

PREFACE

In Plato's *The Symposium*, Eryximachus says, echoing the previous speaker at Agathon's party, Pausanias, that there is not one kind of 'love' but two; and he chooses to talk about them from the perspective of medicine. His argument is that healthy bodies and diseased bodies are dissimilar; therefore 'love' is different in the case of a healthy body and a diseased body. Perhaps for the first time disease enters into the discourse of love as a dominant term in a binary that will have further ramifications down the ages. Unnatural sexual activity will be seen as a disease that corrupts the moral fabric of the society. With the advancement of rational scientific enquiries and rapid advancement of clinical medicine, a sex act that is disruptive and unfruitful, in the strictest sense of biological procreation, will be discursively construed as the harbinger of an epidemic like Aids.

In the Greek imagination, while men risk being feminised by indulging in penetrative sex excessively, women, too, are thought to become masculinised by receiving too much of hot seed that are needed to stabilise their womb which, the Hippocratic school of medicine believed, tend to float round the body. With the help of a certain clinical and physiological explanation, gender, for the Greeks, is a constantly shifting category. It is not so much the female sexuality as a discourse that can be self-validating than the anxious desire to recognise that male sexuality is always already potentially under threat. Classical age believed that sex was necessary for balancing bodily heat, procreation, and pleasure. Sexual inclination was determined through the active/passive distinction, not on the basis of heterosexual/homosexual categorisation, which emerged in a discursive formation late in history.

The following study takes the body as a contested site as it is situated always within the social and cultural network of different discourses, and tries to show how the sexually deviant

body, the *flawed* body, can manipulate the concomitant disadvantages into a politically motivated intervention to pose challenges to the existing hegemonic power. Through the methodology of genealogical enquiry, and engaging with the complex nature of discursive subjectification of the body, the performative construction of gender, and the problem of locating an agency as a political strategy to confront the dominant powers, this study will examine the fabrication of the foundational categories of sex, gender, and the body.

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