*, 19:14; in *The Collected Works of St. Teresa of Avila*, ed. and trans. Kieran Kavanaugh and Otilio Rodriguez, 3 vols. (Washington, DC: ICS, 1976–85), 1:171; *Libro de la Vida*, in *Obras completas: Nueva revisión del texto original con notas criticas*, ed. Efrén de la Madre de Dios, 3 vols. (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1951–59), 1:704.

10. Teresa of Avila, *Interior Castle*, bk. 2:1.3–4; Eng. ed., 2:298–99; Span. ed., 2:356–57; *Way of Perfection*, bk. 39:7; Eng. ed., 2:191; Span. ed., 2:182; *Book of Her Life*, bk. 8:7; Eng. ed., 1:97; Span. ed., 1:639–40. See also *Interior Castle,* bk. 5:4; Eng. ed., 2:356–57; Span. ed., 2:411–12; *Way of Perfection*, bk. 21:7; Eng. ed., 2:119–20; Span. ed., 2:173–74.

11. John of the Cross, *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, bk. 3, chap. 6; in *The Complete Works of Saint John of the Cross*, trans. E. Allison Peers, 3 vols. (Westminster, MD: Newman, 1945), 1:234–37.

12. Achille Gagliardi, *Breve compendio di perfezione cristiana: Un testo di Achille Gagliardi S.I.*, ed. Mario Gioia (Rome: Aloisiana and Gregorian University Press, 1996), 203–5.

13. Ibid., 211–16; translation from *Italy in the Baroque: Selected Readings*, ed. and trans. Brendan Dooley (New York: Garland, 1995), 529–31.

14. Miguel de Molinos, *Guía espiritual*, ed. Claudio Lendinez (Madrid: Jucar, 1974), 84.

15. Miguel de Molinos, *Defensa de la contemplación*, ed. Eulogio Pacho (Madrid: Fundación Universitaria Española, 1988), chaps. 20–22, pp. 194–213; quote on 211.

16. François de Salignac de La Mothe-Fénelon, Maxim Eight, in *Explication des maximes des saints sur la vie intérieure*, ed. Albert Cherel (Paris: Bloud, 1911), 176–77; English ed.: *The Maxims of the Saints Explained, Concerning the Interiour Life* (London: H. Rhodes, 1698), 39–40.

17. See the chapter "La mystique condamnée," in Leszek Kolakowski, *Chrétiens sans Eglise: La conscience religieuse et le lien confessionnel au XVIIe siècle* (Paris: Gallimard, 1969), 492–566.

18. For a very similar case, with the same mingling of female spirituality, ecstatic visions, and diabolic possession in eighteenth-century Brazil, see Luiz Mott, *Rosa Egipcíaca: Uma Santa Africana no Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: Bertrand Brasil, 1993).

19. [Angélique de Saint-Jean Arnauld d'Andilly; based on the *mémoires* of Madeleine de Sainte-Candide Le Cerf], *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de Port-Royal: Relation sur la vie de Mère Angélique de Sainte Magdeleine Arnauld*, 3 vols. (1673; repr., n.p., 1737), 3:120.

20. Ann-Marie de Flécelles de Brégy [Soeur Sainte-Eustoquie], *Modèle de foi et de patience dans toutes les Traverses de la vie et dans les grandes persecutions; ou, Vie de la Mere Marie des Anges (Suireau), Abbesse de Maubuisson & de Port-Royal* (Paris, 1752), 234–38. Henri Bremond, *Histoire littéraire du sentiment religieux en France depuis la fin des guerres de religion jusqu'à nos jours*, 12 vols. (Paris: Bloud et Gay, 1916–33), 11:114–56, is so biased in his anti-Jansenism that his discussion of the events is of little value.

21. Brégy, *Modèle de foi*, 201–3.

22. She had already been interrogated and arrested in suspicion of Illuminism in 1629 but was cleared and released.

23. Jean Orcibal, *Les origins du Jansénisme*, 5 vols. (Paris: J. Vrin, 1947), 2:412–14.

24. Later in his life, Quinet was to become abbot of Barbery (near Caen in Normandy) and a member of the Hermitage of Caen, a circle of Norman mystics (1602–59). This group followed Benoît de Canfield's teachings, emphasizing annihilation and nudity of the self as the right way to reach unity. Like the spiritual exercises that Madeleine de Flers introduced to Maubuisson, the Hermitage of Caen was targeted by Jansenists. Maurice Souriau, *Deux mystiques normands: Gaston de Renty et Jean de Bernières* (Paris: Perrin, 1913); Georges-Abel-René Simon, *Un mystique bénédictin normand au XVIIe siècle: Dom Louis Quinet, abbé de Barbery (1595–1665)* (Caen: Jouan et Bigot, 1927); Lucien Luypaert, "La doctrine spirituelle de Bernières et le quiétisme," *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 41 (1940): 19–121. For the Jansenist attack on the Hermitage, see Pierre Nicole, *Les imaginaires et les visionnaires; ou, Lettres sur l'hérésie imaginaire* (Paris, 1667), who calls the mystical teaching of the Hermitage "Philosophie du Rien" (Cologne, 1683), 379. Jansenist mythology had it that in 1659 the hermits of Caen ran down the streets, throwing stones and shouting that "the world would soon perish unless all Jansenists are exterminated." Gabriel Gerberon, *Histoire générale du Jansénisme et de tout ce qui s'est passé en France*, 3 vols. (Amsterdam, 1700), 2:417.

25. A similar exaltation of the mother superior took place in the Tertiary Refuge of reformed prostitutes in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1760–62. There, however, it was Rosa, the mother superior herself, who was led by the demons to declare herself to be the Virgin and to appoint twelve apostles among her followers. Mott, *Rosa Egipcíaca*, 464–76.

26. Archivo Histórico Nacional, Madrid, Sección Inquisición, Legajo 3691, caja 1, fols. 161–64, 193. The description of the events in San Plácido is based on the documents in legajos 3691 and 3692. Parts of Doña Teresa's confession were published in *Cárceles y mujeres en el siglo XVII*, ed. Isabel Barbeito (Madrid: Castalia, 1991). On the case and its major political implications, see Carlos Puyol Buil, *Inquisición y política en el reinado de Felipe IV: Los procesos de Jerónimo de Villanueva y las monjas de San Plácido 1628–1660* (Madrid: Consejo superior de investigaciones científicas, 1993). See also Beatriz Moncó Rebollo, *Mujer y demonio: Una pareja barroca (Treinta monjas endemoniadas en un convento)* (Madrid: Instituto de Sociología Aplicada de Madrid, 1989), and the vast bibliographies in these two books.

27. Puyol Buil, *Inquisición y política*, 125.

28. This summary is based on Esprit du Bosroger, *La pieté affligée; ou, Discours historique et théologique de la possession des religieuses dittes de Sainte-Elisabeth de Louviers* (Rouen, 1652); Bibliothèque nationale de France mss. 7599 and 18695; [Pierre Yvelin], *Examen de la possession des religieuses de Louviers* (Paris, 1643); [Jean de Lempèrière, Sieur de Montigny], *Réponse à l'examen de la possession des religieuses de Louviers* (Evreux, 1643); *Censure de l'examen de la possession des religieuses de Louviers* (n.p., 1643); [Pierre Yvelin], *Apologie pour l'auteur de l'examen de la possession des religieuses de Louviers, à Messieurs l'Emperière et Magnart, Médecins à Rouen* (Rouen, 1643); *Récit véritable de ce qui s'est fait et passé à Louviers, touchant les religieuses possedées* (Paris, 1643); [Thomas Le Gauffre], *Récit veritable de ce qui s'est fait et passé aux exorcismes de plusieurs religieuses de la ville de Louviers, en présence de M. le Penitencier d'Evreux et de M. Le Gauffre* (Paris, 1643); François Humier, *Discours théologique sur l'histoire de Magdelaine Bavent* (Nyort, 1649); [Charles Desmarets], *Histoire de Magdelaine Bavent, religieuse du monastère de Saint-Louis de Louviers; avec sa confession générale et testamentaire, où elle déclar les abominations, impiétez et sacrilèges qu'elle a pratiqué et vu pratiquer, tant dans ledit monastère, qu'au sabbat*

(Paris, 1652); Ms. 666 at the Bibliothèque Sainte Geneviève in Paris contains a large collection of eyewitness accounts of this case.

29. The following analysis owes a huge debt to Daniel Vidal, *Critique de la raison mystique: Benoît de Canfield, possession et dépossession au XVIIe siècle* (Grenoble: Jérôme Millon, 1990); see also Sarah Ferber, *Demonic Possession and Exorcism in Early Modern France* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 89–112, and the complete bibliography there.

30. Desmarets, *Histoire de Magdelaine Bavent*, 8; *Récit véritable de ce qui s'est fait et passé à Louviers*, 1; Bosroger, *Pieté affligée*, 48–49, mentions a few additional mystical texts that were read at the convent.

31. Archange Ripaut, *Abomination des abominations des fausses dévotions de ce tems* (Paris, 1632), 224–99.

32. Bosroger, *Pieté affligée*, 43–48.

33. Ibid., 49–50.

34. For a detailed history of the anti-Illuminist campaign within the Capuchin order, see Jean Mauzaize, *Le rôle et l'action des Capucins de la Province de Paris dans la France religieuse du XVIIème siècle*, 3 vols. (Paris: H. Champion, 1978), 2:912–33. As we have seen, both the Carmelites and the Jesuits were equally concerned in the first half of the seventeenth century with cleansing their spiritual methods of any practices that might raise suspicion of pre-Quietism.

35. Jean-Joseph Surin, *Triomphe de l'amour divin sur les puissances de l'enfer; et, Science expérimentale des choses de l'autre vie* (Grenoble: Jérôme Millon, 1990), 43. The first treatise describes the exorcism of Jeanne des Anges; the second Surin's own struggles following Anges's recovery. See also Jean-Joseph Surin, letter 52 to Achille Doni d'Attichy, May 3, 1635, in *Correspondance*, ed. Michel de Certeau (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1966), 264.

36. Surin often described his condition as obsession rather than possession. But "obsessio" was the Latin term for the affliction, and Surin himself at times used the term "possession" to define his situation. As such, he legitimizes our discussion of the events as diabolic possession. See, for example: "possédé ou obsédé" (*Triomphe*, 35); possession and obsession (36); "comme une personne possédée" (41, 173); "ce fut non un esprit étranger, mais le sien proper" (43); possession (*Science expérimentale*, 191); "les demons possédaient absolument mon âme au dedans" (225). For Surin's own elaboration of the difference between the two states, see *Relation véritable de ce qui s'est passé aux exorcismes des religieuses possédées de Loudun en la presence de Monsieur, Frère unique du roi* (Paris, 1635), 27–30. On the lack of distinction between obsession and possession until the latter part of the seventeenth century, see Adolf Rodewyk, *Possessed by Satan: The Church's Teaching on the Devil, Possession, and Exorcism*, trans. Martin Ebon (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1975), 178–80. For an opposite view to the one I present here, see Nicholas D. Paige, *Being Interior: Autobiography and the Contradictions of Modernity in Seventeenth-Century France* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 185–86.

37. The Jesuit Michel de Certeau devoted much of his career to introducing Surin to twentieth-century readers. The discussion that follows owes a great deal to his works. The best biographical sketch is in Certeau's introduction to Surin's *Correspondance.* See also Certeau, *La Possession de Loudun* (Paris: Julliard, 1970); *The Mystic Fable: The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 206–40. For a complete bibliography of Certeau's writings on Surin, see Luce Giard, ed., *Le voyage mystique: Michel de Certeau* (Paris: Cerf, 1988), 191–243. Additional significant biographies and discussions of Surin include Bremond, *Histoire littéraire*, 5:148–310; Kolakowski, *Chrétiens sans Eglise*, 436–91;

Mino Bergamo, *La science des saints: Le discours mystique au XVIIe siècle en France* (Grenoble: Jérôme Millon, 1992), 123–60; Bergamo, "Il problema del discorso mistico: Due sondaggi," *Asmodee, Asmodeo* 1 (1989): 9–36; Sophie Houdard, "De l'exorcisme à la communication spirituelle: Le sujet et ses démons," *Littérature Classique* 25 (1995): 187–99; and Paige, *Being Interior*, 179–225.

38. Surin, letter 18 to his fellow Jesuits at La Flèche, May 1630, *Correspondance*, 140–43. See, on this letter and its textual history, Certeau, *Mystic Fable*, 206–40; Certeau, "L'illettré éclairé dans l'histoire de la lettre de Surin sur le Jeune Homme du Coche (1630)," *Revue d'ascétique et de mystique* 44 (1968): 369–412; and Bergamo, *Science des saints*, 123–60.

39. Surin, letter 312 to Anne Buignon, July 13, 1660, *Correspondance*, 977.

40. Whispering into the ear of the possessed was also recommended in the *Thesaurus exorcismorum atque conjurationum terribilium, potentissimorum, efficacissimorum, cum practica probatissima; quibus spiritus maligni, daemones, maleficiaque omnia de corporibus humanis obsessis, tanquam flagellis fustibusque fugantur, expelluntur* (Cologne, 1608), 1111–16.

41. Michel de Certeau, "Les aventures de Jean-Joseph Surin," in Surin, *Triomphe*, 431–32.

42. Compare Bergamo, "Problema del discorso," 28–30; Houdard, "De l'exorcisme," 192–93.

43. Jean-Joseph Surin, *Cantiques spirituels de l'amour divin*, ed. Benedetta Papasogli (Florence: Olschki, 1996).

44. Surin, letter 469 to Jeanne des Anges, June 26, 1662, *Correspondance*, 1395.

45. Surin, *Triomphe*, 303; Surin, *Correspondance*, letter 394 to Jeanne des Anges, July 16, 1661, 1178.

46. Surin, letter 52 to Achille Donni d'Attichy, May 3, 1635, *Correspondance*, 263–64.

47. Ibid.

48. M. Olphe-Galliard, "Le Père Surin et les Jésuites de son temps," *Études Carmélitaines* 23, no. 3 (1938): 177–82; quoting Surin's close friend, Father Bastide.

49. Michel de Certeau, "Une campagne contre Surin et la 'nouvelle spiritualité,'" in Surin, *Correspondance*, 439–41; Certeau, "Crise sociale et réformisme spirituel au début du XVIIe siècle: Une 'Nouvelle Spiritualité' chez les Jésuits français," *Revue d'ascétique et de mystique* 41 (1965): 339–86; Marin Mersenne, *Correspondance*, ed. Marie Bul Tannery and Cornelis de Waard (Paris: Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1932), 5:271. Surin never made up his mind whether "little women" were more likely to enjoy spiritual favors or, alternatively, were more likely to become possessed. In his *Triomphe*, he argued against a dismissal of spiritual experiences as feminine (325), and in his *Les fondements de la vie spirituelle*, he argued that "those that are completely ignorant [of learning], God instructs them by supernatural occurrences. Because one can find simpletons and little women [femmelettes] that acquire deep understanding of divine things through prayer" (quoted in Bremond, *Histoire littéraire*, 5:172). But at other times he attacked visionary women and dismissed their claims. See, for example, his letter to Mother Buignon, February 1, 1661, *Correspondance*, 1039.

50. Surin, *Relation véritable*.

51. Nicolas Boileau, "Epître XII," in *Satires, Epîtres, Art poétique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1985), 220.

> C'est ainsi quelquefois qu'un insolent mystique,
> Au milieu des péchés tranquille fanatique,
> Du plus parfait amour pense avoir l'heureux don,
> Et croit posséder Dieu, dans les bras du demon.

52. Surin, letter 509 to Jeanne des Anges, September 15–17, 1665, *Correspondance*, 1472; Surin, *Triomphe*, 129.

53. Achille Gagliardi, the Italian Jesuit pre-Quietist mystic, compared the highest stage of passive contemplation to the state of being a baby. Surin was probably familiar with his *Short Summary of Christian Perfection*, which was translated into French before 1599. For Gagliardi, this passivity was extremely brief; in Surin's case, however, it lasted many years. See Gagliardi, *Breve compendio*, 206; and see a discussion of Gagliardi's spirituality in the previous chapter.

54. Surin, letter 143 to Angélique de Saint-François, 1637 or 1638, *Correspondance*, 422.

55. Ripaut, *Abomination*, 637.

56. Which could itself, of course, be construed as a gendered process of relinquishing a male prerogative and embracing femininity.

CHAPTER SIX

1. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologica* (New York: Benziger, 1947), I–II, q. 111, art. 4, ad 2a.

2. Ibid., II–II, q. 171, art. 5; 172, art. 5; 173, art. 4; 175, art. 1; *Quodlibeta*, q. 2, art. 8.

3. Adolph Franz, *Die kirchlichen Benediktionen in Mittelalter*, 2 vols. (Freiburg, 1909; repr., Graz: Akademische Druck, 1960), 2:583; Saint Augustine, *The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, trans. John H. Taylor, 2 vols. (New York: Newman Press, 1982), 2:196: "The evil spirit acts in a seemingly peaceful manner and, without tormenting the body, possesses a man's spirit." See also 2:193, 198.

4. There is a growing body of literature on the discernment of spirits in the Middle Ages, and I will therefore limit most of my discussion to the early modern period. The entry "Discernement des esprits" in the *Dictionnaire de spiritualité, d'ascétique et mystique* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1957) 3: col. 1222–91, is a good place to start. For the Middle Ages, see Rosalynn Voaden, *God's Words, Women's Voices: The Discernment of Spirits in the Writing of Late-Medieval Women Visionaries* (Bury St. Edmunds, UK: St. Edmundsbury Press, 1999); Nancy Caciola, *Discerning Spirits: Divine and Demonic Possession in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003); and Wendy Love Anderson, "Free Spirits, Presumptuous Women, and False Prophets: The Discernment of Spirits in the Later Middle Ages" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 2002). I thank Ms. Anderson for sending me a copy of her dissertation.

5. Bernard of Clairvaux, Sermon 49, *On the Song of Songs*, trans. Kilian Walsh and Irene M. Edmonds, 4 vols. (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Fathers Series, 1962), 3:25.

6. Thomas Hohmann, ed. and trans., *Heinrichs von Langenstein "Unterscheidung der Geister"* (Munich: Artemis, 1977); and see André Vauchez, "Les théologiens face aux prophéties à l'époque des papes d'Avignon et du Grand Schisme," in *Les textes prophètiques et la prophétie en occident (XIIe–XVIe siècles)*, ed. André Vauchez (Rome: École française de Rome, 1991). [*Mélanges de l'École française de Rome, Moyen Âge* 102, no. 2 (1990): 582–86]; Anna Morisi Guerra, "Il silenzio di Dio e la voce del'anima da Enrico di Langenstein a Gerson," *Cristianesimo nella storia* 17 (1996): 396–403; Anderson, "Free Spirits," 209–21; and Dyan Elliott, *Proving Woman: Female Spirituality and Inquisitional Culture in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), 256–63. On Langenstein's career, see Michael H. Shank, *Unless You Believe, You Shall Not Understand: Logic, University, and Society in Late Medieval Vienna* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988).

7. Hohmann, *Langenstein*, 62–66, 110–14; cf. the discussion in Caciola, *Discerning Spirits*, 291–96.

8. Peter Dinzelbacher, "Heilige oder Hexen?" in *Religiöse Devianz*, ed. Dieter Simon (Frankfurt: Vittorio Klostermann, 1990), 41–60; Dinzelbacher, *Heilige oder Hexen? Schicksale auffalliger Frauen in Mittelalter und Fruhneuzeit* (Munich: Artemis & Winkler, 1995); Gábor Klaniczay, "Miraculum and Maleficium: Reflections Concerning Late Medieval Female Sainthood," in *Problems in the Historical Anthropology of Early Modern Europe*, ed. R. Po-Chia and R. W. Scribner (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1997), 49–73; Barbara Newman, "Possessed by the Spirit: Devout Women, Demoniacs, and the Apostolic Life in the Thirteenth Century," *Speculum* 73 (1998): 733–70. But see Richard Kieckhefer, "The Holy and the Unholy: Sainthood, Witchcraft, and Magic in Late Medieval Europe," in *Christendom and Its Discontents: Exclusion, Persecution, and Rebellion, 1000–1500*, ed. Scott L. Waugh and Peter D. Diehl (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 310–37, who cautions against ignoring the differences between the states.

9. In his discussion of visions, the bishop of Hippo posited a hierarchy of visions—corporeal, spiritual, and intellectual, with the latter being the highest type of experience, a mystical union with God without any sensory or symbolic form. The lower types of spiritual or corporeal visions are open for demonic deception and therefore need examination, guidance, and explanation. The spiritual vision is the most problematic. A dreamer, a mentally disturbed person, and a visionary can all have the same spiritual visions, and during ecstasy, delirium, and intervention of spirits, the three possible sources of these experiences—namely, memory, knowledge, and invention—cannot easily be distinguished from each other. But it is not only the symptomatic morphology that prevents us from having clear criteria to separate these experiences from one another. The etiology of visions is also problematic, and Augustine argued that we cannot distinguish between natural and supernatural causes of such experiences. Only divine grace makes it possible to tell the difference between the natural and the supernatural, the demonic and the divine, and what is actually seen with the eyes and what is seen in a spiritual or corporeal vision. Saint Augustine, "De genesi ad litteram" ("On the Literal Meaning of Genesis"), bk. 12, chaps. 12–13: "The discernment of [spiritual] experiences is certainly a most difficult task. . . . Such spirit cannot be recognized except by the gift . . . of God." Augustine, *Literal Meaning of Genesis*, 196. Cf. Frank Tobin, "Medieval Thought on Visions and Its Resonance in Mechthild von Magdeburg's *Flowing Light of the Godhead*," in *Vox Mystica: Essays on Medieval Mysticism in Honor of Professor Valerie M. Lagorio*, ed. Ann Clark Bartlett et al. (Bury St. Edmunds, UK: D. S. Brewer, 1995), 41–53.

10. Caroline W. Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion* (New York: Zone Books, 1991), 119–150; André Vauchez, *La sainteté en Occident aux derniers siècles du Moyen Âge d'après les procès de canonisation et les documents hagiographiques* (Rome: École française de Rome, 1981), 472–79; Vauchez, *Les laïcs au Moyen Âge: Pratiques et expériences religieuses* (Paris: Cerf, 1987), 189–202, 239–75; Geraldine McKendrick and Angus MacKay, "Visionaries and Affective Spirituality during the First Half of the Sixteenth Century," in *Cultural Encounters: The Impact of the Inquisition in Spain and the New World*, ed. Mary E. Perry and Anne J. Cruz (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 93–104; Caciola, *Discerning Spirits*, 54–66.

11. Jean Gerson, "De probatione spirituum," in *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. Palémon Glorieux, 10 vols. (Paris: Desclée, 1960–73), 9:177–85; "De examinatione doctrinarum," 9:458–75. I have used the following translations: "On Distinguishing True from False Revelations," in *Jean Gerson: Early Works*, ed. and trans. Brian P. McGuire (New York: Paulist Press, 1998), 334–64;

"On the Testing of Spirits," in Paschal Boland, *The Concept of* Discretio Spirituum *in John Gerson's "De probatione spirituum" and "De distinctione verarum visionum a falsis"* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1959), 25–38. On Gerson and the discernment of spirits, see B. J. Caiger, "Doctrine and Discipline in the Church of Jean Gerson," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 41 (1990): 389–407; Voaden, *God's Words*, 41–56; Cornelius Roth, *Discretio spirituum: Kriterien geistlicher Unterscheidung bei Johannes Gerson* (Würzburg: Echer, 2001); Dyan Elliott, "Seeing Double: John Gerson, the Discernment of Spirits, and Joan of Arc," *American Historical Review* 107, no. 1 (2002): 26–54; Deborah Fraioli, "Gerson Judging Women of Spirit: From Female Mystics to Joan of Arc," in *Joan of Arc and Spirituality*, ed. Ann W. Astell and Bonnie Wheeler (New York: Palgrave, 2003), 147–65; Caciola, *Discerning Spirits*, 291–315; and Elliott, *Proving Woman*, 264–96. Anderson, "Free Spirits," 234–99, offers the most detailed analysis of Gerson's treatises.

12. Gerson, "De examinatione doctrinarum," 9:467–68.

13. See also Dyan Elliott, "The Physiology of Rapture and Female Spirituality," in *Medieval Theology and the Natural Body*, ed. Peter Biller and Alastair J. Minnis (Bury St. Edmunds, UK: St. Edmundsbury Press, 1997), 141–73. Elliott, "Seeing Double"; Fraioli, "Gerson Judging Women"; and Anderson, "Free Spirits," 290–95, however, are right to point out that his doubts concerning female visionaries did not prevent Gerson from supporting Jeanne d'Arc.

14. Girolamo Savonarola, *Compendio di rivelazioni: Testo volgare e Dialogus de veritate prophetica*, ed. Angela Crucitti (Rome: A. Belardetti, 1974), 35; English translation by Bernard McGinn in *Apocalyptic Spirituality*, ed. Bernard McGinn (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), 215–16. See also Claudio Leonardi, "Girolamo Savonarola profeta di S. Marco," in *La chiesa e il convento di San Marco a Firenze*, 2 vols. (Florence: Giunti, 1989), 1:149–204; Leonardi, "Jérôme Savonarole et le status de la prophétie dans l'église," in *Les textes prophètiques et la prophétie en occident (XIIe–XVIe siècles)*, ed. André Vauchez (Rome: École française de Rome, 1991). [*Mélanges de l'École française de Rome, Moyen Âge* 102, no. 2 (1990): 589–96.]

15. Savonarola, *Compendio*, 40; English ed., 219.

16. Ottavia Niccoli, "Profezio in piazza: Note sul profetismo populare nell'Italia del primo cinquecento," *Quaderni storici* 41 (1979): 500–539; Gabriella Zarri, "Living Saints: A Typology of Female Sanctity in the Early Sixteenth Century," in *Women and Religion in Medieval and Renaissance Italy*, ed. Daniel Borstein and Roberto Rusconi (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 245–47, and many examples in note 167 there.

17. Gabriella Zarri, *Le sante vive: Profezie di corte e devozione femminile tra '400 e '500* (Turin: Rosenberg and Sellier, 1990); Zarri, ed., *Finzione e santità tra medioevo ed età moderna* (Turin: Rosenberg and Sellier, 1991).

18. Norman Tanner, ed., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 2 vols. (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1990), 2:635–38; Nelson H. Minnich, "Prophecy and the Fifth Lateran Council (1512–1517)," in *Prophetic Rome in the High Renaissance Period*, ed. Marjorie Reeves (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992), 63–87.

19. Zarri, "Living Saints"; Zarri, *Sante vive*.

20. Henry C. Lea, *A History of the Inquisition of Spain*, 4 vols. (1906–7; repr., New York: American Scholar Publications, 1966), 4:1–29; Claire Guilhem, "L'Inquisition et la dévaluation des discours féminins," in *L'Inquisition espagnole: XVe–XVIe siècle*, ed. Bartolomé Bennassar (Paris: Hachette, 1979), 197–240; Joseph Pérez, "Illuminisme et mysticisme dans l'Espagne du XVIe siècle," in *Les réformes: Enracinement socio-culturel*, ed. Bernard Chevalier and Robert Sauzet (Paris: Maisnie, 1985), 43–55; María de Santo Domingo, *The Book of*

Prayer of Sor María of Santo Domingo: A Study and Translation, ed. and trans. Mary E. Giles (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990); Carmelo Lisón Tolosana, *La España mental: Demonios y exorcismos en los siglos de oro* (Madrid: Akal, 1990); Alastair Hamilton, *Heresy and Mysticism in Sixteenth-Century Spain: The Alumbrados* (Cambridge: James Clarke, 1992); Jodi Bilinkoff, "Charisma and Controversy: The Case of María de Santo Domingo," in *Spanish Women in the Golden Age: Images and Realities*, ed. Magdalena S. Sánchez and Alain Saint-Saens (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996), 23–35; María Laura Giordano, *María de Cazalla (1487–?)* (Madrid: Orto, 1998); Mary E. Giles, "Francisca Hernández and the Sexuality of Religious Dissent," in *Women in the Inquisition: Spain and the New World*, ed. Mary Giles (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 75–97; Angel Alcalá, "María de Cazalla," in *Women in the Inquisition*, ed. Giles, 98–118. On the Jewish background of the majority of *alumbrados*, see José C. Nieto, "The Nonmystical Nature of the Sixteenth-Century Alumbrados of Toledo," in *The Spanish Inquisition and the Inquisitorial Mind*, ed. Angel Alcalá (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 431–56; Angela Selke, "El iluminismo de los converses y la Inquisición. Cristianismo interior de los alumbrados: Resentimiento y sublimación," in *La Inquisición española: Nueva vision, nuevos horizontes*, ed. Joaquín Pérez Villanueva (Madrid: Siglo veiniuno, 1980), 617–36.

21. Francisco de Osuna, *Tercer Abecedario espiritual*, ed. Melquídes Andrés [Martín] (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1972), treatise 5, chap. 4, 229–30; English ed.: *The Third Spiritual Alphabet*, ed. and trans. Mary E. Giles (New York: Paulist Press, 1981), 154–55. I altered somewhat Giles's translation.

22. Martín de Castañega, *Tratado de las supersticiones y hechicerías* (Buenos Aires: Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, 1997), dedication, 3. Translations are mine from this edition, but see David H. Darst, "Witchcraft in Spain: The Testimony of Martín de Castañega's *Treatise on Superstition and Witchcraft* (1529)," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 123, no. 5 (1979): 298–322, for another English translation. And see a discussion in Fabián Alejandro Campagne, *Homo Catholicus, Homo Superstitiosus: El discurso antisupersticioso en la España de los siglos XV a XVIII* (Buenos Aires: Universidad de Buenos Aires, 2002), 350–52.

23. Castañega, *Tratado*, chap. 1, pp. 28–29; chap. 5, pp. 63–65; chap. 14, pp. 115–16.

24. Ibid., chap. 23, pp. 191–92; see a discussion in Lu Ann Homza, *Religious Authority in the Spanish Renaissance* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 197–99.

25. This was not a totally new linguistic invention. Caesarius of Heisterbach recorded in his collection of miracles one such case and warned that "some people simulate possession for the sake of profit." At the second decade of the thirteenth century, the Florentine author Francesco da Barberino (1264–1346) included a similar warning against simulating women in his guide for women, *Del reggimento e costumi di donna* (*On the Regiments and Customs of Women*). Some young women, he explained, fake possessions due to vanity or need for love or attention, or because they are mentally disturbed. Caesarius of Heisterbach, *The Dialogue on Miracles*, 5:12, trans. H. von E. Scott and C. C. Swinton Bland, 2 vols. (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1929), 1:291–92; Francesco da Barberino, *Del reggimento e costumi di donna* (Bologna: Gaetano Romagnoli, 1875), 71–73.

26. Homza, *Religious Authority*, 198.

27. Castañega, *Tratado*, chap. 23, p. 192.

28. Luis de Granada, "Sermon contra los escándalos en las Caídas Públicas" (1578), in *Obras*, 14 vols. (Madrid: Gómez Fuentenebro, 1906), 14:571–72.

29. Pedro Ciruelo, *Reprouacion de las supersticiones y hechizerias* (Valencia: Albatros Hispanófila, 1978); English ed.: *A Treatise Reproving All Superstitions and Forms of Witchcraft; Very*

Necessary and Useful for All Good Christians Zealous for Their Salvation, trans. Eugene A. Maio and D'Orsay W. Pearson (London: Associated University Press, 1977). All translations are from this English edition. See also Campagne, *Homo Catholicus*, 353–63 and passim; Homza, *Religious Authority*, 199, suggested that Ciruelo's book was a correction to Castañega's book of the previous year, and I find her arguments convincing.

30. Ciruelo, *Reprouacion*, 108–17. The fact that the twelfth-century German mystic Elisabeth of Schönau spoke Latin during her ecstasies served as proof that her visions were divine. Equally, Saint Catherine of Siena's ability to speak Latin affirmed her uniqueness. See Anne L. Clark, *Elisabeth of Schönau: A Twelfth-Century Visionary* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992), 28–31; Raymond of Capua, *The Life of Catherine of Siena by Raymond of Capua*, trans. Conleth Kearns (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1980), 178–79.

31. Juan de Ávila, *The audi filia; or, A Rich Cabinet full of Spirituall Jewells* (London, 1620), 256–59.

32. Juan de Ávila, *Obras completas del Santo Maestro Juan de Avila*, ed. Luis Sala Balust and Francisco Martín Hernandez (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1970–71) 5:575; quoted in David Coleman, "Moral Formation and Social Control in the Catholic Reformation: The Case of San Juan de Avila," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 26, no. 1 (1995): 23.

33. Teresa herself, as we have seen, was equally worried. On Teresa of Ávila's discerning activities, see the next chapter.

34. Diego Pérez de Valdivia, *Aviso de gente recogida* (Barcelona, 1585; repr., Madrid: Universidad Pontífica de Salamanca y Fundación universitaria española, 1977), 569–79.

35. Ibid., 334; cf. Alison Weber, "Between Ecstasy and Exorcism: Religious Negotiation and Sixteenth-Century Spain," *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 23 (1993): 221–34.

36. Denis [de la Mère de Dieu], *Traicté théologique des divines revelations, visions, locutions, & autres graces semblables* [Paris, 1619], 6–12; On Denis de la Mère de Dieu, see Stéphane-Marie Morgain, "Sainte Gertrude d'Helfta à la rescousse du Père Denys de la Mère de Dieu, dans son opposition à Pierre de Bérulle," in *Carmes et Carmélites en France du XVIIe siècle à nos jours: Actes du Colloque de Lyon (25–26 septembre 1997)*, ed. Bernard Hours (Paris: Cerf, 2001), 293–318.

37. Andrew W. Keitt, *Inventing the Sacred: Imposture, Inquisition, and the Boundaries of the Supernatural in Golden Age Spain* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 76–86. I thank Professor Keitt for allowing me to read his manuscript prior to publication.

38. Giulio Antonio Santori, *Rituale sacramentorum Romanum Gregorii XIII Pont Max iussu* (Rome, 1584), 674; quoted in Patrick Dondelinger-Mandy, "Le rituel des exorcismes dans le Rituale Romanum de 1614," *La Maison-Dieu* 183/184 (1990): 108.

39. Beguines were accused already in the twelfth century of faking sanctity and of hypocrisy, but the term itself appeared only rarely in medieval texts. See Caciola, *Discerning Spirits,* 125.

40. Giovanni Romeo, "Una 'simulatrice di santità' a Napoli nel '500: Alfonsina Rispola," *Campania Sacra* 8/9 (1977/78): 159–218, published the legal proceedings of the case; and see 215. See also Jean-Michel Sallmann, "La sainteté mystique féminine à Naples au tournant des XVIe et XVIIe siècles," in *Culto dei santi, istituzioni e classi sociali in età preindustriale*, ed. Sofia Boesch Gajano and Lucia Sebastiani (Rome: Japadre, 1984), 693–98; Sallmann, *Visions indiennes, visions baroques: Les métissages de l'inconcsient* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1992), 57–83.

41. The literature on simulated sanctity is growing fast. Albano Biondi, "L''inordinata devozione' nella *Prattica* del Cardinale Scaglia (ca. 1635)," in *Finzione e santità*, ed. Zarri,

306–25, published the main arguments of one of the first manuals that addressed false sanctity. Zarri's entire collection of articles addresses the issue. See also Lucetta Scaraffia, "Tra fede e simulazione: Questioni aperte sulla religiosità femminile," *Memoria* (Turin) 28 (1990): 177–83; Richard L. Kagan, *Lucrecia's Dreams: Politics and Prophecy in Sixteenth-Century Spain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990); Adriano Prosperi, *Tribunali della coscienza: Inquisitori, confessori, missionari* (Turin: Einaudi, 1996), 431–64; Cecilia Ferrazzi, *Autobiography of an Aspiring Saint*, ed. Anne Jacobson Schutte (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); Sophie Houdard, "Des fausses saintes aux spirituelles à la mode: Les signes suspects de la mystique," *XVIIe siècle* 200 (1998): 417–32; Paola Zito, *Giulia e l'Inquisitore: Simulazione di santità e misticismo nella Napoli di primo Seicento* (Naples: Arte tipografica, 2000); Daniela Berti, "L'autobiografia di una visionaria," *Rivista di Storia e Letteratura Religiosa* 28, no. 3 (1992): 473–508; and especially Anne Jacobson Schutte, *Aspiring Saints: Pretense of Holiness, Inquisition, and Gender in the Republic of Venice, 1618–1750* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Pres, 2001), who meticulously traces the construction of the legal category "simulated sanctity."

42. Biondi, "L'inordinata devozione,'" 318–19; translated in Schutte, *Aspiring Saints*, 69.

43. Biondi, "L'inordinata devozione,'" 321–23; translated in Schutte, *Aspiring Saints*, 71.

44. Keitt, *Inventing the Sacred*, 139–82; José Lúis Sanchez Lora, *Mujeres, conventos y formas de la religiosidad barroca* (Madrid: Fundación Unversitaria Española, 1988).

45. Girolamo Menghi, *Compendio dell'arte essorcistica, et possibilità delle mirabili, et stupende operationi delli demoni, et dei malefici: Con li rimedii opportuni alle infirmità maleficiali* (Bologna, 1576; repr., Genoa: Nuova Stile Regina, 1987), 19–39, 146–47.

46. Writing merely fifteen years after Menghi, French demonologist Pierre de Lancre stated explicitly that, unlike good angels, demons cannot appear as Christ, the Virgin, or saints, and that this postulate was the best means to discern spirits. Pierre de Lancre, *Tableau de l'inconstance des mauvais anges et démons, où il est amplement traité des sorciers et de la sorcellerie* (1613; repr., Paris: Aubier, 1982), bk. 5:1, 253–55.

47. Girolamo Menghi, *Fustis daemonum, adiurationes formidabiles, potentissimas, et efficaces in malignos spiritus fugandos de oppressis corporibus humanis* (Venice, 1593), 27–29, 39–45.

48. Ibid., 50–60.

49. Francesco Maria Guazzo, *Compendium maleficarum*, ed. and trans. Montague Summers (London: John Rodker, 1929), bk. 2:16, 136.

50. Cf. Menghi, *Compendio*, 150; Gaspar Navarro, *Tribunal de la superstición ladina, explorador del saber, astucia, y poder del demonio; en que se condena lo que suele correr por bueno en hechizos* (Huesca, 1631), fol. 32.

51. Cf. Adriano Prosperi, "Diari femminili e discernimento degli spiriti: Le mistiche della prima età moderna in Italia," in *America e apocalisse e altri saggi*, ed. Adriano Prosperi (Pisa: Istituti editoriali e poligrafici internazionali, 1999), 343–65.

52. Marc Venard, "Le démon controversiste," in *La controverse religieuse (XVIe–XIXe siècles): Actes du 1er Colloque Jean Boisset*, 2 vols. (Montpellier: Université Paul Valéry, 1980), 2:45–60; Daniel P. Walker, *Unclean Spirits: Possession and Exorcism in France and England in the Late Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1981), 19–42; Walker, "Demonic Possession Used as Propaganda in the Late Sixteenth Century," in *Scienza, credenze occulte, livelli di cultura* (Florence: Olschki, 1982), 237–48; Henri Weber, "L'exorcisme à la fin du XVIe siècle, instrument de la contre réforme et spectacle baroque," *Nouvelle revue du seizième siècle* 1 (1983): 79–101; Jonathan L. Pearl, "Demons and Politics in France, 1560–1630," *Historical Reflections* 12, no. 2 (1985): 241–51; Pearl, "'A School

for the Rebel Soul': Politics and Demonic Possession in France," *Historical Reflections* 16, nos. 2/3 (1989): 286–306.

53. *Les actes de la province ecclésiastique de Reims: Ou canons et décrets des conciles, constitutions, status, et lettres des évêques des différents diocèses qui dépendent ou qui dépandaient autrefois de la métropole de Reims*, ed. Thomas Marie Joseph Gousset, 4 vols. (Rheims: L. Jacquet, 1842–44), 3:639–40, 690–91; 4:10–11, 81, 107, 262, 365–66.

54. Jean Bodin, *De la démonomanie des sorciers* (Paris, 1587), bk. 1:3; abridged English ed.: *On the Demon-Mania of Witches*, trans. Randy A. Scott (Toronto: Center for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 1995), 66–67.

55. Pierre Pigray, *Épitome des precepts de medecine et chirurgie avec ample declaration des remedes propres aus maladyes* (Paris, 1606), 517–20.

56. Bibliothèque nationale de France, ms. français 18453; Jean Dagnes, *Bérulle et les origins de la restoration catholique (1575–1611)* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1952), 150–65; Walker, *Unclean Spirits*, 33–42; Anita M. Walker and Edmund H. Dickerman, "'A Woman under the Influence': A Case of Alleged Possession in Sixteenth-Century France," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 22, no. 3 (1991): 535–54; Sarah Ferber, "The Demonic Possession of Marthe Brossier, France, 1598–1600," in *No Gods Except Me: Orthodoxy and Religious Practice in Europe, 1200–1600*, ed. Charles Zika (Melbourne: University of Melbourne, 1991), 59–83; Ferber, *Demonic Possession and Exorcism in Early Modern France* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 40–59.

57. Michel Marescot, *Discours veritable sur le fait de Marthe Brossier, de Romorantin, prétendue démoniaque* (Paris, 1599), 48.

58. Léon d'Alexis [Pierre de Bérulle], *Triacté des énergumènes, suivy d'un Discours sur la possession de Marthe Brossier, contre les calumnies d'un médecin de Paris* (Troyes, 1599), 39; cf. 14.

59. Ibid., 81–82.

60. François de Sales, *Traité de l'amour de Dieu*, 2 vols. (Paris: Bonne Presse, 1925), 2:20–21; English ed.: *Treatise on the Love of God*, trans. Henry B. Mackey, 2 vols. (London: Burns Oates and Washbourne, 1932–33), 2:298.

61. Sales, *Traité*, 2:22–24; Sales, *Treatise*, 1:300–302.

62. See chapter 4.

63. Lancre, *Tableau de l'inconstance*, 237–47.

64. P. J. S. Whitmore, introduction to *A Seventeenth-Century Exposure of Superstition: Selected Texts of Claude Pithoys (1587–1676)* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1972). All the references to Pithoys's treatise are to this edition.

65. Remy Pichard, *Admirable vertu des saincts exorcismes sur les princes d'enfer: Possedants réellement vertueuse demoiselles Elizabeth de Ranfaing* (Nancy, 1622).

66. Étienne Delcambre and Jean Lhermitte, *Un cas énigmatique de possession diabolique en Lorraine au XVIIe siècle: Elisabeth de Ranfaing l'énergumène de Nancy, fondatrice de l'ordre du Refuge* (Nancy: Société d'Archéologie Lorraine, 1956). Rainfaing's cult was later suppressed following a papal intervention and the Jesuits' own retreat from unsupervised forms of interiorized spirituality.

67. Damien Joseph Blaher, *The Ordinary Processes in Causes of Beatification and Canonization* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 1949), 31–52.

68. Romeo De Maio, "L'ideale eroico nei processi di canonizzazione della Controriforma," in his *Riforme e miti nella Chiesa del '500* (Naples: Guida, 1973), 265–67; Giuseppe Dalla Torre, "Santità ed economia processuale: L'esperienza guiridica da Urbano VIII a Benedetto XIV," in *Finzione e santità*, ed. Zarri, 231–63; Anne Jacobson Schutte, "Little Women, Great Heroines: Simulated and Genuine Female Holiness in Early Modern Italy,"

in *Women and Faith: Catholic Religious Life in Italy from Late Antiquity to the Present*, ed. Lucetta Scaraffia and Gabriella Zarri (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 280–81; Giulio Sodano, "Il nuovo modello di santità nell'epoca post-tridentina," in *I tempi del concilio: Religione, cultura e società nell'Europa tridentina*, ed. Cesare Mozzarelli and Danilo Zardin (Rome: Bulzoni, 1997), 189–205.

69. "De exorcizandis obessis a daemonio," in *Rituale Romanum Pauli V pontificis maximi* (1614) (Mechelen: Hanicq, 1851), 416–50; quote 417.

70. *Dictionnaire historique de la langue française*, ed. Alain Rey, 2 vols. (Paris: Le Robert, 1995) 2:2266; Luis Martinéz Kleiser, *Refranero general, ideológico español* (Madrid: Real Academia Española, 1953), 618.

71. *Cartas de algunos Padres de la Conpañia de Jesús al P. Rafael Pereyra, de Sevilla, Memorial Histórico Español* (Madrid: Imprenta Nacional, 1861), 13:49; quoted in Isabelle Poutrin, "Les stigmatisées et les clercs: Interprétation et répression d'un signe—Espagne, XVIIe siècle," in *Les signes de Dieu aux XVIe et XVIIe siècles* (Clermont-Ferrand: Université Blaise Pascal, 1993), 194; and see additional examples in Sanchez Lora, *Mujeres*, 343–57; and Linda Timmermans, *L'accès des femmes à la culture (1598–1715)* (Paris: Champion, 1993), 621–59.

72. Jean-Joseph Surin, letter to Mère Anne Buignon, January 2, 1661, in *Correspondance*, ed. Michel de Certeau (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1966), 1039.

73. Archange Ripaut, preface to *Abomination des abominations des fausses dévotions de ce tems* (Paris, 1632).

74. Ibid., 178.

75. Nicolas Malebranche, *De la recherche de la vérité* (Paris, 1675), 1:337; Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet, "Instruction sur les états d'oraison," in *Oeuvres complètes*, 31 vols. (Paris: Louis Vivès, 1862–66), 18:371.

CHAPTER SEVEN

1. Jean Gerson, letter to Barthélemy Clantier (1402), in *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. Palémon Glorieux (Paris: Desclée, 1960–73), 2:61; English translation in *Jean Gerson: Early Works*, ed. and trans. Brian McGuire (New York: Paulist Press, 1998), 208–9; see detailed discussions in the previous chapter, and in Dyan Elliott, "Seeing Double: John Gerson, the Discernment of Spirits, and Joan of Arc," *American Historical Review* 107, no. 1 (2002): 26–54; and Elliott, *Proving Woman: Female Spirituality and Inquisitional Culture in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), 264–96.

2. A letter from Madame Guyon to Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet, July 25, 1694, in Bossuet, *Correspondance*, ed. Charles Urbaine and Eugène Levesque, 15 vols. (Paris: Hachette, 1909–25), 6:367.

3. Teresa of Avila, "'Cuentas de conciencia': Relacion que hizo N. Sta. Madre Teresa de Jesus de con quien ha tratado y communicado su espiritu," in *Obras completas: Nueva revisión del texto original con notas criticas*, ed. Efrén de la Madre de Dios, 3 vols. (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1951–59), 2:515–16, 524; English ed.: "Spiritual Testimonies," testimony 58, in *The Collected Works of St. Teresa of Avila*, ed. and trans. Kieran Kavanaugh and Otilio Rodriguez, 3 vols. (Washington, DC: ICS, 1976–85), 1:418, 425.

4. Teresa of Avila, *The Constitutions*, in *Collected Works*, 3:331–32; *Constituciónes*, in *Obras completas*, 2:890 (a different version).

5. Alison Weber, "Spiritual Administration: Gender and Discernment in the Carmelite Reform," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 31, no. 1 (2000): 130–31.

6. Teresa of Avila, *Interior Castle*, 4:3, in *Collected Works*, 2:333–34; *Castillo interior*, in *Obras completas*, 2:389–90; a similar attack on inexperienced confessors at 6:8–9. For Teresa's own censuring of her mystical doctrine, see Gillian T. W. Ahlgren, *Teresa of Avila and the Politics of Sanctity* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), esp. chap. 4: "*Apología por la mística femenina*: Teresa's Theological Agenda."

7. Teresa of Avila, *Life*, 25:14, in *Collected Works*, 1:219; *Libro de la vida*, in *Obras completas*, 1:746.

8. Teresa of Avila, *Interior Castle*, 6:1, in *Collected Works*, 2:362–63; *Castillo interior*, in *Obras completas*, 2:417.

9. María de San José Salazar, *Book for the Hour of Recreation* (1585), ed. Alison Weber, trans. Amanda Powell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 38.

10. See also Alison Weber, "Saint Teresa, Demonologist," in *Culture and Control in Counter-Reformation Spain*, ed. Anne J. Cruz and Mary E. Perry (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 171–95, and her "Spiritual Administration."

11. Madeleine de Saint-Joseph, *Vie de soeur Catherine de Jésus*, ed. Jean-Baptiste Ériau, in *Une mystique du XVIIe siècle, soeur Catherine de Jésus, Carmélite (1589–1623): Sa vie et ses écrits* (Paris: Desclée, 1929), 69, 153. On Madeleine de Saint-Joseph as a spiritual director, see Madeleine de Saint-Joseph, letter 236, in *Lettres spirituelles*, ed. Pierre Sérouet (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1965); Barbara Diefendorf, *From Penitence to Charity: Pious Women and the Catholic Reformation in Paris* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 152–59.

12. The Latin *discretio* is translated both as "discretion" and "discernment" until the eighteenth century.

13. *La vie de la vénérable mère Alix le Clerc, fondatrice, première mère et religieuse de l'ordre de la congrégation de Nostre-Dame* (Nancy, 1666), 221.

14. Marguerite-Marie Alacoque, *Vie et oeuvres de la bienheureuse Marguerite-Marie Alacoque*, vol. 2, *Vie de la bienheureuse Marguerite-Marie Alacoque . . . écrit par elle-même* (Paray-le Monial: La Visitation de Paray-le Monial, 1876), 363.

15. On Acarie, see André Duval, *La vie admirable de la beinheureuse Soeur Marie de l'Incarnation, religieuse converse en l'ordre de Notre Dame du Mont Carmel et fondatrice d'iceluy en France, appellée au monde la demoiselle Acarie* (Paris, 1621); Henri Bremond, *Histoire littéraire du sentiment religieux en France depuis la fin des guerres de religion jusqu'à nos jours*, 12 vols. (Paris: Bloud et Gay, 1916–33), 2:193–262; Bruno de Jésus-Marie, *La belle Acarie, bienheureuse Marie de l'Incarnation* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1942); Barbara B. Diefendorf, "An Age of Gold? Parisian Women, the Holy League, and the Roots of Catholic Renewal," in *Changing Identities in Early Modern France*, ed. Michael Wolfe (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), 169–90; and Diefendorf, *From Penitence to Charity*, 77–118.

16. Duval, *Vie admirable*, 14.

17. Ibid., 28–29, 67, 11–12.

18. Ibid., 108–14; Barbe Acarie, *Les vrays exercises de la Bienheureuse soeur Marie de l'Incarnation composez par elle même* (Paris, 1623).

19. Duval, *Vie admirable*, 122.

20. Ibid., 163–64, 375, and additional cases, 366–71.

21. Bruno de Jésus-Marie, *Belle Acarie*, 412–12 (testimony of Duval in the beatification process); cf. Duval, *Vie admirable*, 372.

22. Duval, *Vie admirable*, 122–27; Bruno de Jésus-Marie, *Belle Acarie*, 448 (testimony of no less than Coton).

23. François de Sales, letter 1494 (end of 1618 or early 1619), in *Oeuvres complètes*, 27 vols. (Annecy: Niérat, 1892–1964), 18:324–25.

24. Duval, *Vie admirable*, 126–31. This episode played a major role in Acarie's beatification procedure. See Diefendorf, *From Penitence to Charity*, 81n12.

25. Duval, *Vie admirable*, 131, 365–66; Bruno de Jésus-Marie, *Belle Acarie*, 455.

26. Duval, *Vie admirable*, 373; Bruno de Jésus-Marie, *Belle Acarie*, 415.

27. Bruno de Jésus-Marie, *Belle Acarie*, 44–48.

28. On Chantal, see Mère Françoise-Madeleine de Chaugy, *Mémoires sur la vie et les vertus de sainte Jeanne-Françoise Frémyot de Chantal* (1642), vol. 2 of *Sainte Jeanne-Françoise Frémyot de Chantal: Sa vie et ses oeuvres* (Paris: Plon, 1873); Elisabeth Stopp, *Madame de Chantal: Portrait of a Saint* (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1963); Wendy M. Wright, *Bond of Perfection: Jeanne de Chantal and François de Sales* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1985); André Ravier, *Saint Jeanne de Chantal: Noble Lady, Holy Woman* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989); and Françoise Kermina, *Jeanne de Chantal, 1572–1641* (Paris: Perrin, 2000).

29. *Regles de Sainct Augustin et constitutions pour les soeurs religieuses de la Visitation Saincte Marie* (Lyon, 1645), 211; quoted in Barbara B. Diefendorf, "Discerning Spirits: Women and Spiritual Authority in Counter-Reformation France," in *Culture and Change: Attending to Early Modern Women*, ed. Adele Seeff and Margaret Mikesell (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2003). I thank the author for sharing her paper with me prior to publication.

30. Antonio Gómez-Moriana, "Autobiografia y discurso ritual: Problemática de la confesión autobiográfica destinada al tribunal inquisitorial," *Imprévue* 1 (1983): 107–29; Jacques Le Brun, "L'institution et le corps, lieux de la mémoire d'après les biographies spirituelles féminines du XVIIe siècle," *Corps écrit* 11 (1984): 111–21; Isabelle Poutrin, *Le voile et la plume: Autobiographie et sainteté féminine dans l'Espagne moderne* (Madrid: Casa de Velásquez, 1995); Adriano Prosperi, "Diari femminili e discernimento degli spiriti: Le mistiche della prima età moderna in Italia," in *America e apocalisse e altri saggi*, ed. Adriano Prosperi (Pisa: Istituti editoriali e poligrafici internazionali, 1999), 345–65.

31. De Chaugy, *Sainte Jeanne-Françoise Frémyot de Chantal*, 2:540.

32. Jeanne-Françoise Frémyot de Chantal, letter 490, October 3, 1622, in *Correspondance*, ed. Marie-Patricia Burns, 6 vols. (Paris: Cerf, 1986–96), 2:108–9.

33. Chantal, letter 1071, 1626, in ibid., 3:309.

34. Chantal, letter 2339, August 25, 1640, in ibid., 6:114–17. See also letter 2414, April 23, 1641, in ibid., 6:265: "For many good reasons, it is mandatory that this [a nun's supernatural behavior] be covered up."

35. Chantal, letter 1247, November 24, 1629, in ibid., 3:569.

36. See Micheline Cuénin, "Fausse et vraie mystique: Signes de reconnaissance d'après la *Correspondance* de Jeanne de Chantal," in *Les signes de Dieu aux XVIe et XVIIe siècles* (Clermont-Ferrand: Université Blaise Pascal, 1993), 177–87.

37. Chantal, letter 422, October 1621, in *Correspondance*, 1:646.

38. St. François de Sales, *Les vrays entretiens spirituels* (1628), chap. 9, in *Oeuvres complètes*, 6:139–40.

39. Sales, letter 1121, October 8, 1615, in *Oeuvres complètes*, 17:71.

40. Chantal, letter 1385, 1630 or 1631, in *Correspondance*, 4:74–75.

41. Chantal, letter 2339, August 25, 1640, in ibid., 6:116.

42. Chantal, letter 775 to Mother Jeanne-Charlotte de Bréchard, Riom, March 19, 1625, in ibid., 2:523; cf. letter 1069, 1627, in ibid., 3:308.

43. Chantal, letter 2414, April 23, 1641, in ibid., 6:265–67.

44. Chantal, letter 422, October 1621, in ibid., 1:646.

45. Chantal, letter 505, December 1622, in ibid., 2:125; cf. letter 2383, February 10, 1641, in ibid., 6:201; letter 858, November–December 1625, in ibid., 2:638.

46. Chantal, letter 1561, August 4, 1632, in ibid., 4:364–65.

47. Chantal, letter 724, October 1624, in ibid., 2:447–48; cf. letter 782, 1625, in ibid., 2:531–32.

48. Chantal, letter 2338, August 24, 1640, in ibid., 6:112.

49. Chantal, letter 1421, May 1, 1631, in ibid., 4:139.

50. On the development of Chantal's understanding of contemplation, see Wright, *Bond of Perfection*, 140–45.

51. Chantal, letter to Marie-Aimée de Blonay, October 1623, in *Correspondance*, 2:276.

52. Chantal, letter 2729, n.d., in ibid., 6:671.

53. Romeo De Maio, "L'ideale eroico nei processi di canonizzazione della Controriforma," in *Riforme e miti nella Chiesa del '500* (Naples: Guida, 1973), 257–78; Giulio Sodano, "Il nuovo modello di santità nell'epoca post-tridentina," in *I tempi del concilio: Religione, cultura e società nell'Europa tridentina*, ed. Cesare Mozzarelli and Danilo Zardin (Rome: Bulzoni, 1997), 189–205; Anne Jacobson Schutte, "Little Women, Great Heroines: Simulated and Genuine Female Holiness in Early Modern Italy," in *Women and Faith: Catholic Religious Life in Italy from Late Antiquity to the Present*, ed. Lucetta Scaraffia and Gabriella Zarri (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 144–58.

54. Chantal, letter 1247, November 24, 1629, in *Correspondance*, 3:573.

55. Chantal, letter 2348, September 1640, in ibid., 6:137; cf. letter 2383 to Françoise-Catherine Georges, Bourges, February 10, 1641, in ibid., 6:201.

56. Chantal, letter 1385, 1630 or 1631, in ibid., 4:74–75.

57. See, for example, Sales, letter 1494 (end of 1618 or early 1619) concerning Sister Marie Constance, in *Oeuvres complètes*, 18:323–27; letter 234 of October 14, 1604, in ibid., 12:352–70, in which he advises her of the beneficial remedy of sixty or at least thirty strokes of the whip; and letter 351 of June 8, 1606, 13:181–92, in which, in addition to advising Chantal, the bishop of Geneva mentions Chantal's previous consultations with another cleric.

58. Chantal, letter 1102, May 1628, in *Correspondance*, 3:352; cf. letter 1385 to Anne-Marguerite Clément, 1630 or 1631, in ibid., 4:74.

59. Chantal, letter 2819, n.d., in ibid., 6:755.

CHAPTER EIGHT

1. Jean-Joseph Surin, letter 52, May 3, 1635, in *Correspondance*, ed. Michel de Certeau (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1966), 263–64.

2. This short summary is based on Jeanne des Anges, *Soeur Jeanne des Anges, Autobiographie (1644)*, ed. Gabriel Legué and Gilles de la Tourette (Montbonnet-St. Martin, 1985); Michel de Certeau, *La Possession de Loudun* (Paris: Julliard, 1970); English ed.: *The Possession at Loudun*, trans. Michael B. Smith (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000); Robert Mandrou, *Magistrats et sorciers en France au XVIIe siècle* (Paris: Plon, 1968); and Michel Carmona, *Les diables de Loudun: Sorcellerie et politique sous Richelieu* (Paris: Fayard, 1988), and the bibliographies there. On Jeanne de Anges's discernment of spirits, see "La vie de la venerable Mère Jeanne des Anges . . . recueillie de ses propres écrits, et des mémoires des Révérends pères Suerin et Saint-Jure, jésuittes, et de ceux de nostre venerable soeur du Houx,"

2 vols., Mayenne, Archive de la Visitation; quoted in Sarah Ferber, *Demonic Possession and Exorcism in Early Modern France* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 140–44.

3. Girolamo Menghi, *Compendio dell'arte essorcistica, et possibilità delle mirabili, et stupende operationi delli demoni, et dei malefici: Con li rimedii opportuni alle infirmità maleficiali* (Bologna, 1576; repr., Genoa: Nuova Stile Regina Editorice, 1987), 150; Jean Bodin, *De la démonomanie des sorciers* (Paris, 1587), fol. 245; Jean Le Breton, *La deffense de la vérité touchants la possession des religieuses de Louviers* (Evreux, 1643); Giovanni Bona, *Traité du discernment des esprits* (Rome, 1672; repr., Paris, 1675), 221–41.

4. See, for example, *Il primo processo per San Filippo Neri*, ed. Giovanni Incisa della Rocchetta and Nello Vian, 4 vols. (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1957–63), 1:156; 2:268; 3:291, 392; Federico Borromeo, *De ecstaticis mulieribus et illusis* (Milan, 1616), 73, 141; Paolo Zacchia, *Questiones medico-legales* (1654; repr., Lyon, 1701), 158; Giovanni Battista De Luca, *Il religioso pratico dell'uno e dell'altro sesso* (Rome, 1679).

5. *Il processo per la canonizzazione di S. Nicola da Tolentino*, ed. Nicola Occhioni (Rome: École française de Rome, 1984), 136–37, 320–30; Alvarus Pelagius, *De planctu Ecclesiae* 1.2 (Venice, 1560), 87v.

6. "Vita B. Columba Reatinae," *Acta Sanctorum*, May 5. Giovanni Boccaccio, "Third Day, First Story," *The Decameron* (New York: Norton, 1982), 165–71.

7. Johannes Nider, *Formicarius* (Strasbourg, 1517), bk. 3:3, pp. 90v–91; bk. 5:2, p. 73. On Nider and early modern witchcraft, see Michael D. Bailey, "From Sorcery to Witchcraft: Clerical Conceptions of Magic in the Later Middle Ages," *Speculum* 76 (2000): 960–90; Werner Tschacher, *Der Formicarius des Johannes Nider von 1437/38: Studien zu den Anfängen der europäischen Hexenverfolgungen im Spätmittelalter* (Aachen: Shaker, 2000); Bailey, *Battling Demons: Witchcraft, Heresy, and Reform in the Late Middle Ages* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003).

8. Jehan Molinet, "La tresdure et doloreuse oppression que firent aulcuns mauvais espritz aux religieuses du Quesnoy le Conte," in *Chroniques de Jean Molinet*, ed. Georges Doutrepont, 3 vols. (Brussels: Académie royale de Belgique, 1935–37), 2:217–21; and Christiaan Massaeus [Massée], *Chronicorum* (1540), bk. 20, fol. 268; in *Corpus documentorum inquisitionis haereticae pravitatis neerlandicae*, ed. Paul Frédéricq, 5 vols. (Ghent: J. Vuylsteke, 1889–1906), 1:483–86. See also Jean Molinet, *Récollection de merveilleuses avenues en nostre temps, commencée par très elegant orateur messier George Chastelain et continuée jusques à present par maistre Jehan Molinet* (Antwerp, n.d.), not paginated.

9. *La vita del Beato Ieronimo Savonarola scritta da un anonimo de sec. XVI e già attribuita a Fra Pacifico Burlamacchi*, ed. Piero Ginori Conti (Florence: Olschki, 1937), 66–67; Giovafrancesco Pico della Mirandola, *Vita di Hieronimo Savonarola*, ed. Raffaella Castaznola (Florence: SISMEL, 1998), 86; Pasquale Villari, *La storia di Girolamo Savonarola e de' suoi tempi*, 2 vols. (Florence: Le Monnier, 1930), 2: appendix, 178, 190, 197; Domenico Di Agresti, *Sviluppi della riforma monastica Savonaroliana* (Florence: Olschki, 1980), 20–23.

10. On Lyon, see [Adrien de Montalembert], *La merveilleuse histoire de l'esprit qui depuis n'agueres c'est apparu au monastere des religieuses de Sainct-Pierre de Lyon laquelle est plaine de grand admiration; comme l'on pourra veoir par la lecture de ce present livre* (Paris, 1528). On Rome, see Barthélemy Faye [d'Espeisses], *Energumenicus* (Paris, 1571), 83–88; and Anna Foa, "Il gioco del proselitismo: Politica della conversioni e controllo della violenza nella Roma del Cinquecento," *Ebrei e cristiani nell'Italia medievale e moderna: Conversioni, scambi, contrasti. Atti del VI Congresso internazionale dell'AISG, S. Miniato, 4–6 novembre 1986*, ed. Michele Luzzati, Michele Olivari, and Alessandra Veronese (Rome: Carucci, 1988),

160–64. A case in Bologna in 1562 is mentioned in Guido Dall'Olio, "Alle origini della nuova esorcistica: I maestri bolognesi di Girolamo Menghi," in *Inquisizioni: Percorsi di ricerca*, ed. Giovanna Paolin (Trieste: Università di Trieste, 2001), 92–96. A case in Pisa in 1574 is mentioned by Andrea Cesalpino, *Daemonum investigatio peripatetica, in qua explicatur locus Hippocratis in Progn: Si quid divinum in morbis habetur* (Florence, 1580); and in Francesco de Vieri, *Intorno a'Dimonii, volgarmente chiamati spiriti* (Florence, 1576). Both consulted the archbishop of Pisa concerning a possession of three nuns in the local convent of Sant'Anna, and Cesalpino was so overwhelmed by the supernatural behavior of the nuns that he converted from being a naturalist Aristotelian to a believer in the reality of demons (164r). A case in Imola is recorded by Antonio Ferri, "Memorie cronologiche de'conventi, e confraternite dell'ordine seafico . . . nella città di Imola," Biblioteca Communate di Imola, ms. 75, fols. 18–19; reproduced in Giuliana Zanelli, *Streghe e società nell'Emilia e Romagna del Cinque-Seicento* (Ravenna: Longo, 1992), 144–45; and another case in Forlì in 1596 is mentioned on 158. Other events are mentioned briefly in Johann Weyer, *De praestigiis daemonum*; see the recent English translation in *Witches, Devils, and Doctors in the Renaissance*, trans. George Mora et al. (Binghamton, NY: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1991), 304–11; Bodin, *Démonomanie*, fols. 180–81; Pierre de Lancre, *L'incrédulité et mescréance du sortilège plainement convaincue, où il est amplement et curieusement traicté, de la vérité ou illusion du sortilège, de la fascination, de l'attouchement, du scopelisme, de la divination, de la ligature ou liaison magique, des apparitions, et d'une infinité d'autres rares et nouveaux sujects* (Paris, 1622). See also Traugott K. Oesterreich, *Possession, Demoniacal and Other: Among Primitive Races, in Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and Modern Times* (1921; repr., New Hyde Park, NY: University Books, 1966), 188–90; Rossell Hope Robbins, *Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Demonology* (New York: Crown, 1959).

11. See the primary sources below and summaries of these cases in the following secondary sources: on the possession in Louvain, see Craig Harline, *The Burdens of Sister Margaret* (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 383–89; on Aix, Louviers, Auxonne, Toulouse, and Lyon, see Mandrou, *Magistrats et sorciers*; Ferber, *Demonic Possession and Exorcism*, 63–112 (Aix and Louviers); on the Brigitines at Lille, see Alain Lottin, *Lille, citadelle de la Contre-Réforme? (1598–1668)* (Dunkirk: Weshoek, 1984), 177–81; on Verger, see Lottin, "Sorcellerie, possessions diaboliques et crise conventuelle: La 'déplorable tragédie' de l'abbaye du Verger en Artois (1613–1619)," in *Histoire des faits de la sorcellerie: Actes de la huitième Rencontre d'histoire religieuse tenue à Fontevraud les 5 et 6 octobre 1984* (Angers: Presse Universitaire d'Angers, 1985), 111–32. On the Parisian Carmelites, see Bruno de Jésus-Marie, *La belle Acarie, bienheureuse Marie de l'Incarnation* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1942), 420; On the Parisian Ursulines, see M.P.D.V. [Marie-Augustine de Pomereu], "Annales du monastère du Faubourg Saint-Jacques à Paris (1612–1662)," ms. preserved in the Ursuline convent in Quebec; summarized in Marie de Chantal Gueudré, *Histoire de l'ordre des Ursulines en France*, 2 vols. (Paris: Saint-Paul, 1957–60), 1:203–4.

The group possession among the sisters of the Visitation is mentioned in a circular letter of Saint Jeanne-Françoise Frémyot de Chantal, the founder of the order. See her letter 1247, in *Correspondance*, ed. Marie-Patricia Burns, 6 vols. (Paris: Cerf, 1986–96), 3:571. For a demonic attack on the Visitandines of rue Saint-Antoine in Paris in 1637, see Archives du monastère de la Visitation, Monastère de l'avenue Denfert-Rochereau, Paris, "Annales du monastère de la rue Saint-Antoine, 1619–1789," fols. 115–16; quoted in Marie-Ange Duvignacq-Glessgen, *L'ordre de la Visitation à Paris aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles* (Paris: Cerf, 1994), 129–30. On a mass possession in a cloistered religious orphanage in Lille in 1661, see Antoinette Bourignon, *La*

parole de Dieu; ou, La vie interieure, in *La vie de Damlle Antoinette Bourignon, écrite partie par elle-même, partie par une personne de sa connoissance*, [ed. Pierre Poiret] (Amsterdam, 1638), 83–87.

On Cologne, 1626, see letter 812 of November 20, 1626, in *Nuntiaturberichte aus Deutschland nebst ergänzenden aktenstücken: Die kölner Nuntiatur*, vol. 7, part 1, in *Nuntius Pier Luigi Carafa*, ed. Joseph Wijnhoven (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1980), 548–49. On Paderborn, see Rainer Decker, "Die Haltung der römischen Inquisition gegenüber Hexenglauben und Exorzismus as Beispiel der Teufelsaustreibungen in Paderborn 1657," in *Das Ende der Hexenverfolgung*, ed. Sönke Lorenz and Dieter R. Bauer (Stuttgart: F. Steiner Verlag, 1995), 97–115; and Decker, *Die Hexen und ihre Henker* (Freiburg: Herder, 1994), 13–60.

On a case in Madrid in 1628, see Beatriz Moncó Rebollo, *Mujer y demonio: Una pareja barroca (Treinta monjas endemoniadas en un convento)* (Madrid: Instituto de Sociología Aplicada de Madrid, 1989); and Carlos Puyol Buil, *Inquisición y política en el reinado de Felipe IV: Los procesos de Jerónimo de Villanueva y las monjas de San Plácido, 1628–1660* (Madrid: Consejo superior de investigaciones científicas, 1993). Another case in Madrid in 1652 is mentioned in Francisco de Blasco Lanuza, *Patrocinio de angeles y combata de demonios* (San Juan de la Peña, 1652). On Cagnas, see Henry Charles Lea, *A History of the Inquisition of Spain*, 4 vols. (1906–7; repr., New York: American Scholar Publications, 1966), 2:170–71; on Las Palmas, see Stephen Haliczer, *Sexuality in the Confessional: A Sacrament Profaned* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 147; on Mexico (1691), see Fernando Cervantes, *The Devil in the New World: The Impact of Diabolism in New Spain* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), 99–110; and on Peru, see Lourdes Blanco, "Poder y passión: Espíritus entretejidos," in *El monacato femenino en el imperio español: Monasterios, beaterios, recogimientos y colegios*, ed. Manuel Ramos Medina (Mexico City: Condumex, 1995), 369–80.

For the series of cases in Bergamo, see Vincenzo Lavenia, "'Tenere i malefici per cosa vera': Esorcismi e censura nell'Italia moderna," in *Dal torchio all fiamme. Inquisizione e censura: Nuovi contributi dalla più antica Biblioteca Proviniciale d'Italia*, ed. Vittoria Bonani and Matilde Romito (Salerno: Biblioteca Provinciale di Salerno, 2005), 140. On the case in Carpi in 1636–39, see Archivio di Stato di Modena, Inquisizione di Modena, busta B 108, fascicoli 1A–1B; and Vincenzo Lavenia, "I diavoli di Carpi e il Sant'Uffizio (1636–1639)," in *Eretici, esuli e indemoniati nell'età moderna*, ed. Mario Rosa (Florence: Olschki, 1998), 77–139, and see 79nn13–14 for other cases in Reggio Emilia and Piacenza (both in 1625); compare Mario Rosa, "'Cauda tu seras pendu': Lotta politica ed esorcismo nel piemonte de Vittorio Amedeo I (1634)," *Studi storici* 37 (1996): 541n2. On a possession of ten nuns in Celenza (Foggia, near Naples) in 1627, see Pietro Piperno, *De magicis affectibus horum dignotione, praenotione, curatione, medica, stratagemmatica, divina, plerisque curationibus electis* (Naples, 1634), 58, 97–99. On Turin, see Maurice Argrand, *La vie de Monseigneur D. Juste Guêrin, religieux barnabite, évêque et prince de Genève* (Annecy, 1678), 45–47.

12. Anne Jacobson Schutte, *Aspiring Saints: Pretense of Holiness, Inquisition, and Gender in the Republic of Venice, 1618–1750* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2001), 106–10; Oswald Loschert, *Vorgänginer Versuch zu Erwürkung eines Vertrags zwishen den im bisherigen Hexery-Krieg verwickelten Gelehrten . . .* ([Bamberg], 1767); Eduard Kohl, *Maria Renata Singer von Mossau: Die Geschichte einer Zeller Ordensschwester, die als letzte fränkische Hexe verbrannt wurde* (Zell am Main: n.p., 1999); Pedro de Horta, *Informe médico-moral de la penosissima y rigorosa enfermedad de la epilepsia, que a pedimento de la M.R.M. Alexandra Beatriz de los Dolores* (Madrid, 1763), 2; Luiz Mott, *Rosa Egipcíaca: Uma Santa Africana no Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: Bertrand Brasil, 1993).

13. Weyer, *Witches, Devils, and Doctors*, 306.

14. Certeau further elaborated this point in *The Mystic Fable: The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992). On Certeau's approach to early modern mysticism, see Luce Giard, ed., *Le voyage mystique: Michel de Certeau* (Paris: Cerf, 1988); and Jeremy Ahearne, *Michel de Certeau: Interpretation and Its Other* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995).

15. "¡Somos mujeres! Pregunto: ¿Cómo seremos oídas?" in her "The Instruction of Novices" (1602); quoted in *Untold Sisters: Hispanic Nuns in Their Own Works*, ed. Electa Arenal and Stacey Schlau (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1989), 45.

16. Nancy Caciola, *Discerning Spirits: Divine and Demonic Possession in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003); Nancy Caciola and Moshe Sluhovsky, "Spiritual Physiologies: The Discernment of Spirits in Medieval and Early Modern Europe," in *Miracles as Epistemic Things*, ed. Fernando Vidal (forthcoming); and see examples in Scipione Mercurio, *Degli errori popolari d'Italia* (Venice, 1599; I have used the Padua, 1654, edition), 101v–2r; and Martín Del Rio, *Disquisitiones magicae* (Louvain, 1599–1600), bk. 2, q. 30, sec. 3; and the many additional examples in chapter 3.

17. Diderot's *La religieuse* (written 1780; first published 1796) and Jules Michelet's *La sorcière* (1862) are the two most (in)famous fictional invocations of this alleged conventual ennui.

18. Recent scholarship on this topic is immense and growing. See Ari Kiev, *Faith and Healing: Primitive Psychiatry Today* (New York: Free Press, 1964); Kiev, *Transcultural Psychiatry* (New York: Free Press, 1973); Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "The Hysterical Woman: Sex Roles and Role Conflict in 19th Century America," *Social Research* 39 (1972): 652–77; Alan Krohn, *Hysteria: The Elusive Neurosis* (New York: International Universities Press, 1978); Gérard Wajcman, *Le maître et l'hystérique* (Paris: Navarin, 1982); Elaine Showalter, *The Female Malady: Women, Madness, and English Culture, 1830–1980* (New York: Pantheon, 1985); Charles K. Bernheimer and Claire Kahane, eds., *In Dora's Case: Freud—Hysteria—Feminism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985); Jan E. Goldstein, *Console and Classify: The French Psychiatric Profession in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); Yannick Ripa, *Women and Madness: The Incarceration of Women in Nineteenth Century France* (Cambridge: Polity, 1990); Sander L. Gilman et al., *Hysteria Beyond Freud* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Mark S. Micale, *Approaching Hysteria: Disease and Its Interpretations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995); Elisabeth Bronfen, *The Knotted Subject: Hysteria and Its Discontents* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998); Ann Goldberg, *Sex, Religion, and the Making of Modern Madness: The Eberbach Asylum and German Society, 1815–1849* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); and Juliet Mitchell, *Mad Men and Medusas: Reclaiming Hysteria* (New York: Basic, 2000).

19. Jo Ann Kay McNamara, *Sisters in Arms: Catholic Nuns through Two Millennia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996); Arenal and Schlau, *Untold Sisters*; Jeffrey F. Hamburger, *Nuns as Artists: The Visual Culture of a Medieval Convent* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Hamburger, *The Visual and the Visionary: Art and Female Spirituality in Late Medieval Germany* (New York: Zone Books, 1998); Paul Vandenbroeck et al., *Le jardin clos de l'âme: L'imaginaire des religieuses dans les Pays-Bas du Sud, depuis le 13e siècle* (Brussels: Martial et Snoeck, 1994); Elisa Sampson Vera Tudela, *Colonial Angels: Narratives of Gender and Spirituality in Mexico, 1580–1750* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000); Gabriella Zarri, "Le istituzioni dell'educazione femminile," in *Recinti: Donne, clausura e matrimonio nella prima età moderna* (Bologna: Mulino, 2000), 145–200;

Charlotte Woodford, *Nuns as Historians in Early Modern Germany* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2002).

20. On the reforms, see Johannes Meyer, *Buch der Reformacio Predigerordens*, ed. Benedictus Maria Reichert (Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1909; *Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte des Dominikanerordens in Deutschland*, vol. 3), 65–68; Theodor von Kern, ed., "Die Reformation des Katharinenklosters zu Nürnberg im Jahre 1428," *Jahresbericht des historischen Vereins in Mittelfranken* 31 (1863): 1–20; Johannes Kist, "Klosterreform im spätmittelalterlichen Nürnberg," *Zeitschrift für bayerische Kirchengeschichte* 32 (1963): 31–45; and Werner Williams-Krapp, "'Dise ding sint dennoch nit ware zeichen der heiligkeit': Zur Bewertung mystischer Erfahrungen im 15. Jahrhundert," in *Frömmigkeitsstile im Mittelalter*, ed. Wolfgang Haubrichs (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990), 61–71.

21. Nider, *Formicarius*, 3:3, pp. 90v–91. Nider, as we have seen, was convinced that the devil has a special delight in attacking religious people, especially members of mendicant orders. Ibid., 1:10, p. 15. Later in life he also wrote a short treatise on the difficulties of reforming religious orders and on Satan's resistance to such changes. See his *Tractatus de Reformatione status coenobitici* (c. 1431).

22. My description of the events is based on the *Cronaca di San Marco*, Biblioteca Mediceo-Laurenziana, ms. 370, as reproduced in Di Agresti, *Sviluppi della riforma*, 199–200, and on *Stratto del libro intitolato cronaca del Monastero e Monache di S. Lucia*, quoted in Lorenzo Polizzotto, "When Saints Fall Out: Women and the Savonarolan Reform in Early Sixteenth-Century Florence," *Renaissance Quarterly* 46, no. 3 (1993): 509; see also Júlia Benavent, "Las reliquias de Fra Girolamo Savonarola," in *Frate Girolamo Savonarola e il suo movimento* (Pistoia: Provincia Romana dei Frati predicatori, 1998), 166–67.

23. Weyer, *Witches, Devils, and Doctors*, 304–6.

24. Alexis de Norguet, "Anne du Bois, fondatrice des Brigittines de Lille," *Bulletin de la Commission historique du Nord* 10 (1868): 193–292; J[ean] Le Normant [de Chiremont], ed., *Histoire véritable et mémorable de ce qui s'est passé sous l'exorcismes de trois filles possedées es pays de Flandre, en la découverte et confession de Marie de Sains, soi-disant princesse de la magie, et Simone Dourlet, complice, et autres* (Paris, 1623), 5–7.

25. Esprit du Bosroger, *La piété affligée; ou, Discours historique et théologique de la possession des religieuses dittes de Sainte-Elisabeth de Louviers* (Rouen, 1652), 42–49, quote on 48. See also [Pierre Yvelin], *Examen de la possession des religieuses de Louviers* (Paris, 1643); *Récit véritable de ce qui s'est fait et passé à Louviers, touchant les religieuses possédées* (Paris, 1643).

26. Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, Paris, ms. 2890, fols. 42–48: [Pierre Yvelin], "Lettre d'un médecin anonyme à M. Philibert de la Marre" (1647), reproduced in *Possession et sorcellerie au XVIIe siècle*, ed. Robert Mandrou (Paris: Fayard, 1979), 209.

27. On the process of enclosure in early modern Europe, see Raimondo Creytens, "La riforma dei monasteri femminili dopo i Decreti Tridentini," in *Il Concilio di Trento e la riforma tridentina: Atti des Convegno Internazionale, Trento 2–6 settembre 1963*, 2 vols. (Rome: Herder, 1965), 1:45–84.

28. Linda Lierheimer, "Female Eloquence and Maternal Ministry: The Apostolate of Ursuline Nuns in Seventeenth-Century France" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1994), 36–38, 70–84, 94–101. On the tradition of the two sisters, see Michel Lauwers, "Noli me tangere: Marie-Madeleine, Marie d'Oignies et les pénitentes du XIIIe siècle," *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome, Moyen Âge* 104 (1992): 209–68; Giles Constable, "The Interpretation of Mary and Martha," in *Three Studies in Medieval Religious and Social Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 1–141.

29. For a recent discussion of the Ursulines' navigation between enclosure and activism, see Anne Conrad, *Zwischen Kloster und Welt: Ursulinen und Jesuitinnen in der katholischen Reformbewegung des 16./17./ Jahrhunderts* (Mainz: Philipp von Zabern, 1991).

30. Jeanne des Anges, *Autobiographie*, 55.

31. Jules Michelet, *Satanism and Witchcraft: A Study in Medieval Superstition* (New York: Citadel, 1939), 171.

32. Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Inquisición (A.H.N. Inq), leg. 3692, caja 2, fols. 597r–98r; caja 1, 795v; reprinted in part in *Cárceles y mujeres en el siglo XVII*, ed. Isabel Barbeito (Madrid: Castalia, 1991), 169–70.

33. Archivio di Stato di Modena, Inquisizione di Modena, busta B, 108, fascicolo 1A, 21–30; Lavenia, "Diavoli di Carpi," 81–83.

34. Frédéricq, *Corpus documentorum inquisitionis*, 484.

35. Sébastien Michaëlis, *Histoire admirable de la possession et conversion d'une pénitente, séduite par un magicien, la faisant sorcière et princesse des sorciers au pays de Provence, conduite à la Saincte Baume pour y estre exorcizée l'an 1610*, 2 vols. in 1 (Paris, 1614), 2:43, 61–62.

36. Bosroger, *Piété affligée*, 43.

37. Quoted in Alison Weber, "Saint Teresa, Demonologist," in *Culture and Control in Counter-Reformation Spain*, ed. Anne J. Cruz and Mary E. Perry (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1991), 184.

38. Surin, letter 48, March 14, 1635, *Correspondance*, 253–56: "L'un des diables que j'éxorcise est ennemi particulier des Carmélites et travaille contre elles tant qu'il peut"; quote 255.

39. M.P.D.V. [Mme. Marie-Augustine de Pomereu], *Les chroniques de l'ordre des Ursulines, recueillies pour l'usage des religieuses du même ordre*, 3 vols. (Paris, 1673), 1:40, 247.

40. Bibliothèque nationale de France (B.N.F.), ms. fr. 18696, fol. 130.

41. Le Normant, *Histoire véritable*, 3.

42. A.H.N. Inq. leg. 3692, caja 1, 70r; Puyol Buil, *Inquisición y política*, 145–51.

43. Carlo Marcora, ed., "Lettere del Card. Federico Borromeo alle claustrali," *Memorie storiche della diocesi di Milano* 11 (1964): 177–432. See, among others, letters 2, 5, 7, 17–23, 122, 126; Agostino Saba, *Federico Borromeo e i mistici del suo tempo (con la vita e la corrispondenza inedita di Caterina Vannini da Siena)* (Florence: Olaschki, 1933).

44. Borromeo, *De ecstaticis mulieribus*, esp. 30, 50, 70–72, 141; Agustín de Vetancurt, *Menologio Mexicano* (México: Pottúa, 1871), 130; quoted in Asunción Lavrin, "Espiritualidad en el claustro novohispano del siglo XVII," *Colonial Latin American Review* 4 (1995): 168. See also Cervantes, *The Devil in the New World*, 100–107. And see chapter 4 above.

45. See, for examples, Verrine's sermons, during the exorcisms in Aix, in praise of the Virgin Mary and Mary Magdalene in Michaëlis, *Histoire admirable*, 2:5–9, and the demon's exaltation of the Virgin during the exorcisms in Louviers, in Bosroger, *Piété affligée*, 116–19, 302.

46. Lavenia, "Diavoli di Carpi," 80–83; Puyol Buil, *Inquisición y política*, 62–65.

47. B.N.F. ms. fr. 23852, testimony of Catherine de France, 69, and investigation of Madeleine de la Palud, 305.

48. For additional French examples, see Geneviève Reynes, *Couvents de femmes: La vie des religieuses cloîtrées dans la France des XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles* (Paris: Fayard, 1987), 183–84, 201–5; for Flemish examples, see Alexandre Pasture, *La restauration religieuse aux Pays-Bas catholiques sous les archiducs Albert et Isabelle (1596–1633)* (Louvain: Librarie Universitaire, 1925), 277.

49. Lancre, *L'incrédulité et mescréance*, 422.

50. Weyer, *Witches, Devils, and Doctors*, 307–9; Bodin, *Démonomanie*, 180v.

51. Yvelin, *Examen de la possession des religieuses de Louviers*, 13; see also the detailed prosopographical study of the nuns of Louviers in Daniel Vidal, *Critique de la raison mystique: Benoît de Canfield, possession et dépossession au XVIIe siècle* (Grenoble: Gérôme Millon, 1990), 351–61.

52. Puyol Buil, *Inquisición y política*, 63–64.

53. Romeo De Maio, "L'ideale eroico nei processi di canonizzazione della Controriforma," in *Riforme e miti nella Chiesa del '500* (Naples: Guida, 1973), 257–78; Giuseppe Dalla Torre, "Santità ed economia processuale: L'esperienza guiridica da Urbano VIII a Benedetto XIV," in *Finzione e santità tra medioevo ed età moderna*, ed. Gabriella Zarri (Turin: Rosenberg & Sellier, 1991), 231–63; Anne Jacobson Schutte, "Little Women, Great Heroines: Simulated and Genuine Female Holiness in Early Modern Italy," in *Women and Faith: Catholic Religious Life in Italy from Late Antiquity to the Present*, ed. Lucetta Scaraffia and Gabriella Zarri (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 144–58; Giulio Sodano, "Il nuovo modello di santità nell'epoca post-tridentina," in *I tempi del concilio: Religione, cultura e società nell'Europa tridentina*, ed. Cesare Mozzarelli and Danilo Zardin (Rome: Bulzoni, 1997), 189–205.

54. Recalled by his student Sigmund Freud, "On the History of the Psycho-Analytical Movement," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works*, ed. James Strachey, 24 vols. (London: Hogarth Press, 1957), 14:14.

55. Especially important is Charcot's *Les démoniaques dans l'art* (Paris: Delahaye et Lecrosnier, 1887), where the comparison between energumens and hysterical patients at the Saltpêtrière, Charcot's clinic, is developed. On the genital sensuality of early modern possession and exorcism, see Giovanni Romeo, *Esorcisti, confessori e sessualità femminile nell'Italia della Controriforma* (Florence: La Lettere, 1998); and see chapter 2 above.

56. Jean Gerson, "De distinctione verarum visionum a falsis," translated in Paschal Boland, *The Concept of Discretio Spirituum in John Gerson's "De Probatione Spirituum" and "De Distinctione Verarum Visionum a Falsis"* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 1959), 81, 75.

57. Jean Henry, *Le livre d'instruction pour religieuses novices et professes, fait et compose par scientifique personne masitre Jehan Henry, President des enquestes a Paris, Chantre & Chanoine de Nostre Dame* (Paris, 1516), E iii.

58. B.N.F. ms. fr. 12801: *Relation de tout ce que j'ay vue à Loudun en neuf jours que j'ay visité les possédées*; and a letter from Naudé to Guy Patin, who quotes Quillet; quoted in René Pintard, *Le libertinage érudite dans la première moitié du XVIIe siècle* (Geneva: Slatkine, 1983), 222.

59. Yvelin, "Lettre d'un Médecin," 210; compare Yvelin, *Apologie pour l'auteur de l'examen de la possession des religieuses de Louviers, à Messieurs l'Emperière et Magnart, Médecins à Rouen* (Paris, 1643), 17. Yvelin, the queen mother's physician and a specialist in female illnesses, explained that possession results from the accumulation of unused melancholic humor in the vagina, which vaporizes throughout the body. This condition is especially common among young unmarried women; Guy Patin, *Lettres*, November 17, 1643; quoted in Mandrou, *Magistrats et sorciers*, 291.

60. Jean Benedicti, *La triomphante victoire de la vierge Marie sur sept malins esprits finalement chasses du corps d'une femme, dans l'Eglise des Cordeliers de Lyon* (Lyon, 1611), 33; Bodin, *Démonomanie*, 82r; compare 15v, 24r; J. Lough and D. E. L. Crane, "Thomas Killigrew and

the Possessed Nuns of Loudun: The Text of a Letter of 1635," *Durham University Journal* 78 (1985–86): 265; Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan, G 29 inf. fol. 524v.

See also Domenico Gravina's warning against nuns' *fluxus geniturae* in his *Ad discrenendas vesas a falsis visionibus et revelationibus* (Naples, 1638), vol. 2, part 2, bk. 1, chap. 2, p. 19. The entire second volume of this long work deals with discernment of spirits and the theological, sexual, and humoral causes that make women's revelations and visions unreliable and likely to be demonic. And see chapter 1 above, p. 27, for French physician Ambroise Paré's similar observation.

61. All of these cases are recorded by Weyer, *Witches, Devil, and Doctors*, 306–11, and reproduced with some variations in Bodin, *Démonomanie*, 180–81.

62. B.N.F. ms. fr. 23852, p. 118; cf. 21–22, 53, 73; Michaëlis, *Histoire admirable*, 1:74–75.

63. Archives générales du royaume, Brussles, Conseil privé espagnol, 1098; Quoted in Lottin, "Sorcellerie, possessions diaboliques et crise conventuelle," 115.

64. Jeanne des Anges, *Autobiographie*, 68–69; cf. B.N.F. ms. fr. 24163, "Extrait des preuves qui sont au proces de Grandier."

65. Bosroger, *Piété affligée*, 140–44.

66. Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, mss. 2833, 5416.

67. B.N.F. ms. fr. 23852, 8–9; ms. fr. n.a. 6764, 7–8, 92–96v; deposition of Michel Soumain: ms. fr. 12801; *La démonomanie de Loudun, qui montre la véritable possession des religieuses ursulines et autres séculières, avec la liste des religieuses et séculières possédées* (La Flèche, 1634). A woman in the Lorraine encountered a demon with the transparent and intriguing name "pensée de femme"! Robin Briggs, *Witches and Neighbors: The Social and Cultural Context of European Witchcraft* (New York: Viking, 1996), 27.

68. B.N.F. ms. fr. 18696, fols. 150–52.

69. Mère Jacqueline Bouëtte de Blémur, *Eloges de plusieurs personnes illustres en piété de l'Ordre de Saint Benoît*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1679), 1:355–56.

70. Jean Maillard, *La vie de la Mère Marie Bon de l'Incarnation* (Paris, 1686), 152–54.

71. Francisca Josefa Castillo y Guevara, *Obras completas*, ed. Darío Achury Valenzuela (Bogotá: Banco de la República, 1968), I: *Su vida*, 147, 150–51, 205; quoted in Kristine Ibsen, *Spiritual Autobiography in Colonial Spanish America* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1999), 76; Blanco, "Poder y passión," 371–72.

72. Francisco Pons Fuster, *Místicos, beatas y alumbrados: Ribera y la espiritualidad valenciana del S. XVII* (Valencia: Alfons el Magnànim, 1991), 182–86. See also Richard Trexler, "Gendering Jesus Christ," in *Iconography at the Crossroads: Papers from the Colloquium Sponsored by the Index of Christian Art, Princeton University, 23–24 March 1990*, ed. Brendan Cassidy (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 1–13; Asunción Lavrin, "La vida feminina como experiencia religiosa: Biografía y hagiografía colonial," *Colonial Latin American Review* 2 (1993): 37–41.

73. On alternative systems of dream analysis, see John J. Winkler's superb chapter on Artemidorus's dream book in *The Constraints of Desire: The Anthropology of Sex and Gender in Ancient Greece* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 17–44.

74. Caroline W. Bynum, "The Body of Christ in the Later Middle Ages: A Reply to Leo Steinberg," in *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion* (New York: Zone, 1992), 79–117; Bynum, "Why All the Fuss about the Body? A Medievalist's Perspective," *Critical Inquiry* 22 (1995): 1–33.

75. Compare Teresa of Avila, *Life*, in *The Collected Works of St. Teresa of Avila*, ed. and trans. Kieran Kavanaugh and Otilio Rodriguez, 3 vols. (Washington, DC: ICS, 1976–85), vol. 1, 28:4.

76. Contemporaries were already aware of the danger of sexual arousal as a result of discipline. Revelations are especially common among nuns, explained the abbé Jacques Boileau, because they take their vows when they are still very young, "at a time when their passions are most disposed to be inflamed, and when an object of love may be looked upon as one of the necessaries of life, this, together with the circumstance of their close confinement, induces a number of them to contract a real and direct love for the person of Jesus Christ, whose picture they see placed almost in every corner, who is, besides, expressly called their Husband, whose Spouses they are said to be." Jacques Boileau, *The History of the Flagellants; Otherwise of Religious Flagellations among different Nations, and especially among Christians* (London, 1731), 107–8.

77. Here I am echoing Mary Jacobus's observation that "women's access to discourse involves submission to phallocentricity, to the masculine and the symbolic; refusal, on the other hand, risks re-inscribing the feminine as a yet more marginal madness or nonsense." *Reading Woman: Essays in Feminist Criticism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 29. Cf. Julia Kristeva, "Oscillation between Power and Denial," in *New French Feminism*, ed. Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron (New York: Schocken, 1981), 165–67. While I disagree with Jacobus's and Kristeva's generalizations, exorcism, when it was performed (as was usually the case) by a man of power on the body of a powerless woman, seems to be a setting in which the sexual and linguistic dynamics indeed overlap.

78. The duality grace/nature is mentioned by Jean Delumeau, *Un chemin d'histoire: Chrétienté et christianisation* (Paris: Fayard, 1981), 220–24, and his use of these abstractions follows early modern usages.

79. On the rhetorical devices and the character of spiritual autobiographies, see Kate Greenspan, "The Autohagiographical Tradition in Medieval Women's Devotional Literature," *Auto/biography* 6, no. 2 (1991): 157–68; Jacques Le Brun, "Les biographies spirituelles françaises du XVIIème siècle: Écriture féminine? Écriture mystique?" in *Esperienza religiosa e scritture femminili tra medioevo ed età moderna*, ed. Marilena Modica Vasta (Palermo: Bonnano, 1992), 135–51, who raises the possibility that such biographies were written by the nuns' confessors rather than by the nuns themselves; and Isabelle Poutrin, *Le voile et la plume: Autobiographie et sainteté féminine dans l'Espagne moderne* (Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 1995). See also Anne Jacobson Schutte, introduction to her edition of Cecilia Ferrazzi, *Autobiography of an Aspiring Nun* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 12; and Ibsen, *Spiritual Autobiography in Colonial Spanish America*, 10–32.

80. *Coutumier et Directoire pour les soeurs religieuses de la Visitation Sainte-Marie* (Paris, 1637), 84.

81. Bosroger, *Piété affligée*, 776, 147 (Angel of Light), 149, 169–72, 126–211.

82. Teresa of Avila, *Life*, 23:3; Kavanaugh ed., p. 152; and 28:14 (p. 187).

83. Ibid., 29:7 (p. 191); 30:9 (p. 198), 31:1 (p. 203); 32:9 (p. 216). Such doubts were typical. Among numerous other examples, see Chantal, *Correspondance*, 4:186; 5:568, 574–79, 634–35, 793–94; Richard L. Kagan, *Lucrecia's Dreams: Politics and Prophecy in Sixteenth-Century Spain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990); Jodi Bilinkoff, "Charisma and Controversy: The Case of María de Santo Domingo," in *Spanish Women in the Golden Age: Images*

and Realities, ed. Magdalena S. Sánchez and Alain Saint-Saens (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1996), 23–35; Alison Weber, "Between Ecstasy and Exorcism: Religious Negotiation in Sixteenth-Century Spain," *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 23 (1993): 221–34; and Anne Scattigno, "Maria Maddalena de'Pazzi. Tra esperienza e modello," in *Donna, disciplina, creanza christiana dal XV al XVII secolo: Studi e testi stampa*, ed. Gabriella Zarri (Rome: Storia e Letteratura, 1996), 97–98.

84. Harline, *Burdens of Sister Margaret*, xiii.

85. Martha Elisabeth Zitter, "Basic Reasons which have induced the Maiden Martha Elisabeth Zitter to Leave the French or White-Ladies Convent of the Ursuline order in Erfurt and to profess the true Evangelical Religion," in *Convents Confront the Reformation: Catholic and Protestant Nuns in Germany*, ed. Merry Wiesner-Hanks (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1996), 91.

86. Gueudré, *Histoire de l'ordre des Ursulines de France*, 1:184–87, 237–38; Francesca Medioli, ed., *L'"Inferno monacale" di Arcangela Tarabotti* (Turin: Rosenberg & Sellier, 1990).

87. Jeanne des Anges, *Autobiographie*, 58–59, 86–88; Teresa of Avila, *Life*, 28:12 (p. 243); "Spiritual Testimonies," no. 2, 1:381–82; María de San José Salazar, *Book for the Hour of Recreation* (1585), ed. Alison Weber, trans. Amanda Powell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 46–52. On the hostility to María de San José, see Gillian T. W. Ahlgren, *Teresa of Avila and the Politics of Sanctity* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 53–58. See additional cases in Poutrin, *Le voile et la plume*, 159–67.

88. Ana de San Bartolomé, "Autobiography," in Arenal and Schlau, *Untold Sisters*, 63. Similar episodes are recorded in the plays and biographies authored by Abbess Marcela de San Félix (1605–1687), daughter of the great Spanish dramatist Lope de Vega and a Reformed Carmelite. Arenal and Schlau, *Untold Sisters*, 235–39, 277.

89. Bosroger, *Piété affligée*, 80, 137, 144–45, 157–65.

90. Castillo y Guevara, *Su vida*, 30; quoted in Ibsen, *Spiritual Autobiography in Colonial Spanish America*, 72.

91. Harline, *Burdens of Sister Margaret*, 21–23, 99–122, 221–32.

92. Yvelin, "Lettre d'un médecin," 210.

93. B.N.F. ms. fr. 18695, fols. 3–4, and the very detailed testimonies of the Ursuline sisters during their investigations, fols. 37–88; ms. fr. 18696, fols. 135–36, 147–54.

94. Diego Pérez de Valdivia, *Aviso de gente recogida* (Barcelona, 1585; repr., Madrid: Universidad Pontífica de Salamanca y Fundación Universitaria Española, 1977), 334.

95. Cardinal Desiderio Scaglia, "Practtica per procedere nelle cause del S. Offizio," quoted in Schutte, *Aspiring Saints*, 68; Giorgio Polacco, *Breve raccontamento di quanto gli è occorso nel corso di trenta sei anni continui mentre è stato confessor delle venerande monache di S. Lucia de Venezia* (Venice, 1643), 30–31.

96. B.N.F. ms. fr. 23852, testimony of Catherine de France, pp. 66–69, 73. Cf. Michaëlis, *Histoire admirable*, 2:9.

97. Teresa of Avila, *Life*, 33:5 (p. 286); cf. 31:2 (p. 264).

98. Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Sant'Uffizio, b. 38: "Contra sororem Mansuetam"; reprinted in Giovanna Paolin, *Lo spazio del silenzio: Monacazioni forzate, clausura e proposte di vita religiosa femminile nell'età moderna* (Pordenone: Biblioteca dell'Immagine, 1996), 171. For another analysis of this case, see Marisa Milani, "L'ossessione secolare di sour Mansueta: Un esorcismo a Venezia nel 1574," *Quaderni veneti* 7 (1988): 133. See also Adriano Prosperi, "Diari femminili e discernimento degli spiriti: Le mistiche della prima età moderna in Italia,"

in *America e apocalisse e altri saggi*, ed. Adriano Prosperi (Pisa: Istituti editoriali e poligrafici internazionali, 1999), 356–57.

99. Albano Biondi, "L'inordinata devozione' nella *Prattica* del Cardinale Scaglia (ca. 1635)," in *Finzione e santità*, ed. Zarri, 317–18; Jean Passavant, *La vie de la Révérande Mère Madeleine Gautron, prieure du monastère de la Fidélité de Saumur* (Saumur, 1690).

100. Lough and Crane, "Thomas Killigrew and the Possessed Nuns of Loudun," 265: "The Priest then gave one boute more for my sake"; "Relation de M. Hédelin, abbé d'Aubignac, touchant les possédées de Loudun au mois de septembre 1637," in *Possession et sorcellerie au XVIIe siècle*, ed. Mandrou, 180.

101. Jeanne des Anges, *Autobiographie*, 228.

102. Paolo Prodi, "Riforma interiore e disciplinamento sociale in San Carlo Borromeo," *Intersezioni* 5, no. 2 (1985): 273–95, 372–85.

103. Teresa of Avila, *The Foundations*, chap. 14; Kavanaugh ed., 3:168.

104. Teresa of Avila, *Interior Castle*, bk. 4:3; Kavanaugh ed., 2:328–29. See above, p. 212.

105. McNamara, *Sisters in Arms*, 331.

106. Teresa of Avila, *The Foundations*, chap. 7; I have used Edgar Allison Peers's translation in *The Complete Works of Saint Teresa of Jesus*, 3 vols. (London: Sheed and Ward, 1944–46), 3:38; and see José López Ibor, "Ideas de Santa Teresa sobre la melancholía," *Revista de espiritualidad* 22 (1963): 423–33.

107. Pérez de Valdivia, *Aviso de gente recogida*, 334.

108. Teresa of Avila, *Life*, 12:7 (p. 122).

109. "El tratado de Milagros en el códice de Valencia," in Júlia Adela Benavent, "El Códice de Valencia y la tradición manuscrita," *Memorie domenicane* 27 (1997): 117–18.

110. Gérard de Frachet, *Vitae fratrum ordinis praedicatorum*, ed. Benedictus Maria Reichert, vol. 1 of *Monumenta ordinis fratrum praedicatorum historica* (Louvain: Charpentier, 1896), bk. 1, chap. 7, pp. 58–59; and see Pedro de Valder[r]ama, *Histoire générale du monde et de la nature; ou, Traictez théologiques de la fabrique, composition, et conduicte générale de l'universe*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1619), 1:329–31.

111. Nider, *Formicarius*, bk. 1:10, fols. 15r–16r; See also a case of possession of a novice in the Oratory in Naples in 1696, in Antonio Fienga, *Satana in convento: Curiosa narrazione di diabolici eventi occorsi a Napoli nella Casa dei PP. Oratoriani* (Naples: Franco Di Mauro, 1992).

112. Biblioteca Communale di Polizzi Generosa, ms. 123: "Caso memorabile accaduto nel convento de' RR.PP. Cappuccini della Città di Caltanissetta," in Salvatore Mazzarella, *Diavoli a Caltanissetta: Il 'caso memorabile' del 1671* (Caltanissetta and Rome: S. Sciascia, 1990), 143–64.

113. Jean de Mailly, *Abrégé des gestes et miracles des Saints*; quoted in Nancy Caciola, "Mystics, Demoniacs, and the Physiology of Spirit Possession in Medieval Europe," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 42, no. 2 (2000): 290. Caciola points out, though, that gender was only one context here, and that sanctity/sinfulness was an additional binary opposition that was expressed in this anecdote.

114. "Caso memorabile," 143–45.

115. Ibid., 144, 151–53, 156–62.

CHAPTER NINE

1. Claire Guilhem, "L'Inquisition et la dévaluation des discours féminins," in *L'Inquisition espagnole: XVe–XVIe siècle*, ed. Bartolomé Bennassar (Paris: Hachette, 1979), 197–239;

Gianvittorio Signorotto, *Inquisitori e mistici nel Seicento italiano: L'eresia di Santa Pelagia* (Bologna: Mulino, 1989), 279–303; Linda Timmermans, *L'accès des femmes à la culture (1598–1715)* (Paris: Champion, 1993), 621, 632–39.

2. There is a growing body of literature on these topics. See, for example, "Direction spirituelle," *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, 16 vols. (Paris: Beauchesne, 1937–94), 3: cols. 1002–214; Iréné Noye, "Notes pour une histoire de la direction spirituelle," *Supplément de la Vie spirituelle* 34 (1955): 251–76; Carlo Marcora, ed., "Lettere del Card. Federico Borromeo alle claustrali," *Memorie storiche della diocese di Milano* 11 (1964):177–432; Gabriella Zarri, "Il carteggio tra Don Leone Bartolini e un gruppo di gentidonne bolognesi negli anni del Concilio di Trento (1545–1563)," *Archivio Italiano per la storia della pietà* 7 (1976): 337–551; Romeo De Maio, *Donne e Rinascimento* (Milan: Il Saggiatore, 1987), 167–72; Jacques Le Brun, "Les biographies spirituelles françaises du XVIIème siècle: Écriture féminine? Écriture mystique?" in *Esperienza religiosa e scritture femminili tra medioevo ed età moderna*, ed. Marilena Modica Vasta (Palermo: Bonnano, 1992), 135–51; Pierre Gervais, "Ignace de Loyola et la confession générale," *Communio* 8 (1983): 69–83; John W. O'Malley, *The First Jesuits* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 136–44; Paolo Prodi, ed., *Disciplina dell'anima, disciplina del corpo e disciplina della società tra medioevo ed età moderna* (Bologna: Il Molino, 1994); Isabel Poutrin, *Le voile et la plume: Autobiographie et sainteté féminine dans l'Espagne moderne* (Madrid: Casa de Velásquez, 1995); Adriano Prosperi, *Tribunali della coscienza: Inquisitori, confessori, missionari* (Turin: Einaudi, 1996), 485–507; Michael Maher, "Confession and Consolation: The Society of Jesus and Its Promotion of the General Confession," in *Penitence in the Age of Reformations*, ed. Katharine Jackson Lualdi and Anne T. Thayer (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2000), 184–200; Jodi Bilinkoff, *Related Lives: Confessors and Their Female Penitents, 1460–1750* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005).

3. Adriano Prosperi, "Diari femminili e discernimento degli spiriti: Le mistiche della prima età moderna in Italia," in *America e apocalisse e altri saggi*, ed. Adriano Prosperi (Pisa: Istituti editoriali e poligrafici internazionali, 1999), 356–65.

4. *New York Times*, Friday, February 18, 2005, A7.

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