Emotional Styles of Belief and Early Modern English Witchcraft Pamphlets [c. 1560 – 1640]

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Abstract

Historians agree that belief in witchcraft was widespread in early modern England and the present literature contains more insight than ever before into what people in the past believed. Yet beliefs had no reality outside of their expression. Their reality was within the minds of believers, and they were invested with the doxastic diversity that this implies. This work seeks to confront assumptions about the nature of belief, query how these assumptions have manifested in the historiography of witchcraft, and ask what is meant when people are described as having believed witchcraft? Through a problematisation of the concept of belief, an evaluation of the suitability of various interdisciplinary methods to address the issue, a survey of scholarship in the history of emotion, and the examination of early modern printed sources this work proposes a fresh approach to the history of belief in witchcraft centred on describing believing as a stylised process. It argues that there is more complexity in English witchcraft pamphlets than has been recognised and that these sources can inform an understanding of belief through a concentrated analysis of the interrelationship of emotions and belief in these sources. The thesis is not intended to overwrite scholarship that has explored beliefs as propositional statements and systematised them within matrices of thought. It does, however, suggest that much of the dynamism of believing is lost by only assuming such a perspective. Believing is a deeply contextual process and reassessing statements of belief in their original context allows for greater comprehension of how profoundly the style of their presentation was entangled with specific cultural notions of doubt, credulity, and emotionality.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Reason, an *Ignis fatuus* of the mind,
Which leaves the Light of mature Sense behind.
Pathless, and dangerous, wand'ring wayes, it takes,
Through errors fenny Bogs, and Thorny Brakes:
Whil'st the misguided follower thinks, with pain,
Mountains of Whimseys heap't in his own brain;
Stumbling from thought, to thought, falls headlong down
Into doubts boundless Sea, where like to drown,
Books bear him up a while, and make him try
To swim with Bladders of Philosophy:
In hopes still to o'retake the skipping Light,
The Vapour dances, in his Dazeling sight,
Till spent, it leaves him to Eternal night.
Then Old Age, and Experience, hand in hand,
Leads him to Death, makes him to understand,
After a search so painful, and so long,
That all his Life, he has been in the wrong.
Hudled in Dirt, the reas'ning Engine lies,
Who was so proud, so witty, and so wise.

John Wilmot, *A satyr against mankind* (London, 1675), pp. 1–2.

This thesis seeks to recomplicate how historians might best conceive of belief in, and beliefs about, witchcraft. It re-examines the historiography of early modern witchcraft through a problematisation of the ways in which notions about believing have been deployed in the existing literature. I propose an alternative interdisciplinary framework with which to approach the phenomenon of historical belief in witchcraft that disaggregates our understanding of belief from propositional statements and redirects it towards believing as a form of constructed experiential practice. For this reason, the terms "belief", "beliefs", and "believing" have been employed interchangeably throughout the thesis to encourage readers to think about belief as a dynamic historical process. Stories about witchcraft were

crystallisations of these processes and, like crystals, different facets shine brightest depending upon the angle at which they are viewed – but they were not uncut gems. Contemporaries styled their interpretations of witchcraft in the same manner as providentialism apprehended the world: through a general sense of the moral operation of the universe discovered in the irruption of the supernatural into the material world. Episodes of witchcraft were not an irruption of the sacred, but of a more ambiguous kind of profundity. In theological terms – according to which it was acknowledged that the power the Devil exercised was derived from God, and ultimately furthered His inscrutable plan – there was innate potentiality in a witchcraft case for it to become an hierophany.[1] Far from being passive observers, participants intentionally and unintentionally both styled and stylised their encounters with witchcraft. My work reassesses witchcraft pamphlets as historical sources and analyses the specific ways in which accounts shaped their presentation of belief in witchcraft, emphasising the role of emotionality of this process. I predominantly focus on witchcraft pamphlets printed between 1560 and 1640, although material from outside this range is consulted when appropriate. These dates have been chosen for two key reasons. Firstly, because 1560–1640 can be considered as constituting a distinct phase of English witchcraft, with cases peaking around the 1580s and then steadily and significantly declining until there was a second spike in the period 1640–1660. Secondly, and relatedly, because the Civil Wars and Interregnum caused such a massive upheaval in English society that it is difficult to account for the uniquely disruptive effect of those two decades.

In 1668 the Anglo-French cleric, scholar, and translator Méric Casaubon's work *Credulity and Incredulity in Things natural, civil, and divine* – a defence of traditional forms of demonology and rationality of witchcraft belief – was published. This publication coincided with that of Joseph Glanvill's *A Blow at Modern Sadducism*, which was itself the prototype for his better known posthumous release *Sadducismus Triumphatus* (1681). Casaubon and Glanvill made similar arguments against excessive scepticism about supernaturality and they shared a conviction that an overabundance of such doubts would result in a dangerous socio-cultural drift away from proper religiosity and into atheism. The arguments of both Casaubon and Glanvill pivoted around the concepts of credulity and incredulity: in other words, styles of believing. In an early passage, Casaubon shared a poignant anecdote about an experience he

[1] Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: the Nature of Religion*, trans. Willard R. Trask (London: Harcourt 1959), pp. 11–18, 26.

had when studying at Oxford at an undefined point during his education.[2] He had encountered the mathematical concept of the asymptote and been confounded by it. Simply put, an asymptote is a line relative to a parabola the distance between which two approaches zero as they tend to infinity. If one were to imagine plotting the arc of the equation $y=1/x$, then the axes of the graph would be the asymptotes for the two resultant parabolas. The *y* coordinate diminishes into almost nothing as it is plotted along the *x* axis, from a half to a quarter to one hundredth to infinity. Crucially, the parabola never actually intersects with the asymptote. Casaubon's cognitive experience mirrored the relationship between the parabola and the asymptote, in that the line of his knowledge could not truly meet the hardline reality of that mathematical truth. He was unable to reach certainty, despite describing how he 'was shewed, and sufficiently, by ocular demonstration . . . convicted, that it must be so: yet still so strange and incredible did it appear unto me, that I could never be satisfied, but that there is some kind of fallacy in that business'. For Casaubon, this experience was formative to how he conceived of the epistemic nature of belief. His concern was that the 'truth of Christian faith' would be subjected to the same logic, and that even if it was indeed proven according to these standards, 'yet hardly true belief wrought, and obtained'. For him, it was necessary for the very existence of faith itself that there be a gap between the lines for it to bridge.[3]

What Casaubon experienced can also be described as an *aporia*. This was not an *aporia* in the classical sense of something 'purgative' or 'cathartic', which involved the progression of intellectual inquiry by finding oneself at an impasse in the pursuit of knowledge and philosophically recognising this initial gap in one's capacity to reason.[4] Rather, this was an *aporia* in the Derridean sense: an uncomfortable and persistent mental phenomenon involving an encounter with an epistemic disjuncture that – crucially – remained unresolved.[5] One of the most incisive contributions to witchcraft studies in the last decade comes, not

[2] Casaubon was a student at Christ Church College from 1614–27 B.A. [1618], M.A. [1622], and B.D. [1628]: Joseph Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses: The Members of the University of Oxford, 1500–1714*, 4 vols, I (Oxford: Parkey and Co., 1891), p. 248.

[3] Méric Casaubon, *Of Credulity and Incredulity In things Natural, Civil, and Divine* (London: Printed for T. Garthwait, 1668), pp. 25, 26.

[4] Vasilis Politis, 'Aporia and Searching in the Early Plato', in Lindsay Judson and Vassilis Karasmanis (eds), *Remembering Socrates: Philosophical Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 88–109.

[5] Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (London: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1976); Jacques Derrida, *Aporias*, trans. Thomas Dutoit (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993); see also Arthur Bradley's guide to Derrida: Arthur Bradley, *Derrida's Of Grammatology: An Edinburgh Philosophical Guide* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008).

from history, but from anthropology. In his 2014 book *The Empty Seashell*, Nils Bubandt argues that scholars should consider witchcraft, conceptually, to be a Derridean *aporia*.[6]

Bubandt has qualified that his intent in *The Empty Seashell* was not to posit 'that *aporia* is a universally applicable term that somehow describes the essence of witchcraft (or anything else) everywhere'; rather, that the aptness of its deployment is dependent on the particularities of a given cultural expression of belief in witchcraft.[7] This acknowledgement was given because Africanist ethnographers, in review, have noted substantial cultural differences between conceptions of witchcraft in Africa, Melanesia, and Indonesia. There are notable divergences in terms of the relative irrelevance of doubt in most African formulations of belief in witchcraft in comparison to the characteristics Bubandt observed in the village of Buli.[8] Todd Sanders, a fellow anthropologist, has raised the issue of 'whether the *aporia* might itself constitute a form of analytic domestication and explanation'.[9] Bubandt acknowledged the irony that finding the *aporia* and doubt in witchcraft might lead to the same self-assurance that it is intended to combat, that of finding what witchcraft is "really" about. Therefore, he stressed that it must be kept in mind that deconstruction is critique, that it resists generalisation, and that it does not provide an alternative formulation of that which it deconstructs.[10] Bubandt's ethnographic descriptions of *gua* in Buli – a cultural analogue of the witch – certainly indicate that it has especially, possibly uniquely, challenging metaphysical qualities. As these reviewing anthropologists caution, it would be a mistake to assume that witchcraft belief in other cultures features the same degree of the integration of doubt into their conceptualisations as Bubandt observed in experiences of *gua* of Buli. The strength of Bubandt's contribution is not as a model with which to locate equivalents within another culture, but that connecting witchcraft with *aporias* encourages scholars to examine

[6] Nils Bubandt, *The Empty Seashell: Witchcraft and Doubt on an Indonesian Island* (London: Cornell University Press, 2014), pp. 33–62.
[7] Nils Bubandt, 'When in doubt…? A reply', *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 6:1 (2016), pp. 519–530, pp. 524.
[8] Todd Sanders, 'The pendulum swings', *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 6:1 (2016), pp. 493–498; Peter Geschiere, *Witchcraft, Intimacy, and Trust: Africa in Comparison* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2013), pp. 165–180.
[9] Sanders, 'The pendulum swings', p. 497.
[10] Nils Bubandt, 'Derrida and the death of my mother in Buli', in Nils Bubandt and Thomas Schwarz Wentzer (eds), *Philosophy on Fieldwork: Case Studies in Anthropological Analysis* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2022), pp. 194–213, p. 211.

how expressions of witchcraft beliefs in other cultures – both present and historical – impel and interact with the concept of doubt.[11]

Scholars must remain circumspect when deploying the concept of *aporia*, as conceiving of witchcraft belief as a bridge has the potential to annihilate the very critical intervention that the concept of *aporia* introduces to the discourse. The anthropologist Vincent Crapanzano reserved rightful scepticism toward approaches that 'even when they admit to contradiction, tension, and disjunction, [nevertheless] often subsume these under a single umbrella image or concept'.[12] It is possible that reading witchcraft as *aporia* can shift into a mode featuring functionalist connotations redolent of Bronislaw Malinowski's description of magic. In which example a sailor encounters a practical 'gap' – a prolonged absence of propitious winds for sailing – and confronts his impotence to affect the change he desires. The supernatural is invoked as a desperate final attempt to resolve the distress he feels. For Malinowski, supernatural beliefs and their associated actions were definitionally functional, and so possessed an innate pragmatism.[13] Part of the brilliance of Bubandt's work is that he consciously inverts this trope, instead emphasising that belief in witchcraft has the potential to be profoundly dysfunctional, and that it creates its own panoply of dangers for believers. Where functionalism implies a closed interaction with a resolution, Bubandt finds a culturally generative potency in the agony of inconclusiveness.

Historiography

Witchcraft studies are themselves bound in a double *aporia*. Firstly, as Bubandt's work reminds us, witchcraft is itself an inherently aporetic phenomenon. Secondly, there is a concomitant *aporia* in scholarship attempting to describe reality by accessing unreality. Derrida pathologised Western metaphysics as 'longing for the coherence of a transparent primary or natural authenticity, the anxiety that such coherence is impossible, and the attempt to conceal that anxiety by generating textual omissions and equivocations, false

[11] Coincidentally, witchcraft, doubt, and *aporias* are the subjects of an excellent article by Will Pooley: William Pooley, 'Who Believes in Belief?', *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* 16:3 (Winter, 2023), pp. 371–380.
[12] Vincent Crapanzano, *Imaginative Horizons: An Essay in Literary Philosophical Anthropology* (London: Chicago University Press, 2004), p. 8.
[13] Bronislaw Malinowski, *Magic, Science, and Religion* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday Anchor, 1954), pp. 79–84.

dichotomies, and hierarchies'.[14] Historians of witchcraft have not been entirely naïve about the epistemic difficulties attendant in the study of an historical phenomenon that we consider to have been fundamentally unreal. There is a natural friction produced by the interaction between 'a profession used to addressing documents for their reliability' and a subject that 'we do not believe to be factual'.[15] Witchcraft is a crime without a definitive act: criminal or otherwise. It is a story pieced together from personal context and shaded by individual and collective cosmologies being applied to mundane experiences of human suffering. It is, as Robin Briggs so aptly described it, a crime with 'a hole at the centre'.[16] To historians, the hollow at the heart of witchcraft demands explanation but despite continuing scholarship allowing us to uncover hitherto unappreciated aspects of the phenomenon the void itself never dissipates, persisting defiantly in its unknowability. Despite our best efforts the 'mystery remains, and will never vanish altogether'.[17] Witchcraft belongs to the realm of the supernatural, a conceptual space that 'resists discourse' and one that 'is always in the process of being described, conjured, made, and made up, without ascertainable outside referents'.[18] For Bubandt, 'the problem of "understanding witchcraft" [is] that "understanding" in all cases serves the purpose of ultimately domesticating witchcraft by taming its impossible reality within a system or structure of some kind'.[19] As an academic subject, witchcraft generates fascinating and challenging research precisely because of its indomitable epistemological status. It invites continual reinterpretation, whilst resisting definitive solutions. In Katharine Hodgkin's panegyric for the historiographical utility of witchcraft as a subject, she posited that 'because the field seems incommensurable with usual ways of knowing. . . it at once usefully challenges our assumptions about what history is' and calls into question the provisionality of how we demarcate notions of rationality, knowledge, and the relationship between history, reality, and unreality.[20] Half a century ago

[14] Harold Mah, 'Suppressing the Text: The Metaphysics of Ethnographic History in Darnton's Great Cat Massacre', *History Workshop Journal* 31:1 (Spring, 1991), pp. 1–20, quoted p. 13.
[15] Lyndal Roper, 'Witchcraft and fantasy in early modern Germany', *History Workshop Journal* 32 (1991), pp. 19–33, quoted p. 22.
[16] Robin Briggs, 'Many reasons why: witchcraft and the problem of multiple explanation', in Jonathan Barry, Marianne Hester, and Gareth Roberts (eds), *Witchcraft in early modern Europe: Studies in culture and belief* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 49–63, p. 57.
[17] David D. Hall, 'Witchcraft and the Limits of Interpretation', *The New England Quarterly* 58:2 (Jun., 1985), pp. 253–281, quoted p. 281.
[18] Marina Warner, *Fantastic Metamorphoses, Other Worlds: Ways of Telling the Self* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 159, cited in Malcolm Gaskill, 'Witchcraft, Emotion, and Imagination in the English Civil War', in John Newton and Jo Bath (eds), *Witchcraft and the Act of 1604* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), pp. 161–178, p. 178.
[19] Bubandt, 'Derrida and the death of my mother in Buli', p. 201.
[20] Katharine Hodgkin, 'Historians and Witches', *History Workshop Journal* 45 (1998), pp. 271–277, quoted p. 272.

William Monter, commenting favourably on Caro Baroja's masterful ethnography of European witchcraft, advised twentieth-century historians of witchcraft to follow Baroja in recognising 'the relativism of our concept of "reality"'.[21] A sentiment also shared by Jeanne Favret-Saada in her work on witchcraft in mid-twentieth-century France, in which she carefully reflected upon how deeply embedded cultural modes of communicating belief interacted with practices of academic ethnography to make studying the phenomenon of witchcraft a uniquely challenging, but ultimately revealing, pursuit.[22]

Tensions between belief and reality comingle at the heart of witchcraft scholarship, lending it a vital energy but ensuring that the historiography of witchcraft is haunted by the concept of belief.[23] Historians recognise that the historical phenomenon of witchcraft was fundamentally predicated upon early modern people believing in it. But epistemological unease about the ambivalence and inaccessibility of this historical process has resulted in continuous attempts to replace belief with something more tangible: more amenable to analysis. This is exemplary of the tendency Derrida identified within academia for epistemic anxieties to generate distortions and misrepresentations of subjects. Rather than fully engaging with the uncomfortable questions generated from the *aporia* of witchcraft, we attempt to ignore, recast, or otherwise fill that disquieting void. Expressions of this unease have manifested as the submersion of the significance of belief in witchcraft as something aetiologically inferior to supposedly deeper socio-economic or cultural factors; or belief is overly reified by locating it in statements and arguments that can be tracked and identified more readily. It is not that reification of belief through the production of propositional statements did not occur – one need only look to the *Thirty-nine Articles*, or any of the myriad other contemporary doctrinal statements, to confirm it – but it would be misguided to equate an understanding of statements of belief with an understanding of the history of belief and believing in early modern England. Where there has been more of an

[21] William E. Monter, 'The Historiography of European Witchcraft', 'The Historiography of European Witchcraft: Progress and Prospects', *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 2:4 (1972), pp. 435–451, quoted p. 448 n. 45.

[22] For instance, her observation that believers in witchcraft nevertheless participated in the post-Enlightenment discursive tradition of demonstrating oneself 'capable of repelling the irrational': Jeanne Favret-Saada, *Witchcraft in the Bocage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 180 [1977]), p. 37; Favret-Saada's work contributed substantially to the formation of Marion Gibson's approach to the textuality of witchcraft pamphlets: Marion Gibson, *Reading Witchcraft: Stories of early English witches* (London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 19–20, 78–80.

[23] Jacques Derrida, *Spectres of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (Abingdon: Routledge, 1994); Katy Shaw, *Hauntology: The Presence of the past in Twenty-First Century English Literature* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), esp. introduction; Sadeq Rahimi, *The Hauntology of Everyday Life* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021), esp. foreword and ch. 1.

historiographical appetite to explore the problem of witchcraft as an *aporia* is in recognising the ways that some early modern English people themselves engaged with this issue. Several historians, as well as lawyers interested in the history of their profession, have explored how sixteenth- and seventeenth-century legal institutions grappled with the epistemic challenges witchcraft impelled, and the effect that questions about the factuality and provability of witchcraft as a crime had upon evidentiary precedents and norms within national judicial system.[24] It seems telling that Stuart Clark felt compelled to follow up his scholarly encounter with the subject in *Thinking with Demons* with an history of early modern sensorial epistemology and the boundaries of the supernatural in his *Vanities of the Eye*.[25] Katherine Hodgkin was quite right that it is through an appreciation for the relativity of early modern understandings of reality that we can recognise our own boundedness.

Despite the concept of belief haunting scholarship on early modern witchcraft, it has seldom been the focal point of studies on the subject. Instead, the difficult questions belief impels have been bulled over, cast into the periphery, or subducted within explanatory frameworks. Witchcraft scholarship has had a reckoning with belief coming for a long time, and I contend that it is crucial for historians to seriously consider our conceptualisations of belief in order to avoid misapprehending its historicity. Due to the potential enormity of this endeavour – as well as how crucial I consider this critical intervention in the historiography of witchcraft to be – this thesis takes on an unorthodox structure. Firstly, Chapters 1 and 2 explore and problematise the deployment of belief in histories of witchcraft, surveys interdisciplinary scholarship on the topic, and proposes a new critical perspective on the issue informed by both interdisciplinarity and insights from the history of emotions: emotional styles of belief. Secondly, Chapters 3 and 4 evaluate the use of pamphlets as historical sources, consider

[24] For the rich history of evidence, witchcraft, and the English legal system see: Barbara J. Shapiro, *Probability and Certainty in Seventeenth-Century England: A Study of the Relationships Between Natural Science, Religion, History, Law, and Literature* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983), esp. ch. VI 'Witchcraft', pp. 194–226; Christina Larner, *Witchcraft and Religion: the Politics of Popular Belief* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984), esp. pp. 35–68; Barbara J. Shapiro, *Beyond Reasonable Doubt and Probable Cause: Historical Perspectives on the Anglo-American Law of Evidence* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1991), esp. pp. 51–54, 164–85, 209–16; Barbara J. Shapiro, *A Culture of Fact: England 1550–1720* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000), esp. 179–83; Gregory Durston, *Witchcraft & Witch Trials: A History of English Witchcraft and its Legal Perspectives, 1542–1736* (Chichester: Barry Rose Law Publishers, 2000); Orna Alyagon Darr, *Marks of an Absolute Witch: Evidentiary Dilemmas in Early Modern England* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011); Peter Rushton, 'Texts of Authority: Witchcraft Accusations and the Demonstration of Truth in Early Modern England', in Stuart Clark (ed.), *Languages of Witchcraft: Narrative, Ideology, and Meaning in Early Modern Culture* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2001), pp. 21–40; Malcolm Gaskill, 'Witches and Witnesses in Old and New England', in Clark, *Languages of Witchcraft*, pp. 55–80.

[25] Stuart Clark, *Vanities of the Eye: Vision in Early Modern European Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007)

methods for approaching them, and demonstrate some of the emotional styles of belief found in Elizabethan, Jacobean, and Caroline witchcraft pamphlets. And lastly, Chapters 5 and 6 focus intently upon how emotionality and believing were synchronously styled in two specific works: *The most strange and admirable discouerie of the three Witches of Warboys* and Edward Fairfax's *Daemonologia*.

Here, I would like to issue a disclaimer. Histories of witchcraft, like most histories, resist stark classification and it would be misrepresentative to categorise them without first acknowledging that the responses of historians to the question of witchcraft belief are more nuanced than broad delineations might suggest. The schema I offer below is purposefully impressionistic in its characterisation of how historians of witchcraft have dealt with the concept of belief. It is intended to capture a sense of some of the prevailing currents that have carried our understanding of historical belief in witchcraft. As such, the historiographical groupings proposed here are not intended to represent strict borders within the literature, but this overview does chart a pattern in prevailing approaches to belief through several broad phases: "displacement", "rehabilitation", and "revision". These terms take on a specific meaning in this context. Displacement is the tendency to relocate discussions of belief and subsume them as epiphenomena of deeper causative factors. The diversification of witchcraft studies in the 1990s uncovered hitherto underexplored aspects of historical witchcraft and I explore the degree to which these new perspectives, whilst incredibly valuable and necessary, further displaced the concept of belief. Rehabilitation describes how supernatural beliefs have been systematised within their historical context and had their internal rationality recognised. Revision encompasses a phase, beginning around the millennium, which that proposed a reconsideration of the incidence and significance of diabolic themes in English witchcraft, as well as challenges to how scholars have temporally bounded magic, and by association witchcraft, amidst a wider historiographical reappraisal of (dis)enchantment. Keith Thomas has been situated in the "displacement" category in this model, but this is not intended to communicate that Thomas was in any sense a one-dimensional historian. His writing has always possessed considerable internal nuance, especially in the case of a work as conceptually discursive and evidentiarily dense as his *Religion and the Decline of Magic*. It could reasonably be argued that it ought to be included alongside the work of Stuart Clark as belonging to a phase of rehabilitation, in which historians systematised supernatural beliefs, and to which end Clark contextualised belief as part of the contemporary intellectual field of demonology. In the very first paragraph of his foreword, Thomas framed his work as an exploration of magical 'systems of

belief' operating alongside, through, and against prevailing religious systems of belief. He went on to acknowledge the insufficiency of defining these systems of belief as either religious or magical, despite this being the overall bent of the work, as 'there were magical elements surviving in religion, and there were religious facets to the practice of magic' – an acknowledgement that also demonstrates the complexity of his position. He uses the phrase to transition between the section concerning religion to that concerning magic, and the decline of magic is framed in relation to the resilience of established systems of belief.[26] Lastly, it is worth noting that although English witchcraft historiography is entwined with European witchcraft scholarship, the following discussion focusses principally on material related to England and, to a much more limited extent, the whole of the Atlantic Archipelago.

The Aetiological Displacement of Belief

A major current in the approach mid-century witchcraft historiography took towards witchcraft belief was aetiologically displacing it by recasting it as having been subservient to grander causative factors. Such a stance often coincided with general proclamations of derision of, or disdain for, beliefs about witchcraft. The salient feature of displacement is that as a stance, it ultimately conceptualises witchcraft beliefs as a cipher for deeper structural issues. The first historiographical phase presented here centres on the seminal works of Keith Thomas and Alan Macfarlane, whose pioneering research set the standard for histories of witchcraft for decades after their publication.[27] Thomas' *Religion and the Decline of Magic* and Macfarlane's *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England* were both monumental pieces of social history, boldly eschewing many of the constrictive norms pertaining to mainstream historical method: norms that tended to exalt political history above all else.[28] Despite their unorthodox interests and arguments, both Thomas and Macfarlane nevertheless retained and reproduced certain academic tropes and positions, including in their stance towards witchcraft beliefs. For whilst they championed the academic legitimacy of the study of historical witchcraft, their framing of supernaturality and believing retained a persistently dismissive tone and vocabulary. To this point, Diane Purkiss has piercingly

[26] Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1971), pp. ix, 318, 206, 767.
[27] Alan Macfarlane, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England* (London: Routledge, 1999 [1970]).
[28] For recent reconsiderations of Thomas' *Religion* see: Theodore K. Rabb, 'Reviewed Work: Religion and the Decline of Magic', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 40:1 (Spring, 2009), pp. 132–134; Simon Young and Helen Killick, *An Analysis of Keith Thomas's Religion and the Decline of Magic* (London: Routledge, 2017).

explored how, predominantly male, historians – including Thomas and Macfarlane – have built their own identity through the contrasting femininity of the witch. "Witchcraft beliefs" were presented as being antithetical to "historical method", and through the creation of such a dichotomy the abjuration of the former was the championing of the latter. Historians identified with contemporary sceptics like Reginald Scot, aligning themselves along the long-drawn axes of "rationality" inherited from Enlightenment traditions. In constructing their identities as academic historians they framed themselves against credulity in a 'narcissistic myth which shapes them as sceptical empiricists', dispassionately studying witchcraft beliefs from on high.[29] Even the well-meaning humanistic influences that also shaped their work resulted in expressions that carried uncomfortable baggage and which, going unaddressed as they did, inevitably clouded the ways in which belief and believing was presented in these works.

The starkest example of this displacing characteristic comes from Hugh Trevor-Roper's *The European Witch-Craze*. And, although it preceded both Thomas and Macfarlane's works, Roper's contribution to the debate epitomised the rhetorical displacement of belief that Thomas and Macfarlane would later perpetuate: regardless of the protestations made in the preface to the Penguin edition. Malcolm Gaskill argues that Trevor-Roper 'is commonly misrepresented as a rationalist celebrating the victory of enlightenment over ignorance' and has countered that *The European Witch-Craze* identified elements of credulity within scepticism and scepticism within belief. This characterisation is a tad overly generous, as whether Trevor-Roper ultimately placed witchcraft within a teleological Enlightenment framework does not address the fact that his language brimmed with uncomfortable connotations. Gaskill writes that he 'parted company with the old without quite ushering in the new' but the language in *The European Witch-Craze*, and even the title itself, reproduced the dismissiveness of an Enlightenment lexicon.[30] Trevor-Roper contemptuously brushed aside 'mere witch-beliefs'—'those elementary village credulities' – because those beliefs were 'universal'.[31] There are evocations here of ugly sentiments dichotomising civility and primitivity, between masculine order and feminine chaos: sentiments that corresponded to the themes of gendered identity-building that Purkiss observed in witchcraft historiography.

[29] Diane Purkiss, *The Witch in History, Early modern and twentieth-century representations* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 60.
[30] Malcolm Gaskill, 'Witchcraft and Evidence in Early Modern England', *Past & Present* 198:1 (Feb., 2008), pp. 33–70, quoted p. 33.
[31] Hugh Trevor-Roper, *The European Witch-Craze of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries and Other Essays* (London: Harper & Row, 1969), pp. 90, 116.

The primitive/civilised dichotomy bled into another flawed assumption Trevor-Roper made about witchcraft, in that he framed witchcraft belief as belonging to villages and rural backwaters, which were distinct from more sophisticated – and therefore implicitly less credulous – urbanity.[32] Ironically, after Trevor-Roper finished chastising historians of the nineteenth century for anachronistically attacking the rationality of believers in witchcraft, he summarised the intellectual context of witchcraft beliefs as an 'extension, with the aid of peasant superstition, feminine hysteria, and clerical imagination, of a whole cosmology'. He was respectful enough to consider these beliefs to have constituted a cosmology, but they were nevertheless superstitious and hysterical imaginings. These assumptions were combined with a slightly bizarre, Braudel-inspired geographical determinism that singled out the mountainous terrain of the Alps and the Pyrenees as having produced relict communities. According to Trevor-Roper, these communities possessed the right combination of circumstances to resist the development of feudalism due to their peripheral location, which in turn engendered them as a place 'where pagan customs lingered and the climate bred nervous disease'. They were thusly especially susceptible spaces for Dominican theologians to exert their influence, as they rationalised and systematised 'peasant fantasies' into an insidious demonological theory of witchcraft.[33] It was a patronising conceptualisation of witchcraft, one which framed witchcraft belief as having arisen from the cultural backwardness of isolation combined with cognitive deficits – both of which qualities, it ought be noted, were feminised – being manipulated by more-educated fanatics. And whilst neither Thomas nor Macfarlane reproduced the degree of dismissiveness towards witchcraft beliefs found in *The European Witch*-Craze, their works did retain elements of Trevor-Roper's conceptualisation of belief.

Thomas and Macfarlane were generally less rhetorically hostile to the idea of belief in witchcraft than Trevor-Roper, but they nevertheless occasionally re-trod the lexically hostile paths he had laid. In the foreword to *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, Thomas framed belief in the supernatural as being 'now all rightly disdained by intelligent persons'. But in keeping with his penchant for ambivalence, simultaneously recognised that astrology, witchcraft, magical healing, divination, prophesying, spirits and magical entities 'were taken seriously by equally intelligent persons in the past', prefiguring their upcoming rehabilitation in an

[32] Both magic and witchcraft continued to be a part of urban life in Europe for centuries after the height of the witch trials. See: Karl Bell, *The Magical Imagination: Magic and Modernity in Urban England 1780–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); María Tausiet, *Urban Magic in Early Modern Spain: Abracadabra Omnipotens* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).
[33] Trevor-Roper, *The European Witch-Craze*, pp. 106, 113.

historiographical phase three decades hence.[34] Nevertheless, Lawrence Stone echoed the former sentiment in his review of *Religion*, describing those 'wholly irrational beliefs which stunt the mind and prevent effective action for human betterment'.[35] Similarly, Macfarlane followed anthropological principles laid out by scholars such as E. E. Evans Pritchard to conclude that '"what at first sight seems no more than an absurd superstition" is "the integrative principle of a system of thought and morals"', whilst still feeling the need to qualify that 'to understand all is not *necessarily* to forgive all'.[36] It should be noted that both Thomas and Macfarlane gave more respect to belief in witchcraft than the subsequent mythologising of their work has suggested. Neither demonstrated the degree of dismissiveness and denigration that limited Trevor-Roper. Where Thomas and Macfarlane did err was in displacing witchcraft beliefs into a functionalist perspective, drawing interdisciplinarity from the legacy of Malinowski, their analyses championed the socially causative aspect of witchcraft accusations whilst assuming the relative simplicity of belief. Criticism of their use of outdated and problematic anthropological work retains a significant sting, but their overall stance on belief in witchcraft should not necessarily be wholly conflated with the ugly connotations of primitivism inherited from that field.

In terms of their analytical models, like Trevor-Roper, Thomas and Macfarlane reframed the historical question of witchcraft into one more legible to standard historical methods, rather than engaging with the epistemological disquietude that accompanies supernaturality. They were thus able to avoid contending directly with knotty questions about belief, because beliefs were an epiphenomenon of a deeper change in the socio-economic fabric of early modern England. They were incidental specificities brought to the surface only through the movement of truly aetiologically agentive currents below. The beliefs being expressed by early moderns were symptoms, and not the cause, of witchcraft episodes and could be bypassed by engaging with the socio-economic structures that underpinned them. If historians were dealing with underlying currents, then it made addressing belief a redundant exercise. Thusly, their explanation of early modern witchcraft involved describing the ways in which traditional models of economic obligation and intra-community relations broke down and caused resentment between social strata.

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[34] Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, p. ix.

[35] Lawrence Stone, 'The disenchantment of the world', *New York Review of Books*, 17, 2 Dec 1971 <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/1971/12/02/the-disenchantment-of-the-world/> (18 August 2017).

[36] MacFarlane, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England*, p. 241, original emphasis; quoting E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *Social Anthropology* (London: Routledge, 1951), p. 102.

Thomas and Macfarlane's charity-refused model dominated the landscape of English witchcraft studies for around two decades. And the fact that it ossified into something dogmatic enough to somewhat stultify English witchcraft historiography is not a condemnation; indeed, the shadow their works cast speaks to just how impressive they were. Nevertheless, by the 1990s historians of English witchcraft began to take cues from the more dynamic historiography of witchcraft in continental Europe, where discourse had avoided stagnation and witnessed an explosion of scholarship, producing an unprecedented diversity of witchcraft histories. By far the most significant evolution in witchcraft studies came from the broad feminist intervention in academic history; gender quickly became an inseparable component to any decent consideration of the subject.[37] And whilst I would like to make it clear that I recognise and applaud these contributions as being responsible for forcing the discipline to undergo some extremely necessary developments that have improved witchcraft scholarship immeasurably, I am focussing here on the parts of this critical intervention that itself exhibited tendencies to displace belief in a similar manner to its predecessors.

In fact, the radical feminist strain that emerged from a gendering of the historiography of witchcraft embodied a particularly stark relegation of witchcraft beliefs into epiphenomenal status. Through this extreme interpretation of gender in history witchcraft beliefs, accusations, hunts, and trials were conceived of as expressions of a gynocidal oppressive impulse rooted deeply in western European societies.[38] This position on the history of witchcraft was founded upon several suspect pillars. Its inaccuracy was partially founded upon a misapprehension of the scale of witchcraft prosecution and 'fantastic exaggerations' of victim-numbers: some estimates claimed that there had been as many as nine million victims of witch-hunting in Europe.[39] Such accounts were overly reliant on, as James Sharpe caustically put it, 'a sense of indignation and a superficial reading of the *Malleus maleficarum*'.[40] And whilst estimates from historians do vary widely, they do not approach anything like one million executions, let alone nine. The scholarly consensus is that between

[37] Katherine Hodgkin, 'Gender, mind, and body: feminism and psychoanalysis', in Jonathan Barry and Owen Davies (eds), *Palgrave Advances in Witchcraft Historiography* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 182–202.
[38] Andrea Dworkin, *Woman Hating* (New York, N. Y.: Dutton, 1974), chp. 7 'Gynocide: the Witches', pp. 118–150; Marianne Hester, *Lewd Women and Wicked Witches: A Study of the Dynamics of Male Domination* (London: Routledge, 1992).
[39] Norman Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons: An Enquiry Inspired by the Great Witch-Hunt* (New York: N.Y.: Basic Books, 1975), p. 253.
[40] J. A. Sharpe, 'Witchcraft and women in seventeenth-century England: some Northern evidence', *Continuity and Change* 6:2 (1991), pp. 179–199, quoted p. 195.

40,000 and 60,000 witches were executed in early modern Europe, leaning towards the lower end of that range.[41] Further, Johannes Dillinger calculates that around half of all deaths took place in Germany.[42] In England, even at a generous estimate, only around five hundred people were executed for witchcraft during the two centuries of its criminalisation from 1533 to 1736. To put the comparative restraint of witch-hunting in England into perspective we need only look across the border to Scotland, where the figure was substantially higher; around 2,000 witches were killed there, resulting in a per capita rate of execution twelvefold that of England.[43]

Subsequent histories of witchcraft and gender have painted a substantially more sophisticated picture, grounding the relationship between the two in proper historical context. They emphasise specificity and overall complexity of the intersection between contemporary thoughts on witches and women, and the variety of ways women were involved in witchcraft episodes.[44] For instance, the religiously-informed cultures of Europe conceived of women as being spiritually weak and more impressionable than men. This was aligned with the basic theological notion that the Devil was intent on bringing human souls to ruin, to make women – or more specifically people who had feminised traits – more susceptible to diabolic corruption.[45] Historians like Malcolm Gaskill and Alison Rowlands have stressed that dividing witches strictly according to sex prevents us from recognising fundamental similarities in how they were conceived of by contemporaries. Accused men and women were, after all, united in the category of "witch".[46] In English witchcraft

[41] William Monter has given a more conservative figure of 30,000–35,000: William Monter, 'Witch Trials in Continental Europe 1560–1660', in Bengt Ankarloo, William Monter, and Stuart Clark (eds) *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: The Period of the Witch Trials* (London: Athlone, 2002), 1–52.
Brian Levack approximated 90,000 accusations and 45,000 executions: Brian P. Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe* (London: Routledge, 2016 [1987]), p. 21.
Ronald Hutton estimated a slightly higher range of 40,000–50,000: Ronald Hutton, 'Writing the History of Witchcraft: A Personal View', *The Pomegranate* 12:2 (2010), pp. 239–262.
[42] Johannes Dillinger, 'Germany – "The Mother of the Witches"', in Johannes Dillinger, *The Routledge History of Witchcraft* (London: Routledge, 2020), pp. 94–112.
[43] J. A. Sharpe, 'Witch hunts in Britain', in Johannes Dillinger, *The Routledge History of Witchcraft* (London: Routledge, 2020), pp. 145–159.
[44] Clive Holmes, 'Women: Witnesses and Witches', *Past & Present* 140:1 (1993), pp. 45–78; for an accessible and broad-ranging summary of the topic with helpful reading suggestions see: Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks, *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019 [1993]), ch. 7 'Witchcraft', pp. 278–301.
[45] Lara Apps and Andrew Colin Gow, *Male witches in early modern Europe* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), esp. ch. 5 'Literally Unthinkable? Demonological Descriptions of Male Witches', pp. 95–117.
[46] Malcolm Gaskill, 'The Devil in the Shape of a Man: Witchcraft, Conflict, and Belief in Jacobean England', *Historical Research* 71:175 (Jun., 1998), pp. 142–171; Alison Rowlands, 'Not "the Usual Suspects"? Male Witches, Witchcraft, and Masculinities in Early Modern Europe', in Alison Rowlands

pamphlets, Charlotte-Rose Millar has found that 'witches were defined primarily by their relationship with the Devil, not their sex'.[47] And Sheriden Morgan has shown that male witches had a more significant presence in the history of English witchcraft than has traditionally been acknowledged.[48] Conceiving of the entire constellation of contributory factors to witchcraft as an historical phenomenon – including belief – as a cipher for contemporary misogyny can result in histories that, as Alison Rowlands puts it, make 'gender, as a category of analysis, do too much work'.[49] Getting a sense of the demographic breakdown of European witches can only produce generalised figure for how genders were proportioned, but women undisputedly made up the majority of the accused, and men were somewhere around 10 to 40 per cent of the total.[50] Although this figure does obscure some massive regional variations – male witches were approximately 90 per cent of the total in Iceland, 60 per cent in Estonia, roughly 50 per cent in Finland, 70 per cent in Normandy, and 75 per cent in Russia.[51] What is no longer in dispute in academic witchcraft history is the notion that the period of the witch trials in early modern Europe constituted a mythological "Burning Times", unsavourily glossed as a Holocaust for women, which idea has been thoroughly discredited by other feminist historians of witchcraft.[52] This mythologisation was both ahistorical and nebulously aligned with other controversial positions that contributed to a displacement of belief in discussions of the topic.

Alongside radical feminist commentary on witchcraft occasionally rode a Neopaganistic revival of Margaret Murray's witch-cult hypothesis. Murray had insisted that the witch hunts represented an institutional persecution of a secret religious sect that had, however improbably, persisted throughout the millennium since the Christianisation of Britain. This

(ed.), *Witchcraft and Masculinities in Early Modern Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, pp. 1–30.

[47] Charlotte-Rose Millar, 'Diabolical men: reintegrating male witches into English witchcraft', *The Seventeenth Century* 36:5 (2021), pp. 693–713.

[48] Sheriden Morgan, *Perspectives on Male Witches in Early Modern England* (Unpublished Thesis: University of Bristol, 2019).

[49] Alison Rowlands, 'Witchcraft and Gender in Early Modern Europe', in Brian P. Levack (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe and Colonial America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 448–467, quoted p. 466.

[50] Malcolm Gaskill, 'Masculinity and Witchcraft in Seventeenth-Century England', in Rowlands, *Witchcraft and Masculinities*, pp. 171–190.

[51] Raisa Maria Toivo, 'Witchcraft and Gender', in Johannes Dillinger, *The Routledge History of Witchcraft* (London: Routledge, 2020), pp. 219–232; Valerie A. Kivelson, 'Male Witches and Gendered Categories in Seventeenth-Century Russia', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 45:3 (2003), pp. 606–631.

[52] Purkiss, *The Witch in History*, ch. 1, pp. 7–30; Raisa Maria Toivo, 'The Witch-Craze as Holocaust: The Rise of Persecuting Societies', in, Barry and Davies, *Palgrave Advances in Witchcraft Historiography*, pp. 90–107.

strain of thought also displaced belief in witchcraft, albeit in a novel way. In its telling, the fantastical elements of contemporary witchcraft theory and reporting – diabolic sabbaths, pact-making, etcetera – were in fact Christianised corruptions of actual rituals and practices of this ancient and submersed religion. Witches were absolutely real, in the sense that they were misidentified cultists. A key binding thread between early feminist and witch-cult theory were issues of class and female agency, as the latter posited an alternative current of female agency running deeply through popular culture, and that the misogynistic elite had identified the danger of these traditions resulting in their relentlessly persecuting its practitioners. This was combined with materialist analysis, mixing into a theory that witch-hunting was the result of economic developments, as an encroaching (male) professional class attempted to enclose and capture domains of practice that had been bastions of female power and prestige: especially midwifery and folk healing.[53] These arguments interlink quite nicely, however they rest upon an unsound evidentiary base. For instance, we have found that in practice midwives were not highly proportionally represented amongst accused witches. In fact their expertise on the female body saw them brought in occasionally as experts in witch-trials, in order for them to inspect witches for physical indications of their having formed a diabolic pact.[54] As for women dominating the realm of folk-healing, Owen Davies estimates that there were potentially as many as 200,000 cunning-folk operating in Elizabethan and Stuart England – meaning there were several thousand working in the country at any given point up until the nineteenth century – and that the majority of them, two-thirds, were male.[55]

When it came to questions of belief itself, these discourses operated in a manner much akin to mid-century socially minded histories, brushing aside the leaves and branches of belief to get to the roots of the matter. All strands of this approach to witchcraft thoroughly displaced belief and continued to relegate it as a façade draped across the vistas of deeper issues that are more worthy of consideration. Through the application of an etic model of misogynistic persecution the roles of victim and perpetrator were reversed, which prevented analyses founded upon these assumptions from accurately appreciating the historically specific

[53] Barbara Ehrenreich and Deidre English, *Witches, Midwives, and Nurses* (Old Westbury, N.Y.: The Feminist Press, 1973); this theory has been revived and iterated upon, with a Marxist spin, see: Silvia Federici, *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body, and Primitive Accumulation* (Brooklyn, N. Y.: Autonomedia, 2004), esp. ch. 'The Great Witch-Hunt in Europe', pp. 163–218.
[54] David Harley, 'Historians as Demonologists: The Myth of the Midwife-witch', *Social History of Medicine* 3:1 (1990), pp. 1–26.
[55] Owen Davies, *Popular Magic: Cunning-folk in English History* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2003), pp. 67–69.

variations in how contemporaries constructed the relationship between the witch and the bewitched. It is only through attempts to understand how the witch was culturally constructed in the past that historical witchcraft can be effectively described.

Rehabilitation

Despite a few misfires, witchcraft scholarship was in a reasonably healthy state around the millennium, having come to recognise the diversity of causative factors underpinning the phenomenon. This more invigorated discursive domain produced a more pluralistic scholarly consensus, one epitomised by Robin Briggs' statement – made in his influential 1996 chapter "Many reasons why" – that 'any serious interpretation of European witchcraft must be multifactorial'.[56] Part of this variegation seemed to spring from an impetus to go beyond the remit of confirming the veracity of historical facts, and to instead to progress in the spirit of a comment by Hayden White that 'historical inquiry is born less of the necessity to establish *that* certain events occurred than of the desire to determine what certain events might *mean* for a given group'.[57] Witchcraft, after all, has no definitive "solution" – nor interpretation – and by recognising this quality historians have been able to produce a wonderfully diverse and adventurous approach to understanding historical witchcraft. Scholars like Christina Larner and Robert Muchembled tied witch trials in Europe to exercises of state-building, centralisation, and acculturation.[58] Regional studies of witchcraft proliferated, finding considerable evidence that accusations and trials sprang from a genuine European-wide desire to see witches prosecuted.[59] It became undeniable that belief was fundamentally important in these processes, but the dominant theories that emerged in response to this issue once again mishandled their approach to belief. Whilst often more incisive and circumspect than previous offerings, they nevertheless also cemented and accentuated a particular conceptualisation of belief itself, one which has obscured its other aspects.

One such influential method has been to disaggregate witchcraft beliefs from the accusations and trials found in the historical record, and to instead consider beliefs through their

[56] Briggs, 'Many reasons why', quoted p. 51.
[57] Hayden White, 'Historical Pluralism', *Critical Inquiry* 12:3 (1986), pp. 480–493, quoted p. 487.
[58] Marko Nenonen, 'Culture Wars: State, Religion, and Popular Culture in Europe, 1400–1800', Barry and Davies, *Palgrave Advances in Witchcraft Historiography*, pp. 108–124.
[59] For example, Annabel Gregory gave a complex and nuanced account of how elite and popular forces interacted in the early seventeenth century in the cinque port town of Rye to produce witchcraft accusations: Annabel Gregory, 'Witchcraft, Politics, and "Good Neighbourhood" in Early Seventeenth-Century Rye', *Past & Present* 133:1 (1991), pp. 31–66.

relationships with the surrounding structural logic about supernaturality found in contemporary theorisation. In effect, this approach acted as a scholarly rehabilitation of supernatural beliefs, intent on properly contextualising their relationships within an intellectual tradition through descriptions that emphasised how rational, rigorous, and consistent witchcraft beliefs could be. With these serious examinations of historical systems of magical beliefs finding in them 'far more rationality . . . than is evident at first sight'.[60] And, whilst these histories were by no means inaccurate in their exploration of learned theory, the qualities they considered to elevate particular forms of believing in witchcraft into the more legitimate realms of philosophy and theology were received from the same modern intellectual tradition that had led Trevor-Roper to label them as "primitive".

Richard Kieckhefer was an early advocate for historians adopting an emic approach to medieval belief in the supernatural, arguing that historians should use definitions that elided closely with how contemporaries described their own world. He divided medieval magic into strands of 'occult' and 'natural' magics, rather than the problematic sociological trichotomy of religion, science, and magic.[61] His enthusiasm was partially born of his critique of Valerie Flint who, in her 1991 monograph *The Rise of Magic in Early Medieval Europe*, had characterised medieval magic as fundamentally nonrational. Kieckhefer accused her of having unintentionally adopted the same condescension she sought to repudiate in the works of others, through her application of a faintly Frazerian definition of magic – that religion and magic exist along a preternatural spectrum – and by failing to recognise that within medieval European the cultural discourse about magic was entirely rational, in the sense that it was internally logically consistent.[62] As one review of *The Rise of Magic* put it, Flint failed to 'evoke the cultural specificity of the early Middle Ages at all', locating her conceptualisation of rationality outside of the medieval era. The reviewer, Mark Gregory Pegg, echoed Kieckhefer's sentiments neatly with his statement that 'it is the political and social tempo of a community that provides the rhyme for all magical reason'.[63] Historians

[60] Nils Freytag, 'Witchcraft, witch doctors and the fight against "superstition" in nineteenth-century Germany', in Willem de Blécourt and Owen Davies (eds), *Witchcraft Continued: Popular magic in modern Europe* (Manchester, 2004), pp. 29–45, esp. pp. 38–44.
[61] Richard Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 8–17; for a newer perspective on medieval magic see: Albrecht Classen, 'Magic in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Age – Literature, Science, Religion, Philosophy, Music, and Art. An Introduction', in Albrecht Classen (ed.), *Magic and Magicians in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Time: The Occult in Pre-Modern Sciences, Medicine, Literature, Religion, and Astrology* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017), pp. 1–108.
[62] Richard Kieckhefer, 'The Specific Rationality of Medieval Magic', *The American Historical Review*, 99:3 (1994), pp. 813–836.
[63] Mark Gregory Pegg, 'The rise of magic in early medieval Europe (review)', *Parergon* 10:2 (December 1992), pp. 200–202.

were able, through a concerted recognition of the relativity of rationality, to better engage with strains of contemporary discourse, resulting in a greater appreciation for the complexity and provenance of contemporary theorising on the supernatural.

The seminal text for early modernists in this mode was – and remains – Stuart Clark's *Thinking with Demons*, the publication of which was a defining historiographical moment for its revision of notions about ideas previously labelled as 'superstition' and ludicrous.[64] His voluminous work charted demonology as an early modern European philosophical subdiscipline, an intellectual pursuit that followed contemporary practices and conceptualisations of rational and logical thought.[65] Clark's recontextualisation of demonology as a rational and legitimate strain of theology only became even more significant to historians of English witchcraft in the wake of a further historiographical reconsideration of the Devil in early modern England.[66] And both were part of a broader revision of the empirically suspect distinction between continental 'diabolic' witchcraft and English 'malefic' witchcraft.[67] Historians of witchcraft in continental Europe, as well as Scotland, consistently unearthed acts of *maleficium* – traditionally considered more of a hallmark of English witchcraft – whilst historians of witchcraft in England found that the presence of demons and the Devil was felt considerably more frequently and intensely than had previously been acknowledged.[68] Clark's seminal re-evaluation of demonology as a highly rational dialogue that permeated early modern European theological discourse was intrinsically orientated toward a more 'elite' culture of the intelligentsia and the elite.[69] For instance, the chapter 'Believers and Sceptics' preoccupied itself with a comparison between

[64] Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997). See also: Richard Kiechefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) and its sequel Richard Kieckhefer, 'The Specific Rationality of Magic', *The American Historical Review*, 99:3 (1994), pp. 813–836; Stanley Tambiah, *Magic, Science, Religion, and the Scope of Rationality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

[65] Jan Machielsen has recently released an edited volume full of brilliant contributions to the history of demonology: Jan Machielsen, *The Science of Demons: Early Modern Authors Facing Witchcraft and the Devil* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2020).

[66] The influence of Clark is evidenced when, in Brian Levack's introduction to *The Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe and Colonial America*, the statement that historiographically demonology could not 'be readily dismissed as unscientific or incompatible with a rational view of the natural world' solely cites *Thinking with Demons*: Brian P. Levack, 'Introduction', in Brian P. Levack (ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe and Colonial America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 8, n. 20.

[67] For a classic version of this see the distinction Thomas makes: Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, pp. 520–535.

[68] For continental see Malcolm Gaskill, 'Witchcraft Trials in England', in Brian P. Levack, *The Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft*, pp. 283–299.

[69] This is, of course, a generalisation of Clark's work, which does engage with aspects of popular culture – especially in ch. 31, 32: Clark, *Thinking with demons*, pp. 457–488.

Henri Boguet's *Discours des sorciers* (1602) and Johann Weyer's *De praestigiis daemonum* (1563), followed by commentary on other writers who took part in the 'debate'.[70] The rehabilitative courtesy that Clark extended demonologists, through his serious consideration of the types of doubt and scepticism they demonstrated, has been less readily extended to regular believers outside of intellectual discourse. Which stance can be observed in Walter Stephens statement about how dubiety about the reality of witchcraft was not only 'manifested variously by lawyers, physicians, and theologians . . . *but* [that] *even the uneducated sometimes expressed scepticism*'. Here the scepticism of ordinary people is qualified to have been manifest predominantly when they *dis*believed a particular official imposition of witch-finding, with Stephens later reiterating that '*even the unlettered and semi-literate*, could express strong opinions about witchcraft'.[71] Despite good intentions, such framing perpetuates the notion of a dichotomy between the complex, active believing of the elite, and the simple, passive believing of the many.

Clark's rehabilitation of demonology as a contemporary intellectual and theological pursuit remains a zenith of intellectual history. And it is wonderful that, as a result of his having proven demonology to have been a highly rational philosophical system of ideas and beliefs, the credibility of any presentation of demonology couching it in the dismissive language of craze and hysteria is much less academically tenable. However, the prominence of his work in historical discourse about witchcraft has had some unintendedly stultifying consequences. Robin Briggs – writing in an otherwise glowing review piece, and which criticism has been acknowledged by Clark himself – posited that Clark's syncretic argumentation tended to homogenise the topic by emphasising agreement between disparate sources.[72] And this first criticism significantly impels a more impactful problem with Clark's approach: it continually overemphasised the neatness of systems. As touched on above, witchcraft resists clarification: especially, and crucially, in those experiences of witchcraft had by people in the past to whom historians comfortably apply the label of 'believer'. In large part thanks to Clark, early modern demonology must be acknowledged to have significantly contributed to contemporary interpretations of witchcraft, and to have formed part of the cosmological framework for comprehending the causative meaning and metaphysical processes that

[70] Clark, *Thinking with Demons*, ch. 13, pp. 195–213.
[71] Walter Stephens, 'The Sceptical Tradition', in Brian P. Levack (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe and Colonial America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 101–121, emphasis added, quoted pp. 101, 102.
[72] Robin Briggs, 'Review: Thinking with Demons', *The English Historical Review*, 113: 450 (Feb., 1998), pp. 121–123.

produced supernatural experiences. However, the specificity of actual historical witchcraft cases re-frays the neatened edges of systematised belief. In the words of anthropologist Jonathan Mair, it is worth remembering that 'every believer everywhere is not a fundamentalist or a systematic theologian'.[73] In practice – which it is worth reminding ourselves is where believing actually happened – beliefs were messy and dynamic. Gaskill considers this to be the 'principal strength' of studying witchcraft, valuable because it 'the way that it contrasts bodies of knowledge, juxtaposes metaphor and observable fact, and pulls together strands of opinion across eras and contexts'. To tidy the edges of witchcraft into tame systems is to fail to appreciate how witchcraft was 'an idea in action, not a corpus of learning but a vague concept in the minds of individuals – a memory, latent but volatile, always starting arguments, never settling them'.[74]

This is absolutely not to suggest that the historiographical legacy of Clark and Kieckhefer is meritless or toxic. For instance, In *Fearful Spirits, Reasoned Follies*, Michael Bailey has furthered Kieckhefer's work in charting how medieval intellectuals drew the boundaries of supernaturality, to construct a sophisticated formulation of contemporary "superstition" as an elite interpretation of practices and beliefs that were considered spiritually dangerous.[75] However, the following critique of the work of Euan Cameron, someone who has taken an almost exclusive intellectualist approach to the supernatural in history, can reveal its delimiting effects.

Cameron's position emphasises that the Reformed and Catholic Churches approached supernaturality in distinct ways due to their respective doctrinal positions.[76] He aggressively disagrees with Bob Scribner's suggestion that the Reformation had no inherent desacralizing agenda, and that there was considerable continuity between pre- and post-Reformation popular religiosity. Cameron specifically critiques the 'method and approach' of Scribner and his pupils to 'resist the inference that Protestantism was inherently more "modern" than the Catholicism that it rebelled against' as a 'style of historiography [in which] the theological writings of the reformers are minimised', implying that personal investments may have

[73] Jonathan Mair, 'Cultures of belief', *Anthropological Theory*, 12:4 (2012), pp. 448–466, quoted p. 451.
[74] Malcolm Gaskill, 'Witchcraft, Politics, and Memory in Seventeenth-Century England', *The Historical Journal* 50:2 (2007), pp. 289–308, quoted p. 307.
[75] Michael Bailey, *Fearful Spirits, Reasoned Follies: The Boundaries of Superstition in Late Medieval Europe* (London: Cornell University Press, 2013).
[76] Euan Cameron, 'For Reasoned Faith or Embattled Creed? Religion for the People in Early Modern Europe', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 8 (1998), pp. 165–187.

compromised the integrity of their scholarship.[77] Cameron's premise is flawed in that it is founded upon several unsubstantiated assumptions. In an otherwise complimentary review of *Enchanted Europe*, Alexandra Walsham gestures to the issue of confessional affiliation within histories of religion regarding notions of modernity, and identifies it as a commonly levelled accusation between more sectarian historians.[78] She further identifies that, despite Cameron mentioning the incoherence and relativity of superstition, there is an ontologising tendency in the language he himself uses to describe superstition: often slipping into the same interpretation of "superstition" as the theorists he is studying.[79] One 'puzzling' contrast she picks up on is the distinction Cameron makes between the 'innate plausibility' of learned discourse on superstition and the 'absurdities and impossibilities' of witchcraft theory.[80] Which, as she notes, is incongruent with Clark's observation about the intellectual development of demonology as a logically coherent discipline: one that included beliefs about the involvement of witches in the world. Cameron also offers only a superficial analysis of how learned understandings of superstition correlated with the reality of lived experience. Comparisons between lived reality and learned theory are strictly unnecessary according to his own methodology, as his self-stated intention is to sketch a history of the 'intellectual *response* to superstition'. What Cameron alludes to, but does not outright state, is that he is operating from a top-down understanding of belief; for him, 'the *intentions* behind the movement' are firmly generated from learned theory. He frames these 'dynamic forces of change' – generative and causative – in contrast to popular beliefs and practices – 'the reluctant voices of tradition' – which were inherently conservative and reactive. To privilege the causative agency of intellectuals so heavily that it borders on chauvinism, is to inevitably miss how 'occasionally the irreducible logic of folklore burst the restricting bounds of

[77] Euan Cameron, *Enchanted Europe: Superstition, Reason, and Religion 1250–1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 13–14, n. 34.

[78] For a prime example of this see discussions of the work of Brad Gregory: Brad S. Gregory, 'The Other Confessional History: on Secular Bias in the Study of Religion', *History and Theory*, Theme Issue 45 (Dec., 2006), pp. 132–149; and Brad S. Gregory, *The Unintended Reformation: How a Religious Revolution Secularised Society* (London: Harvard University Press, 2012).
For critical responses, see: James Simpson 'Brad Gregory's Unintended Revelations', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 46:3 (2016), pp. 545–554; Nico Vorster, 'Sola Scripture and Western Hyperpluralism: A Critical Response to Brad Gregory's *Unintended Reformation*', *Review of European Studies* 5:1 (2013), pp. 52–64; Josh A. Reeves, 'How Not to Link the Reformation and Science: Reflections on Brad Gregory's *The Unintended Reformation*', *Religions* 8:5, 83 (2017). A more sympathetic evaluation is given by Midelfort: H C. Erik Midelfort, 'Review: The Unintended Reformation', *The Journal of Modern History* 85:2 (2013), pp. 407–409.

[79] Alexandra Walsham, 'Review: Enchanted Europe', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 62:2 (2011), pp. 379–382.

[80] Cameron, *Enchanted Europe*, pp. 70, 111: quoted in Walsham, 'Review: Enchanted Europe', p. 381.

scholastic dogmas'.[81] And Cameron even appears to recognise that such a lofty approach to superstition leaves its history concerningly detached and abstracted, which is why he attempts to ground it in real beliefs and practices, despite this entirely undermining his stated *raison d'etre*.

As fine a work as *Enchanted Europe* can occasionally be for the purpose of intellectually historicising "superstition", its overreliance on theological texts detaches belief entirely from historical events, leaving it stranded on the shores of theory. Perhaps it is merely that the historiographical pendulum is due to swing back towards an interest in popular beliefs and practices, just as Cameron presented his own position as a response to the pendulum having swung in the direction of a minimisation of theology. Regardless, his attempted overcorrection is emblematic of how an overreliance on learned sources can easily lead to a denial that popular ideas had any historical agency. When scrutinised, his approach has difficult-to-swallow implications, such as that the familiar spirits that populated the imaginative landscape of early modern England should properly only be conceived of having had historical agency in terms of their existence within English demonology and in their theological implications for "superstition".[82] The bifurcation of how magic was conceived of in elite and popular culture respectively was a protracted and ambiguous separation that progressed over the course of several centuries. And due to the interpenetration between these two spheres – if we even concede to considering them to be independent entities – historians are now much warier about drawing polaristic distinctions about early-modern elite and popular culture.[83] We can find the same problems with over-privileging intellectual sources in another history about the supernatural: Walter Stephens' *Demon Lovers*. In which book, Stephens posited that theologians in early modern Europe experienced a "crisis of belief" and, in a frantic attempt to prove the existence of God through Aristotelian logic, spurred on the witch trials. Their rationale supposedly being that by proving the existence of

[81] Cameron, *Enchanted Europe*, pp. 18, 14, 115.
[82] Ibid., pp. 179–80, 259–60; James Serpell, 'Guardian Spirits or Demonic Pets: The Concept of the Witch's Familiar in Early Modern England, 1530–1712', in A.N.H. Creager and W.C. Jordan (eds.), *The Human/Animal Boundary* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2002), pp. 157–190; Emma Wilby, *Cunning Folk and Familiar Spirits: Shamanistic Visionary Traditions in Early Modern British Witchcraft and Magic* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2005).
[83] Barry Reay, *Popular Cultures in England 1550–1750* (London: Routledge, 1998), esp. pp. 198–223; J. A. Sharpe, *Early Modern England: A Social History 1550–1760* (London: Bloomsbury, 2011 [1987], pp. 286–331. Over the course of the seventeenth century there was a definite divergence between elite and popular belief in witchcraft the severity of which split was due to a combination of factors, such as the cultural reaction against both enthusiasm and atheism in England after the civil wars and Interregnum, as well as the methodological empiricism of natural philosophy eroding the academic credence of supernatural phenomena: Michael Hunter, *The Decline of Magic: Britain in the Enlightenment* (London: Yale University Press, 2020).

witches, and having those witches truly confess to having had sex with the Devil, they thusly proved corporeality of the Devil, which in turn proved that God was real.[84] It was an inventive theory on Stephens' part, and an admirable enough example of an historian genuinely attempting to integrate contemplation about belief and doubt into their scholarship. However, the thesis in *Demon Lovers* shared its foundational aetiological assumptions with Cameron's later work: that learned ideas were driving events.

Historian of religion Alec Ryrie has noted that intellectuals, academics, philosophers, and theorists demonstrate 'a persistent tendency to overestimate the power of ideas', and which prompted him to question whether traditional assumptions about the aetiology of belief – the top-down model typified by the works of Cameron and Stephens – are entirely backwards. He instead proposes that these theories emerged in a post-hoc fashion, they trailed practice, and became accepted in an atmosphere that was already receptive to them.[85] The historian Dominic Erdozain terms this the 'intellectualist fallacy', in which he identifies 'a tendency to privilege the clean logic of ideas above the raw fuel of human experience among the forces of historical change'.[86] There is a neatness to the contemporary intellectual discourse about witchcraft that does not reflect the complexities of how these beliefs seem to have been practised in the real world. Pamphlet writers even explicitly distanced themselves from the idea that their work had implications in this field.[87] The intellectualist interpretation avoids the aporetic qualities of popular belief and culture, confining the problematic issues with belief within the words of learned scholars and their internecine debates, and in which it is safely insulated from the deeply messy ways believing as an active process happened off the page. Access to that messier version of belief is by no means easy – depending on one's epistemological leanings it may even be fallacious – but it is worthy of consideration in any serious attempt to define historical belief. The "real" experiences of people in the past may be inaccessible to us, but representations of experiences of believing in witchcraft have survived.

Ultimately, how I conceive of witchcraft as an historical phenomenon aligns with the pluralism of Briggs and can be expressed through a visual metaphor. In the 2010s the Dutch

[84] Walter Stephens, *Demon Lovers: Witchcraft, Sex, and the Crisis of Belief* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2002), pp. 1–10.
[85] Alec Ryrie, *Unbelievers: An Emotional History of Doubt* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019), pp. 5.
[86] Dominic Erdozain, *The Soul of Doubt: The Religious Roots of Unbelief from Luther to Marx* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 5.
[87] Anon., *The wonderfvl discoverie of the Witchcrafts of Margaret and Phillip Flower* (London: Printed by G. Eld, 1619), sigs B1r–C2r

artist Berndnaut Smilde produced a series of installations under the title *Nimbus*, in which he carefully controlled the atmospheric conditions within closed spaces – from abandoned warehouses to baroque churches – to, for one moment, perfectly recreate a cloud at their centre. Imagine that all evidence of historical witchcraft that will ever be available to historians was that cloud, frozen in time and suspended as a three-dimensional object around which we can move. However, our access to the cloud is mediated by objects and architecture that sit between us and it. All sightlines are interrupted or narrowed by overlapping pillars, plinths, apertures, and mirrors. Every vantage point reveals to us different shades, contours, and connections that constitute the central cloud, but no singular perspective can possibly apprehend it in its totality, nor should it be considered suitable for observations made at one stance to be extrapolated and applied to the entirety of the phenomenon. In that sense, this thesis is merely the identification of one such viewing angle and the suggestion that it could be one that other historians might benefit from adopting.

Revision

A notable example of historians having gained an appreciation for a wrinkle in the cloud through a reorientation of their perspective has been the evolution in witchcraft historiography of the role of the Devil. In the last two decades scholarship on the Devil in early modern England has been typified by a heightened awareness – especially when discussing elements from popular culture – of the complex and ambiguous conception contemporaries had about Satan's involvement in witchcraft. These reflections have upset a longstanding consensus in witchcraft historiography, one that had survived from Kittredge and Ewen to Thomas and MacFarlane. That is that English witchcraft was 'very different from that on the Continent and in Scotland'.[88] The revision of this position was accelerated as a consequence of the elevation of demonology in the historiography of European witchcraft generally, but movement in that direction had begun prior to any overall discursive shift. As James Sharpe, in his 1996 monograph *Instruments of Darkness*, notably mentioned the presence of both the demonic and the diabolic in English witchcraft cases.[89] And this historiographical revision directly disproves the idea that popular beliefs were not dynamic. It was supposed that what differentiated English witchcraft from its Continental equivalents

[88] Macfarlane, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England*, p. 6.
[89] J. A. Sharpe, *Instruments of darkness, Witchcraft in England 1550–1750* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), pp. 70–79.

was the comparatively stronger importance of maleficium in English witchcraft cases, and that demonology was also less prominent there, whereas it strongly characterised other European cases. In his 1998 book on early modern English popular culture, Barry Reay expressed that misgivings had begun to surface about the 'characterisation of English witchcraft as non-demonological', with a consensus bubbling up that boundaries between English and Continental witchcraft had been 'overdrawn' in the past; the re-examination of these boundaries prompted, and been prompted by, a renewed interest in the figure of the Devil in contemporary discourse.[90] Michael Bailey, for instance, has traced the entwinement of the Devil with notions of superstition and idolatry – which were intimately connected to conceptualisations of witchcraft – through the later Middle Ages.[91] And Sean Armstrong has gone so far as to declare that by the middle of the sixteenth century, 'superstition equalled witchcraft, and the Devil was lord of both'.[92] In terms of the relationship between popular and elite conceptualisations of the Devil, Darren Oldridge has, in multiple works, explored the contradictory and often confusing picture of beliefs about the Devil evident in contemporary characterisations, concluding that the discrepancies between beliefs proscribed and beliefs evidenced 'cannot be found in theology'.[93] In the revised understanding of the importance of the Devil in early modern England, historians have revealed how persistently popular characterisations of the physicality of the Devil diverged from more theologically orthodox, or 'academic' notions.[94] These ambiguities illustrate the difficulties historians face when attempting to systematise believing even through emic categorisation according to contemporary understandings. An approach to belief that catalogues in this way detaches beliefs from the vitality of their context and subsumes them beneath "belief" as a semantic shorthand for views held with an implicitly rigid certainty. Variations in belief are described by contrasting its expression in different texts, rather than accounting for how an expression of belief relates to the internal presentational style of its own text. This process essentially reifies belief by folding the variance of its original situation into a statement that is contextualised according to its relationship to other statements, rather than how its meaning was shaped by its immediate textual surroundings. Belief is,

[90] Barry Reay, *Popular Cultures in England, 1550–1750* (London, 1998), p. 116.
[91] Michael Bailey, *Battling Demons: Witchcraft, Magic, and Heresy in the Late Middle Ages* (University Park, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), pp. 130–138.
[92] Sean Armstrong, 'The Devil, Superstition, and the Fragmentation of Magic', *Renaissance and Reformation/Renaissance et Réforme*, 37:2 (Spring, 2014), pp. 49–80.
[93] Darren Oldridge, *The Devil in Early Modern England* (Stroud, 2000), p. 9; Darren Oldridge, *The Supernatural in Tudor and Stuart England* (Routledge: London, 2016), ch. 4.
[94] Nathan Johnstone, *The Devil and Demonism in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 7, 19.

intentionally or not, conceptually reified through its status as a constituent component of a system of believing – thus making it more legible to historians – that invests belief with an inert and static quality.[95] Julian Goodare expressed this issue perfectly in his study of faeries, noting that approaches which favour stricter classification have a tendency to 'be misleading unless we remember that the focus of study should not be on the fairies themselves but on the humans who believe in fairies or experience encounters with fairies'.[96]

This is not to say that systemisation is an invalid or useless analytical method; it is certainly helpful when attempting to explain how, and why, institutional confidence in the existence of witches waned over the course of the seventeenth century. Demonology collapsed under the weight of its own reflexive scrutiny because it was formulised into a system that could be analysed, critiqued, and dismantled in the judicial, theological, and metaphysical realms of thought. The fact that belief in witchcraft persisted for centuries after its institutional disownment appears anomalous in this regard and contains hints that something more complex was occurring. The dissonance here is born of a misapprehension that most early modern people both thought of, and interacted with, witchcraft as if it constituted a solid system of belief. Historians must be sensitive to the power that, as the witch-hunter John Stearne put it, 'experience amongst our selves' had in perpetuating belief in witchcraft.[97] When his partner Matthew Hopkins defended their activities in East Anglia, he likewise claimed that his skill in witch-finding came not from 'profound learning, or frome much reading of learned Authors concerning that subject . . . but from experience'.[98] And the preface to a 1597 pamphlet mocked 'the peeuish opinion, that there are no wiches', recommending that those thought thusly were 'to be pittied, than confuted, daily experience crying out against their folie'.[99] The diabolisation of English witchcraft is entangled with the much-debated idea of the enchantment of the world. How early modern people conceived of, and interacted with, the figure of the Devil – and his attendant demonic retinue – speaks to a sense of supernatural environment in which witchcraft beliefs flourished.

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[95] Stephen Wilson, *The Magical Universe: Everyday Ritual and Magic in Pre-Modern Europe* (London, 2000), p. xxviii.
[96] Julian Goodare, 'Ghosts, fairies and the world of spirits', in Susan Broomhall (ed.), *Early Modern Emotions: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2017), pp. 418–421, quoted p. 418.
[97] John Stearne, *A confirmation And Discovery of vvitch-craft, Containing these several particulars* (London: Printed by William Wilson, 1648), p. 4.
[98] Matthew Hopkins, *The Discovery of VVitches: in Answer to severall Queries, lately Delivered to the Judges of Assize for the County of Norfolk* (London: Printed for R. Royston, 1647), p.1.
[99] Anon. [I. D.], *The most wonderfull and true storie, of a certaine VVitch named Alse Gooderig of Stapen hill* (London: Printed by John Oxenbridge, 1597), sig. A2v.

Enchantment

The historiography of witchcraft is thoroughly intertwined with concepts of magic, the supernatural, and enchantment: the last having been inherited from Max Weber's seminal thesis that Protestantism was responsible for the 'disenchantment of the world'.[100] Enchantment is, in essence, a measure of the capacity for a certain type of thought in a society. Thomas' *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, as its title suggests, broadly follows the Weberian notion of magical decline, although it is slightly unfair to characterise these paradigmatic outlines as having gone 'unacknowledged', as Alexandra Walsham has.[101] Although it could have been more overtly acknowledged, Thomas neither disguised nor hid references to Weber. He mentioned Weber's thesis that Puritanism associated 'economic achievement with spiritual success' and in his concluding chapter he directly referred to Weber's disenchantment thesis prior to discussing ambitious mentalities.[102] Thomas certainly followed the teleological notion of a progressive disenchantment in western European societies that was driven, in large part, by a shift to an aspirational mentality with a 'new faith in the potentialities of human initiative'. The influence of which mentality eroded the basis upon which, according to Thomas, magic perpetuated: its immediate practical utility. Enchantment, then, is something like a measure of the space a society allows magic to inhabit: a 'shared and durable sense of how the world worked [and] the relationship between forces not of this world, extraordinary forces in this world, and daily experiences'.[103]

Enchantment itself is a fuzzy concept, beholden to underlying taxonomies of magic, science, and religion; all which concepts are themselves laden with theoretical baggage. Reformation historian Peter Marshall has gone so far as to recommend that any sense of an enchantment thesis is best discarded – neither to be disproven, nor advocated for – because it tends to essentialise its own concepts. His alternative suggestion is that it be replaced by a focus on the history of contemporary discourses of 'rationality' and 'irrationality' and how these boundaries have been contested over time.[104] For the purposes of this thesis, the rigorous

[100] Max Weber, 'Science as Vocation', in H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (eds and trans.), *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (London, 2009), pp. 129–156; Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalis*m, Hans Henrik Bruun and Sam Whimster (eds), trans. Hans Henrik Bruun (Abingdon, 2012), p. 342, 481.
[101] Alexandra Walsham, 'The Reformation and "The Disenchantment of the World" Reassessed', *The Historical Journal*, 51:2 (June, 2008), pp. 497–528, quoted p. 498.
[102] Thomas, *Religion*, pp. 103, 786.
[103] Kathryn A. Edwards, 'What Makes Magic Everyday Magic', in Kathryn A. Edwards (ed.), *Everyday Magic in Early Modern Europe* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), pp. 1–11.
[104] Peter Marshall, 'Disenchantment and Re-enchantment in Europe, 1250–1920', *The Historical Journal*, 54:2 (2011), pp. 599–606. This directional suggestion comes on p. 606.

differentiation between "supernatural" and "preternatural" that Walsham exercises is eschewed in favour of looser language.[105] 'Magic', as Michael Bailey puts it, 'is a profoundly unstable category'.[106] And given the critiques of overly stringent systemisation in terms of witchcraft and magic expressed above, a more fluid and heuristic stance on definitional issues. Marina Warner describes the supernatural as 'difficult terrain; of its very nature, it resists discourse . . . it is always in the process of being described, conjured, made, and made up, without ascertainable outside referents'.[107] The salient characteristic of the supernatural to Warner is its dynamism; a dynamism that rejects the constraints of language and theology, even as its shape is moulded through them. The working definition employed here follows that used by Owen Davies, which describes 'low, popular, or folk magic' as being 'characterised as a rich medley of indigenous beliefs, practices, and rituals'.[108] In practice, witchcraft and magic in early modern England were subsumed beneath the loose canopy of the supernatural.

The pluralism of this position reflects the fact that early modern understandings of the supernatural, magic, and witchcraft were 'multiple and contested' .[109] Consider, for instance, the discordance between two texts from Essex produced within four years of each other: a treatise about witchcraft by the Maldon-based puritan preacher George Gifford (1593) and an anonymous pamphlet relating a witch-trial in Chelmsford (1589).[110] Whereas Gifford's treatise critically appraises the theological position about the Devil's physical causal agency, the anonymous pamphlet uncritically reports the physical phenomena described in the trial. Gifford's position is that the manipulations of the Devil 'decieueth not onely the witches but many other and so leadeth them awrie into many great errours'; one such error being attributing physical causal agency to the Devil. The most potent ability Gifford's Devil possessed was that of supernaturally accurate prediction, deployed insidiously to manipulate the witch into thinking they desire something that was predetermined to occur regardless of his input, and to gain the witch's loyalty through this deception. The Devil

[105] Walsham, 'The "Disenchantment of the World" Reassessed', pp. 497–528.
[106] Michael D. Bailey, 'The Meanings of Magic', *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft*, 1:1 (Summer, 2006), pp. 1–23.
[107] Warner, *Fantastic Metamorphoses, Other Worlds* (Oxford, 2002), p. 159.
[108] Davies, *Popular Magic*, p. x.
[109] Stuart Clark, 'Introduction', in idem, *Languages of Witchcraft*, pp. 1–18.
[110] A more in-depth biography and analysis of Gifford is given in Alan MacFarlane, 'A Tudor Anthropologist: George Gifford's Discourse and Dialogue', in Sidney Anglo (ed.), *The Damned Art: Essays in the Literature of Witchcraft* (London, 1977), pp. 140–155; George Gifford, *A dialogve concerning VVitches and Witchcraftes* (London: Printed by Iohn Windet, 1593); Anon., *The Apprehension and confession of three notorious witches* (London: Printed by E. Allde, 1589).

planted the desire to see a person dead into the mind of the witch and so 'he maketh them beleeue he doeth kill and plague' when in actuality the supposed victim's 'bodie did languish and pine of naturall causes, which the deuill did know'. Once they did 'die of naturall diseases' the witch was elated, impressed, and convinced of their pact. But the positions Gifford presents within the treatise contained nuance. For instance, he allowed for scenarios in which the Devil had the capacity to affect physical change, albeit without agency: he could 'strike some in their bodies for their haynous sinnes' but only as an instrument of God's intentions.[111] Gifford's positions were communicated through a fictional dialogue between characters who critically and self-consciously interrogated the content of their beliefs, for the metatextual purpose of didactically correcting readers' miscomprehensions. The trial pamphlet indicated how atypical this kind of deliberate self-reflection was in situations when witches were suspected to have been involved. Joan Cunny, a witch from Stisted, used her demonic familiars to 'hurt diuers persons' over the course of two decades. In one instance Jack, one of Cunny's familiars, accompanied her son to gather wood from the grounds of Sir Edward Huddlestone 'the Sheriffe of the Sheere', 'and when they came to a mighty Oke-tree, the spirit went about it, and presentlye the Tree blew vp by the roots'. The writer of this account was clearly quite convinced that this episode was indicative of supernatural agency; they twice contextualised the event as having occurred when 'no winde at all stirring at [that] time', which the High Sheriff confirmed when he testified it 'to be blown down in a great calme'. This was where the writer left their report of Cunny and the impression given clearly invited readers to conclude that, in the absence of natural causation, supernatural force must have caused the movement of the tree. This direct causation is mirrored at the end of the pamphlet, when the writer related that 'the Iury found these bad women guiltie and that they had slaine Men, women, and Children'.[112] There is no report, or even indication, of any uncertainty in the belief that these familiars had directly and physically caused many different events.

Sharpe has unpacked the problem of historians relying upon contemporary categorisations of nebulous concepts like 'magic' and 'witchcraft' by judging the merit of a potential generalisation: one that distinguishes between magic and witchcraft by the learned nature of the former and the innateness of the latter. Sharpe immediately points out that 'early modern commentators [themselves] tended to jumble the terms together happily enough', and that contemporary descriptions of witchcraft practices include the use of specific charms

[111] Gifford, *A dialogue*, sigs C3r–v.
[112] Anon., *The Apprehension and confession*, sigs A4v, B3r.

and spells, and that counter-magic employed the same.[113] Such ambiguity is readily apparent in English witchcraft pamphlets. According to the anonymous writer of a 1613 pamphlet the convicted witch Mother Sutton lived with her daughter Mary as a 'furtherer to her diuellish practises', implying an innate lineage of proclivity and capacity for witchcraft, but went on to describe Sutton's motive 'to make her a *scholler* to the Diuell himselfe', implying a learned element to the process.[114] The previously mentioned Joan Cunny of Stisted was taught a ritual for summoning 'Spirits' by another practitioner of witchcraft Mother Humfrye; this ritual involved the learning of physical behaviour – kneeling – preparing the ritual environment – making a circle on the ground – and the recitation of a specific 'praier now forgotten' 'vnto Sathan'.[115] Another anonymous pamphleteer describes a different mother and daughter pair who courted the Devil, but who '[learnt] the manner of Incantations, Spells, and Charmes', and reported how witches 'studie nothing but mischief and exoticke practises of loathsome Arts and Sciences'. Indeed, in the introductory section discussing the nature of witchcraft, the same anonymous writer – someone evidently quite familiar with the more scholarly debates about the topic – described the 'titles of sundry sorts' by which 'the learned have charactered delinquents in this kinde': Pythonissae, Magi, Chaldei, Negromancers, Geomantici, Genethliaci, Ventriloqui, and Venefici. For all of this diversity, the writer noted that 'yet have they all but one familiar terme with us in English, called Witches', exemplifying how within popular contemporary texts 'witches' was the hypernym under which myriad magical practitioners were subsumed.[116]

One of the best elucidations on this theme is found in Robin Briggs' work on the eponymous witches of Lorraine, where he wrote about how 'the popular vision of the great complex of hidden or magical forces surrounding the everyday world was evidently far more ambiguous than that formulated by austere theologians'. Briggs found sufficient evidence in early modern Lorraine to 'not implausibly describe this as a superenchanted world, one so full of messages and meanings that its inhabitants might well feel both bewildered and terrified, beset as they supposedly were by invisible forces, whether benign or malign'.[117] To return us to the language of doubt, Warner goes on to describe how 'the concept [of the supernatural]

[113] Sharpe, *Instruments of darkness*, p. 14.
[114] Anon., *Witches Apprehended, Examined and Executed, for notable villanies by them committed both by Land and Water* (London: Printed by William Stansby for Edward Marchant, 1613), sig. A4r, emphasis added.
[115] Anon., *The Apprehension and confession*, sig. A2r.
[116] Anon., *Witchcrafts Strange and Wonderfull: Discovering the damnable practises of seven Witches, against the lives of certain Noble Personages* (London: Printed by M. F. for Thomas Lambert, 1635), sigs B1r, A2v, A2r, A2v.
[117] Robin Briggs, *The Witches of Lorraine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 121.

does not only describe a vacancy, it threatens it [recursively]'.[118] The acute paranoia experienced by patients of Richard Napier represented wider anxieties that only grew in the wake of the purgation of "superstitious" practices in Anglicanism; the population had been disarmed against magical threats that were simultaneously considered to be more active and threatening than ever before.[119] We must be sensitive to the contestation of the gestalt space between rough binaries of doubt and belief – as well as between scepticism and credulity – in order to re-evaluate not only *what* contemporaries believed but *how* they believed.

The supernatural was deeply embedded within the 'multiplicity of cosmological understandings and interpretations in early modern Europe', which could never have been neutralised or simply swept away by any historical force.[120] This was the point raised by Bob Scribner when he argued that the Reformation had failed to disrupt popular magical beliefs in the manner that more triumphalist histories of Protestantism had presented. A project 'to shatter an entire world-view, to effect change in popular understanding of moral, psychic and physical causality' was, realistically, an 'impossible task'.[121] The supernatural remained entrenched in popular culture for centuries and there is considerable evidence for the continuation of popular magical belief, including belief in witchcraft. Owen Davies and Willem de Blécourt have challenged the idea that magic declined as an aspect of popular belief by spotlighting evidence of its continued existence across Europe long after its supposed demise. In the German municipality of Wichterich, church bells were still reportedly rung to turn away thunderstorms and protect against witches and demons despite prohibition of the practice by the 1783 ordinances from the Trier Elector.[122] In France, allegations of witchcraft have been identified as late as the mid-nineteenth century.[123] In Spain, folk healers known as *curandero* operated until at least the late nineteenth century, relying on their supposed possession of innate supernatural power to '[see] inside of the human body, the same as one can see the water in a crystalline glass',

[118] Warner, *Fantastic Metamorphoses*, p. 159.
[119] Michael Macdonald, *Mystical Bedlam: Madness, anxiety, and healing in seventeenth-century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), esp. pp. 198–217.
[120] Helen Parish, 'Introduction: The "Disenchantment" of Europe?', in Helen Parish (ed.), *Superstitious and Magic in Early Modern Europe: A Reader* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), pp. 309–313, quoted p. 309.
[121] R. W. Scribner, *Popular Culture and Popular Movements in Reformation Germany* (London: Hambledon, 1987), p. 15.
[122] Freytag, 'Witchcraft, witch doctors', p. 38.
[123] Owen Davies, 'Witchcraft accusations in France, 1850–1990', in de Blécourt and Davies, *Witchcraft Continued*, pp. 107–132.

and through the use of which they were able to diagnose any ailment.[124] And in my own hometown of Halstead a man died in 1863 after having been beaten and swum in a brook after it was suspected that he was a witch. In what remains the most comprehensive study of English cunning-folk to date, Davies claimed that these practitioners of magic 'were as much a part of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century society as they were of the seventeenth'.[125] Davies charted statements spanning the eighteenth century which described the continued operation of cunning-folk – and implicitly belief in their abilities – such that in 1807 Robert Southey wrote that 'A Cunning-Man, or a Cunning-Woman . . . is to be found near every town'.[126] In the nineteenth century Davies found evidence that people still resorted to consulting cunning-folk for medical problems – particularly for ailments that were longstanding, or that professionalised medicine had failed to sufficiently treat.[127] A particularly charming example of the intransigence of popular belief in the face of proscription comes from nineteenth-century Montgomeryshire. A woman sent for the local curate and explained that she had wanted him to break a spell that had been placed on her by a local witch. The curate attempted, unsuccessfully, to disabuse her of the idea that this was even possible but eventually, albeit reluctantly, provided her with a prayer and bible reading. When he next saw the woman, she made sure to let him know that she had recovered fully thanks to his having broken the witch's spell, and his magic had even provided her with protection from any follow-up magical attacks.[128]

An alternative cyclical model of enchantment has been proposed by Andrea Walsham, in which she discards linearity to conceive of enchantment as a measure of engagement with magic in a given period, fluctuating according to circumstance.[129] There are salutary aspects to her reformulation of enchantment. She is clearly cognisant that such historical analyses must be sensitive to the dynamism of historical events, quoting Owen Chadwick's 'wise

[124] Ramiro Ávila, *Medicina Rural*, 25 March 1882, quoted in Enrique Perdiguero, 'Magical healing in Spain (1875–1936): medical pluralism and the search for hegemony', in de Blécourt and Davies, *Witchcraft Continued*, pp. 133–150

[125] Davies, *Popular Magic*, p. xiii. For evidence showing a significant proportion of the English population continued to believe in, and have concerns about, witchcraft into the early twentieth century also see Owen Davies, 'Cunning-Folk in the Medical Market-Place during the Nineteenth Century', *Medical History*, 43:1 (Jan., 1999), pp. 55–73, n. 7.

[126] Robert Southey, *Letters from England* (London, 1807), p. 295 quoted in Owen Davies, 'Cunning-Folk in England and Wales during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries', *Rural History*, 8:1 (Apr., 1997), pp. 91–107.

[127] Davies, 'Cunning-folk in the Medical Marketplace', pp. 56–57.

[128] Elias Owen, 'Folklore, Superstitions, or What-not, in Montgomeryshire and Elsewhere' (1882), p. 153, quoted in Owen Davies, 'Methodism, the Clergy, and the Popular Belief in Witchcraft and Magic', *History*, 82: 266 (1997), pp. 252–265, quoted p. 261.

[129] Walsham, 'The "Disenchantment of the World" Reassessed', pp. 515–527.

warning against making "the crass error that minds were at any time not in motion"'.[130] But I feel that there is unobserved potential in the sentiment Chadwick expressed. Rather than attempting to trace the fluctuations in belief over a long durée – as is the original intention of the cyclical model of enchantment – it may be equally as important to concentrate our efforts intensely and appreciate fluctuations at a smaller historical scale. The minds of early modern English people were in constant motion, navigating a dynamic sea of ever-changing social, political, and cultural structures and circumstances. Attempting to arrive at an understanding of enchantment as an historical process acting upon, or through, societies – or indeed to better debate whether it is a mere figment of our collective imagination – appears to be putting the cart before the horse. Therefore, before we can effectively deal with a concept as massive as enchantment, it might be more prudent for us to first grapple with understanding its core constituents: historical ideas, practices, and beliefs. In Chapter 2 we turn to charting some of the issues with historicising witchcraft belief, investigating several conceptual perspectives and formulations that may help navigate that difficult terrain, and from these travels synthesising an alternative conception of belief for histories of witchcraft.

[130] Owen Chadwick, *The secularisation of the European mind in the nineteenth century* (Cambridge, 1975), p. 17, quoted in Walsham, 'The "Disenchantment of the World" Reassessed', p. 527.

Chapter 2: A New Approach to Witchcraft Belief

The previous chapter summarised trends in how historians have deployed concepts of belief and identified a considerable number of instances within the historiography of witchcraft where our understanding of it as an historical phenomenon has suffered because of a lack of any rigorous examination of our conceptualisation of belief. Whether by displacement, revision, or rehabilitation belief has been consistently marginalised in many analytical models. This chapter confronts the conceptualisation of belief in witchcraft directly, expounding on its vital importance in any comprehensive historical witchcraft. This argument, and the thesis more broadly, is cosily situated in the corpus of works that Frances Dolan has described as being 'reluctant to dismiss testimony as deluded or malicious, trying instead to get inside what it meant to believe in witchcraft'.[1] In this chapter I give an overview of interdisciplinarity within witchcraft studies and evaluate the most promising avenues for the integration of extradisciplinary material into history: interaction with the domains of psychology, cognitive science, and anthropology. I contend that, with a few notable exceptions, the prospect of an interdisciplinarity that principally incorporates psychology and cognitive science into histories of witchcraft has, and always will have, several ineluctably destructive implications for history writing. And instead, I propose that a combination of insights from anthropology and the history of emotions provide a strong foundation for reconceptualising historical belief in witchcraft.

A major, overarching problem with conceptions of belief in the historiography of witchcraft is a resistance to the prospect of thinking about belief as a process. As shown in Chapter 1, when recent histories of witchcraft have engaged with belief as a concept, they have predominantly dealt with beliefs as propositional statements. Conceiving of beliefs as statements disaggregates them from the lived historical experiences from which they were born and reifies beliefs as if they were historical objects themselves. This solidity benefits systematising belief into typologies, but through this petrification the sense of historical process is lost. An alternative approach is not to question what people believed in, but how they believed. It is safe to say that the vast majority of early modern English people who believed in the reality of witchcraft did not write explicit treatises on the topic. Even those

[1] Frances Dolan, *True Relations: Reading, Literature, and Evidence in Seventeenth-Century England* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), p. 52.

who were involved in trials did not make direct statements about what supernatural effects witches could or not achieve. The people who produced accusations did not sit and consciously think to themselves, "I believe that witches enter into a diabolical pact with a familiar spirit so that the spirit can harm others". Rather, their beliefs were generated from their own experiences, the stories about bewitchments to which they were exposed, and suspicions they held and discussed with their family and communities. The idea of belief *in* witchcraft was not an abstraction that most early modern people engaged with, predicated as it is upon self-conscious reflection on the topic. Rather, belief *in* witchcraft, meaning that witchcraft was possible, was merely implied by people believing *that* witchcraft was possible, or was occurring in a given situation. There are echoes here of E. P. Thompson's critique of *Religion and the Decline of Magic*: that Thomas' voluminous approach lacked 'space for micro-study, and for exploring the inwardness – and the irregularities as well as regularities – of the evidence'.[2] We have, in a sense, missed the trees for the wood.

Recent recommendations to review the conceptualisation of belief in the academy are not a unique phenomenon in the discipline of history. Recent reflections in religious studies have identified a similar discursive tendency within its academic literature 'to focus on theological and life-changing beliefs and [neglect] everyday practices'.[3] Because strident historical material tends to stand out, and ardent people more likely to produce material in the first place, it is crucial to reiterate 'that every believer everywhere is not a fundamentalist or a systematic theologian', and nor must they be.[4] Alexandra Walsham's influential study of early modern English providence concluded with a reminder that 'Protestantism could not and did not eliminate the ideological eclecticism which characterised lay mentalities at every level' and that 'ordinary individuals invoked varying explanations according to [their] situations and circumstances'.[5] Those even passingly familiar with the historiography of the Reformation are aware of the oceans of words and mountains of books written debating the social direction and degree to which beliefs and ideas penetrated, permeated, and

[2] E. P. Thompson, 'Anthropology and the Discipline of Historical Context', *Midland History* 1:3 (1972), pp. 41–55, quoted pp. 50–51.
[3] Lea Taragin-Zeller, 'Towards an anthropology of doubt: the case of religious reproduction in Orthodox Judaism', *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies*, 18:1 (2018), pp. 1–20, quoted p. 2.
[4] Jonathan Mair, 'Cultures of belief', *Anthropological Theory*, 12:4 (2012), pp. 448–466, quoted p. 451.
[5] Alexandra Walsham, *Providence in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 332.

percolated in early modern England.[6] Ethan Shagan called for a wholesale revision of the Reformation meta-narrative, recognising its historical reality as 'a more piecemeal process . . . of cultural accommodation' at a popular level.[7] The literary scholar Timothy Rosendale advocated for a model of the English Reformation being a 'simultaneously a vertical and coercive exercise of state power *and* a horizontal distribution of political and religious authority'.[8] The prolific scholar of the English Reformation Peter Marshall has presented a 'messy process', in which ordinary 'English parishioners were not simply passive and stoic consumers' of religious prescription.[9] There is a begged question – related to the problem of how 'top-level' studies of witchcraft belief arrange themselves according to intellectual superstructure – about if and how these ideologies translated into the actual population and how this influence manifested. Walsham describes a dynamic process by which 'unlearned parishioners subtly edited, altered, and ignored the elaborate tenets propounded by their university-educated pastors and preachers'.[10] She emphasised that people were *bricoleurs*, acting according to their present circumstances 'ordinary individuals invoked varying explanations according to the situation and circumstances in which they found themselves'. That the process of believing in real time was reactive and adaptive elided with Walsham's conceptualisation of providentialism that 'ingrained providential assumptions did not preclude a degree of practical scepticism and "rationalism" on particular occasions'; how such mental resources were deployed was not predetermined.[11] This, I think, is the spirit in which we should approach historical believers in witchcraft.

In a remarkably prescient article – one that was tragically overshadowed by the releases of Thomas and Macfarlane's works – W. B. Carnochan suggested that witchcraft scholarship dearly needed to re-examine the notion of belief.[12] Carnochan's article is well worth a read

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[6] C.f. Christopher Haigh, 'The Recent Historiography of the English Reformation', in Christopher Haigh (ed.), *The English Reformation Revised* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 19–33; Robert Whiting, *The Blind Devotion of the People: Popular religion and the English Reformation* (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 1989); James Gregory, 'The making of a Protestant nation: "success" and "failure" in England's Long Reformation', in Nicholas Tyacke (ed.), *England's Long Reformation* (London: UCL Press, 1998), pp. 307–333.

[7] Ethan Shagan, *Popular Politics and the English Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), esp. ch. 1, quoted p. 7.

[8] Timothy Rosendale, *Liturgy and Literature in the Making of Protestant England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 3.

[9] Peter Marshall, '(Re)defining the English Reformation', *Journal of British Studies*, 48:3 (2009), pp. 564–586, quoted, pp. 585–586.

[10] Walsham, *Providence*, p. 331.

[11] Walsham, *Providence*, p. 332.

[12] Charlotte-Rose Millar does, in fact, cite Carnochan's article in her 2017 monograph, but only in respect to the historical episode with which he illustrated his point, without reference to the probing

for anyone interested in witchcraft studies because he raised several incisive queries about the relationship between witchcraft and belief that are as relevant now as they were fifty years ago. He questioned how historians understood and used the term belief, and what ramifications this had had on scholarship. And in pondering what exactly the historical relationship between belief in witchcraft and religious belief was, he predicted 'that the most satisfying history of witchcraft will be one that turns out to deal with the subject as an episode, above all, in the continuing history of belief and its associated behaviour'. He even drew an association between belief as an active process involving emotion by recognising that 'belief, however we want to construe that difficult notion, represents many shades of feeling. At one end of the spectrum is bright certainty; at the other, paler shades of fear and hope'. Tucked away in the final footnote of the article was an acknowledgement by the author pre-emptively tempering the 'cautionary' tone of his piece in light of the imminent publication of Thomas and Macfarlane's books.[13] Neither work would ultimately turn out to address the concept of belief in witchcraft in a manner suitably nuanced enough to meaningfully answer Carnochan's questions. Thomas did frame his research in terms of a decline in supernatural belief but this suffered alongside the collapse of the teleological Enlightenment narrative to which it was intellectually indebted. The prospect of reconsidering beliefs as having had a temporality has also been raised by Tessa Watt, who has urged historians 'to see belief-formation as a process'. In light of historians having attributed confessional identity to particular beliefs, she astutely observed that religion in early modern England 'was not a category isolated from other aspects of experience', nor can it 'just be measured in terms of knowledge of particular doctrines'. Instead, we must 'look at the hazier area of images, emotions, and fears'.[14]

The issue that emerges from an analysis of historical belief rooted in a categorisation of ideas, whether those categories are in accordance with theological or folkloric genres, is that histories produced thusly foreground classification of beliefs into discrete ideological statements to which investigations of provenance and epidemiology become applicable. The effect of this kind of framing is to relegate the historical experience of certain beliefs beneath a neater covering of classification. To do so – particularly in the case of magical and

theoretical questions he had raised: Charlotte-Rose Millar, *Witchcraft, the Devil, and Emotions in Early Modern England* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), p. 5 n. 22.

[13] W. B. Carnochan, 'Witch-Hunting and Belief in 1751: The Case of Thomas Colley and Ruth Osborne', *Journal of Social History* 4:4 (Summer, 1971), pp. 389–403, quoted pp. 391, 403, n. 22.

[14] Tessa Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety: 1550–1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 327–28.

supernatural beliefs – is to lose sight of how integral the experiences that beliefs generated were to the history of their continuation and proliferation. A similar sentiment has been expressed in a recent article for *Past & Present*, in which the social historian John Arnold notes that historians have privileged propositionally orientated apprehensions of belief. He uses insights from Bruno Latour to suggest that, in terms of our understanding of belief as it pertains to populations in general, there is merit in also considering the importance of 'belief acts'. Although his observations are principally applied in the context of medieval religious belief, his conclusion that 'the contexts within which belief [takes] place are structural, but also sensory, emotional, and affective' elides with my proposals (the subject of the second half of this chapter) that historians need to interrogate and broaden our understanding of historical beliefs.[15] The historiographical rise of the study of emotions as a valid subject has, by its nature, reorientated our perspectives toward a consideration of the importance of how historical persons experienced life. Avenues for more complex scholarly reconstructions of the past as a dynamic and affective place have been opened. And one particularly vibrant potential route historians of witchcraft have been drawn to is interdisciplinarity.

Interdisciplinarity

Interdisciplinarity can be an excellent tool to enhance the understanding of any historical subject and almost every piece of historical scholarship is to some degree interdisciplinary. Appreciating outside perspectives can lead us to rethink our assumptions, re-examine historical material, and revise our conclusions. Paul Veyne once wrote that historiographical progress is made through a process of 'being able to ask oneself more and more questions, but not in knowing how to answer them'.[16] And interdisciplinary reading certainly generates a plethora of questions for historians. Witchcraft studies has been fertile ground for cooperation between disciplines for decades. As mentioned in Chapter 1, Thomas and Macfarlane's integration of anthropology into their seminal histories of English witchcraft was a significant moment in British historiography. Their work was considered to have been in the vanguard of interdisciplinary scholarship for English historians at the time.[17]

[15] John H. Arnold, 'Believing in Belief: Gibbon, Latour, and the Social History of Religion', *Past & Present* (2022), https://doi.org/10.1093/pastj/gtac012, pp. 1–33, quoted pp. 31–2.
[16] Paul Veyne (trans. Mina Moore-Rinvolucri), *Writing History: Essays on Epistemology* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1984), p. 213.
[17] Natalie Zemon Davis, 'The Possibilities of the Past', *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 12:2 (1981), pp. 267–275.

Unfortunately, the fallout from their choice to include anthropology in their work had a temporary chilling effect on the prospect of further collaboration. In an infamous back-and-forth between Thomas and anthropologist Hildred Geertz, the latter emphasised that, although she respected the former's work greatly, he had used outdated anthropological categories that had been problematised and overthrown by more up-to-date scholarship.[18] Thomas had heavily lent on E. E. Evans-Pritchard's observations about witchcraft in the culture of the Azande people of central Africa, which research had been carried out and written about in the 1920s and '30s. Severe critiques had subsequently been made within the discipline of anthropology about issues of cultural specificity and whether cross-comparison between cultures was appropriate or even helpful. Thomas agreed with Geertz that cross-cultural comparisons based on broad etic categories were not useful and that the supernatural needed to be studied as an emic category within the bounds of different cultures: modern and historical.[19] At this point a moratorium was effectively enacted on anthropological interdisciplinarity in witchcraft studies and even the explosion in witchcraft historiography towards the end of the 1980s did not see its status restored. The promise of that early exercise was so thoroughly halted that – in his 1989 review of Geoffrey Quaife's *Godly Zeal and Furious Rage* – the historian of France J. H. M. Salmon commented that, whereas a generation ago the entwinement of history and anthropology had seemed natural, he was not surprised that Quaife had only made a single reference to an anthropologist, which was itself accompanied by a litany of references to articles problematising historico-anthropological integration.[20] Amongst sister-disciplines in the humanities, history's hesitancy towards engaging immediately with intellectual trends earnt it 'scornful condescension' and a reputation for timidity.[21]

In the last two decades of scholarship, however, more advocates for increased interdisciplinarity have come forward and there appears to be an appetite for the practice to be given another chance.[22] Malcolm Gaskill, writing in 2013 about the overall momentum in witchcraft historiography seemingly slowing, explicitly recommended that historians

[18] Hildred Geertz, 'An Anthropology of Religion and Magic, I', *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 6:1 (Summer, 1975), pp. 71–89.
[19] Keith Thomas, 'An Anthropology of Religion and Magic, II', *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 6:1 (Summer, 1975), pp. 91–109.
[20] J. H. M. Salmon, 'History without Anthropology: A New Witchcraft Synthesis', *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 19:3 (Winter, 1989), pp. 481–486.
[21] Richard D. Brown, 'Microhistory and the Post-Modern Challenge', *Journal of the Early Republic* 23:1 (2003), pp. 1–20, quoted p. 1.
[22] Ronald Hutton, 'Anthropological and Historical Approaches to Witchcraft: Potential for a new collaboration?', *The Historical Journal*, 47:2 (2004), pp. 413–434.

produce 'work that cross-fertilises' interdisciplinarily.[23] Even more recently Ronald Hutton has extended an interdisciplinary olive branch to anthropology through his use of examples from that field in his expansive history of witchcraft and the nature of fear as intertwined historical phenomena, in which he enthusiastically advocates for the value of comparative ethnography.[24] In the last several years further statements encouraging interdisciplinarity have been issued. In a 2019 article reflecting upon her book *Reading Witchcraft*, Marion Gibson advocates that the notion of a 'finished, closed, univocal text' should be abandoned. Instead, historians should seek to 'ask more questions, or at least to frame them in a different way, with reference to current anthropological and analytical thinking'.[25] Although she does not cite Nils Bubandt's *The Empty Shell* directly, she does cite a review of it by the eminent anthropologist and witchcraft scholar Peter Geschiere, in which he summed the scope of three recent witchcraft ethnographies, including *The Empty Seashell*.[26] Gibson focusses on the conceptual inspiration (noted by both Geschiere and Bubandt) owed to James Siegel's *Naming the Witch* (2005). And obscurely tucked away Geschiere's article is a page-spanning footnote that identifies how Siegel locates the uncanny experience of witchcraft in a specific catalytic event. Bubandt's intervention directly contradicts this characterisation, instead locating the aporetic qualities of *gua* in Buli precisely in that it is 'not related to an exceptional happening but is an everyday and long-term phenomenon'.[27] With its pairing of familiars, neighbours, and localistic features with intense episodes of illness, loss, and suffering English witchcraft seems to straddle both the extraordinary and the mundane in much the same way. Nevertheless, the lasting impression from Gibson is that witchcraft operates in uncertainty, it is not a straightforward act of producing meaning and definition, but it is simultaneously the failure of this process. Ever elusive, ever confounding. As Gibson notes, the 'overarching binary structure [of demonology] does not determine everything that is said by the accused and accusers' because they area active participants who 'resist, evade, and edit as well as invent for themselves, producing their own discourse and language'. In this they collaborate to create 'an inharmonious, unfinished overall picture that meets the needs

[23] Malcolm Gaskill, 'Witchcraft Trials in England', in Brian P. Levack (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe and Colonial America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 283–299, quoted p. 283.
[24] Ronald Hutton, *The Witch: A History of Fear, From Ancient Times to the Present* (London: Yale University Press, 2017), esp. ch. 1 and conclusion
[25] Marion Gibson, 'Becoming-Witch: Narrating Witchcraft in Early Modern English', *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft*, 14:3 (2019), pp. 317–335.
[26] Ibid., p. 332.
[27] Peter Geschiere, 'Witchcraft, Shamanism, and Nostalgia. A Review Essay', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 58:1 (2016), pp. 242–265, quoted n. 16.

of the magistracy and the church in only very approximate ways'.[28] Allowing for a greater recognition of how agency was expressed through the act of believing provides a much more accurate and nuanced understanding of how historical witchcraft beliefs operated and were experienced in the past.

So, interdisciplinarity can vaguely be said to harbour wondrous potential; but its worth is nevertheless entirely determined according to which disciplines historians choose to engage with. As one might expect, different disciplines have wildly disparate perspectives on a subject. The very first line of an article published in the journal *Review of General Psychology* states that 'believing is arguably one of the most important things we do'.[29] Whereas *Social Analysis* devoted a special issue to critiquing whether there is any value in the concept of "belief" whatsoever, describing it as 'conceptually misleading and ideologically dubious'.[30] No amount of enthusiasm for syncretism will marry every extradisciplinary concept together usefully, necessitating that we determine how historians of witchcraft should best exercise discernment when informing their work through extradisciplinary material. As the rule, the best kind of interdisciplinary history is one influenced by outside material but is not beholden to it. There is an inflection point of diminishing returns as the historian becomes too indebted to their borrowings and too invested in the internecine debates and results of a separate branch of academia. In light of this, I now explore how certain interdisciplinary borrowings – predominantly those from the more scientific fields like medicine, psychology, and cognitive science – have had a net-negative effect on our understanding of historical witchcraft. This is achieved through a critique of the worst offender in this category – the practice of retrospective diagnosis – which is followed by an in-depth analysis of how an overreliance on psychology, particularly cognitive science, is fundamentally problematic to witchcraft scholarship.

Displacement and Retrospective Diagnosis

In terms of approaches that mostly detrimentally submerge witchcraft belief, and especially historical witchcraft, the worst offender are attempts to "solve" the issue of witchcraft by retrospectively diagnosing bewitched persons in the past. Retrospective diagnoses have

[28] Gibson, 'Narrating Witchcraft', p. 335.
[29] Matthew T. Boden and Howard Berenbaum, 'Why Do People Believe What They Do? A Functionalist Perspective', *Review of General Psychology* 20:4 (2016), pp. 399–411.
[30] Galina Lindquist and Simon Coleman, 'Introduction: Against Belief?', *Social Analysis* 52:1 (Spring, 2008), pp. 1–18.

been singled out because they represent the most egregious response to the disquietude felt when encountering witchcraft as an *aporia*. It is a form of translation that simultaneously sanitises history by epistemologically watering down the acidity of its brutal historical reality, whilst also being a neutralising process that shifts attention towards explicability and away from historical context. Although this method has barely impacted the academic discourse about witchcraft, it is imperative that the practice be thoroughly critiqued. It shares implicit methodological and conceptual problems with interdisciplinary histories of witchcraft that incorporate psychology and cognitive science; so an examination of retrospective diagnosis also sheds light on associated issues with the inclusion of material from the latter disciplines in history writing.

The dogged persistence of retrospective diagnosis as an approach is another, particularly harmful, aspect to it as a response to encountering the witchcraft *aporia*.[31] Discomfort with the epistemic dubiety of witchcraft as an historical phenomenon has led some 'to explain it in terms of something more real . . . in the language of pathology'.[32] Ironically, Edward Bever – with whom Stuart Clark has sparred on issues of realism and interdisciplinarity in history writing, and whose work is addressed below – gives an excellent summation of why this form of displacement is so prevalent, describing how 'the emotional attraction of the rational worldview as a habitual orientation lies in its insulating the observer from the affective meaning of what is observed'.[33] One particularly clever and challenging defence of retrospective diagnosis is an article by the medical ethicist Osamu Muramoto. Despite the ingenuity of Muramoto's argumentation, exploring his article reveals the degree of incompatibility between the fundamental assumptions that scholars of history and medical science approach the subject of witchcraft – much of which can be boiled down to two disciplines talking at cross purposes – as well as the flimsiness of even the best advocacy for the practice of retrospective diagnosis.

Firstly, it is worth recognising that plenty of experts within the medical field themselves have also made arguments against retrospectively diagnosing historical figures. Mathias Schmidt,

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[31] An early articulation of witchcraft as a misapprehension of mental illness is: Gregory Zilboorg, *The Medical Man and the Witch During the Renaissance* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1935).
[32] Stuart Clark, 'Introduction', in Stuart Clark (ed.), in Stuart Clark (ed.), *Languages of Witchcraft: Narrative, Ideology and Meaning in Early Modern Culture* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), pp. 1–18.
[33] Edward Bever, 'Descartes' Dreams, the Neuropsychology of Disbelief, and the Making of the Modern Self', in Edward Bever and Randall Styers (eds), *Magic in the Modern World: Strategies of Repression and Legitimisation* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2017), pp. 33–48, quoted pp. 33–34.

Saskia Wilhelmy, and Dominik Gross have confidently summarised the numerous ontological, epistemological, and ethical problems inherent to the practice of retrospective diagnosis by psychiatric specialists, which critiques also apply to the practice overall. They conclude that because 'medical knowledge is socially and culturally transformed' the 'projection of disease categories and definitions into the past is an inadmissible simplification and an anachronism'.[34] And Axel Karenberg has raised several of the serious ethical implications raised when licenced medical practitioners propose retrospective diagnoses.[35] Outside of these internecine complaints, the article exemplifies a conflict between epistemic presuppositions in history and medicine.

Marumoto's first point is more technical than substantive, identifying logical inconsistencies in the ontological and epistemic positions of opponents and arguing that critics fail to adequately recognise that the diagnostic process is founded upon Bayesian probabilistic reasoning and that it is not an apodictic judgement. Beyond this logical technicality, he suggests that the negative response from historians to medical practitioners retrospectively diagnosing supernatural incidents in the past is actually the result of the failure of modern practices of academic publication. He suggests that in order for 'important papers' – by which he means the diagnostic – to be fairly adjudicated upon they should appear first in medical journals to have the quality of the medical diagnosis evaluated, and either simultaneously or shortly thereafter have 'the appropriateness of the historiographical methodology and the scholarly impact of the diagnosis be evaluated' in non-medical journals. His reasoning is reliant on the premise that such 'important papers' are valuable to both scholars of the humanities as well as medical professionals. There is an obvious tautology at play here, one latent within all related scholarship, that assumes that there have been, are, and can be, works produced through this method that are useful and 'important'. But, as Muramoto himself goes on to recognise, 'serious scholars of the humanities and sciences have little interest in those highly specific diagnostic labels generated by clinicians'.[36] The elephant in the room of the entire discourse is that, for such methods to have any value to historians, we must adopt a type of analytical reasoning that negates historical specificity.

[34] Mathias Schmidt, Saskia Wilhelmy, and Dominik Gross, 'Retrospective diagnosis of mental illness: past and present', *The Lancet Psychiatry* 7:1 (2020), pp. 14–16.
[35] Axel Karenberg, 'Retrospective Diagnosis: Use and Abuse in Medical Historiography', *Prague Medical Report* 110:2 (2009), pp. 140–145.
[36] Osamu Muramoto, 'Retrospective diagnosis of a famous historical figure: ontological, epistemic, and ethical considerations', *Philosophy, Ethics, and Humanities in Medicine* 9:10 (2014), pp. 1–15, 9, 13.

Muramoto's rhetorical proposal is that retrospective diagnosis should be limited to proposing syndromic conclusions without identifying disease. This suggestion is founded upon the same misapprehension that suffuses the entirety of the article: that this interdisciplinary antagonism stems from miscommunications rather than incompatibility. It imagines that historians critical of the practice are opposed to it because of a subtle misapprehension about nosology – disease identification – and the act of clinical diagnosis. Ironically, this is a misapprehension of historians' rationale. Historicity, in this context, can be considered the primary metric by which historians measure the value of something for our work. By deconstructing the fundamental logic of "realist" and "antirealist" arguments, Muramoto has missed the point entirely. Retrospective medical diagnoses are speculations made based on historical evidence: evidence that historians are already interpreting. What, then, does a diagnosis provide us? What historians have actually stressed is that interventions by physicians have tended to be prohibitively anachronistic in a manner that strip subjects of their historicity and promotes a reductionism in the public perception of given historical phenomena. Muramoto complains that it is illogical 'to insist that physicians must use ancient concepts and tools to diagnose an ancient patient', missing the plain fact that historians are not requesting that physicians do anything at all. These contributions are assumed to have inherent value, and historians' insistence that physicians and psychiatrists avoid applying entirely etic analysis to historical subjects is a gentle attempt to nudge them away from engaging in the practice altogether. And analyses that discount relativity become doubly suspect when the subject of inquiry is something like witchcraft, which already inherently raises questions about notions of historical reality. As Muramoto himself recognises, all diagnoses are 'socially determined', and historians already have to deal with problems of anachronism in their own theorising and work; it is unclear, then, why we would elect to burden ourselves with additional anachronisms borrowed from modern medical science. A concession might be made that the practice is useful for histories of medicine and disease themselves, and as a pleasant distraction for hobbyists. But here we run into more intractable issues, namely that historians of medicine are rightly more interested in how contemporaries themselves conceived of the relationship between illness, and – most importantly – supernatural retrospective diagnoses are entirely interchangeable.[37] Consider a hypothetical scenario wherein the supernatural visions experienced by the bewitched – an aspect of bewitchment explored more fully in Chapters 5 and 6 – could somehow be proven

[37] This relationship has been explored in a myriad of contexts over the course of two millennia in contributions to: Siam Bhayro and Catherine Rider (eds), *Demons and Illness from Antiquity to the Early Modern Period* (Leiden: Brill, 2017).

to have been the result of their having contracted malaria, and that this infection was not identified as some form of ague by contemporaries. The question then becomes what effect this would have on histories of witchcraft. Because the result would be identical as if they instead had encephalitis, schizophrenia, or suffered toxic exposure. Whether the constellation of symptoms experienced by a bewitched person aligned mostly closely with ergotism, encephalitis, a mental health disorder, or any other proposed pathology would be decided by, and debated between, modern clinicians, and this would be determined almost entirely outside of the sphere in which historians work.[38] These diagnoses are unscientific because they are unfalsifiable, and so discourse would necessarily become a series of proposals and counterproposals about new research into the presentation of disease. To accept that such diagnoses have value is to, without hyperbole, abandon any meaningful sense of historical context. In practice, these back-and-forths would simply become an ever-increasing list of claims for us to occasionally disproved or be forced to do battle against in the arena of popular historical comprehension.[39] They are very much so more a nuisance than a boon.

And although this critique has focussed on contributions by clinicians, inappropriate pathologisation can originate from the fields of both medicine and psychology.[40] Psychology, has more flexibility to consider questions of relativity, but it can certainly as produce the same de-historicising effect as retrospective medical diagnosis, which is why I consider it so important to directly challenge these practices. For instance, Frederick Valletta attempted a modest degree of interdisciplinary scholarship in his monograph, and he correctly recognised that feelings of persecution had historical agency. He also wisely caveats that we must be

[38] Linnda R. Caporael, 'Ergotism: The Satan Loosed in Salem?', *Science* 192: 4234 (April, 1976), pp. 21–26; Mary K. Matossian, 'Ergot and the Salem Witchcraft Affair', *American Scientist* 70:4 (1982), pp. 355–357; Nicholas P. Spanos and Jack Gottlieb, 'Ergotism and the Salem Village Witch Trials', *Science* 194:4272 (December, 1976), pp. 1390–1394; Nicholas P. Spanos, 'Ergotism and the Salem Witch Panic: a Critical Analysis and an Alternative Conceptualisation', *Journal of the History of the Behavioural Sciences* 19:4 (Oct., 1983), pp. 358–369. Homayun Sidky gives a reasonably comprehensive and equitable critique of the debate see: 'Demonic Possession, Witchcraft, Deception, and Disease' in: Homayun Sidky, *Witchcraft, Lycanthropy, Drugs and Disease: An Anthropological Study of the European Witch-Hunts- Second Printing,* (New York: Peter Lang AG International Academic Publishers, 2012), ch. 6.

[39] For more recent instances of the ergot-toxicity theory, and similar retroactive diagnoses continuing to be promoted see: Thomas Haarmann, Yvonne Rolke, Sabine Giesbert, and Paul Tudzynski, 'Ergot: from witchcraft to biotechnology', *Molecular Plant Pathology* 10:4 (Jul., 2009), pp. 563–577; Kirsten C. Uszkalo, 'Medical Theories on Malefic Possession: From Bewitchment to Anti-NMDAR Encephalitis', *Journal of Religion in Europe* 5:3 (2012), pp. 323–348; Johnny Tam and Michael S. Zandi, 'The witchcraft of encephalitis in Salem', *Journal of Neurology* 264: 6 (Jun., 2017), pp. 1529–1531.

[40] Paul Cefalu, 'The doubting disease: religious scrupulosity and obsessive-compulsive disorder in historical context', *Journal of Medical Humanities* 31:2 (2010), pp. 111–125.

cautious in our deployment of modern medical knowledge when discussing historical witchcraft. Yet, in effect, adopting this form of interdisciplinary resulted in Valletta inverting the explanatory logic of his work by continually presenting historical examples as evidence of modern psychological theories, finding instances of disorders such as paraphrenia and Munchausen Syndrome by proxy.[41] Clearly, if a line is to be drawn between the pathological and the normal – if, indeed, any line whatsoever can be drawn – then we must draw it as close as we can to contemporary demarcations in order to preserve any sense of the historicity of the subject.[42] There is a misunderstanding going here, but it is not on the behalf of historians.

What gives a subject historicity is that it allows us to contextualise and explore how people in the past acted and reacted, how they perceived the world and conceived of events and developments over time: all of which is predicated on the study of historical evidence. Conclusions drawn from etic diagnosis are entirely superfluous to this process; historians have invariable gained more historical insight by studying contemporary diagnoses.[43] This continues to be the case regardless of which diagnosis is made. Retrospective diagnosis is an extreme manifestation of the issue that pervades and plagues witchcraft studies: the drive to "solve" witchcraft. Diane Purkiss astutely identified it as a tendency for scholars to 'have often bent their energies to explaining witch-beliefs away . . . rather than trying to understand how witch-beliefs were structured for and by the believer'.[44] The problem at the heart of this sort of interdisciplinarity is an issue of intent and reception. Muramoto posits that retrospective diagnosis should function as merely another competing theory to explain causation in historical phenomena.[45] However, in practice these theories do not stop at explanation. As Purkiss showed, the metaphysical anxiety that witchcraft produces demands more than explanation, it demands solution. Solving something goes beyond merely explaining it. Solution implies finality, an end to the frustrating ambiguity that witchcraft

[41] Frederick Valletta, *Witchcraft, Magic, and Superstition in England, 1640–70* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), pp. 189–16.
[42] David D. Hall, 'Witchcraft and the Limits of Interpretation', *The New England Quarterly* 58:2 (Jun., 1985), pp. 253–281, quoted p. 281.
[43] Judith Bonzol, 'The Medical Diagnosis of Demonic Possession in an Early Modern English Community', *Parergon* 26:1 (2009), pp. 115–140; Nadine Metzger, 'Battling demons with medical authority: werewolves, physicians and rationalisation', *History of Psychiatry* 24:3 (2013), pp. 341–355; Brian P. Levack, *The Devil Within: Possession and Exorcism in the Christian West* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013); Andrew Sneddon, 'Medicine, belief, witchcraft and demonic possession in late seventeenth-century Ulster', *Medical Humanities* 42:2 (2016), pp. 81–86;
[44] Diane Purkiss, *The Witch in History, Early modern and twentieth-century representations* (London, Routledge, 1996), pp. 63, 61.
[45] Muramoto, 'Retrospective diagnosis', p. 8.

represents through its ontological negation. The specifics of proposed solutions might change but their actual content is largely immaterial; their shared quality of being solutions is what gives them value. Even the presumption of a solution is comforting in that it implies that witchcraft *can be solved*; its attendant implications of unknowability are less threatening because they can potentially be either contained within the parameters of a given solution or dissolved through constraint. By reducing cases of bewitchment and possession to universally consistent pathologies we avoid having to confront the *aporia*; in Veyne's terms, we are choosing to ask ourselves questions to which we already know the answers.

The Use of Cognitive Science

One of the most prominent theoretical reactions to the impetus-to-solve triggered by encountering the *aporia* of witchcraft has been the use of cognitive science in witchcraft history. This iteration of interdisciplinary collaboration does address one of the objections raised in Chapter 1: that previous conceptualisation of historical witchcraft have reified belief as a static object. Belief is certainly considered as an active process in cognitive science, but the rub is that – exactly as is with retrospective diagnosis – it is a discipline concerned with the mechanics of universal processes.[46] And like with retrospective diagnosis, this is a serious problem for its integration into history writing because rather than being about historical belief, our attention is directed towards these universal cognitive mechanisms. These processes take centre stage and belief is once again displaced. In effect, this approach constrains beliefs and believing through the act of describing them as cognitive processes, reifying belief as an historical object by recasting it as a pattern of thought. Any agency that might be attributable to belief is relegated to the periphery, replaced by the limitations of our understanding of how cognition is directed along certain neural pathways. As with the forms of conceptual displacement previously discussed, this reification is a method to make witchcraft belief more tangible, making it more readily observable, and therefore solvable. It represents another attempt to quell the dissatisfaction resultant from the friction between historical method and a resistant subject: to fill the aporetic void of our epistemic discomfort. It would be reasonable to raise an eyebrow about the severity of my response to these interdisciplinary borrowings. The Devil's advocate might argue that, surely, perspectives from cognitive science and the medical profession are merely new vantage points from which

[46] Jesper Sørensen, *A Cognitive Theory of Magic* (Plymouth: AltaMira, 2007), pp. 1–62.

historians can appreciate witchcraft as an historical phenomenon? Do they not provide the same opportunity for analytical variegation for providing which other critical interventions have been deservedly praised? Unfortunately, due to the foundational logic of these borrowings, opening our eyes to them means closing our eyes to other perspectives – they are inherently hostile to adopting a pluralistic stance on the subject. And it is for this reason that their problems must be energetically dredged to the surface and exposed, because I am concerned that if we fail to do so, then their discursively corrosive effects will seep into the groundwater of witchcraft historiography and poison it.

Technological advances made in the last several decades have given cognitive scientists unprecedented access to the processes at work within our brains. Consequently, since around the millennium some historians have advocated for the merits of an interdisciplinarity that accommodates new insights that such advances have enabled in psychology and cognitive science, what Daniel Lord Smail terms "neurohistory" or "deep history".[47] It is an approach to history that, proceeds according to a necessary foundational assumption – and conviction – that the morphological structure of human brains in the past is effectively identical to those structures that comprise our modern brains. If this is true, then consequently findings about our neurology today are equally applicable to past persons. An interdisciplinary history of witchcraft founded upon cognitive science replicates the same process identified in histories of witchcraft that conceptualise belief as an epiphenomenon of social or gender structures. Belief takes on the status of ephemera, the froth on the waves of history kicked up by deeper causative currents. There is not sufficient space here to fully interrogate the overall use of cognitive science in history; and I instead seek to demonstrate how the adoption of such an interdisciplinary methodology has severely damaging repercussions specifically to our understandings of belief, witchcraft, and the interaction between the two in the past. Through a focussed reading of several works of scholarship, I tease out criticisms that have both immediate relevancy to the historiography of witchcraft, as well as potentially dangerous implications for the discipline of history overall.[48]

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[47] Daniel Lord Smail, *On Deep History and the Brain* (London: University of California Press, 2008), esp. pp. 112–156; Andrew Shryock and Daniel Lord Smail, *Deep History: The Architecture of Past and Present* (London: University of California Press, 2011).

[48] Jeremy T. Burman, 'Bringing the brain into history: behind Hunt's and Smail's appeals to neurohistory', in Cristian Tileagă and Jovan Byford (eds), *Psychology and History: Interdisciplinary Explorations* (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 64–82; Paul H. Elovitz, 'The successes and obstacles to the interdisciplinary marriage of psychology and history', in Cristian Tileagă and Jovan Byford (eds), *Psychology and History: Interdisciplinary Explorations* (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 83–108; Kirsten C. Uszkalo, *Bewitched and Bedevilled: A*

Edward Bever is undeniably the most vociferous, prodigious, and voluble, champion of the prospective historiographical utility of historians of witchcraft implementing findings from cognitive science into their work.[49] Even before advocates for neurohistory, such as Smail, amplified the historiographical reach of this sort of interdisciplinarity, Bever expressed an early formulation of what would eventually coalesce into his insistence upon the "realities" of witchcraft, using related or connotative terminology such as "psychosociality".[50] As mentioned above, the calibre of Bever's specific research about a particular historical period itself is not adjudicated upon here – even his critics have tended to confirm that Bever's historical knowledge is sound – rather, this reading of his work intends to explore the potential ramifications of historians adopting the interdisciplinary model for which he is an ardent apologist.[51] The best articulations of the foundational problems inherent to the approach have come from historians Michael Ostling and Stuart Clark. Ostling demonstrates that, despite some caveating, Bever effectively only endorses "reality" as that determined through the application of modern neuroscience and relegates contemporary cultural interpretation to a secondary status, reluctantly brought in only where cognitive and neurobiological models falter.[52] Both Ostling and Clark dig into the ramifications of adopting a timeless stance on reality, one that is a necessary precursor to the function of the approach Bever deploys to function. Metaphysically, his approach occupies a space that could be variously termed as universalism, realism, or essentialism. In effect, his insistence on the universality of neurobiology means that any given episode of witchcraft is made explicable through an explanatory model that itself is only subject to change via updates from modern scientific theories. And as with retrospective diagnosis, it is a practice that diminishes historicity and renders historians of witchcraft effectively redundant in our own field.

Histories written in this mode are inherently inflexible and deterministic precisely because the underlying logic of the universalist perspective. To illustrate these practical implications,

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Cognitive Approach to Embodiment in Early English Possession (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

[49] Edward Bever, *The Realities of Witchcraft and Popular Magic in Early Modern Europe: Culture, Cognition, and Everyday Life* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); Idem, 'Current Trends in the Application of Cognitive Science to Magic', *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* 7:1 (2012), pp. 3–18.

[50] Edward Bever, 'Witchcraft Fears and Psychosocial Factors in Disease', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 30:4 (Spring, 2000), pp. 573–590; Idem, 'Witchcraft, Female Aggression, and Power in the Early Modern Community', *Journal of Social History* 35:4 (Summer, 2002), pp. 954–988.

[51] For criticism of Bever's deployment of conflicting models see: Jesper Sørensen, 'Magic as a State of Mind?: Neurocognitive Theory and Magic in Early Modern Europe', *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* 5:1 (Summer, 2010), pp. 108–112.

[52] Michael Ostling, 'Secondary Elaborations: *Realities* and the Rationalisation of Witchcraft', *Preternature: Critical and Historical Studies on the Preternatural* 4:2 (2015), pp. 203–210.

we need only to extrapolate from two works Bever has produced that are relevant to the topic of this thesis. In one chapter, Bever uses the framework of neurobiology to explore the emotionality, as well as the psychological and physical effects of bullying in relation to a handful of cases of witchcraft in early modern Germany.[53] In reading this study, however, it becomes apparent that the specifics of the cases themselves only appear perfunctorily, essentially serving an entirely illustrative function. Almost the entirety of Bever's study is devoted to describing how cognitive models explain the psychological effects of ostracization, the basis of emotion, and the capacity of psychosocial factors to cause illness. Were one to enthusiastically adopt Bever's approach and attempt to replicate his work on bullying in a piece on an English witchcraft case, then the subsequent research output would be almost identical to Bever's original; only the names of places and historical persons would change. The historical information here serves only a decorative function in what is otherwise mainly a straightforward report on certain theories about cognition. Likewise, it would be reasonable to question what historical insight is gleaned into the thoughts of René Descartes by describing the effects of neurotransmitters during different stages of sleep, relaying their currently supposed association with "rational" or "emotional" modes of thinking. I do not deny that it is incredibly interesting to learn about the cognitive effects of cholinergic and aminergic neurotransmitters, but to claim that this process was agentive in Descartes settling into 'the aware yet detached view of the world of a successful dreamer and of a successful scientist' reduces the complexities of the route by which one of the early modern world's most influential philosophers arrived at scepticism into the convection of chemicals in a French brain soup.[54] Adopting Bever's process is unavoidably reductive, as in practice historians would only be entering information into a formula with a predetermined answer. It renders history writing into a solved equation that is immune to alteration by any historical specificity, which is the most problematic element shared between interdisciplinary borrowing from cognitive science and the practice of retrospective diagnosis. Both inevitably result in an inversion of the original project; histories of witchcraft become histories of an extradisciplinary explanatory model or idea. Tellingly, outside of some ineffective swings directed vaguely at "post-modernism", Bever never confronts this

[53] Edward Bever, 'Bullying, the Neurobiology of Emotional Aggression, and the Experience of Witchcraft', in Michael Ostling and Laura Kounine (eds.), *Emotions in the History of Witchcraft* (London; Palgrave, 2016), pp. 193–212.
[54] Bever, 'Descartes's Dreams' , p. 44.

principal critique of his interdisciplinary method.[55] At the heart of the issue is a fundamental metaphysical disjuncture between his approach and the essence of historicity. Despite his protestations that he did not undertake the project to 'promote a scientific point of view or cognitive theory', his approach is nevertheless invariably beholden to them.[56] Contrary to his insistence that 'understanding the neuropsychological bases of [magic] is critical', an overreliance on these models introduces a hard limit on the potential for variation within histories of witchcraft.[57]

Frank Manuel once commented that locking disciplines in the same cage can cause one to devour the other. And methodologically it is accurate to say that Bever's work is devoured by cognitive science.[58] If we consider this issue in the light of Paul Veyne's comments about historiographical progress being made through processes of continuous reflection then, in a sense, interdisciplinary engagement with models borrowed from cognitive science does indeed broaden our ways of enquiring into witchcraft as a subject. However, doing so results in the termination of the questioning process itself; the history of witchcraft becomes the history of whichever modern theory happens to be preeminent. It is a realisation of Febvre's concerns that historians might pursue a course of 'psychological anachronism, the worst sort of anachronism'.[59] This intersects with issues with believing in that a fixation on the mechanics of witchcraft beliefs focusses our attention on an unproductive aspect of historical witchcraft. As Robin Briggs articulates, 'the problem is not to explain why witchcraft beliefs exist [but] why are these invoked in particular cases?'[60] As will be seen in the following section, the danger of essentialising the process by which witchcraft was believed in cannot be understated and goes beyond the adoption of Bever's specific approach.

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[55] Edward Bever, 'The Critiques and the Realities', *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* 5:1 (2010), pp. 113–121; Idem, '"Postmodernist, Deconstruct Thyself": A Response to Michael Ostling's "Babyfat and Belladonna: Witches' Ointment and the Contestation of Reality"', *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* 11:2 (2016), pp. 249–263.

[56] Edward Bever, 'Culture Warrior: A Response to Michael Ostling's Review Essay on *The Realities of Witchcraft and Popular Magic in Early Modern Europe*', *Preternature: Critical and Historical Studies on the Preternatural* 5:1 (2016), pp. 112–120, quoted p. 113.

[57] Bever, 'Bullying', p. 206

[58] Frank E. Manuel, 'The Use and Abuse of Psychology in History', *Daedalus* 117:3 (Summer, 1988), pp. 199–225.

[59] Lucien Febvre, *A New Kind of History: And Other Essays*, Peter Burke (ed.), trans. K. Folca (London: Harper & Row, 1973), p. 9.

[60] Robin Briggs, 'Many reasons why: witchcraft and the problem of multiple explanation', in Jonathan Barry, Marianne Hester, and Gareth Roberts (eds), *Witchcraft in early modern Europe: Studies in culture and belief* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 49–63, quoted p. 61.

A Critique of Realism

It is important to disincentivise realist approaches to witchcraft because they alter scholarship in a way that makes it unreceptive to appreciating the nuances of believing as a human process. Eric Pudney's *Scepticism and Belief in English Witchcraft Drama* is a prime example of this problem both because I disagree with some of his conclusions about early modern English witchcraft belief because it demonstrates the subtle colouration of scholarship occasioned by universalist underpinnings.[61] Pudney is a scholar of English literature and a lecturer in that field at Lund University; although not an historian himself, his literary interests sit within the early modern period. His 2019 monograph is a revised version of his 2016 doctoral thesis, which work had won the Warburg prize from The Royal Swedish Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities. It is perhaps unfair to single out Pudney's work, but it does illustrate perfectly how realist assumptions can permeate into scholarship and compromise the discourse surrounding witchcraft beliefs, even in otherwise solid research. I would like to make it clear that my critique of the work is not a comment upon the worth of the work as a piece of literary scholarship: its award-winning status would suggest that these contributions have been warmly received. Nor are my comments about his book intended to impugn Pudney's own scholarly acumen. To the contrary, one of Pudney's more recent contributions is an edited reproduction of a fascinating, and hitherto overlooked, manuscript that was a proofreading of an early copy of Reginald Scot's *Discoverie of Witches*, for which he has deservedly earnt no small store of praise.[62]

As a history of early modern attitudes to witchcraft in England, *Scepticism and Belief*, however, features some deeply rooted flaws that stem from Pudney having founded his research upon realist philosophical assumptions. Certain comments are slightly off the mark, such his statement that 'it was not until the reign of Charles I that theatre, together with the country as a whole, began to back away from witchcraft belief'.[63] Putting aside the issue of what belief means in this context, it is curious to locate the beginning of a distancing from witchcraft under Charles, especially given James I's changing stance on witchcraft. Additionally, we know that Jacobean prosecution rates declined relative to those under Elizabeth, which is explicitly acknowledged elsewhere in the book. However, such relatively

[61] Eric Pudney, *Scepticism and Belief in English Witchcraft Drama, 1538–1681* (Lund: Lund University Press, 2019).
[62] Eric Pudney (ed.), *A Defence of Witchcraft Belief: A Sixteenth-Century Response to Reginald Scot's 'Discoverie of Witchcraft'* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2021); Stuart Clark, 'Review', *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* 17:1 (2022), pp. 148–150.
[63] Pudney, *Scepticism and Belief*, p. 317.

minor inconsistencies are not at the heart of the problem with the approach Pudney takes and are not the reason his book has been singled out for critique.

Given that Pudney is not himself an historian, he is naturally reliant on reproducing historiographical consensuses inferred from his reading of secondary sources. It should be noted that Edward Bever is never cited by Pudney; instead, he relies heavily on his reading of Stuart Clark and Walter Stephens, as well as his fellow early modern English literature scholars Marion Gibson and Diane Purkiss. It is curious that Pudney treats belief more flatly than have the historians from which he draws, especially given Clark's role in problematising the assumptions that underpinned Bever's approach. That this was not the case, and that the fact that Pudney reflexive adopted realist assumptions is less of a black mark against him specifically, but more of an indication of urgently necessary it is for historians of witchcraft to directly and energetically warn other scholars interested in the space off from falling into essentialist conceptualisations. Although, as Jean La Fontaine has recently commented, 'to point out the danger of misleading superficiality resulting from the attempt at universality is not a new claim', it remains a necessity.[64] If historians are serious about endeavouring to produce interdisciplinary history, then it is incumbent upon us to recognise, and proactively intervene in, the potential pitfalls into which scholars unfamiliar with the topic might fall.

It is only in the conclusion of *Sceptics and Believers* that Pudney reveals that his position on witchcraft, and consequently belief in witchcraft, has been informed throughout by assumptions drawn from a position of somewhat naïve realism. He considers early modern England to have been 'governed, in reality, by the same physical laws as those in operation in our own time'; the supernatural is, and therefore was, not real and thus all historical evidence for its existence was tainted. People were supposedly, in some vague sense, aware of this discrepancy, but persisted in their belief 'because it performed various functions'. As has been discussed above, these positions are precedented. The former elides with Bever's stance on the universality of bio-cognitive structures, and the latter echoes the strain of functionalism Thomas adopted through his engagement with the British School of anthropology. Whilst this position might initially appear to be innocuous, its effects are surprisingly corrosive. Pudney's presumptions about base reality led him to assume an analytical starting position wherein any expressed belief in witchcraft on the part of early modern people was, in some fashion, their overcoming an innate recognition of the unreality

[64] Jean La Fontaine, *Witches and Demons: A Comparative Perspective on Witchcraft and Satanism* (Oxford: Berghahn, 2016), p. 7.

of witchcraft. That their natural scepticism 'was never overcome without some kind of ulterior motive', and that 'any accusation of witchcraft, or instance of credit being granted to such claims, must have required some kind of effort to achieve the necessary suspension of disbelief in oneself'.[65] This is a remarkably stark conceptualisation of believing, and it is one that informs Pudney's neologism about the expression of doubt in early modern texts: "rhetorical scepticism". This term is a riff on Walter Stephen's concept of 'submerged scepticism', a psychological behaviour that constituted a 'defensive intellectual endeavour', and which behaviour was engaged in by demonologists during the Renaissance and early modern periods.[66] I obviously consider scepticism and expressions of doubt about witchcraft to be an entirely understandable and fascinating aspect of the subject, as is evident from an exploration of the relationship between doubt and belief ,and how contemporaries expressed and reflected upon, being a core part of this thesis. However, because Pudney's working assumptions about belief in witchcraft are that early modern people consciously or subconsciously recognised that witchcraft was not a real phenomenon, his "rhetorical scepticism" inevitably detects a profound cynicism throughout early modern witchcraft discourse, which I think ultimately misleads more than it informs.

The significance of this assumed cynicism is that it engenders analytical myopia. It precludes and occludes an adequate recognition of the complexities of belief by binarisation of categories of believers. A prime example of this can be seen in Pudney's treatment of Joseph Glanvill's rationality. It is one thing to point out that Glanvill's argumentation is not rational, in the sense that it is not always internally logically consistent, and its standards are unevenly applied. But Pudney goes beyond this to claim that Glanvill was engaged in a remarkably voluminous project of 'self-deluding'.[67] His claim that this was necessarily the case relies on his foundational assumption that the early modern world was governed by the same physical laws that constitute our modern reality. The proposition that advocates for belief in witchcraft were actively suspending their disbelief is far more controversial than he realises. Pudney's definition of rhetorical scepticism does not shy away from its cynical and disingenuous dimensions as 'a strategy employed by witchcraft theorists . . . using scepticism,

[65] Pudney, *Scepticism and Belief*, p. 310–311.
[66] Walter Stephens, *Demon Lovers: Witchcraft, Sex, and the Crisis of Belief* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2003); Richard Godbeer, 'Review: Demon Lovers', *Central European History*, 36:2 (2003), pp. 280–283; For a short but brutal critique of Stephens's analysis, particularly regarding Kramer's *Malleus*, see: Wolfgang Behringer, 'Review: *Demon Lovers*', *The American Historical Review*, 108:4 (Oct. 2003), pp. 1207–1208.
[67] Pudney, *Scepticism and Belief*, quoted p. 310; Glanvill is dealt with at more length throughout the chapter 'Witchcraft in the Restoration', esp. pp. 244–260.

or the pretence of scepticism, as an argumentative and narrative tactic to persuade others'.[68] Where "submerged scepticism" describes an underlying impetus to prove the metaphysical aspects of theological demonology to themselves, "rhetorical scepticism" is a literary technique that affected doubt in order to polemicise to an audience. And although Pudney cites Stuart Clark's *Vanities of the Eye* in reference to aspects of Macbeth, as well as the biblical consultation of the Witch of Endor by Saul, there is a pertinent quote from Clark that it would behove any students of historical witchcraft to bear in mind. Clark noted that 'it was often those who by and large *believed* in witchcraft who offered striking arguments for not taking at least some of it seriously' precisely because they perceived it to be a subject overflowing with illusions, both rhetorical and real. Clark qualified that 'this did not stop them taking the rest of it very seriously indeed . . . and on empirical grounds', indicating that it is bad practice to assume cynicism on the part of these writers.[69]

An etic conceptualisation of scepticism violates one of the more careful thoughts proffered by Euan Cameron about the related concept of "superstition"; that 'the historian must not pretend to determine what "actually" constituted "superstition" . . . since the whole point is to show how these loaded terms evolved and acquired new and contested meanings, a degree of relativism is essential'.[70] Not only does "rhetorical scepticism" prematurely assume degrees of cynicism, it distributes this perceived cynicism unevenly between different types of contemporary writing on witchcraft according to our own sensibilities. Pudney, for example, more readily acknowledges the legitimacy of scepticism found in texts in which it was expressed in a manner deemed to have been logically consistent. Compounding this effect is a tendency to privilege theoretical works of which we have identified the authors over anonymous or narrative writings. In much the same way that Purkiss observed the tendency amongst historians to identify more with sceptical figures – the ur-example being Reginald Scot – Pudney is more comfortable giving credence to self-reflective and internally nuanced perspectives, such as George Gifford's *Dialogue concerning witches and Witchcrafte*. He is especially disparaging of the corpus of pamphlet literature about witchcraft, stating that 'any relationship that the pamphlets bear to historical reality is tenuous at best' and advises that 'caution should be exercised before accepting anything in

[68] Ibid., p. 33.
[69] Stuart Clark, *Vanities of the Eye: Vision in Early Modern European Culture* (Oxford; Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 140.
[70] Euan Cameron, *Enchanted Europe: Superstition, Reason, and Religion 1250–1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 6–7.

them . . . as historically accurate', labelling them 'not (or not only) lies, but (also) fictions'.[71] This sentiment underappreciates the historicity of witchcraft narratives, as well as how historians engage with fictitiousness as a concept. Albrecht Koschorke has reflected upon this and commented that 'magical narratives, and specifically narratives of malign magic, are fictive, not in the sense of being lies but in the sense that the facts they deploy are inherently unfalsifiable'.[72] It brings to mind Jeanne Favret-Saada's comments that the difficulties she faced in her encounters with the complexity of believing in witchcraft forced her into 'acknowledging the truth of a discourse', shifting her perspective to consider 'in what way are the bewitched right when they say they are suffering?' Her suggestion was that for academics to better conceive of how believers viewed the reality of witchcraft, they should somewhat suspend their preconceptions about the possible, and consider that for believers 'the metaphysical world is simply seen as if it were *still possible*'.[73] Scholars of witchcraft overly beholden to an 'appetite for the real' find themselves grubbing desperately in the silt for the reassuring solidity of stones of verifiable fact, during which activity they kick up an obstructive plume.[74] The particular muddying of the waters in this case is the result of an inappropriate binarisation of belief and doubt into exclusive domains, in combination with categorising beliefs by sorting them teleologically and only according to the positions on witchcraft they ultimately arrived at. In determining the legitimacy of doubt within a text predominantly according to its conclusions we miss the nuances of the journey to that point.

This critique of Pudney's "rhetorical scepticism" is not intended to imply that ulterior motives were not a constant factor in witchcraft cases: they absolutely were. Peter Elmer has conducted excellent research into English witchcraft that thoroughly investigates and uncovers the contextual complexities and multi-layered panoply of interests that contributed to particular witchcraft cases.[75] And Chapters 4, 5, and 6 of this thesis are largely concerned with unpicking the myriad influences that contributed to particular contemporary witchcraft texts. The difference being that I, like Elmer, do not begin with assumptions about

[71] Pudney, *Scepticism and Belief*, pp. 17, 4, 39.
[72] Richard Gordon, 'A Babel of Voices: Styling Malign Magic in the Roman World', *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft*, 14:2 (2019), pp. 155–188, quoted p. 156. Citing: Albrecht Koschorke, *Fact and Fiction: Elements of a General Theory of Narrative*, trans. Joel Golb (Berlin; de Gruyter, 2018).
[73] Jeanne Favret-Saada, *Witchcraft in the Bocage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 180 [1977]), pp. 12, 230, original emphasis.
[74] Lionel Gossman, 'History and Literature', in Robert H. Canary and Henry Kozicki (eds.), *The Writing of History: Literary Forms and Historical Understanding* (Madison; University of Wisconsin Press, 1978), pp, 3–39, quoted p. 19.
[75] Peter Elmer, *Witchcraft, Witch-Hunting, and Politics in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

what these ulterior motives were and how they affected a given episode or trial, they are discovered through analysis of specific evidence. It is in this regard that the works of Lyndal Roper stand out as some of the best examples of the potential for utilising a more scientifically-informed interdisciplinary approach to the study of historical witchcraft.[76] Not all interdisciplinary methodologies importing material from psychology suffer the same universalising tendency as those fixated upon neurological mechanics and realism. In fact, it has been Roper's use of psychoanalysis to interrogate how reality and unreality were historically situated that has been the most successful and well-received product of a witchcraft history informed by psychology. Michael MacDonald, in a review of an earlier attempt by John Demos to integrate psychoanalysis into the history of witchcraft, chastised Demos for his consistent overexuberance in applying psychoanalytical theory, which drowned out the voices from the past to whom he should have been most attentive.[77] Roper's work, and its concomitant methodology, is one of the few examples considered to have broached the 'incommensurability' of history and psychology and is exemplary of the potential enrichment of witchcraft historiography through interdisciplinary enhancement.[78] Roper succeeds where Demos faltered, in that she does not allow her interdisciplinary borrowings to drown out the evidence of the sources or dictate the boundaries of historical reality, instead framing witchcraft in terms of emic fantasy. Roper – in terms that prefigured those Clark later used to denude Bever – realised that 'where psychoanalysis is used simply to redescribe material, it deadens it'. Her solution to avoiding this was to situate specific imaginings within broader contemporary 'sets of cultural fantasies', restoring an historicity to her analysis that would be destroyed if psychological models were applied too vigorously. She correctly predicted that witchcraft studies were increasingly shifting 'away from considering social or economic motivations for accusing women of witchcraft towards a more serious engagement with the substance of witchcraft accusations themselves – the disturbing, irrational material of fantasy'.[79] And whilst witchcraft accusations continue to disturb, their irrationality is a less certain prospect. We should ideally handle the charting of

[76] Lyndal Roper, *Witch Craze: Fantasy: Terror and Fantasy in Baroque Germany* (London: Yale University Press, 2004); Lyndal Roper, *The Witch in the Western Imagination* (London: University of Charlottesville Press, 2012).
[77] Michael MacDonald, 'Review: New England's Inner Demons', *Reviews in American History* 11:3 (Sept., 1983), pp. 321–325.
[78] Joan W. Scott, 'The incommensurability of psychoanalysis and history', in Cristian Tileagă and Jovan Byford (eds), *Psychology and History: Interdisciplinary Explorations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 40–63.
[79] Lyndal Roper, 'Witchcraft and Fantasy', in *History Workshop Journal* 45 (1998), pp. 265–271, quoted pp. 270, 271, 266.

rationality within contemporary material pertaining to witchcraft with the same degree of care and diligence we employ when contextualising historical reality.

Doubt and Belief

With these critiques in mind, I propose an approach to witchcraft belief that synthesises advances made over the last two decades in the field of emotions history with anthropological theorisations about the interrelation of belief, doubt, and emotion. My approach to belief revolves around two types of style: styles of belief and emotional styles.

Anthropologists have been suspicious of belief for over a century.[80] With William James' *Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902) and Rodney Needham's *Belief, Language, and Experience* (1972) remaining texts that are frequently referred to in the ongoing internal debate about belief as a concept.[81] Despite its definitional slipperiness, belief remains a seemingly indispensable heuristic, albeit one that requires careful supervision. Joseph Streeter has explored issues that have accompanied its use within anthropology and found that, even when not attached to the performance of 'specific theoretical functions', it has manifest practical utility in ethnographic description.[82] My intention here is not to relitigate all the avenues down which anthropologists have problematised belief as a concept. There is always danger in importing controversies from another discipline, as doing so can overwhelm and compromise historical clarity, but exploring anthropology's relationship with belief has the potential to disrupt our assumptions in a productive way.

In a 2012 article the anthropologist Jonathan Mair drew some fascinating conclusions from his ethnographic observations about Mongolian Buddhism. Mair found that the believers he studied prioritise the mastery of the practice of believing – both as a mental and behavioural activity – over adherence to the propositional content of specific beliefs, in terms of their status as tenets or credal statements. His findings indicated there needs to be a necessary adjustment to the definition of belief in order to accommodate aspects of believing as a process. Reflecting on this, Mair suggests that to complement work on propositional beliefs, scholars should recognise the importance of precisely describing 'historically specific modes

[80] Joseph Streeter, 'Should we worry about belief?', *Anthropological Theory* 20:2 (2020), pp. 133–156.
[81] William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011 [1902]); Rodney Needham, *Belief, Language, and Experience* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1972); Galina Lindquist and Simon Coleman, 'Introduction: Against Belief?', *Social Analysis*, 52:1 (Spring, 2008), pp. 1–18.
[82] Joseph Streeter, '"Belief" and Anthropology, in Use and in Theory', *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* (2022), Advance Articles, https://doi.org/10.1163/15700682–bja10090, pp. 1–27.

or styles of belief'. His terminology emphasises the relationality of beliefs and seeks to emphasise how 'particular contexts can impose specific conditions on reasoning'.[83] This facet of witchcraft belief was even previously noted by none other than Keith Thomas, commenting that 'there was a stylised character about witchcraft as an explanatory theory' in that 'could not be indefinitely extended to account for any misfortune'.[84] Mair calls on scholars to wholeheartedly embrace an approach to studying beliefs and believing by seeking 'a rounded contextual understanding of all aspects of that particular practice, one that takes in all of its components, including the relationships, embodied knowledge and aesthetic standards with which cognitive aspects of belief are tied up'. By focusing on the styles of belief they observe scholars might be better situated to appreciate the nuances of how believers "do" belief. Towards the end of the article Mair poses a rhetorical question that should elicit as much self-reflection amongst historians of witchcraft as it sought to arouse in Mair's fellow anthropologists: 'in how many other cases in which content is understood have we disregarded consequential subtleties in the styles of belief that is applied to that content?'[85] Early modern English witchcraft can certainly be counted amongst them.

One crucial advantage to analysing belief in terms of specific styles is that it allows greater scope to consider the conceptual relationship between belief and doubt. Although doubt is sometimes rhetorically treated as synonymous with unbelief, some anthropologists have also sought to challenge whether belief and doubt should be considered distinct and antagonistic entities whatsoever. Mathijs Pelkmans – whose work was introduced in Chapter 1 – considers doubt to be part of belief and, like Mair, his approach prioritises contextualisation.[86] Pelkmans does not see doubt and belief 'as opposites but rather as co-constitutive parts'; he rejects their division as a false dichotomisation that fails to acknowledge the way in which each implicates the other.[87] Pelkmans' doubt exists as part of a process; the questions doubt begs have ontological, epistemological, but also 'pragmatic referents'. It is in these 'cycles of hope, belief, doubt, and disillusionment' that we can gain deeper insight into the 'complex mechanisms and dynamics by which specific ideas gain and lose their credibility' and 'how ambiguous reality is acted upon to produce (temporary)

[83] Mair, 'Cultures of belief', p. 450.
[84] Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1971), p. 642.
[85] Mair, 'Cultures of belief', pp. 463, 464.
[86] Mathijs Pelkmans, 'The restlessness of doubt, and the tenacity of belief', *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 6:1 (2016), pp. 499–503.
[87] Mathijs Pelkmans, 'Outline for an Ethnography of Doubt', in Mathijs Pelkmans (ed.), *Ethnographies of Doubt: Faith and in Contemporary Societies* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2013), pp. 1–43, quoted pp. 4, 2.

convictions'.[88] It is precisely this ambiguity, temporality, and provisionality that is so easily lost when historical beliefs are excised from their context and discursively reified through the language of "belief *in* x" and "belief *that* y". Instead, it is crucial to appreciate how people played along the edge of these imaginative horizons: the liminal edge on the periphery of the hinterland into which minds enter whether in voluntary reflection or when forced through circumstance. The horizon shifts, moves, and is replaced but is never absent: a threatening constancy of the potential of alterity implied by the very existence of the boundary itself.[89]

The interrelationship between doubt and belief has been explored in a rich variety of ethnographic studies, from critiques of the New Atheism movement to an analysis of reproduction in Orthodox Judaism.[90] In the previous chapter I introduced how Nils Bubandt's *The Empty Seashell* placed doubt at the centre of his study of witchcraft in the Indonesian village of Buli. Published two years after Mair's article – and seemingly unaware of it – Bubandt's book advocated for an approach that effectively sought to describe an ethnographic style of belief, even without using that exact terminology. From his time spent studying witchcraft in Buli, Bubandt came to understand witchcraft as a socio-cultural phenomenon that is characterised more by doubt and uncertainty than it was by belief. From these interactions, Bubandt's broader theoretical goals became to 'question the idea of witchcraft as belief, and to emphasise doubt as a shared condition of witchcraft'.[91] Although he ostensibly differs from Pelkmans in demarcating belief and doubt in this way, Bubandt has since qualified this careful positioning in this regard stems from an abundance of caution. Whilst agreeing with the notion that 'doubt and belief are connected, entangled even', he is wary about how "belief" in a vague sense can easily shift into "belief" in a strong sense. He nevertheless conceives of belief in very similar terms to Mair, in that it is not 'a universal mental state but a historically specific attitude to the world'.[92] Bubandt's presentation of the *aporia* at the heart of the cultural existence of witchcraft in Buli can be read in terms of a style of belief deeply coloured and shaped by processes of doubt and uncertainty. In terms

[88] Pelkmans, 'Outline for an Ethnography of Doubt', pp. 2, 3.
[89] Vincent Crapanzano, *Imaginative Horizons: An Essay in Literary-Philosophical Anthropology* (London: University of Chicago Press, 2004), esp. pp. 13–38.
[90] Paul-François Tremlett and Fang-Long Shih, 'Forget Dawkins: Notes toward an Ethnography of Religious Belief and Doubt', *Social Analysis* 59:2 (Summer 2015), pp. 81–96; Taragin-Zeller, 'Towards an anthropology of doubt', pp. 1–20.
[91] Nils Bubandt, *The Empty Seashell: Witchcraft and Doubt on an Indonesian Island* (London: Cornell University Press, 2014), p. 9.
[92] Nils Bubandt, 'When in doubt…? A reply', *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 6:1 (2016), pp. 519–530, p. 522.

of the variability of styles of belief, the cultural prominence of witchcraft, and the pre-eminence of its epistemic status the Indonesian island of Halmahera seems to be quite exceptional. It is for this reason – as well as a broad chariness with regard to cross-cultural comparisons, especially between such temporally distant entities – that I am purposefully not attempting to directly equate the *gua* of modern Buli to the witches of early modern England. Whilst interesting, directly comparing cultural manifestations of witchcraft comes with significant risks. In practice, attempting to draw connections between present and historical cultures can produce similar distortions to those previously discussed as resultant from an insistence on fitting historical evidence into etic explanatory models. Nevertheless, the works of both Pelkmans and Bubandt are incisive, and should prompt historians to seriously reconsider how we include doubt in our descriptions of a style of belief.

Witchcraft never rose to the same status of disaster in English discourse as it did in producing consistent crescendos of violence and mass prosecution elsewhere in continental Europe, or even across the border in Scotland.[93] Experiences of witchcraft in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England were spaces of contested meaning subject to regional and temporal variation, even in those sites where historians have otherwise binarily lumped people together monolithically as "believers". Whilst doubt never characterised belief in witchcraft in England quite so starkly as it does for the Buli, it was more of a factor in contemporary discourse about experiences of witchcraft than has been previously acknowledged. The families of the bewitched were often presented as initially hesitant to ascribe supernaturality to events, arriving at witchcraft only after exhausting more conventional medical and folkloric explanations. When Thomas Darling fell ill, and a local cunning man suggested he had been bewitched, his aunt 'doubted of the matter'; once the family did begin to accept that bewitchment was the cause of his sickness, they were cognisant that they could not accuse her without 'sure proofe'.[94] Bewitched persons and items were often tested in various ways to verify the parameters of their condition and indicate a spirit of thorough empiricism, which is further explored in Chapter 6 regarding Edward Fairfax's *Daemonologia*. Evidence of supernaturality was evaluated based on the social standing and reputation of the testifier, as was seen when Joan Cunny of Stisted was

[93] William Monter, 'Witch Trials in Continental Europe 1560–1660', in Bengt Ankarloo, Stuart Clark, and William Monter (eds) *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: The Period of the Witch Trials* vol. 4 (London: The Athlone Press, 2002), pp. 1–52; Julian Goodare (ed.), *The Scottish Witch-Hunt in Context* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002).
[94] Anon., *The most wonderfull and true storie, of a certaine Witch named Alse Gooderige of Stapenhill* (London: Printed by John Oxenbridge, 1597), pp. 4v–5r.

reported to have had her familiar Jack topple a huge tree. This event was couched in the reputational authority of the High Sherriff on whose grounds it had been felled, who 'acknowledged [it] to be blown down in a great calme'.[95] Additionally, people were often suspected of being witches for decades before any formal legal action was brought against them, with references to longstanding ill reputations abounding, indicating a drawn-out process of uncertainty and disputation within communities. Ralph Josselin recorded two examples of this intracommunal negotiation in his diary. Once, the minister of Colne Engaine reported to Josselin his suspicion that Ann Crow was a witch and Josselin 'pressed her', whereupon she 'protest[ed] her innocency'. Whereas when a Mr Cressener thought his child bewitched by one J. Bidford, Josselin 'took the fellow alone into the field, and dealt with him solemnly' because he thought that 'the poor wretch [was] innocent as to that evil'.[96] When accusations of witchcraft did make it to the courts there was no guarantee of conviction and rates could vary from approximately 41 per cent from 1598–1608 to 17 per cent from 1608–17.[97] The Home Circuit Assizes had a conviction rate of only around 32 per cent and only 22 per cent of those indicted were executed.[98] All of which evidences that there was significantly more complexity to the process of believing in witchcraft in early modern England than might initially be apparent.

Experience

In conceiving of belief as a process it is safer to tentatively allow psychology some more interdisciplinary influence. History is best informed by psychology when the latter is used to challenge our biases and preconceptions about a topic without eclipsing specific historical context. Interaction between the disciplines of psychology and history in academia is its own story, brimming with the drama of the doomed conjoining enterprise of psychohistory, as well as fraught reconciliations over the years.[99] This does not mean that psychology has

[95] Anon., *The Apprehension and confession of three notorious Witches* (London: Printed by E. Allde, 1589), sig. A4v.
[96] Ralph Josselin, *The Diary of Ralph Josselin 1616–1683*, ed. Alan Macfarlane (London: Oxford University Press, 1976), pp. 404, 379.
[97] Malcolm Gaskill, 'Witchcraft and Evidence in Early Modern England', *Past & Present* 198:1 (2008), pp. 33–70.
[98] J. A. Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness: Witchcraft in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), pp. 105–13.
[99] Lynn Hunt, 'Psychology, Psychoanalysis, and Historical Thought', in Lloyd Kramer and Sarah Maza, *A Companion to Western Historical Thought* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), pp. 337–356.

nothing to offer us; it just has to play 'a more modest role', in that it can encourage historians to ask certain questions and inform us of where our attention might best be paid.[100]

Psychologists have consistently found evidence for a preponderance of magical thinking and behaviour in modern societies: undermining assumptions that are fundamental to teleological narratives, such as the association of disenchantment with modernity discussed at the end of Chapter 1. Findings from psychology have revealed and reemphasised that even people living in societies that value 'reason' and 'rationality' – traditionally considered indicators of "modernity" – more highly than others continue to exhibit magical behaviours, thoughts, and beliefs. Rather than an utter abandonment or 'replacement' of the magical thinking that precipitates magical beliefs, adults from these "modern" cultures are 'reluctant to explicitly endorse . . . superstitious beliefs', but many nevertheless implicitly endorse them with their behaviours.[101] For example, it has been well documented by many investigations into superstition that magical thinking is reliably found in the experiences of students, athletes, and gamblers.[102] Through investigations such as these, the dominant narrative in the literature has shifted from one that defines modernity by its distance from the supernatural, to one that acknowledges the persistence of magical beliefs, thinking, and behaviour in modern societies.[103] By shearing magic away from its conceptual position as a metric of contrastive macro-societal development, we are better positioned to recognise belief in the supernatural as the complex phenomenon it is.[104]

Surveying the psychological literature provides another salient observation: the paramount importance of context and experience in determining the emergence of magical thinking and

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[100] Frank E. Manuel, 'The Use and Abuse of Psychology in History', *Daedalus* 117:3 (Summer, 1988), pp. 199–225, quoted p. 221.

[101] Eugene Subbotsky, 'Explanations of unusual events', *British Journal of Developmental Psychology* (1997), pp. 13–36, p. 16; Jane Risen and Thomas Gilovich, 'Why people are reluctant to tempt fate', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*', 95 (2008), pp. 293–307.

[102] Daniel Albas and Cheryl Albas, 'Modern Magic: The Case of Examinations', *The Sociological Quarterly*, 30:4 (Winter, 1989), pp. 603–613; G. Gmelch, and R. Felson, 'Can a lucky charm get you through organic chemistry?', *Psychology Today* (Dec., 1980), pp 75–78. C. Jane Gregory and Brian M. Petrie, 'Superstitions of Canadian Intercollegiate Athletes: An Inter-Sport Comparison', *International Review for the Sociology of* Sport, 10:2 (Jun., 1975), pp. 59–68; Jared L. Bleak and Christina M. Frederick, 'Superstitious Behaviour in Sport: Levels of Effectiveness and Determinants of Use in Three Collegiate Sports', *Journal of Sport Behaviour*, 21:1 (Mar., 1998), pp. 1–15; James M. Henslin, 'Craps and Magic', *American Journal of Sociology*, 73:3 (Nov., 1967), pp. 316–330.

[103] It should be noted here that the predominant definition of "superstition" in psychological and cognitive theory is unerringly functionalist and consistent with Stuart Vyse's definition of "superstition" as 'the subset of paranormal beliefs that are pragmatic': Stuart Vyse, *Believing in Magic: The Psychology of Superstition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011 [1997]), p. 24.

[104] Eugene Subbotsky, *Magic and the Mind: Mechanisms, Functions, and Development of Magical Thinking and Behaviour* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), esp. chs 1, 4, 5, 12.

magical beliefs. The literature of the last forty years has built upon the foundation of earlier theories, which posited that magical beliefs emerge when people experience certain circumstances. Witchcraft, as a form of magical belief, shared this functionalist treatment. This would rightly ring alarm bells, especially amongst anthropologists, but – if we discard the general pragmatic framing of witchcraft beliefs in psychological studies – it worth noting how robustly their research indicates the criticality of the experiential and contextual components to supernatural belief. Circumstances that produce high levels of stress – such as in athletic competition, academic examination, and gambling – all result in a greater tendency amongst their participants to manifest magical beliefs and behaviours. Similarly, there is a causal relationship between higher-stress environments and an increased probability of magical thinking in areas of military conflict.[105] Another study has even found a link between superstitious and magical beliefs, which was measured by tracking increased cultural interest in astrology, mysticism, and cults in Interwar Germany that exploded during a period of severe economic depression in the country.[106] One explanation for the underlying mechanism here is the necessity of perceived control, as there is extensive evidence that psychological stress undermines individuals' perception of control', and attempts to regain or maintain perceived control are fertile ground for the manifestation of magical thinking, regardless of whether the degree to which this control is 'illusory'.[107] These findings can inform an approach to historical witchcraft without it being necessary to fully adopt their explanatory models, or to direct research to locating these implicit pragmatic ends in the evidence of early modern witchcraft.[108] In this case, the questions raised by an overview of these studies are about how tightly supernatural beliefs are bound to experiences. Even Edward Bever's work can be recontextualised in this fashion, in that his approach does recentre the experientiality of witchcraft. By focusing on cognitive processes and attempting to situate them within the minds of early modern witches and believers in witchcraft it does separate believing from propositional statements. Unfortunately, he ultimately overawes this experiential aspect of belief with an avalanche of cognitive science and psychology,

[105] Giora Keinan, 'The Effects of Stress and Tolerance for Ambiguity on Magical Thinking', Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 67:1 (1994), pp. 48–55.
[106] Vernon R. Padgett and Dale O. Jorgenson, 'Superstition and Economic Threat: Germany, 1918–1940', *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 8:4 (Dec., 1982), pp. 736–741.
[107] Jennifer A. Whitson and Adam D. Galinksy, 'Lacking Control Increases Illusory Pattern Perception', *Science*, 322:5898 (3 Oct., 2008), pp. 115–117; R. Thomas Dudley, 'The relationship between negative affect and paranormal belief', *Personality and Individual Differences*, 28:2 (Feb., 2000), pp. 315–321.
[108] Michael Bailey, *Fearful Spirits, Reasoned Follies: The Boundaries of Superstition in Late Medieval Europe* (London: Cornell University Press, 2013), pp. 4–5.

temporarily elevating experience but then immediately burying it, preventing it from binge described and understood in its own terms.

Recently, historians have shown increased interest in the prospects of the experiential as a category of historical analysis; whether this be explicitly termed as "experience" or has been implied through emphasis on the provisionality of causative factors as processes and practices committed in the past.[109] Several historians of emotions have sought to expand the horizons of the "affective turn" to encompass historical experience more broadly. An ambitious collaborative call to action by historian of emotion Rob Boddice and historian of the senses Mark Smith has made predictions about, as well as suggestions for, a more thoroughly interdisciplinary project to produce a new history of experience.[110] Their proposition is an admirable clarion call. In particular their advocacy for the problematisation of the role played by scholarly empathy contributes to a wave of dissatisfaction with how assumptions about the moral calibre of our own emotions have coloured our apprehension of past feelings.[111] A history of experience – or an experiential turn in the historiography – appears to be underway, but much of its discourse has been directed at establishing an epistemological defence to legitimise itself and in so doing form a solid theoretical foundation for future studies. Whilst I find these discussions are fascinating, for the purposes of this thesis I am less concerned with the nature of experience than with the ways specific historical experiences affected the process of believing in witchcraft.[112] There is certainly, however, a sense of alignment between this present work and the motivations behind cultivating a critical framework for experience as an historiographical category. In Caro Baroja's remarkably prescient work on witchcraft, he described the fantastical and imaginary nature of witches and magic as eroding notions of barriers between physical and mental worlds, with witches existing 'in this region of *experience*'.[113] And in their edited volume honouring Paul Slack, Michael J. Braddick and Joanna Innes single out four fields of history primed for concerted studies of the 'emotional aspects of lived experience', all of which are

[109] Harold Mah, 'The Predicament of Experience', *Modern Intellectual History* 5:1 (2008), pp. 97–119.
[110] Rob Boddice and Mark Smith, *Emotion, Sense, Experience* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).
[111] Katie Barclay, 'Compassion as an Agent of Historical Change', *The American Historical Review* 127:4 (Dec., 2022), pp. 1752–1785.
[112] David Carr's argument for the epistemological accessibility of historical experience through narratives is intriguing but not entirely convincing: David Carr, *Experience and History: Phenomenological Perspectives on the Historical World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 195.
C.f. Joan Scott, 'The Evidence of Experience', *Critical Inquiry* 17:4 (1991), pp. 773–797.
[113] Caro Baroja, *The World of the Witches*, trans. O. N. V. Glendinning (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1965) quoted pp. 12, 13, original emphasis.

applicable to witchcraft: intimate relationships, sickness and death, violence, and religion.[114] I contend that, by focussing on the emotional aspects of experience found within evidence of historical witchcraft in early modern England, historians can gain a fuller appreciation of the historically specific styles of belief represented therein, and through which recognition we can also reckon with our preconceptions about belief.

The History of Emotions

Emotions indelibly code human experience, and I argue that there is more to discover about early modern witchcraft belief in the realm of past feeling. As such I will now give an overview of the various interpretative schema historians of emotions have proposed to best describe feelings in the past and assess their compatibility with Mair's concept of styles of belief. Advances in the field of emotions history since around the millennium have produced an abundance of useful theoretical frameworks for organising our understanding of feeling in the past.[115] And the rise of the emotion in historical discourse – sometimes described as 'the affective turn' – has prompted historians to reassess the importance of the experience of historical people, as well as reconsider the prominence of emotion within the experiential space.[116] Whilst most frameworks of historical emotional have been formulated with an intent to place emotions themselves as the subjects of a history, my approach investigates how emotions factored into the ways in which contemporaries expressed experiences of witchcraft, and to use these insights in reflections upon how they affected the presentations of believing.

William Reddy, a hugely influential figure in the space of emotions history, has argued for the independence of emotions history, insisting it be a 'way of doing [history]', and 'not

[114] Michael J. Braddick and Joanna Innes, 'Introduction', in idem (eds), *Suffering and Happiness in England 1550–1850: Narratives and Representations. A collection to honour Paul Slack* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. 1–22.
[115] Katie Barclay, 'State of the Field: The History of Emotions', *The Journal of the Historical Association* 106:371 (July 2021), 456–466.
[116] Jan Plamper, 'The History of Emotions: An Interview with William Reddy, Barbara Rosenwein, and Peter Stearns', *History and Theory*, 49:1 (May, 2010), pp. 239–265; Rob Boddice, 'The affective turn: historicising the emotions', in Cristian Tileagă and Jovan Byford (eds), *Psychology and History: Interdisciplinary Explorations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 147–165. Boddice notes J. Moscoso's proclamation of the 'affective turn' in *Pain: a Cultural History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), and that Colin Jones used the term 'emotional turn' in 'The emotional turn in the history of medicine and the view from Queen Mary University of London', *Social History of Medicine* (virtual issue), 'Emotions, Health, and Well-being' (2012) – unfortunately the issue in question is no longer available to access online.

something to be added to existing fields'. I am in concert with most historians of emotion in that I vehemently disagree with this sentiment. If a history 'from the inside out' promotes its own solipsism, then it will remain niche.[117] This study instead follows Barbara Rosenwein's vision of an 'integration of the history of emotions into "regular" history'.[118] Historians interested in emotion are especially fortunate in that the terminology of emotions history is incredibly versatile, with each formulation accentuating different aspects of emotional systems. I believe that a reasonable argument could be made for using any of the schema I consider below and, as such, choosing the right tool for the job is more a question of teasing out subtle benefits than outright dismissal.

First, however, it is worth briefly mentioning some of the significant baggage that emotion has accumulated in academic discourse, with a mind to avoiding falling foul of these past failings. The seminal anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski considered the foundational generator of magic to be 'overwhelming emotion . . . based on a universal psycho-physiological mechanism'.[119] Although the universalist psychological aspect of Malinowski's theory is no longer in vogue, Reddy has reformulated the idea of emotion as a motivational force: because emotion causes historical change it is itself historicised.[120] An early modern example of this process in action can be seen in a statement from the judge in a late seventeenth-century English witchcraft case, who opined that the accused were successfully tempted into an alliance by the Devil because they had 'grown weary of their Lives' in the face of an impotence to otherwise alleviate their desperately 'oppressing Poverty'.[121] The linguistic coding used in discussions of emotion framed it as an externality to the true self – connotatively a logical, and therefore dispassionate, being – the emotional experiences of whom were 'the results [of] the impotence of the mind'.[122] Freud's emotions were similar in that they were hydraulic, and were described almost as a separate self comprised of 'impulses that could be deflected, repressed, or sublimated but, unless given outlet, would never cease to press forward'.[123] The idea of emotion as a surging force, subject to degrees

[117] Susan J. Matt, 'Current Emotion Research in History: Or, Doing History from the Inside Out', *Emotion Review*, 3:1 (Jan., 2011), pp. 117–124, quoted p. 123.
[118] Plamper, 'The History of Emotions', pp. 249, 260.
[119] Bronislaw Malinowski, *Magic, Science and Religion: and Other Essays* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1984), p. 80.
[120] William Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 123–127.
[121] Anon., The life and conversation of Temperance Floyd, Mary Lloyd; and Susanna Edwards, Three Notorious Witches (London: Printed by J.W., 1687), p. 7.
[122] Claude Lévi-Strauss, Totemism (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963), p. 71.
[123] Sigmund Freud, 'Resistance and Repression', in James Strachey (ed. & trans.), *The Complete Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1966), pp. 294–302.

of control pursued by the individual, was extrapolated into a theory of cultural systems of control in European countries over the longue durée by Norbert Elias in his seminal *The Civilising Process*.[124] Linguistically, references to emotion carried a lingering conceptual undertone, one that separated emotion and emotional expression from rational modernity by imbuing modernity with the characteristic of self-control. A significant construction undergirding this concept of emotion was of the rational adult – capable of emotional regulation – in opposition to the impetuous child – whose lack of control resulted in wild emotionality. Elias described '*primitive* feelings', as did Lucien Febvre in his description of 'the history of revived *primitive* feelings', and the Dutch cultural historian Johan Huizinga characterised 'every experience' in the Middle Ages as having 'had that degree of directness and absoluteness that joy and sadness still have in the mind of a *child*'.[125] Peter and Carol Stearns' "emotionology" contributed hugely to breaking from this dismissive mode of thinking by calling on historians to be especially cognisant of the shared standards and rules governing contemporary emotional lives, and the influence of their contributions permeates throughout subsequent emotions historiography. However, as seen in the works of Trevor-Roper and Thomas, even those presenting fresh perspectives on a subject describe it through the lexicon available to them, which results in the reiteration of tropes coded into that vocabulary. The Stearns, despite their interest in validating emotion as an historical topic, did not escape the infantilising trope: describing pre-modern 'temper *tantrums*' being enacted by adults who were 'in many ways, by modern standards, childlike in their *indulgence* in temper' and that this disposition was 'one reason that they so readily played games with children'.[126] Rather than revealing some malicious intent on their part, this linguistic choice reminds us just how deeply ingrained – and subconsciously held – conceptualisations and framings of emotion can be, and how easily judgements that are formed implicitly in accordance with these understandings can slip unbidden into our writing.

How, then, should we recognise the maturity and complexity of feeling in our description of it? James Averill has made the terminological distinction that particular emotions, so far as they can be categorically sorted, are best described polythetically. That is, there are no

[124] Norbert Elias, *The Civilising Process: The History of Manners and State Formation and Civilisation*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994).
[125] Elias, *Civilising Process*, 1, p. 441; Lucien Febvre, 'Sensibility in History', pp. 12–26, quoted p. 26; Johan Huizinga, *The Autumn of the Middle Ages*, trans. Rodney J. Payton and Ulrich Mammitzsch (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), p. 1, emphases added.
[126] Carol Z. Stearns and Peter N. Stearns, *Anger: The Struggle for Emotional Control in America's History* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1986), p. 25, emphasis added.

singular qualities that are universally shared, but rather constellations of shared traits with necessarily woolly borders: that 'there are family resemblances among the various episodes [of anger], but no feature is necessary and sufficient for an episode to be included in the general class we call anger'.[127] His is a softer version of comparability than, for instance, Eleanor Gerber's enthusiasm for 'panhuman' affects drawn from data gathered in Samoa.[128] Expressions of emotion in particular cultural contexts are produced cognitively, and are constituted inexorably from familiar concepts and beliefs. They are 'intelligent, cultivated, conceptually rich engagements with the world, not mere reactions or instincts', as had been the prevailing sentiment within dated, naturalistic models.[129] Catherine Lutz and Geoffrey White – as part of an endeavour to formulate a shared anthropological method for studying emotion – described the tenet that 'the core of the attempt to understand the relation between emotion and culture lies in ethnographic description of the emotional lives of persons in their social contexts'. The crux of their argument was that emotional concepts are 'a kind of language of the . . . culturally constituted self, positioned at the nexus of personal and social worlds'.[130] Considering emotion itself is not the primary focus of this study, these less precise anthropological definitions of emotion are useful in two ways. They are intentionally imprecise, which allows for a more fluid and malleable identification of shades of feeling, and they share a sense of relativity and constructedness that aligns with the characteristics emphasised through an interest in styles of belief.

The question then turns to determining which conceptual framework is most suitable for focussing on the nexus of feeling and belief at the heart of description of historical witchcraft. Carol and Peter Stearns' emotionology was an early intervention, but it did not immediately instantiate a fully-fledged historiographical movement.[131] The value of emotionology to current scholarship comes more from its status as an antecedent display of competency in constructing a framework sensitive to how groups maintain and promote particular standards of emotional expression. As Barbara Rosenwein has pointed out, the utility of

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[127] James R. Averill, 'Ten Questions About Anger that You May Never Have Thought to Ask', in Farzaneh Pahlaven, *Facets of Anger: Getting Mad or Restoring Justice?* (New York: Nova, 2011), pp. 1–25, quoted p. 3.

[128] E. R. Gerber, 'Rage and obligation: Samoan emotions in conflict', in G. M. White and J. Kirkpatrick (eds), *Persons, Self, and Experience: Exploring Pacific Ethnopsychologies* (London: University of California Press, 1985), pp. 121–67, quoted p. 159.

[129] Robert Solomon, *The Passions: Emotions and the Meaning of Life* (Cambridge: Hackett, 1993 [1976]), p. ix & esp. ch. 5.

[130] Catherine Lutz and Geoffrey M. White, 'The Anthropology of Emotions', *Annual Review of Anthropology* 15 (1986), pp. 405–436, quoted pp. 417, 427.

[131] Carol Z. Stearns and Peter N. Stearns, 'Emotionology: Clarifying the History of Emotions and Emotional Standards', *American Historical Review*, 90 (1985), pp. 813–36.

emotionology is limited for scholars of pre-modern European and non-Western societies because the Stearns' methodology relied too narrowly on evidence of explicit behavioural advice to identify 'genuine emotionology' and such evidence is less readily available in these contexts.[132] More recent examinations of emotion and witchcraft tend to pay homage to emotionology but proceed to utilise models produced since theorisation surged in the late 2000s. Sarah Ferber has praised the Stearns' emphasis on studying agencies and institutions in the history of emotions, but raises 'a concern that an emotionological approach to [magical] beliefs . . . might underwrite outdated tendencies both to situate emotions outside of time, and to quarantine belief in demons and witchcraft from considerations of rationality and mainstream religion'.[133] It was not until roughly the last two decades that emotion began to find proper historiographical purchase when the release of William Reddy's *The Navigation of Feeling* prompted a growing cascade of interest in, and discussions about, the history of emotions. The definitions of emotion available to historians – and the frameworks in which to potentially situate them – truly 'are legion', and worth engaging with to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses.[134]

The "emotional regimes" Reddy articulated in *The Navigation of Feeling* explicitly link the construction of standards of emotional expression to political regimes, which institutions demand individuals to adhere to normative *emotives* – gestures and utterances the performance of which channel feeling – to varying degrees for the maintenance of a given regime.[135] The inherent disconnection between any emotion and attempt at expression, combined with imposed structures of emotional acceptability in normative emotives, causes emotional "suffering".[136] Once the expression of true feelings in emotional "refuges" is no longer adequate, and the subsequent suffering sufficiently heightened, this generates historical change in order to alleviate emotional suffering through increased emotional "liberty". Emotional regimes are thusly intimately tied to political processes of state

[132] Barbara Rosenwein, 'Worrying about Emotions in History', *American Historical Review*, 107: 3 (Jun., 2002), pp. 821–845.
[133] Sarah Ferber, 'Psychotic Reactions? Witchcraft, the Devil and Mental Illness', in Kounine and Ostling, *Emotions in the History of Witchcraft*, pp. 231–245, quoted p. 242.
[134] Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling*; Barbara Rosenwein, *Emotional communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006); Anna Wierzbicka, 'The "History of Emotions" and the Future of Emotion Research', *Emotion Review*, 2:3 (Jul., 2010), pp. 269–273; Matt, 'Current Emotion Research in History', pp. 117–124; Benno Gammerl, 'Emotional styles – concepts and challenges', *Rethinking History*, 16:2 (2012), pp. 161–175, quoted p. 161.
[135] Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling*, pp. 123–127.
[136] Ibid., pp. 48–9, 126–127. Reddy first proposed *emotional suffering* in William M. Reddy, 'Emotional Liberty: Politics and History in the Anthropology of Emotions', *Cultural Anthropology*, 14:2 (May, 1999), pp. 256–288.

formation and the exercise of coercive control, so much so that it limits their utility outside of historical contexts similar to that of his original study: the turbulent succession of regimes in Revolutionary France. The close association Reddy drew between emotional regimes and politics might even best be considered, like doubt in Buli, to be an example of an historically specific emotional style. There is, perhaps, more scope for the application of this formulation to serve as a foundation for the study of a comparable period when emotionality and political regimes were closely tied, perhaps the Commonwealth and Restoration eras. Reddy's emotional regimes, as the name implies, demand an association with grand historical motions that does not marry especially well with this thesis' intimate study of historical texts about a select few witchcraft cases.

Another hugely influential theory is Barbara Rosenwein's more socially focussed conception of multiple overlapping "emotional communities", through which people were constantly moving. Throughout they were negotiating different standards and conventions of appropriate emotional expression, whilst simultaneously moving through 'constellations – or sets – of emotions' that constituted these emotional communities themselves: be it the alehouse, the church, or the familial home. These communities consist of groupings 'in which people have a common stake, interests, values, and goals' as well as being 'created and reinforced by ideologies, teachings, and common presuppositions'.[137] There is certainly some sense of community in the sources; Edward Fairfax described the sociality of his demoniac daughters and another bewitched girl in terms of their having formed a 'community of their sufferings'. It would also be accurate to claim that experiences of bewitchment were liable to create temporary social bubbles of interaction, space for exceptional forms of expression that were otherwise taboo.[138] This emphasis on how particular spaces influence and direct the emotionality of those within them has been further narrowed down in Mark Seymour's idea of "emotional arenas", which has obvious applicability to descriptions of events in the courtrooms – and which historical setting inspired his idea – where witch trials were held.[139] Despite this alignment, the texts I focus on are witchcraft pamphlets, mostly dealing with court testimony and documentation indirectly, in terms of the manner of their presentation within said pamphlets, rather than the movement of people through those emotional spaces themselves. Rosenwein's formulation is, unsurprisingly, particularly effective in its capacity

[137] Rosenwein, *Emotional communities*, p. 25.
[138] William Grainge (ed.), *Daemonologia: A Discourse on Witchcraft* (Harrogate: R. Ackrill, 1882), p. 83.
[139] Mark Seymour, 'Emotional arenas: from provincial circus to national courtroom in late nineteenth-century Italy', *Rethinking History* 16:2 (2012), pp. 177–197.

to colour in the social aspect of emotional expression. And although the case studies that feature prominently in this thesis do involve communities – or clusters of communities – the social context of these places is used to inform an analysis of the representations of witchcraft cases that emerged from them, rather than focussing on those communities and spaces as historical subjects themselves.

One aspect of Rosenwein's work that bears further examination is how she relates her communities to Pierre Bourdieu's *habitus*: a term for those 'internalised norms that determine how we think and act and that may be different in different groups'.[140] An incorporation of the habitus, and Bourdieu's wider theory of practice, has proven to be an enduring feature in subsequent methodological proposals for the history of emotion.[141] The most widely celebrated of these is an article by Monique Scheer, in which Scheer solidifies Reddy and Rosenwein's more tentative engagements with practice theory. She proposes the concept of "emotional practices", reframing the matter to emphasise that the 'doing of emotion' is what produces the 'feeling subject' and that definitions of emotion must acknowledge the body as 'a locus for innate and learned capacities deeply shaped by habitual practices'.[142] Practice gives historians an epistemological path to follow into contemporary emotional standards as a process of reproducing and generating the 'regularities', the structure, and shared standards, incorporated into individual behaviour. Narratives of practice, therefore, evince the experiential aspect of magical belief as a reification of these beliefs into historically accessible actions, words, and active interpretations (the style of belief) situated in a context of experienced events. Whilst excellent as a formulation for grasping emotion as a constructed process, Bourdieu's theory of practice is best utilised when the researcher can observe the constellation of subtle somatic practices that make up the habitus, about which the pamphlets provide limited evidence. So, although emotional practices share with styles of belief a focus on processes, this somaticized version of emotion might best be put to use in an exploration of how contemporaries considered their own bodies, in both medical and spiritual terms.

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[140] Rosenwein, *Emotional communities*, esp. pp. 1–31, quoted pp. 24–26.

[141] Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), esp. pp. 78–86; Reddy mentions Bourdieu twice in *The Navigation of Feeling* – Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling*, pp. 86, 110; and his work touches on practice theory in William Reddy, 'Emotional Styles and Modern Forms of Life', in Nicole Karafyllis and Gotling Ulshöfer (eds), *Sexualized Brains: Scientific Modelling of Emotional Intelligence from a Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press, 2008), pp. 81–100.

[142] Monique Scheer, 'Are Emotions a Kind of Practice (and Is That What Makes Them Have a History)? A Bourdieuan Approach to Understanding Emotion.', *History and Theory*, 51 (2012), pp. 193–220, quoted p. 220.

To reiterate, my intent is not to capture how early modern people articulated their feelings through available cultural frameworks of passions and affections, but with a specific emotionality rooted in experiences of witchcraft.[143] The purpose of this thesis it to produce a history with emotion, not of emotion, and the ideal conceptual formulation would reflect the intent to explore how emotions were coded through the process of believing in witchcraft. When considering both the subject and the source material of this study the formulation and phraseology that serves as a best overall description of experienced beliefs is "emotional styles". Whilst some have used the term emotional styles generally to refer to bundles of emotion, I refer specifically to Benno Gammerl's description of the phrase. Gammerl thinks of emotional styles as encompassing 'the experience, fostering, and display of emotions, [oscillating] between discursive patterns and embodied practices as well as between common scripts and specific appropriations'.[144] Where other formulations are more specific and rigid, "emotional style" emphasises more fluidity, malleability, and plurality in the way in which witchcraft belief was articulated by contemporaries. The capacity of 'style' to incorporate broad categories was described by the anthropologist Dewight R. Middleton:

> Emotional style connects individual experience with historically derived group cognitive and moral structures which, in turn, supply the meaning and motivation by which individuals enact and interpret style and self in their daily lives. The concept of style reflects the formative and regulative role of culture in furnishing us with ordered emotional experiences. . . Emotional style is the normative organisation of emotions, their indigenous classifications, form of communication, intensities of expression, contexts of expression, and patterns of linkage with each other and with other domains of culture.[145]

Benno Gammerl unearthed Middleton's definition and pluralised it. Eschewing an idea of a characteristic unitary or general emotional style that is characteristic of a particular time and place, Gammerl favours recognising the interaction between multiple styles. This is especially significant because so much of Pelkman's characterisation of belief is deeply reliant on the,

[143] Susan Broomhall (ed.), *Early Modern Emotions: An introduction* (London: Routledge, 2017); Ute Frevert, *Emotional Lexicons: Continuity and Change in the Vocabulary of Feeling 1700–2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).
[144] Benno Gammerl, 'Emotional styles – concepts and challenges', *Rethinking History*, 16:2 (2012), pp. 161–175.
[145] Dewight R. Middleton, 'Emotional Style: The Cultural Ordering of Emotions', *Ethos* 17:2 (1989), pp. 187–201, quoted p. 188.

often contradictory, interpenetration of doubt and belief. Styles are contextually dependent and sensitive to myriad factors, such as an agent's social position and relationships, their political affiliation, and the spaces in which encounters occurred. Exchanges between styles can be 'conflictual, competitive, or otherwise mutually independent' and styles encompass 'the experience, fostering, and display of emotions and oscillate between discursive patterns and embodied practices as well as between common scripts and specific appropriations'.[146] In terms of studying belief and emotion, religious scholar John Corrigan directs researchers to reflect upon how 'religions offer both direct and indirect cues about emotionality to their adherents' and that 'individuals, guided by the standards imposed on them by religious adherence, construct their emotionality'. Constructions of emotionality surrounding religious practices can serve to 'confirm or challenge the authority of religious emotionology'.[147] Although religious belief and belief in witchcraft are not exactly analogous, our understanding of the relationship between belief and emotionality is improved by attending to how emotionalised styles of belief related back to prevalent cultural norms of both belief and emotion that early modern religious institutions attempted to dictate. As Middleton also noted, emotional styles are more 'a set of guidelines to facilitate discovery, description, and discussion rather than as bases for operational definitions'.[148] Where emotional practices best describe the expression of emotions, emotional styles best capture the aspects of historical emotion that I consider to be key to understanding witchcraft pamphlets: cultivation and representation. And reading historical witchcraft episodes through the lens of styles works to reveal how processes of belief and feeling interpenetrated through people's experiences to produce one another.

Emotional Styles of Belief

Witchcraft is a fascinating subject. It is a window through which historians can observe – in moments of pain, of anguish, and crisis – how cultural and social pressures shaped and limited experiences and imaginings. These influences encouraged, or even dictated, down which stylised paths experiences were channelled. Part of the reason that witchcraft beliefs are so potent is that beliefs about the supernatural can lie contentedly dormant for decades

[146] Benno Gammerl, 'Emotional styles', pp. 162, 163.
[147] John Corrigan, 'Introduction: Emotions Research and the Academic Study of Religion', in John Corrigan (ed.), *Religion and Emotion: Approaches and Interpretations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 3–31, quoted p. 18.
[148] Middleton, 'Emotional Style', p. 189.

before a scenario occurs that implicates them, at which point they activate and begin exerting pressure on the potential believer. Reginald Scot himself acknowledged this contextual activation when he pondered that 'in so much as some neuer feare the diuell, but in a darke night . . . specialie in a churchyard, where right hardie man heretofore scant durst passe by night, but his haire would stand vpright'.[149] These beliefs are the urgent need to comprehend meaning in pain, the anxiety that there is no such meaning to be found, and the intense compulsion to fill that void. An aporetic process that, once activated, generated new forms of trauma. Ronald Hutton is right in characterising the history of witchcraft as a history of fear; but it is also the history of the circumscription of fear, as well as of resistance to it.[150] Within that process there could be triumph, both lasting and temporary. All past cultures interpret, direct, and communicate human experience according to an internal logic about which historians can identify a characteristic style, or styles. And it is the expression of cultural styles and their interaction with past events is what gives them historicity. It so happens that situating a historical methodology in the nexus of belief and emotion aligns closely with how strains of early modern Protestantism conceived of interiority and belief. In the case of disputes about the preferred method for propagating aniconistic ideas amongst the European populace, part of the debate was framed around whether the mechanism for purging idols best began in their removal first from sight or from the heart. Luther himself considered idolatry to be 'primarily a matter of the heart, which fixes its gaze upon other things and seeks help and consolation'.[151] And in 1611 the Calvinist preacher Abraham Sculetus lamented that Protestantism had failed to remove these idols of the heart despite a century of effort.[152] The emotions that filled these hearts were involved in witchcraft cases beyond merely functioning to explain the enmity between the accused and the bewitched, or as fuel for catalytic and pivotal moments during periods of suspicion. Emotions were a constant regulatory presence across the entire process of believing in a bewitchment. Most of the research into witchcraft and emotion has centred the figure of the witch themselves: how witches expressed their feelings and how others perceived their behaviour within a cultural matrix of affective interpretation. But to consider belief in witchcraft as a process requires a recognition that part of the reason the emotions of the witch were so meaningful

[149] Reginald Scot, *The Discouery of Witchcraft* (London: William Brome, 1584), p. 153.
[150] Hutton, *The Witch*, esp. pp. 10–43.
[151] Kirsi I. Stjerna, 'The Large Catechism of Dr. Martin Luther', in Hans J. Hillerbrand, Kirsi I. Stherna, and Timothy J. Wengert (eds), *The Annotated Luther: Word and Faith*, VI:II (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2015), pp. 279–416, quoted p. 302–3.
[152] Sergiusz Michalski, *Reformation and the Visual Arts: The Protestant Image Question in Western and Eastern Europe* (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 184–5.

to contemporaries was because the overall emotional system at play consisted of a dialectic between the emotions of witches and the emotions of non-witches. The emotionality of non-witches has gone relatively unexplored, as has the relationship between emotionality and belief itself: to begin to unpack this relationship it is vital to first acknowledge that the emotionality of the witch could only be conceived of at all through a constant dialogue with how the behaviour, comportment, disposition, and feelings of non-witches were concomitantly styled. It was not just a witch's anger and malice that constituted the emotional style of a text, but their interplay with the emotionality of those with whom the witch shared a stage.

At this point, I would like to issue a small disclaimer. Questions of reality and authenticity tend to take centre stage when evaluating evidence of witchcraft, and the constructedness of texts is brought into an especially stark focus when considering material generated by witch trials. It is all too easy to be swept away in the stories teased out from court records and, without reminding ourselves of their fictiveness, to slip into epistemologically complacent mentality wherein is lost a critical perspective about their relationship to historical fact. This is especially true in those cases where we are reliant on a single source for all of our information about an episode and without recognition that univocity can be mistaken for a definitive version of events. The material historians have access to has been filtered through numerous strata of interpretation and reproduction: strained through layers of memory, self-interest, cultural selectivity, and the sieve of multiple historical persons and contexts. An intent to establish the "real" is a foundational element of historical writing that cuts across metaphysical perspectives of all orientations. Histories of both a realist and constructivist bent have demonstrated an equal capacity to fetishise the "real", however reality happens to be phrased in their preferred vocabulary. Some of the most insightful commentary on the constructivist version of this issue have come from the responses to Robert Darnton's provocative collection of essays, *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History*.[153] Historian Roger Chartier queried whether Darnton's application of anthropological practices – in particular Clifford Geertz's 'thick description' – along with his fascination with semiotics was, in effect, a rhetorical and intellectual legerdemain used to insinuate a false connectivity between historian and the past. Part of this critique was a call to remember that historical texts remain texts, and that their reading provides access to them and not unmitigated contact with what they represent; their

[153] Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History* (London: Allen Lane, 1984), pp. 75–104.

textuality is what separates the Parisian cat massacre from Balinese cockfights.[154] Likewise, Dominick LaCapra problematised a blinkering effect in how Darnton used semiotic vocabulary to describe a deep "reading" of cultural symbols as a route into a version of historical truth; without adequate reflection upon the problematic relationship between text and life this amounted to a '"quick fix" for the difficulties encountered in historiography'.[155] Describing a deeper issue with how Darnton tended 'to treat symbols and texts as transparent registers of cultural meaning', Harold Mah identified that although Darnton was attempting to reject the traditional approach to the history of ideas, in the Derridean sense he inverted the tendencies of Western philosophy rather than subverting them.[156] Darnton tried to avoid the *aporia* by overstating the directness of the relationship between meaning and symbolism in the text. Indeed, LaCapra noted the irony that Darnton's essay on Rousseau's *La Nouvelle Heloise* itself reflected upon the epistolary project's 'paradoxical relation between authentic self-expression or communication and the role of rhetorical artifice – the *aporia* of reality and fiction'.[157] Conceptually, emotions and belief share an epistemic location in their interiority to the mind, meaning they are accessible only through interpreting their operationalisation. Rita Voltmer, writing in response to the "reality" debate occasioned by Bever's work, encouraged epistemological caution in this regard.[158] Reflecting on the prospect of analysing trial documentation for evidence of emotion in witchcraft cases, she impressed that 'we do not find feelings in the records, but *representations of emotions*. . . fluid feelings are lost. In the texts we find labels, stereotypes, norms, narratives of emotions fixed . . . to be communicated to readers and audiences'.[159] Michael Ostling puts forth a more optimistic slant on this epistemic issue: that emotions are accessible to historians precisely because when we discuss emotions we are discussing how 'people express their subjectivity, to themselves as to others, *through* the motifs and structures available'. Ostling cites works by Lyndal Roper and anthropologist Michael Jackson as having demonstrated that it is possible to avoid issues of authenticity and reminding us

[154] Roger Chartier, 'Texts, Symbols, and Frenchness', *The Journal of Modern History* 57:4 (1985), pp. 682–695, quoted p. 685.
[155] Dominick LaCapra, 'Chartier, Darnton, and the Great Symbol Massacre', *The Journal of Modern History* 60:1 (Mar., 1988), pp. 95–112, quoted p. 106.
[156] Harold Mah, 'Suppressing the Text: The Metaphysics of Ethnographic History in Darnton's Great Cat Massacre', *History Workshop Journal* 31:1 (Spring, 1991), pp. 1–20, quoted p. 3.
[157] LaCapra, 'The Great Symbol Massacre', p. 107, emphasis added.
[158] Rita Voltmer, 'Behind the "Veil of Memory": About the Limitation of Narratives', *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft*, 5:1 (2010), pp. 96–102.
[159] Rita Voltmer, 'The Witch in the Courtroom: Torture and the Representation of Emotion', in Kounine and Ostling, *Emotions in the History of Witchcraft*, pp. 97–116, quoted p. 98, original emphasis.

that 'one does not discover the individual by subtracting discourse and examining whatever is left over, nor by peeling away convention and motif to reveal an authentic core'. Despite this qualification, there is a concerning ambiguity to his description of 'occasional *genuine* glimpses of the friendlier emotions'.[160] In Malcolm Gaskill's contribution to the same edited volume – one which offers insightful suggestions for the future of emotionally-minded histories of witchcraft – he describes records of crime as avenues to 'cut through a layer of public conduct into private lives beneath, before finally reaching a mental and emotional core'. In context, Gaskill deploys this phrase in a sophisticated evaluation of the epistemic status of emotions in trial documentation, appropriately caveated with acknowledgements of the 'problems of distortions and unrepresentativeness'.[161] But nevertheless, the term "mental and emotional core" is loaded with semantic connotations of authenticity, conjuring the notion of a genuine base-reality accessible to historians. And just as with the universalistic stances of Muramoto and Bever, it should equally be avoided as it represents an essentialism that binds us to look for only that which we know how to find and find only that for which we know how to look.

Interdisciplinarity always has the potential to displace historical phenomena, like witchcraft, through the extradisciplinary lens it adopts, even when it comes in the form of interaction between history and domains considered more compatible and germane, such as anthropology and sociology. Languages of authenticity and reality are an appealing salve to epistemological anxieties, but historians of witchcraft must be wary that such language does not obfuscate its own constructedness. Given the flattening effect that evocations of "reality" have in witchcraft studies, it is imperative that we choose our words advisedly to avoid fetishising the apprehension of the "real" as a desirable goal. Michael Braddick and Joanna Innes located historians' interest in emotion, alongside *Alltagsgeschichte*, within this shift: a constellation of historical interested in writing history 'from below'. The histories of emotion, like those relatively recent emergent historiographical subgenres of the body and of material culture, are at least somewhat responses to the epistemological confines of the linguistic turn. And, as Braddick and Innes recognise, none of these attempts have truly escaped its orbit because 'a history *of* emotions cannot be other than a history of ideas and representations'.[162] A history of emotion and belief must instead accept and thrive within

[160] Michael Ostling, 'Speaking of Love in the Polish Witch Trials', in Kounine and Ostling, *Emotions in the History of Witchcraft*, pp. 155–171, quoted pp. 167–168, 159, original emphasis.
[161] Malcolm Gaskill, 'Afterword: Passions in Perspective', in Kounine and Ostling, *Emotions in the History of Witchcraft*, pp. 269–279, quoted pp. 276, 275.
[162] Braddick and Innes, 'Introduction', p. 6.

these evidentiary boundaries, which I have chosen to do by examining the style in which historical sources present witchcraft.

In combining the phrases emotional styles and styles of belief into the neologism "emotional styles of belief", I intend to capture a sense of the variegation found in historically specific expressions of believing. This synthetic conceptual framework eschews describing the mechanical operation of believing in favour of emphasising the ways in which historical beliefs were formed from processes, and analysing how these processes were subject to – and themselves contributed to the formation of – particular styles of presentation. It encompasses all the ways in which descriptions of a person's emotionality – their comportment, behaviour, speech, and actions in relation to witchcraft – contributed to a sense of their overall emotional disposition. Emotional dispositions were also relational, dependent upon both other dispositional characterisations as well as the opinions and stances taken on issues by authors. The emotional style of belief in a text is found somewhere in the nexus of relations between emotionality, authorial stance, cultural signifiers, and processes of belief. To recognise believing as having had a stylistic quality – to have a chance of 'catching doubt in mid-air', as Pelkmans puts it – we must abandon the myth of the perfect believer, just as we have abandoned the myth of the perfect witch.[163] To modify a statement made by Robin Briggs regarding the figure of the witch: only once belief is 'allowed its full range of local variants, will its great symbolic richness help rather than hinder our understanding'.[164] Doubt itself describes both an affective state and a process of thought, and insights from anthropology tell us that doubt is an aspect of belief; ergo belief, too, possesses emotional and processual facets for us to identify and analyse. This emphasis on process is not a veiled appeal to an underlying reality that practices and processes were somehow the truth behind witchcraft; they themselves were also a construction: 'how witnesses or pamphleteers chose to tell that story'.[165] The pamphlet accounts are not a transparent register of meaning that provide unfettered access to what 'lay behind the formal court records'.[166] In fact, one of the principal benefits of an approach centring the emotional styles of belief in these sources is that it does not seek to relitigate questions of veracity and instead speaks to the intentions infused into texts through their presentation.

[163] Pelkmans, 'Outline for an Ethnography of Doubt', p. 5.
[164] Robin Briggs, *Witches & Neighbours: The Social and Cultural Context of European Witchcraft* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002 [1996]), pp. 12–50, quoted p. 50.
[165] Dolan, *True Relations*, p. 61.
[166] Alan Macfarlane, 'Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart Essex', in J. S. Cockburn (ed.), *Crime in England: 1550—1800* (London: Methuen & Co, 1977), pp. 72–89, quoted p. 77.

In the following chapter I give my reasoning for selecting pamphlets as my primary source material; discuss, evaluate, and contextualise how other historians have methodologically approached and used these sources; and demonstrate an application of the emotional styles of belief framework to a short piece of analysis on an English witchcraft pamphlet from the 1660s.

Chapter 3: Historical Sources and Methods

Witchcraft pamphlets are the source at the heart of the analysis in this thesis and the circumstances of their production, unique qualities, and historiographical treatment have informed my approach to them. The explosion of pamphlets as a communicative medium in Elizabethan England represented the latest wavefront of the printing revolution, which was continuing to transform the informational culture of early modern Europe.[1] The relationship between witchcraft belief and witchcraft literature was complex. Andrew Cambers has explored how the use of books and the theme of literacy were deployed internally within witchcraft stories themselves, and what ramifications this had for concepts like superstition.[2] Owen Davies has noted how newspapers acquiesced to popular demand for coverage of witchcraft stories, resulting in their propagation of belief in witchcraft even whilst condemning it.[3] And Joad Raymond has argued that the 1580s were a 'watershed' decade for pamphlets as increasing literacy rates, an expansion of the market for literature generally, debate within the Elizabethan church, and the emphasis on vernacular scripture engendered by Protestant doctrine all contributed to the rise of the format. Pamphlets continued to be associated with 'slander and scurrility' but they nevertheless became the most common news medium over the course of the Elizabeth's reign, with authorities recognising, and attempted to regulate through legislation, their potential as vehicles for propaganda.[4] Pamphlets were a more physically disposable medium than books, which lead to accusations of triviality partially based on their material impermanence. In 1606 Barnaby Rich epitomised this opinion in his complaint that his age was home to a bevy of pamphlets 'whereof the greatest part are nothing also but vanitie'.[5] Marion Gibson has demonstrated that witchcraft pamphleteers purposefully and proactively countered readers' potential presumption that the triviality of the medium meant the triviality of their content.[6] It would be a mistake to

[1] Elizabeth Eisenstein, *The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).
[2] Andrew Cambers, 'Demonic Possession, Literacy, and "Superstition" in Early Modern England', *Past & Present* 202 (Feb. 2009), pp. 3–35.
[3] Owen Davies, 'Newspapers and the Popular Belief in Witchcraft and Magic in the Modern Period', *Journal of British Studies* 37:2 (1998), pp. 139–165.
[4] Joad Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 7–9, 11–17.
[5] Barnaby Rich, *Faultes, Fault and Nothing Else but Faultes* (London: [Printed by Valentine Simmes], 1606), sig. 39v.
[6] Marion Gibson, *Reading Witchcraft: Stories of early English witches* (London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 118–156

dismiss or marginalise the significance of pamphlets as historical sources because of their scurrilous reputation, their disposability, or that they were a form of entertainment. This partly speaks to the tendency for historians to treat more cerebral works more favourably, which is problematic because the beliefs about witchcraft that most people held in this period were not informed through a direct personal reading of intellectual treatises. Early modern English culture encouraged historically specific modes of reading, consuming information, and engaging with stories. News, rumour, gossip, and discussion were the primary vectors for the propagation of belief in witchcraft, and networks of informal communication within and between communities connected the entirety of early modern England through this web.[7] It was not only women – whose involvement in these networks has been most extensively studied – who were associated with gossip. Thomas Wright described how all people were 'by nature . . . addicted to conuersation' and that experience proved 'by dayly talke, that commonly men descant vpon other mens doings'.[8] All of these contextual elements combined in pamphlets to make them a remarkable window into how people moulded and expressed experiences of, and belief in, witchcraft.

However, we should not consider the panes of this window to be perfectly transparent: they were warped and muddied, allowing historians only mediated glimpses into events due to several complicating factors. Firstly, the practicalities of reading in the late-fifteenth and early-sixteenth centuries, combined with the relative fragility of pamphlets as sources, make it incredibly difficult to accurately gauge the spread and impact of any given pamphlet. Assessing historical literacy rates has always been difficult, which is further complicated by a contemporary educational strategy that prioritised reading over writing, rendering mark-making an unreliable metric for an evaluation of overall literacy.[9] Recently, Mark Hailwood has challenged assumptions about the relative paucity of literacy in the rural population of early modern England, arguing that levels of 'pragmatic literacy' were much higher than

[7] Bernard S. Capp, *When Gossips Meet: Women, Family, and Neighbourhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), esp. pp. 1–68.
[8] Thomas Wright, *The Passions of the Minde* (London: Printed by Valentine Simms [and Adam Islip], 1604 [1601]), pp. 96, 91.
[9] Margaret Spufford, 'First steps in literacy: the reading and writing experiences of the humblest in seventeenth-century spiritual autobiographers', *Social History* 4:3 (Oct., 1979), pp. 407–435; David Cressy, *Literacy and the Social Order: Reading and Writing in Tudor and Stuart England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980); Keith Thomas, 'The Meaning of Literacy in Early Modern England', in Gerd Baumann (ed.), *The Written Word: Literacy in Transition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), pp. 97–131; Sasha Roberts, 'Reading in Early Modern England: Contexts and Problems', *Critical Survey* 12:2 (2000), pp. 1–16.

historians have previously thought.[10] Reading was not a straightforward process, and 'speech, script, and print infused and interacted with each other in a myriad ways'. Reading was done socially and was an occasion for active participation through discussion, reinterpretation, and later dissemination – whether in terms of the physical redistribution of reading material itself or through oral repetition – to an extent that 'no one lived beyond the reach of the written and printed word'.[11]

Secondly, and relatedly, was the encouragement of a particular style of engagement with the material and meaning of texts. Numerous studies have confirmed the development of introspection in English Protestant culture that encouraged texts to be read and analysed as sources of instruction for the purpose of cognitive, spiritual, and behavioural improvement.[12] This style of reading was most apparently cultivated in texts explicitly directed to that purpose through exegetical commentaries on scripture but it was inevitably also carried into everyday practices.[13] Reading was an instructive practice with a clear emphasis on its utility. Church attendance mandated by statute during the formation of the Elizabethan Settlement exposed the general populace, even those with little or no formal education, to an interpretative style of reading homilies, catechisms, instructions, and other forms of spiritual edification. The Marian exile and clergyman Thomas Lever considered it an abuse of the letter itself to consume God's word 'without any desire, meditation, or consideration of the meaning thereof'.[14] News media were also read in this fashion. A sense of providentialism was ingrained in Elizabethan and Jacobean news reporting to such a degree that distinctions between factuality and fictivity could be 'less important than the fact that they can all be used to inculcate [a] morality'. Witchcraft pamphlets were somewhat aberrant in that they were generally more concerned – although not exclusively so – with establishing the veracity of their reporting because of the naturally ambiguous truthfulness of witchcraft as a phenomenon.[15] But they were nevertheless subject to the same broad interpretative model

[10] Mark Hailwood, 'Rethinking Literacy in Rural England, 1550–1700', *Past & Present* 260: 1 (2023), pp. 38–70, quoted p. 6.
[11] Adam Fox, *Oral and Literate Culture in England, 1500–1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), quoted pp. 5, 19.
[12] Kevin Sharpe and Steven N. Zwicker, 'Introduction: discovering the Renaissance Reader', in Kevin Sharpe and Steven Zwicker (eds), *Reading, Society and Politics in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 1–40.
[13] Sandra Clark, *The Elizabethan Pamphleteers: Popular Moralistic Pamphlets 1580–1640* (London: The Athlone Press, 1983).
[14] Thomas Lever, 'A Preface shewing the true vnderstanding of Gods word, and the right vse of Gods workes and benefites, euident and easie to be seene in the exercise of these Meditations', in John Bradford, *Godly Meditations vppon the ten Commaundementes, the Articles of the fayth, and the Lords prayer* (London: William Seres, 1567), sig. A3r.
[15] Clark, *The Elizabethan Pamphleteers*, pp. 100, 91.

that elevated the 'confirmatory and practical rather than [the] informative, disinterested, or aesthetic'.[16] A sense of this utilitarian bent can be found in Henry Holland's 1590 treatise on witchcraft, which addressed itself to male heads of households and promised to provide 'precious preseruatiues' sufficient for them to 'learn the best meanes to purge their houses of all vnclean spirits, and wisely to auoide . . . such abhominations'.[17] Taking into account the autodidacticism of reading in early modern England, it was almost more difficult for a contemporary reader to avoid drawing out instruction from a text than not. There existed an unspoken agreement between writers and readers that written works contained meaning beyond the purely informational or titillating.[18] Readers were expected to engage even with pamphlets: interpreting, discussing, challenging, and internalising their text. This form of "reading" was reflective of the style of belief in witchcraft in early modern England, demonstrating and inculcating qualities and behaviours that were folded into processes of believing.

Witchcraft Pamphlets as Historical Sources

In 2019 the journal *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* released three special issues devoted to witchcraft narratives, covering a time span of three-and-a-half millennia and ranging geographically across the "Ancient Mediterranean" and northern Europe. The dedicated set of issues were presented as an investigation into how narratives 'select and frame social knowledge . . . and link individual, mundane situations to wider cultural and cosmological beliefs, orchestrating both moral concepts and mortal power in interaction with other social structures and dynamics'. Many of these featured articles 'highlight[ed] the crucial role of uncertainty as both a cause and a consequence of these discursive dynamics'. The historicity of narratives themselves was also asserted as

> such narratives attain their power not only though their mundane efficacy, but because they also link daily experience to the cosmological realm, invoking culturally

[16] Eugene R. Kintgen, *Reading in Tudor England* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1996), p. 130–138.
[17] Henry Holland, *A treatise against vvitchcraft* (Cambridge: Printed by John Legatt, 1590), sig. A1r.
[18] Mark S. R Jenner and Lena Liapi, 'Cheap print, crime, and information in early modern London: The Life and Death of Griffin Flood', *The Seventeenth Century* 38:3 (2023), pp. 185–213.

specific concepts of morality and bringing these concepts into interaction with other social structures and dynamics.[19]

Alexandra Walsham has described the relationship between how the early modern English cultural interpretation of suffering influenced 'the realm of experience' through the potency of print media 'as a barometer and an engine of . . . subtle alterations in attitude and sensibility'.[20] The production, consumption, and redistribution of witch-media was part of an extended process of believing. As a crime, witchcraft was predicated upon suspicion and printed accounts of bewitchment formed an autopoietic cycle: suspicion, accusation, trial, report, repeat. Qualities associated with witchcraft in media became qualities that were both searched for and reproduced in practice, a recursiveness that solidified certain beliefs, as well as incubating idealisations about how bewitchment was experienced.

Witchcraft pamphlets entertained and informed early modern audiences across Europe, and as sources of information about witchcraft they continue to excite the imaginations of historians, having received increased scholarly attention over the last three decades. Robert Walinski-Kiehl has advocated for their worth in German witchcraft historiography, comparing their contemporary provocative potential to the techniques that early Reformers employed to propagate their evangelism.[21] The work of Charles Zika has been influential in exploring the relationship between the stereotyping of witches and imagery in early modern media.[22] More recently, Abaigéal Warfield has called for more comparative work to be undertaken to study how witchcraft and news media interacted in various nations.[23] Some of the prospective links between England and continental Europe have recently been addressed by Gibson, who has explored the possibility that Brian Darcy, the magistrate in charge of the St Osyth witchcraft trials, was influenced by the demonology of Jean Bodin. A cultural exchange precipitated by Bodin's visit to England as a member of the retinue that

[19] Esther Eidinow and Richard Gordon, 'Narrating Witchcraft: Agency, Discourse, and Power', in *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft*, 14:1 (2019), pp. 1–6, quoted pp. 3–5.
[20] Alexandra Walsham, 'The Happiness of Suffering', in Braddick and Innes (eds), *Suffering and Happiness*, pp. 45–64, quoted pp. 45–6.
[21] Robert Walinski Kiehl, 'Pamphlets, Propaganda and Witch Hunting in Germany c. 1560–1630', *Reformation* 6 (2002), pp. 49–74.
[22] Charles Zika, *Exorcising our Demons: Magic, Witchcraft, and Visual Culture in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 2003); Charles Zika, *The Appearance of Witchcraft: Print and Visual Culture in Sixteenth-Century Europe* (London: Routledge, 2007); for studies on a range of interrelations between media and the supernatural see: Jennifer Spinks and Dagmar Eichberger (eds), *Religion, the Supernatural, and Visual Culture in Early Modern Europe: An Album Amicorum for Charles Zika* (Leiden: Brill, 2015).
[23] Abaigéal Warfield, 'Witchcraft and the Early Modern Media', in Johannes Dilinger (ed.), *The Routledge History of Witchcraft* (London: Routledge, 2019), pp. 208–218.

accompanied the Duke of Anjou in 1581.[24] As tantalising as an international comparison of believing styles sound, I am content here to attempt to first establish a more complete baseline understanding of English representations of witchcraft experiences and beliefs before such comparisons are made.

Through an exploration of the emotional styles of belief in English witchcraft pamphlets I hope to contribute in some small way to the rich discourse about witchcraft pamphlets that has been produced in the last thirty years. But here we run into our first snag. Due to its criminality, much of the material that contemporaries compiled about witchcraft was either entirely legalistic or otherwise irrevocably coloured by judicial considerations. Court records, trial transcripts, and other products of the system itself were necessarily highly formulaic and presented in – variable degrees of – accordance with juridical standards. And this presentational style was often transferred to extrajudicial texts that covered specific cases or expounded upon the phenomenon generally, such as pamphlets and sermons. In purely informational terms, emotions and believing patterns were decidedly not prioritised items in the documentation of witchcraft cases. The courts – and consequently their trial reports – prioritised incriminating details: witness statements or confessions that evidenced a diabolic pact having been formed, the involvement of the accused with familiar spirits, or the presence of bodily marks indicative of malefic activity. Thusly it was narrative texts about witchcraft, of which there are relatively few, that tended to include more of the sort of information – considered largely extraneous in a legal sense – from which historians can uncover the emotionality within practices of believing. This is partly due simply to contemporary pragmatic considerations about the scale and cost of production. Despite their flaws, by far the most vividly detailed pictures of witchcraft episodes were given in pamphlets.

This, unfortunately, leads us into another issue. Thus far I have referred to "witchcraft pamphlets" uncritically, as if a consensus has been reached on which texts make up this genre: this is not the case. There are, in the words of James Sharpe, 'considerable definitional problems' in the categorisation of "witchcraft pamphlets" as a distinct genre.[25] Gibson – whose work forms the backbone of scholarship on English witchcraft pamphlets – has

[24] Marion Gibson, 'French Demonology in an English Village: The St Osyth Experiment of 1582', in Julian Goodare, Rita Voltmer, and Liv Helene Willumsen (eds), *Demonology and Witch-Hunting in Early Modern Europe* (London: Routledge, 2020), pp. 107–126.
[25] James Sharpe, 'English Witchcraft Pamphlets and the Popular Demonic', in Julian Goodare, Rita Voltmer, and Liv Helene Willumsen (eds), *Demonology and Witch-Hunting in Early Modern Europe* (London: Routledge, 2020), pp. 127–146, quoted p. 128.

extensively covered the variability of the texts included within this genre: differing lengths, degrees of complexity, intellectual sophistication, authorship, and readership.[26] The predominant response to definitional problems of establishing the bounds of this genre has been heuristic; historians have selected and excluded particular texts to form bespoke corpuses through piecemeal pragmatism, making comparison between conclusions and generalisations difficult and unhelpful. Charlotte-Rose Millar framed her study around a central "core group" of sixty-six witchcraft pamphlets, which she claims represents 'all extant witchcraft pamphlets from this period [1566–1717]'.[27] But only thirty of the thirty-six texts contained in Carla Suhr's corpus also feature in Millar's. This discrepancy is partially due to Millar's extending her exclusionary criteria to texts considered learned, those that comment upon the nature of witchcraft in general, and possession pamphlets – the last of which she considers a distinct genre. And it is presumably in accordance with this last criterion that she excluded both *The Witches of Warboys* and Fairfax's *Daemonologia* from the "core group". This is despite both episodes of "possession" having been caused by the practice of maleficium by witches, who were then brought to trial for the crime of witchcraft. To draw such a distinction seems to contradict the ambiguities found in the source material itself.[28] Indeed, Gibson classifies possession pamphlets as separable from witchcraft pamphlets only when witches were not implicated in the possession, and observes a contemporary interest in witchcraft-induced possession increasing alongside a rise in the use of narrative style in the late sixteenth century.[29] When the seventeenth-century apothecary William Drage intended to produce a nosology of supernatural diseases, he postulated that bewitchment and possession were separate conditions, appearing to lend credence to Millar's choice. But despite Drage's insistence that 'the Causes betwixt Possession and Bewitching, do commonly clearly differ in Manner and Nature' he barely substantiated this claim. In practice, distinctions between the two were characterised by a pervading ambivalence. Possession had more religious consequences because of its inherent theological implications, tied in intermittent controversies about exorcism, but ambiguation occurred even at the theoretical level. As James VI & I stated in his *Daemonologie*, witches 'can make some to be possessed with spirites, & so to becom verie Daemoniacques: and this last sorte is verie possible

[26] Gibson, *Reading Witchcraft*, esp. pp. 1–42, 113–118; Marion Gibson, *Early Modern Witches: Witchcraft Cases in Contemporary Writing* (London; Routledge, 2000).
[27] Charlotte-Rose Millar, *Witchcraft, the Devil, and Emotions in Early Modern England* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), p. 1.
[28] For a discussion of possession see: Sarah Ferber, 'Demonic Possession, Exorcism, and Witchcraft' in Brian P. Levack (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe and Colonial America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 575–592.
[29] Gibson, *Reading Witchcraft*, p. 187.

likewise to the Deuill their Master to do'.[30] For the purposes of this thesis possession and bewitchment are not treated as separate entities.

Although I remain unconvinced about the genre boundaries she drew, I am thankful for Millar's circumscription. Firstly, because she has left two remarkably meaty cases on the analytical chopping block; and secondly, because I can happily report that these cases provide further evidence for some of her conclusions. The principal texts I have chosen to concentrate on in chapters 5 and 6 of this thesis are only lightly engaged with by Millar. *The most strange and admirable discouerie of the three Witches of Warboys* is only referenced a handful of times: as evidence of witch's teats being found secreting different substances and as having featured sexual activity between the witches and the Devil.[31] Whereas Edward Fairfax's *Daemonologia* is not included in her corpus of pamphlets at all because it was never officially published in that format and instead circulated in manuscript copy, despite it sharing many features with the narrative pamphlets that do appear therein. Millar did quote Fairfax to evidence that the notion witches could appear as animals was present in England in the early seventeenth century. And our respective interests in this quotation fortuitously encapsulate the difference in our analytical preoccupations. Fairfax claimed that witches changing 'into hares, cats, and the like shapes, is so common as late testimonies and confessions approve unto us, that none but the stupidly incredulous can wrong the credit of the reporters, or doubt of the certainty'.[32] Whilst Millar focusses on his mention of the ability of witches to transform into animals, I am drawn to the second half of the quotation, which is representative of how Fairfax constructed and styled the hypothetical unbeliever within his text.

Despite our shared theoretical and topical interests, my work diverges from Millar's in terms of both our respective approaches to the material, and in our ultimate objectives. Her primary objectives were to 'challenge our understanding of English witchcraft as a predominantly non-diabolical crime' and 'to highlight how witchcraft narratives emphasised emotions as the primary motivation for witchcraft acts and accusations'.[33] Much to her credit, she has been successful in achieving these goals and her conclusions seem to be being borne out by subsequent research. This project was partly inspired by Millar's championing of pamphlets as an evidentiary avenue for histories of witchcraft and emotion, with my

[30] James VI & I, *Daemonologie* (Edinburgh: Printed by Robert Waldegrave, 1597), p. 47.
[31] Millar, *Witchcraft, the Devil, and Emotions*, ch. 4 n. 38 [p. 142]; p. 134.
[32] William Grainge (ed.), *Daemonologia: A Discourse on Witchcraft* (Harrogate: R. Ackrill, 1882), p. 97.
[33] Millar, *Witchcraft, the Devil, and Emotions in Early Modern England*, pp. 2–3.

research into the Warboys case in Chapter 5 confirming, and even expanding upon, one of her major arguments. Meanwhile, Marion Gibson has found further evidence in St Osyth to support of Millar's proposal that witches, femininity, and anger were intermingled in witchcraft narratives.[34] Speaking to Millar's first objective she has, through a thorough deployment of pamphlet evidence, furthered the historiographical reconsideration of the significance of diabolism to early modern English witchcraft mentioned in Chapter 1. Her method simultaneously demonstrates both the depth of historical insight accessible to historians who seriously engage with pamphlets, whilst simultaneously teasing out some fascinating details from their narratives about how contemporaries wove their conceptions about emotion into the fabric of witchcraft accusations. The question of the extent to which diabolism and demonology featured in English witchcraft is not a focal point of this thesis, although I do proceed in recognition that both were integral to contemporary understandings of witches – including informing the emotional styles of belief presented in texts – and have been historiographically underplayed.

My analysis focusses more on the role of emotion in witchcraft pamphlets. A piece of propaganda issued by the Elizabethan government in 1594 lamented that injudicious writers were all too eager to 'feede the worlde with diuersitie of Reportes agreable to their owne affections and passions', and it is to the presentational style of those affections and passions in witchcraft pamphlets that we now turn.[35] An important point to make here is that Millar is interested in how diabolism and emotions pertained to the figures of the accused witches themselves. However, as has been described in the discussion of emotional dialectics in Chapter 2, emotions do not exist in a vacuum: within texts or life. If the emotions of witches were being described in these texts, then they were necessarily being described within a system: whether that be internally, intertextually, or socially. Although the voices of these accused witches can be rescued from these texts – their stories recognised, and their agency somewhat restored – the texts themselves were not written by these witches. Reported speech from court testimonies are the closest approximation to their "true" storytelling, but they were overwritten by the authorial voice, especially in more narrative pamphlets. If witches' emotions were mentioned, then they were mentioned within the confines of what

[34] Marion Gibson, *The Witches of St Osyth: Persecution, Betrayal, and Murder in Elizabethan England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), p. 268.
[35] *A True Report of Sundry Horrible Conspiracies* (London: 1594), sig. Aiiir, cited in Joad Raymond, 'Irrational, impractical, and unprofitable: reading the news in seventeenth-century Britain', in Kevin Sharpe and Steven Zwicker (eds), *Reading, Society and Politics in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 185–214, p. 186.

writers understood their emotionality to represent, as well as its explicit proximity to witchcraft itself. And witchcraft pamphlets did contain more emotionality than solely those of witches. This was especially apparent when writers were themselves involved in cases, blurring self-advocacy and emotional expression into a heady mix of idealised behaviour, and from which we can glean some insight into how believers in witchcraft crafted narratives of their own belief.

The natural sympathy and attention of historians has humanistically gravitated towards the people accused of witchcraft, its victims, rather than those whose beliefs caused their victimisation. Accordingly, the scholarly emphasis has bent in the direction of analysing the effects of witchcraft on witches, rather than towards those by whom it was constructed, consumed, and conceptually recycled within their everyday practices of belief. To which point, Gibson's work on surviving Elizabethan and Jacobean witchcraft and possession pamphlets has confirmed Barbara Rosen's postulations that there was a shift in the composition and aesthetics of the genre from legal documentation to narrative after 1590. Rosen wrote that within the post-1590 pamphlets "attention shifts from the witch's actions, and the witch's trial to concern with the behaviour of those about her; the reader is now expected to feel himself involved with the sufferers".[36] I certainly concur with Gibson's statement that defining witchcraft requires it to be 'equally fully represented in both the factual, historical reporting of perceived events and in all tendentious accounts of them' and that 'all interpretation produces understanding of the construction being made by the interpreter'.[37] These interpretative constructions are what I hope to capture by examining witchcraft pamphlets through the lens of emotional styles of belief.

Methodologies

The historiography of witchcraft is saturated with discussions of how sources should be ideally parsed. Debates are constantly being had about what method best suits negotiating the layers of stereotyping, genericising, obfuscating, concealing, rewriting, and reimagining that contribute to the production of a textual representation of a witch – whether in trial records themselves, published transcripts of court proceedings, or narratives written after the fact. Methodologically, the analysis of English witchcraft pamphlets has fallen into two

[36] Barbara Rosen, *Witchcraft in England 1558–1618* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1991 [1969]), p. 213, quoted in Marion Gibson, *Reading Witchcraft*, p. 180.
[37] Gibson, *Reading Witchcraft*, p. 117.

broad categories. The first is that preferred by the Marion Gibson, whose seminal work on English witchcraft pamphlets explores their constructedness as historical sources. Building upon foundational observations made by Barbara Rosen in her 1969 book *Witchcraft in England*, Gibson has identified several key developments in witchcraft pamphlets hinging around the turn of the sixteenth- into the seventeenth century. She charts a shift in pamphlets towards a more narrative style of presentation, which was accompanied by a shift in the genericism of stories away from bewitchment as an act of revenge by the witch to acts of 'motiveless malignity'. Concomitantly, pamphlets became more intellectually and stylistically sophisticated as prose, occasioning a tonal shift towards more seriousness and severity when dealing with witchcraft as a subject.[38] Gibson's work excels in both recognising that witchcraft pamphlets were artificial representations but simultaneously acknowledging that their partiality gives them an interesting historicity itself. We should heed Hayden White's warning that 'no set of real events, even those comprising an individual life, displays the kind of formal coherency met with in what we conventionally recognise as a story' and that 'neither the reality nor the meaning of history is "out there" in the form of a story awaiting only a historian to discern its outline and identify the plot that comprises its meaning'.[39] Lived experience does not have an epistemological status beyond its expression in historical sources; rather, it is an interpretative perspective applied to our reading of those sources.

I characterise the second major method for analysing witchcraft pamphlets as a practice of "itemisation", by which I mean a process by which information is extracted from sources in discrete parcels, which parcels are sorted into thematic groupings, and which grouping are then presented to readers. It is a method that has been applied in both qualitative and quantitative studies, and an explication of each of these reveals some of the attendant problems to approaching witchcraft pamphlets in this manner. As mentioned above, Charlotte-Rose Millar successfully used a method of qualitative itemisation by identifying evidence of particular beliefs and organising this evidence to elucidate several themes: descriptions of witches' anger, mentions of interactions with familiars (and the sexualisation of that relationship), as well as the textual proximity of the Devil to emotional descriptions. Carla Suhr, who has produced several pieces of research on English witchcraft pamphlets,

[38] Gibson, *Reading Witchcraft*, pp. 78–152.
[39] Hayden White, 'Historical Pluralism', *Critical Inquiry*, 12:3 (Spring, 1986), pp. 480–493, quoted p. 487.

takes a significantly more quantitative approach to the pamphlets.[40] Her method itemised emotions in pamphlets according to an analytical model borrowed from J. R. Martin and P. R. R. White's work on appraisal theory, specifically its conceptualisation of "attitude". The aim of appraisal theory is to access its nominal "appraisal", defined as 'the semantic resources for negotiating emotions, judgements, and valuations, alongside resources for amplifying and engaging with these evaluations'.[41] The appraisal model subdivides attitude into categories: appreciation – the assessment of people and objects through reference to aesthetics and social values; affect – the qualities of feeling; and judgement – the moral assessment of people's behaviour and character. Suhr's approach is a form of highly technical literary analysis used to locate patterns of linguistic valence within texts. Like Gibson, her findings suggest that narrative pamphlets tended toward including much more positivity in their judgements, and that these judgements were applied overwhelmingly to victims of bewitchment. One major problem with this approach is its legibility. The strictness of Suhr's adherence to the appraisal theory model can overawe discussion of the pamphlets themselves, becoming more beholden the technical lexicon of appraisal theory. Exemplary of this excisional tendency is how Suhr structured her contextualisation; she evidences her points in the form of several-line-long quotations taken from disparate pamphlets, and in which relevant words and phrases highlighted in bold. Overall, this can ironically result in a sense that emotions are being located only as they might be found through a search function, with only their most immediate textual surroundings providing these data any context. A positive "appreciation" might be identified in the formulaic epistle to the reader of a particular pamphlet – a common trope was to address readers as 'gentle' and 'courteous' or as a 'good Christian' – and a negative "affect" could also be found within that same pamphlet: the anger of the witch. But her model allows for only a limited accounting of how we are to interpret the presence of these two pieces of information within a single text; only that they both occur and contribute to a later conclusion about linguistic valence. This is not to suggest that Suhr's work, nor approaches in this same vein, are not valuable analyses. It is useful to know that her findings strongly confirm that witches were overwhelmingly appraised negatively in these texts, which statistical conclusions provide solidity to what would otherwise be more impressionistic statements that neutral, or relatively sympathetic,

[40] Carla Suhr, 'Publishing for the Masses: Early Modern English Witchcraft Pamphlets', *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 113:1 (2012), pp. 118–121; Carla Suhr, 'Portrayal of Attitude in Early Modern English Pamphlets' *Studia Neophilologica* 84:Sup1 (2012), pp. 130–142.
[41] J. R. Martin, 'Beyond exchange: appraisal systems in English', in S. Hunston and G. Thompson (eds), *Evaluation in Text: Authorial Stance and the Construction of Discourse* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), pp. 142–175, p. 145, quoted in Suhr, 'Portrayal of Attitude', p. 133.

portrayals of witches were exceptional.[42] But whilst these models excel at establishing linguistic patterns of frequency and distribution, they are naturally less suited to digging down into the meaning of these relationships within specific narratives.

A more recent application of a similar narratological model to witchcraft pamphlets also exhibits these features. In their 2022 article, Raisa Maria Toivo and Liv Helene Willumsen directly apply concepts of experience and narratology to records from witch trials in Finland and Finnmark.[43] Their use of narratology in regard to the texts is straightforward and highly granular. They focus on styles of voice that emerge from the text, how legal convention shaped its form, and the language used, intending to recover the accused's knowledge about witchcraft, storytelling ability, and use of language. Although the text was mediated through the court scribe, trial evidence was significantly more direct in its proximity to actual speech acts than were the witchcraft pamphlets. Some pamphlets cleave more closely to this process, in that they were direct reproductions of courtroom notes, but most were more heavily mediated than this. Even those based on court records had their content rearranged and organised to form more coherent narratives, and authors added various degrees of gloss according to taste. But whilst Toivo and Willumsen's methodological approach might not be especially efficacious when it comes to accessing the styles of belief in these pamphlets, the theoretical underpinnings of their work deserve expanding upon because they pertain to processes of experience and interpretation. Toivo and Willumsen emphasise that content, form, and process synthesise into meaningful text, which combined with their explication of "experience" as 'a category of using memories of past events and circumstances to make sense of present ones and form expectations for future ones'. Experience is a process of understanding and interpreting done through the active formation of connections between past, present, and future events: 'observations are given meaning in a simultaneous, four-way process between the past and the future, and the self and the community, in which experience is continuously being formed in the middle'. When this process is engaged in by 'a significant number of people and communities, it forms social structures that people come

[42] For instance, the characterisation of Elizabeth Sawyer in the 1621 play *The Witch of Edmonton* was partially a critique of how social prejudice drove women towards becoming that which they were stereotyped as; Sawyer was presented as a pitiable old woman whose poor reputation and loneliness were exploited by the diabolic agent Tom to bring her and others to ruin: William Rowley, Thomas Dekker, and John Ford, *The Witch of Edmonton: A known true Story* (London: Printed by J. Cottrel, 1658); Susan D. Amussen, '*The Witch of Edmonton*: Witchcraft, Inversion, and Social Criticism', *Early Theatre* 21:2 (2018), pp. 167–180; Kathryn Prince, 'Emotions in *The Witch of Edmonton*', *Early Theatre* 21:2 (2018), pp. 181–194.

[43] Raisa Maria Toivo and Liv Helene Willumsen, 'A Narratological Approach to Witchcraft Trial Records: Creating Experience', *Scandinavian Journal of History* 47:1 (2022), pp. 39–61.

to expect, count on, and despair about'.[44] Narratives in historical texts recursively produced and reproduced conceptualisations of various phenomena, including witchcraft. This can be clearly seen in *A true and iust Recorde* – the pamphlet that recounted the witchcraft case in St Osyth, Essex– in which testimonies were arranged out of chronological order to group relevant information together for the sake of legibility. It even included a folding tabulated guide to the different accused witches and their respective crimes and victims.[45]

Ultimately, quantitative methods are undeniably useful for confirming the presence and frequency of particular emotions and beliefs – or at least linguistic expressions associated with such – within datasets, as well as being able to identify broad trends amongst them. However, qualitative research is subsequently required to fully apprehend the specifics of how belief and emotion were styled and related to one another within a text. Once witchcraft pamphlets are translated into the language of appraisal theory or narratology, it is difficult to translate – or recontextualise – their findings back into a format suitable for discussing styles of belief. Neither granular textual analysis nor thematically highlighting words and passages of a text are inherently inappropriate methods for reading these historical sources, but if emotional styles of belief are to be located, then there are more suitable approaches for accessing them. To do so requires us to qualitatively survey the internal consistencies – and inconsistencies – in how witchcraft pamphlets presented and connected beliefs, behaviours, practices, and emotionality.

Emotion and Belief in *The Hartford-shire Wonder*

A certain amount of circumscription is a practical necessity to provide boundaries to research – hence why this thesis focusses on the period 1560 to 1640 – but it is equally necessary for subsequent research to re-evaluate whether sources that have been either missed, or purposefully excluded, in prior research contradict or reinforce its conclusions. This can be demonstrated through a close reading of a pamphlet that was included in Suhr's corpus but excluded from Millar's.[46] This brief analysis of *The Hartford-shire Wonder* serves to demonstrate four points. Firstly, that early modern witchcraft media consciously described

[44] Toivo and Willumsen, 'A Narratological Approach', pp. 40–41.
[45] W. W. [Brian Darcy], *A true and iust Recorde, of the Information, Examination, and Confession of all the Witches, taken at S. Oses in the countie of Essex* (London: Thomas Dawson, 1582), e.g. sigs. C7r–D2r.
[46] Unlike *The Witches Warboys* and *Daemonologia*, Millar does not cite this pamphlet anywhere in her monograph.

believing in witchcraft as a process, that this process was represented and stylised according to – and contributed towards – contemporary emotional standards and expectations, and that this stylisation of belief can be observed outside of the temporal boundaries of this thesis. Secondly, that sources which have been otherwise excluded or neglected in previous histories of emotion and witchcraft contain evidence for a more dialectical model of early modern feeling within texts, as well as further proving claims made by those same historians. Thirdly, that following a deeply qualitative method of reading texts, and closely attending to the style of their presentation, helps tease out some of the complexities within early modern expressions of witchcraft belief. Fourthly, it contains many of the characteristics and tropes that had been developing for a century prior to its publication, and which qualities will be reencountered in an examination in Chapter 4 of several earlier witchcraft pamphlets.

The Hartford-shire Wonder was an anonymously authored pamphlet published in 1669 – almost three decades removed from the principal period with which this thesis is concerned. It reported the supernatural affliction endured by Jane Stretton, whose father Thomas Stretton had quarrelled with a neighbouring cunning person and his wife, causing the pair to inflict a wonderous illness upon Jane. Descriptions of the cunning man and his wife support Millar's observations that severe anger was an emotional state depicted as being closely entwined with witchcraft. The cunning couple were not directly named as witches by the pamphleteer; only the cunning man was referred to as such by Thomas in their initial quarrel. However, whilst the cunning man was also explicitly referred to as a wizard and fortune teller, it is nevertheless made clear in several passages that the pamphleteer considered all manner of practitioners of magic to fall into a single category. They were all recipients of divine castigation in Deuteronomy 18:10–12, and the cause of Jane's affliction was explicitly named as witchcraft. In response to being called 'either a Witch or a Devil' by Thomas Stretton, the heart of the cunning man was 'inflamed with the fire of revenge, but for the present he covers it with the ashes of dissimulation'. His veiled rage was attributed to natural qualities of each emotion. Love and friendship were written as if on sand, liable to be blown away by any disturbance, 'but malice and envy is engraven in Marble or Adamant, time cannot obliterate or wear it out'. The malice of the cunning couple was calculating, unlike those witches Millar identified as having been seduced by the Devil due to a lack of control over their rage. It festered for a whole month before it was acted upon. The couple were still considered servants of the Devil, and he was partially responsible for their emotional disposition as he 'indues them with a plentiful stock of malice, revenge, and dissimulation'. Stores of malice did not spoil, like 'an inperfect book, it hath no *Fi[ni]s*' and upon Jane's 'body

God had permitted them to exercise their envy'.[47] The 'violent raging fits' Jane Stretton experienced mirrored the ferocity of her malicious neighbours, although this was the opposite of her usual demeanour, in which respect she mirrored the bewitched outbursts of the Throckmorton sisters in Warboys, whose experiences are analysed in Chapter 5.

Although the emotional behaviour of non-witches was less frequently commented upon than that of witches, there was still a dialectic at play; generally, malice and anger versus decency and innocence. Jane Stretton was described as 'ignorant' of the bad blood between her father and the cunning couple – her 'Innocency dreads no danger' – and was compared to children who will 'play with the Bee for his gaudy coat, and mistrusts not his sting'. A week hence she gave the cunning wife a pin she requested and 'the silly maid mistrusting no mischief, as not intending any' again had her innocence abused by the couple and she collapsed at a neighbour's door 'lying in a deplored spectacle of pitty'.[48] A few years prior, in 1665, the Hertfordshire apothecary William Drage described the personality of another bewitched woman much the same way. Commenting on the possession case of Mary Hall, Drage noted of her personality that she was 'very young, and seems bashful, and modest', as well as 'silly[,] well-disposed, and religiously-educated'. Hall's parents were 'held by all very conscientious and honest People' and were possessed of enough wealth that imposture for financial gain was reckoned unlikely.[49] It was eminently possible, however, for people could make gains other than monetary from bewitchments. Jane Stretton's suffering was an opportunity for others to visit and demonstrate their 'pitty': to prove their hearts were not iron, that they were softened enough for Jane's torment to make an impression upon them. It was claimed that Jane ate nothing for six months, which claim drew throngs of curious spectators, and 'she had continual attendants both night and day by her Friends and Relations'. Her reputation grew to the point of local legend, which brought ever-more visitors and if plenty of whom attended to satisfy their plain 'curiosity', there were equally many who availed themselves of the opportunity to participate in exercising their emotions of 'pitty . . . to help and comfort her'.[50]

Just as emotions were woven into the pamphlet narrative, so too were practices of believing stylised, with the author of *The Hartford-shire Wonder* specifically intending their work to comment upon cultural processes of believing in England at that time. Ascribing

[47] Anon., *The Hartford-shire Wonder* (London: Printed for John Clark, 1669), sigs A3v–A4v, B1r, B2v.
[48] Ibid., sigs A4r–v.
[49] Drage, *Daimonomageia*, p. 40.
[50] Anon., *The Hartford-shire Wonder*, sigs B1v–B2r.

intentionality can be a slippery task, and it should be noted that identification of themes in witchcraft texts can risk, as Malcolm Gaskill puts it, 'raising to a self-consciousness that which in its own time was unconscious or unexamined'.[51] Connections and associations between witchcraft and emotion were not necessarily being consciously deployed purposefully by all participants or authors – the connections drawn were more representative of people dipping into, and drawing from, sets of cultural connotations and conceptualisations about witches. What makes this particular pamphlet so apposite for demonstrating the role of belief in the genre is that such caveating is not required in its case. Throughout the work, its author deliberately framed the text as both a commentary on the atmosphere of belief in early modern England and as a record of the process of belief at work during this episode. Even on its very title page *The Hartford-shire Wonder* charted the veracity of events as being 'confirmed by many credible witnesses': a sentiment that was immediately reinforced by the epistle to the reader, where it was again confirmed that there were 'sufficient persons both in Ware and London, to justifie the truth thereof'. It would be superfluous to include the testimonies of witnesses because there were an overwhelming number of candidates for this role. 'Several Eminent Persons' even offered to attach their names to the story, but the author dismissed this as 'needless', 'the thing being so near hand and obvious to our eyes'. A spectre of doubt nevertheless crept in at the edges of the text. Despite reassurances about the reliability of the recounting, were it not for those witnesses then the story 'might not gain credence though with some of an easie belief'. The theme of the hardness and softness of believing was a constant pressure that was suffused throughout the text. The atmosphere of belief in mid-seventeenth century England was characterised as 'the Iron Age, because of the stubbornness, and Iron hearted inhabitants that live therein'.[52] This revival of a classical notion of the metallic Ages of Man was invoked in a variety of literary circumstances in this period: illustrating the intolerance of the godly toward theatre productions, framing lamentations about how the civil wars of the 1640s were a chiastic disaster for the nation, and accentuating celebrations of the Restoration as a Golden Age that had replaced the Iron Age of the Commonwealth and Protectorate.[53] Iron hearts were hardened hearts, and hardened hearts were resistant to feeling true faith, continuing a theme that coursed

[51] Malcolm Gaskill, 'Afterword: Passions in Perspective', in Michael Ostling and Laura Kounine (eds.), *Emotions in the History of Witchcraft* (London: Palgrave, 2016), pp. 269–279, quoted p. 277.
[52] Anon., *The Hartford-shire Wonder*, sigs A1r, A2r, B4v, A3r.
[53] Thomas Heywood, *An Apology for Actors* (London: Printed by Nicholas Okes, 1612), sig. B2v; Anon., *The Four Ages of England: or, The Iron Age* (London: Printed by J. C., 1675); Anon. [J. A.], *We have Brought our Hoggs to a fair Market; or, The Iron Age Turned into Gold* (London: Printed for Thomas Mills, 1660).

throughout sixteenth- and seventeenth-century devotional literature that a particular emotional and mental disposition was required to most effectively (and affectively) be a faithful Protestant. To be counted amongst those 'diffident of any such thing as Witchcraft or conjurations' and to hold to 'that belief that stories of witchcraft are but idle Chymeras' could tacitly imply a socially dangerous denial of the veracity of scripture.[54]

In the case of *The Hartford-shire Wonder*, the pamphleteer proclaimed that they were not appealing to those 'of an easie belief', and presented arriving at the conviction that Jane was bewitched to have been a gradual process. When first she was taken ill there was 'no mistrust of the cause of her malady', but as the 'astrange wonder' of her illness and fast continued for months those close to her 'at last began to distrust that her sickness proceeded from more then an ordinary cause'.[55] The supernaturality of her illness increased over time: her miraculous abstinence from bodily sustenance was joined by unusual filaments falling upon her bed, gouts of coloured flame leaping from her mouth, and she regurgitated warped pins. Even those doubtful of the reality of witchcraft had their convictions reversed upon witnessing these wonderous happenings and 'who being fully satisfied with the truth of [it] went home fully convinced of their errours'. Ruling out mundane illness was also a regular part of the process by which early modern people arrived at a supernatural diagnosis. 'In that concourse of people there could not but be many advisers, sume to this thing, and some to that', but the continued inefficacy of medicines made it 'apparent that her distemper proceeded from the malice of the Devils Instruments'. The severity and strangeness of Jane's illness, combined with the 'astonishment' it solicited from witnesses, eventually sufficed to convince her family that 'it was done by Witchcraft and such Diabolical means'. There was a significant displacement happening within the text, enacted in order to stylise the emotionality and behaviours of the Strettons. The opinions of Jane's family, friends, and neighbours were conglomerated into the nebulous figure of 'the beholders', which subsequently muddied attempts to apportion responsibility for later acts of violence, which occurred once the quarrel between Thomas Stretton and the cunning couple had been

[54] Anon., *The Hartford-shire Wonder*, sigs B4r, B2r.
[55] Ibid., sig. B1v.
For more on religious anorexia and the concept of *anorexia mirabilis* see: Rudolph M. Bell, *Holy Anorexia* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1985); Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (London: University of California Press, 1987); Joan Jacobs Brumberg, *Fasting Girls: The History of Anorexia Nervosa* (New York, NY: Plume, 1989); Walter Vandereycken, *From Fasting Saints to Anorexic Girls: The History of Self-Starvation* (New York, N. Y.: New York University Press, 1994); Nancy A. Gutierrez, *'Shall She Famish Then?': Female Food Refusal in Early Modern England* (London: Routledge, 2003); Darren Oldridge, *The Supernatural in Early Modern England* (Routledge: London, 2016), pp. 58–59.

remembered and connected to Jane's illness. It was 'the Neighbours' who 'resolved by violence to fetch them before her'.[56]

The pamphlet invited people to reflect upon their beliefs and practices through exposure to its narrative, but the pamphleteer also overtly encouraged their readers to consider three salient conclusions drawn from Jane's experience. Firstly, to be aware of the fragility of the body: 'like glass apt to be broken'. Secondly, to avoid engaging the services of cunning folk. And lastly, that softened hearts were required to facilitate the process of absorption by which these instructions could be internalised, mirroring core Protestant conceptions of interiority and practiced faith. If the episode did depress the local cunning trade, it did not last; the itinerant wizard Joseph Hynes received five pounds for telling fortunes in Ware less than a decade later, in 1676.[57] Although inefficacious in that endeavour, the pamphlet was one of several published around the same time that linked witchcraft cases to styles of belief. The pamphleteer directly mentioned its connection to another recent possession story published under the title *Newes from Darby-shire* – a pamphlet written by Thomas Robbins about an instance of *anorexia mirabilis* – which also featured a woman who was around twenty, just like Jane Stretton.[58] Both pamphlets instrumentatlised the two demoniacs to prove to their respective readers that the people of mid-seventeenth century England were living in 'the age of Wonders'.[59] Unlike Taylor, however, Stretton was suspected of having been bewitched, which aligned with the geographically closer case of Mary Hall, whose torment and possession by spirits was considered to have been instigated by two witches. William Drage's *Daimonomageia* was empirically orientated – Hall was experimented upon and Drage was keen to determine the efficacy of different treatments – whereas *The Hartford-shire Wonder* and *News from Darby-shire* were foundationally concerned with belief. Robbins 'feared that there is too many in these days, which will be very loath to believe this wonderful work' and like our anonymous pamphleteer insisted on their being a profusion of witnesses to its veracity. He also styled belief in this case of witchcraft to the state of being a 'true believeing Christian', which was dependent upon whether they received the narrative as 'as a true story, and not as a fable'.[60]

[56] Anon., *The Hartford-shire Wonder*, sigs B2r–B3r.
[57] Thomas, Keith, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1971), p. 297.
[58] Thomas Robbins, *Newes from Darby-shire* (London: Printed for T. P., 1668).
[59] *The Hartford-shire Wonder*, sig. A3r.
[60] Robbins, *Newes from Darby-shire*, pp. 8, 3.

Another short quarto was published in 1677 recounting the possession of a young woman in Great Gaddesden, which targeted those who 'like the Sadduces of old [had] a scoffing spirit . . . the undoubted Fore-runner of Atheism'.[61] Including Sadducism and atheism in its lexicon so prominently placed the text within the camp that housed Joseph Glanvill's *A Blow at Modern Sadducism* and Meric Casaubon's *Of Credulity and Incredulity*, both of which works were published in 1668, and which together formed represented the intellectual backbone of apologism for belief in witchcraft in the mid seventeenth century.[62] Their interest in the relationship between the style of belief in witchcraft and believing more broadly in the mid-sixteenth century, which sometimes bordered the obsessive, had its roots in developments within the pamphlet genre in the second half of the fifteenth-century. Pamphleteers had been describing and stylising the intertwined processes of believing and feeling present in witchcraft experiences for decades – with varying degrees of overtness and intensity. In the following three chapters these developments are charted through qualitative analyses of several Elizabethan, Jacobean, and Caroline witchcraft pamphlets

[61] Anon., *Wonderful news from Buckinghamshire* (London, 1677), p. 1.
[62] Joseph Glanvill, *A Blow at Modern Sadducism In some Philosophical Considerations about Witchcraft* (London: Printed by E. Cotes, 1668); Meric Casaubon, *Of Credulity and Incredulity In things Natural, Civil, and Divine* (London: Printed for T. Garthwait, 1668).

Chapter 4: Emotionality and Belief in Witchcraft Pamphlets

Presented as a series of vignettes, the following analyses emphasise the ways in which several texts – published in the period from 1560 to 1640 – constructed idealisations of belief in witchcraft, and how feeling was implicated in this historical process. The intention is to demonstrate – in the less than charitable words of Reginald Scot – 'how fooles are trained to beleeue these absurdities, being woone by little and little to such credulitie'.[1] *The Witches of Warboys* and Edward Fairfax's *Daemonologia* are examined focally in Chapters 5 and 6 respectively. With their exclusion, there were around twenty witchcraft pamphlets published in the period before the Wars of the Three Kingdoms. Marion Gibson counts nineteen news pamphlets published about witchcraft between 1566 and 1621, whereas Carla Suhr counts only thirteen, and Charlotte-Rose Millar seventeen.[2] The discrepancy between these numbers is due to Suhr having included the 1592 work *Newes from Scotland*, and the 1628 account of the life of Dr John Lambe – texts that Millar cites but does not include in her corpus.[3] Suhr's list is the shortest as she excludes several works, most conspicuously Thomas Potts' account of the Lancashire trial in 1612.[4] As mentioned in Chapter 3, Gibson has supported Barbara Rosen's identification of 1590 as an inflection point for witchcraft pamphlets, marking distinct changes in authorship; intellectual and linguistic sophistication; how the prose was structured; and what was presented as having precipitated instances of bewitchment, from bewitchments as acts of revenge to cases of motiveless malignity.[5] The

[1] Reginald Scot, *The discouerie of witchcraft* (London: Printed by William Brome, 1584), p. 397. S. F. Davies has proposed that some of what constituted Scot's stylisation of disbelief was an awareness that believers exhibited weaknesses in their style of belief, that is to say, he ridiculed their credulity: S. F. Davies, 'The Reception of Reginald Scot's Discovery of Witchcraft: Witchcraft, Magic, and Radical Religion', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 74:3 (2013), pp. 381–401.

[2] Marion Gibson, *Reading Witchcraft: Stories of early English witches* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 6.

[3] Carla Suhr, 'Portrayal of Attitude in Early Modern English Pamphlets' *Studia Neophilologica* 84:Sup1 (2012), pp. 130–142; Charlotte-Rose Millar, *Witchcraft, the Devil, and Emotions in Early Modern England* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), Appendix A.

[4] Other pamphlets missing from Suhr: Anon., *The Seuerall Factes of Witch-Crafte* (London: Printed by John Charlewood,1585); Thomas Johnson, *A vvorld of vvonders* (London: Imprinted for William Barley, 1595); Anon., *The most cruell and bloody murther committed by an innkeepers wife* (London: Printed by T. Purfoot, 1606); Thomas Potts, *The vvonderfull disouerie of witches in the countie of Lancaster* (London: Printed by W. Stansby, 1613); Alexander Roberts, *A Treatise of Witchcraft* (London: Printed by N[icholas] O[kes], 1616); Anon., *Witchcrafts strange and wonderfull* (London: Printed by M. F., 1635).

[5] Marion Gibson, *Reading Witchcraft*, pp. 113–117.

1590s have been identified as a significant turning point by several historians. John Guy posited that there was a distinct second phase to Elizabeth I's reign from 1585 until her death.[6] James Sharpe notes the decade as having witnessed marked increases in social tensions born of dearth and concomitantly increased criminality; and Cesare Cuttica has suggested that fear of the "popular" grew in the decade. [7] Michael Wasser has suggested that in Scotland there was a period of suppression of witchcraft trials by the Privy Council beginning with the end of the trials in 1597 and lasting until 1628.[8] The following series of concentrated qualitative analyses suggest that alongside the rise in narrative in the 1590s came an increase in the emotionality of pamphlets.

Documentary Pamphlets

Prior to the 1590s, witchcraft pamphlets often took the form of listed answers to questions asked either during the examination of an accused witch or during the trial itself. These pamphlets tended to be shorter and integrated emotion into their accounts of bewitchment significantly less, and in a more limited fashion, than did the kind of narrative prose that later became prevalent. However, even the earliest of the surviving witchcraft pamphlets – based on the Assizes at Chelmsford in 1566, – was not entirely dispassionate. Both of its prefatory poems feature highly emotive language, specifically identifying the act of conveying information about witchcraft itself to be an emotional process. Accused witches confessed to having been driven to their acts of *maleficium* through anger, resentment, and fear. As for the emotions of victims, neither of the witch Elizabeth Francis' partners, who were also her victims, were especially sympathetic figures. Her familiar, a cat called Sathan, convinced her that if she had pre-marital sex with Andrew Byles then he would marry her. However, after he 'had thus abused her he would not mary her', so she sent Sathan to ruin his finances and health. Her second husband did marry her after they had pre-marital sex, but it was an unhappy and fractious union and 'they liued not so quietly as she desired . . . moued to

[6] John Guy, 'Introduction The 1590s: The second reign of Elizabeth I?', in John Guy (ed.), *The reign of Elizabeth I: Court and culture in the last decade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 1–19.
[7] James Sharpe, 'Social strain and social dislocation, 1585–1603', in Guy (ed.), *The reign of Elizabeth I*, pp. 192–211; Cesare Cuttica, 'Popularity in Early Modern England (ca. 1580–1642): Looking Again at Thing and Concept', *Journal of British Studies* 58:1 (Jan., 2019), pp. 1–27.
[8] Michael Wasser, 'The Privy Council and the Witches: the Curtailment of Witchcraft Prosecutions in Scotland, 1597–1628', *The Scottish Historical Review* 82:213:1 (Apr., 2003), pp. 20–46.

swearing and cursinge'.[9] The testimony of one of the victims in this case was reproduced in the pamphlet; Elizabeth Francis revealed that she had gifted Sathan to Agnes Waterhouse and instructed her on the proper ritual process for forming a pact with him. It was Agnes' daughter Joan Waterhouse who was accused of having sent Sathan to attack a young girl, Agnes Browne, who had refused to give Joan some bread and cheese. By the time Sathan reached Browne his appearance had transformed from that of a cat to a toad, then to a large dog, and finally the horrific chimaera that she described as like a black dog with the head of a horned ape. In Agnes Browne's recounting of her experience, it becomes apparent that Sathan was a stand-in for the begging behaviour of Joan. Sathan repeatedly came to her and asked her to give him butter, which she refused. If his frightening supernatural appearance was insufficient proof of his diabolic nature, whenever she piously said anything 'in the name of Jesus' as the local priest had advised her, the creature called those evil words. Agnes diabolised the act of begging and reified it in the threatening grotesque Sathan. After being refused charity, an angry Joan had tasked Sathan to 'make one Agnes browne afrayde', in which mission he had certainly succeeded.

Contrariwise, the other witchcraft pamphlet that has survived from 1566 is *The Examination of John Walsh*, which does not feature emotions whatsoever, not even those of the witch.[10] It was a straightforward numbered list of questions and answers from the interrogation of a Dorsetshire cunning man. These questions were focussed on the mechanics and practises that Walsh engaged in, and the provenance of his knowledge. Millar notes that it was the sole English witchcraft pamphlet in the sixteenth century not to mention 'revenge or malice as a motivation for witchcraft'.[11] The text was a rather straightforward anti-Catholic polemic intended to connect Catholicism and witchcraft. The address from the printer to the reader unfurls an entire conspiracy about how the institutions of the Catholic Church had, for centuries, been helmed by sinful sorcerers and it began by establishing that John Walsh learnt his witch ways from a priest, Robert of Dreiton. Its anti-Catholicism was shared by *The Confession of Agnes Waterhouse*, wherein the titular Agnes willed the Devil to do thing for her by saying 'her Pater noster in laten' and that Satan made her to likewise in Latin as he 'wolde at no tyme suffer to say it in englyshe'.[12] This is unsurprising considering both were

[9] Anon., *The Examination and Confession of certaine Wytches at Chensforde in the Countie of Essex* (London; William Powell, 1566), sigs A7r–v; Anon., *The Confession of Agnes Waterhowse* (London; William Powell, 1566), sig. A3r.
[10] Anon., *The Examination of John Walsh* (London: Printed by John Awdley, 1566).
[11] Millar, *Witchcraft, the Devil, and Emotions*, p. 110, n. 41.
[12] Anon., *The Examination and Confession of certaine Wytches at Chensforde*, sigs B2r, A2r.

published only eight years after restoration of Protestantism as the official religion of England. The nation had experienced a series of mid-century confessional lurches, and the resulting instability required that the Elizabethan Settlement be imposed, in part, through anti-papist rhetoric. The prevalence of anti-Catholicism in the pamphlets waxed and waned throughout the period according to the political climate; persistent issues with recusancy in Lancashire led the magistracy to associate the Pendle witches with local Catholicism, and Thomas Potts to dedicate his publication about the trial to Thomas Knyvet, who was partly responsible for thwarting the Gunpowder Plot.[13] The main antagonists in the pamphlets, however, were the witches themselves and the Devil, for whose murky machinations they were instruments. It was a styling of belief that gave emotionality little regard and was instead intently interested in encouraging its readership to maintain the orthodoxy of their believing.

More textual space for emotion was given in the series of confessions accused witches made to Brian Darcy, recorded in the 1582 publication *A true and iust Recorde*, which were suspiciously similar in terms of the performance of apologetic behaviours, indicating that there was a heavily stylised emotionality at play. Because we are confident that Darcy himself was responsible for recording and publishing these accounts, we can surmise that in reading these confession we are likely reading a Darcian ideal of a confession. When he tricked Ursula Kemp into confessing, she did so by immediately 'bursting out with weeping, fell vpon her knees'. This action was repeated when Darcy threatened Elizabeth Bennet and 'the saide Elizabeth falling vpon her knees distilling teares confessed'. Likewise, Ales Hunt 'then falling vponn her knees with weeping teares, confessed'. When pressed to reveal any co-conspirators Ales implicated her sister Margery Sammon, who initially denied any such activity whatsoever, including having received any spirits from another, but Ales 'whyspred her in the eare: And then presentlye after [Margery] with great submission and many teares, confessed'. The inclusion of this detail indicated that Ales – whether through guilt over having drawn her into such danger or a sincere trust in Darcy's false promises – had identified what this dangerous man wanted and route by which she and her sister could attempt to safely navigate his hazardous notions. Margery performed the behaviours of confession, but only confessed that her recently deceased mother had kept spirits, and that she had sent them away after her death. Perhaps this was a stratagem by Ales to give Margery a way of

[13] Michael Mullet, 'The Reformation in the parish of Whalley', in Robert Poole (ed.), *The Lancashire Witches: Histories and Stories* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), pp. 88–104; Marion Gibson, 'Thomas Potts's "dusty memory": reconstructing justice in *The Wonderfull Discoverie of Witches*', in Poole, *The Lancashire Witches*, pp. 42–57.

making a pleasing enough statement without actually incriminating herself. Another instance in which tears may have been used strategically was when a direct confrontation between Annis Glascock and Ursula Kemp was arranged, with Glascock accusing Kemp of having 'bewitched her: For that shee coulde not nowe weepe'. It is unlikely that such an accusation was made spontaneously, as the usual symptoms a victim complained of were physical suffering or material deprivation after an unfriendly encounter, which suggests that Glascock's alachrymosity had been raised by someone else and that this was her way of explaining away something that might negatively predispose the magistracy against her.[14] Crying was a complicated emotional behaviour to navigate performing. Dichotomies between 'the Witch' and 'the Maid' could be stark. In 1563's *Doctor Lamb Revived*, the author claimed that they were 'confident this Witch could not shed one penitential tear, though thereby she might have been reprieved from death' whereas the Maid she had bewitched 'wept exceedingly' and 'bitterly' such that 'she had not freedom of speech' but those words she could get out were of a forgiveness 'With all [her] heart'.[15] The shedding of tears could be an incredibly potent behaviour, brimming with moral significance, and which can especially be seen in Chapter 5's analysis of the Warboys case.

Reading and Writing Witchcraft Stories as a Moral Exercise

Emotional dialectics within texts did not require that their non-witch emotions come solely from victims. The emotionality of writers themselves occasionally took on this role, as with the overwrought poems that prefaced the 1566 Essex pamphlet. But much more frequently, and more significantly, the emotionality of readers was brought into this system. Pamphleteers often promoted idealised ways of both reading their work and to believing in witchcraft. Subtleties in presentation – that might otherwise be overlooked as genericisms – coalesced into a murky sense of an ideal reader, and thus an ideal believer. Belief in witchcraft was inextricably tied to modes of communication: to rumour, to reputation, and to stories. The styles of the stories being told were tied to the styles of belief expressed within them.

[14] W. W., *A true and iust Recorde, of the Information, Examination and Confession of all the Witches, taken at S. Oses in the countie of Essex* (London: Thomas Dawson, 1582), sigs A7v, B6v, C3v, C4v
[15] Edmond Bower, *Doctor Lamb Revived, Or, VVitchcraft condemn'd in Anne Bodenham* (London: Printed by T. W., 1653), pp. 42, 40.

In 1616 Alexander Robert's Roberts final work before his death in 1620 was a 1616 treatise on witchcraft, in which the Norfolk preacher expressed his idiosyncratic conceptualisation of the relationship between witchcraft and belief. [16] The treatise was simultaneously a list of Roberts' propositions about the nature of witchcraft and a recording of specific acts of witchcraft committed by one Mary Smith. Roberts opened his book by describing the two poles of believing badly.

> The one, who entertaining a stubborne and curious rash boldnes, striue by the iudgment of reason, to search ouer-deeply into the knowledge of those things which are farre aboue the reach of any humane capacitie. And so making shipwrecke in this deep and vnsoundable Sea, ouerwhelme themselues in the gulfe thereof. The other kind is more sottish, dull, and of a slow wit, and therefore ouer-credulous, beleeuing euerything, especially when they be carried by the violent tempest of their desires, and other vngouerned afections. . . The first of these mentioned, are slie and masked Atheists. . . The second be Sorcerers, Wisards, Witches, and the rest of that ranke and kindred.[17]

He was quite unique in associating credulity with being a witch – an association that imbued a credulous style of believing with an obvious moral significance. Roberts thought that the Devil successfully deceived witches because they suffered from 'credulity and ouer-light beliefe'. And he counted this amongst the many reasons he considered women to be more susceptible to becoming witches as 'they are by nature credulous'. Demonstrating that he was not credulous himself, he glossed one report – that Edmund Newton was visited by a cloven footed man whilst ill – with a parenthetical comment assuring readers that these were 'no vaine conceits, or phantasies, but well aduised and diligently considered obseruances'.[18] By establishing the danger of a credulous style of belief, and firmly locating his own work in its antithesis, Roberts was able to shore up the trustworthiness of his reporting, the moral authority of his arguments, and his masculinity through the deployment of a single stylistic dichotomy.

The emotionality of both writer and reader were imputed through the pious rhetoric to the preface of the 1592 pamphlet *A vvicked vvorke*. In which its author directed readers to

[16] Alexander Roberts was granted benefices for the rectorships of two churches in West Lynn and North Lynn in 1603: 'Alexander Robertes (CCEd Person ID 85091), *The Clergy of the Church of England Database 1540–1835* www.theclergydatabase.org.uk, [accessed 12/10/2022]; Norwich Record Office, Norwich Consistory Court Probate Records: Wills, Register 115 Item 188 (Williams)
[17] Roberts, *A Treatise of Witchcraft*, pp. 2–3.
[18] Roberts, *A Treatise of Witchcraft*, pp. 25, 42, 57.

contextualise their reading of the pamphlet as being part of the 'perpetuall warrefare' against 'the world, the Flesh, and the Dyuell' by 'the godlie', who dwelt in the 'wretched vale of miserie' that was the material world. Witches numbered amongst the Devil's 'bondslaues' who were 'odious in the sight of God [and] detested of the good'.[19] It advanced the theologically palatable line on the provenance of supernatural power that it proceeded from God's allowances to the Devil, which power then flowed through the Devil to his servants. In a world suffused with cosmic moral forces – where hosts of supernatural entities exercised their agency in the mundane plane – a modicum of spiritual edification could be gained merely through gaining awareness of how peculiar events were actually theatres of battle in the war between the sacred and the profane. The world was beset by 'swarmes of Witches . . . For that old Serpent Sathan . . . hath of late years, grately multiplied the broude of them, and muche increased their malice'.[20] Likewise, in the preface to the 1579 pamphlet *A Detection of damnable driftes*, readers were invited to 'peruse it with discretion and hedefulnesse': promoting a cautious sort of awareness. Such advice extended to believing in witchcraft generally. Watchfulness was encouraged, as an 'eye that is wimpled' would not apprehend the threat that witches posed. An especially dangerous wimple was spiritual security: a quality possessed by those 'that moste presumeth of safety'. 'Security [was] the Bed, whereon Satan lull's himselfe'.[21] The style of believing in witchcraft advocated for in *A Detection* was thusly an act of spiritual and communitarian vigilance. Witchcraft was likened to an inferno that could level a community. The act of cultivating an appropriately fearful stance towards witches in others was akin to the urgent task of waking someone 'out of their drousie dreames' to warn them 'that their neighbours house is on fire'. After all, 'when their owne walles are inuaded with like flames, thei shall finde that it had bin better to haue come an hower too soone, then to haue risen one minute too late to extinguishe the same, creepyng into their owne chambers'.[22] Spiritual battle was also invoked in the preface to *A most vvicked worke*, which conjured a world of 'perpetuall warrefare, and most dangerous and deadlie combat' against those perpetual enemies of humankind's salvation: 'The world, the Flesh, and the Dyuell'.[23] Although the 'hectoring' preface to the 1589 *Apprehension and*

[19] Anon. [G. B.], *A most vvicked worke of a wretched Witch,* (London; R[obert]. B[ourne]., 1592), sig. A2v.
[20] Anon, *A Rehearsall both straung and true* (London: Printed for Edward White by John Kingston, 1579), sig. A2r.
[21] Thomas Adams, The Blacke Devill (London: Printed by William Iaggard, 1615), p. 44.
[22] Anon., *A Detection of damnable driftes, practized by three VVitches arraigned at Chelmisforde in Essex, at the laste Assises there holden, whiche were executed in Aprill* (London: John Kingston for Edward White, 1577), sigs A2v–A3v
[23] Anon. [G. B.], *A most vvicked worke,* sig. A2r.

Confession of Three Notorious Witches was substantially different to the tone and content of its main text, it too called upon its readers to consider the sins of society, of which witchcraft was only one. Lamenting of 'the blindness of our estate [and] the naughtiness of our affections', it was intended to encourage the usual acute degree of Protestant introspection and appealed to the godly sociality of its readers to consider 'the loue of our neighbours, our owne welfare, or the fall of others'.[24] Likewise, the preface to *A world of wonders* framed the collection of stories as morally instructive – 'a pretious glasse to see the frailtie of man, . . . the wicknesse of this world, the end of mischeifs, the punishment of such greeuous enormities', such that 'others seing the same may refrain the like, and seeke to shunne such paths'.[25] The ruin wrought by witchcraft was so dangerously transmissible that the socially responsible measures to take were both preventative and proactive. Henry Holland echoed this sentiment in his own treatise, published eleven years later in 1590, in which he mocked the 'Neuters of this world, [who] dreame that they may indifferentlie view the fearres and woundes of other men, and neuer approach neere those bloody skirmishes'.[26] Readers of *A Detection* were encouraged to resolve the situation immediately by acting when they suspected – 'perceuiest by information' – or were 'assured' that a neighbour was bewitched, 'for Charitie to [their] Christian brother, and tender regard for [their] owne state'.[27] To eradicate an instance of witchcraft was to quench the Devil himself; after all, 'the Witche beareth the name, but the deuill dispatcheth the deedes'.[28] Although this version of the provenance of causative supernatural ability does not appear to have been as strictly followed in practice as it was in print, the Devil in post-Reformation England was considered to be more active than his prior iterations. And he was more closely associated with criminality, with Nathan Johnstone finding that the diabolisation of criminals increased over the course of both the Tudor and Stuart eras.[29]

Despite this diabolisation, there was nevertheless consistent ambiguity throughout the period about whether godliness was an effective prophylactic against bewitchment. For instance, a piece of marginalia from 1589's *The Apprehension and Confession* encouraged readers to 'note how Gods spirit confoundeth the impes of wickednes' as the witch Joan

[24] Marion Gibson, *Reading Witchcraft*, p. 170; Anon, *The Apprehension and confession of three notorious Witches* (London: Edward Allde, 1589), sig. A2r.
[25] Johnson, *A vvorld of vvonders*, sig. A2v.
[26] Henry Holland, *A Treatise Against VVitchcraft* (Cambridge: John Legatt, 1590), sig. A2r.
[27] Anon., *A Detection of damnable driftes*, sigs A2v–A3v
[28] Anon., *A Rehearsall*, sig. A3r.
[29] Nathan Johnstone, *The Devil and Demonism in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), chs 4, 5.

Cunny's spirits reported back to her that they could not hurt one George Coe because the Stisted shoemaker had 'a strong faith in God, and had inuocated and called vpon him'.[30] In 1577 it was reported that although when the witch Mother Staunton touched the son of a vicar the boy 'was taken with suche vehement sicknes, that the beholders supposed no lesse, but it would straight haue died . . . within one hower after the Uicar came home the childe recouered perfectly, and plaied as before'.[31] Whereas in Henry Holland's treatise, the author surrogate Theophilus reasoned that God allows witchcraft to exist so 'that he might fatherly forewarne his Saintes to passe their dwelling here in feare and with all diligence, to avoyde the contagion of the wicked, with whom they haue any conuersation'. He would 'afflicte his Saintes, as often as the Lord knoweth it expedient for his glorie, and their saluation'.[32] Alexander Roberts agreed that God allowed witches to torment even the faithful 'for the experience of their faith and integrity, so that by this meanes their loue towards God which lay hidden in the heart, is now made manifest . . . to endure the fire of Tribulation', and to do so with silence and submission, was 'the proofe of a stedfast Christian'.[33] So although these texts demonstrate how experiences of witchcraft operated as spaces for the stylisation of participants' emotionality and belief, there was – as is seemingly always the case with witchcraft – considerable room for invention, contestation, and ambiguity.

Idealisations of belief and behaviour can also be found in the case of the Northamptonshire witches, which was the subject of an anonymously authored pamphlet best known for its imagery of three witches riding to a secret meeting on the back of a pig, and which was licensed in 1612 a few months after the Assize at which the witches were tried.[34] Like *Witches Apprehended*, the Northamptonshire trial occurred in the same year as that of the Pendle witches. The execution of ten of the accused at Lancaster looms large over 1612 as a year for studying witchcraft, but the high number of deaths from Pendle is appalling enough to distract us from the fact that it was very much an aberration in this regard: equalled and surpassed only by Hopkins' and Stearne's campaign across the East of England.[35] The Pendle hangings cast a shadow that conceals the evidence for ambiguity in the treatment of

[30] Anon., *The Apprehension and Confession*, sig. A3v.
[31] Anon., *A Detection of damnable driftes*, sig. B1r.
[32] Holland, *A Treatise*, sig. G4r.
[33] Roberts, *A Treatise of Witchcraft*, p. 39.
[34] Anon., *The Witches of Northamptonshire* (London: Printed by Tho[mas] Purfoot, 1612); The pamphlet dates the trial to the 22nd of July 1612 and the entry into the Stationers' Register was made on the 16th October of that year for Arthur Johnson under the title *The Array[g]nmente conviccon and execucon of Fyue witches at Northampton the 22th of July last 1612*.
[35] James Sharpe, 'Introduction: the Lancashire witches in historical context', in Poole (ed.), *The Lancashire Witches*, pp. 1–18.

witchcraft at the Lancaster Assizes themselves, let alone the rest of the country that year.[36] The acquittal of the three Samlesbury witches was purposefully interpolated into Thomas Pott's officially-sanctioned account of the trial 'by special order and commandement', in order to prove the sagacity and discretion of the presiding judge, Sir Edward Bromley.[37] It served as an advertisement of a particularly discerning style of belief in witchcraft on Bromley's part. The reputational impact of being perceived to be overly credulous in matters of witchcraft in 1612 had not yet reached the perilous heights that it would in 1619, when the author of the pamphlet relating the case of the Belvoir witches was compelled to, in the very first sentence, reassure readers that their 'meaning [was] not to make any contentious Arguments about the discourses, distinction, or definition of Witchcraft'. The circumstances that precipitated this hesitancy are elaborated upon in Chapter 6, as they were also hugely influential in the progression of events related by Edward Fairfax in his 1621 *Daemonologia*, as well as how Fairfax chose to frame that relation. It is sufficient here to note that the value of statements made when the boundaries of discourse are especially restricted is that rhetorical strategies and argumentation are encouraged to adhere to lines of consensus, and in so doing reveal to us those beliefs and epistemologies considered uncontroversial. To wit, both the 1612 and 1619 pamphlets feature discussions about the nature of witchcraft in their introductory passages, with both acknowledging that the meaning of the word 'witch' was imprecisely defined. Learned lexicons which distinguished the 'Pythonisse' from the 'Venefici' – witches specialising in soothsaying and poisoning respectively – were collapsed in common parlance into the 'witch'. Whilst there was a definite connection to the Devil present, the exact operation of this association and its relationship with causality remained inexact.[38]

The author of *The Witches of Northamptonshire* lamented that witchcraft irrevocably separated from God the souls of those who 'for the most part . . . are of the meanest, and the basest sort both in birth and breeding' and who were frustratingly 'most vncapable of any instruction to the contrary, and of all good meanes to reclaime them'.[39] In their opinion, it was the lability of the destitute that made them so susceptible to the sin of witchcraft and discursive interjections that doubted the power, or outright denied the existence, of witches

[36] Stephen Pumfrey, 'Potts, plots, and politics: James I's Daemonologie and The Wonderfull Discoverie of Witches', in Poole (ed.), *The Lancashire Witches*, pp. 22–41.
[37] Potts, *The vvonderfvll discoverie*, sigs K3r–N3r, quoted N3r.
[38] Anon., *The wonderfvl discoverie of the Witchcrafts of Margaret and Phillip Flower* (London: Printed by George Eld, 1619), sigs B1r, B1v–B2r; *Witches of Northamptonshire*, sigs A4v–B1r.
[39] Ibid., sig. A3r.

had only further confused matters. Their evidently godly perspective grounded the controversy about the denial of existence of witchcraft in solid contemporary concerns.[40] They keenly called to remembrance that the debate was not an exchange of harmless rhetoric: it had serious potential consequences. They noted how 'Oppositors [were] more precise then wise', which was to their detriment, as to be wise was to have the sagacity to approach potentially damning issues with a panoramic eye and to be sensitive to the broader cultural and spiritual ramifications of intervening. The human heart was the space in which proper faith could be cultivated, but it was also fertile soil for catastrophe. After all, 'The ground doth not bring forth the corne with such increase as the heart of Man doth errors', 'If an error be planted, who can tell what increase it may yeild in time?' In this style of belief, doubting risked disaster.[41] It was a sentiment that had existed within English culture for decades by the time of the pamphlet's publication; at St Pauls Cross the Elizabethan clergyman Laurence Chaderton preached that his listeners must cultivate themselves, such that they 'may auoyd hardnesse of heart, presumption of minde, securitie of conscience, and all other negligent carelesnes'.[42] It is worth remembering that in cultures in which belief in the reality of witchcraft is pervasive, the safest choice is to remain cautious of bewitchment. As Robert Alexander put it a few years later in his 1616 treatise: 'it is strange that from so great a smoake arising [to] neither descrie nor feare some fire'.[43] The doubts that the aforementioned prefacer to *A Detection of damnable driftes* warned would cause people to disastrously ignore the smoke of witchcraft seemed to have only become more prevalent by the early seventeenth century, and through them more people were at risk of being consumed in the blaze.

Rage and Simplicity in *A most vvicked vvorke*

Another form of emotionality enmeshed with that of witches was that of other participatory characters within a narrative. The emotions of witches themselves tended to be expressed in more direct language – specific emotional states were often explicitly named – and whilst the emotions of non-witches were mentioned less frequently, they were nevertheless

[40] Marion Gibson, 'Devilish Sin and Desperate Death: Northamptonshire Witches in Print and Manuscript', *Northamptonshire Past and Present*, 51 (1998), pp. 15–21.
[41] Anon., *Witches of Northamptonshire*, sigs A3v–A4r.
[42] Laurence Chaderton, *A godly sermon preached at Paules crosse* (London: Printed by Christopher Barker, 1578), sigs D7r–v.
[43] Roberts, *A Treatise of Witchcraft*, sig. A3r.

significant. The interplay between the two is observable in the 1592 pamphlet *A most vvicked vvorke of a wretched Witch*, which reported the maleficent actions of the witch Mother Atkins against a simple man named Richard Burt in Pinner, Middlesex. As Marion Gibson has pointed out, this pamphlet calls into question notions about the relationship between narrative and reality, as it partially plagiarised a scene, in which Burt was magically transported through Hell, from Robert Greene's play *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*. Although the play did not appear in print until two years later in 1594, it had been performed at the Rose Theatre in February and March of 1592 and *A most vvicked vvorke* was first entered into the Stationer's Register in April of that year.[44] We do know that Richard Edlin, in whose service Richard Burt was employed, was definitely a resident at Woodhall in Pinner in 1592.[45] But whether the story was entirely fictitious – or it was an embellished version of a genuine witchcraft accusation that had been made against Atkins – does not mean that there is nothing to learn from how its creators chose to portray its characters. All stories of witchcraft have a complex relationship with fictivity, but all portrayals also contributed to the construction of the ephemeral phenomenon that witchcraft was. Like the bewildered tavern hostess of Greene's play, Richard Burt was magically transported across the landscape, but the drama of his experience was amplified by his also having been sent through hell itself. Whereas the hostess' transportation was instantaneous, time was distorted so much for Burt that he was absent for four full days. Routed through the scorching depths, Hell was described as both sensationally overwhelming – being 'exceeding hot' and 'ful of noise and clamours' – and fundamentally emotionally charged, a place 'strange and passionate'.[46] This portrayal of Hell aligned with that given in a sermon by the preacher Arthur Dent a decade earlier, in which he framed the torment received by sinners as a maelstrom of pulverising feeling: 'Those that wil not now be moued to hearing, shall then be crushed to peeces in feeling'.[47]

Burt's transportation to a realm of cacophonous passion linked the witch Mother Atkins not only to the Devil but to energetic feelings more broadly.[48] The pamphlet opened by

[44] Marion Gibson, 'Greene's Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay and a Most Wicked Worke of a Wretched Witch: a Link', *Notes and Queries* 44:1 (March, 1997), pp. 36–37.
[45] Marion Gibson, *Early Modern Witches: Witchcraft Cases in Contemporary Writing* (London; Routledge, 2000), pp. 138–145.
[46] Anon. [G. B.], *A most vvicked vvorke*, sig. A3v.
[47] Arthur Dent, *A Sermon of repentaunce* (London: Imprinted for John Harrison, 1582), sig. D3r.
[48] Neither the hostess nor the German magician Vandermast, both of whom were magically transported by the sorcerer Friar Bacon, are noted to have ventured into hell. Although Bacon does proclaim that he himself had 'diued into hell': Robert Greene, *The Honorable Historie of frier Bacon, and frier Bongay* (London: Printed for Edward White, 1594), sigs B3r–v, F1v, quoted sig. G1v.

describing how ‘wrathfull witches . . . most of all on simple folke they worke’, encapsulating the dynamic between antagonist and victim within the text. Mother Atkins was portrayed as an exceedingly angry person. When she ignored Burt whilst passing by him near his master’s barn, her silence was not due to fear of Burt, nor due to her exercising self-control, but rather because she was so ‘incensed with hate’ that it rendered her mute. A helpful piece of marginalia reminded the reader that the ‘malice of a wicked woman’ was literally ‘vnspeakable’. The pamphlet’s denouement contained anecdotes that corroborated that this was her usual temperament. When Gregory Coulson did not immediately address Atkins’ request for alms whilst radling his lambs ‘she flung forth in a fume’, and the author assured the reader that ‘many and sundry like actions of extreme rage and crueltie are imputed to her’. These descriptions made a clear and direct link between Atkins’ emotional dysregulation and her practising of witchcraft. Contrariwise, Burt was a comically simple bumpkin, typifying the ‘harmlesse’ ‘simple folke’ upon whom Satan liked ’to execute his wil and pleasure’. Faced with the parching heat of Hell, Burt obliviously ‘looked round about for an Alehouse’ and his ‘poore simplicity’ kept his lunchtime apple pie in his hand for his entire infernal sojourn. Once Burt reappeared in Pinner, the local parson had to physically reach into Burt’s mouth to unfold his tongue so that he could speak: a very different muteness to that of Atkins. This passage also allowed for the parson’s emotionality to be briefly shaded in. Due to his ‘pittieng’ of Burt, he ‘charitably’ laboured to recover the man’s speech, what was helpfully glossed by another marginale declaring the act to be ‘the dutie of a good minister’.[49]

Even the practice of witch-scratching in the pamphlet was emotionally coded – in a way that a straightforward reading of its passage might not detect. There was a behavioural component to Burt’s return from his four-day absence. His journey through a strange and passionate hellscape was reflected in his ragged and burnt appearance, and his desperate and insistent behaviour. Initially struck dumb, he frantically gesticulated towards Atkins’ house ‘looking so grislie and fiercelie that waie, that he tore and rent al that came in his hands’. Once he regained his faculty of speech, Burt immediately and incessantly pleaded with the gentlemen around him that he be allowed to speak with Atkins. Atkins was brought to him but no speech followed, rather ‘he neuer ceased til he had scratched and drawne bloud on hir, perswading himselfe that was a remedy sufficient vnder God, that would make him well’. As will be discussed further in Chapters 5 and 6, scratching was a legally and

[49] Anon. [G. B.], *A most vvicked vvorke*, sigs A3r, A4v, A2v, A3r–v, A4r.

theologically ambiguous practice, but the transformation in Burt's demeanour was an example of its cultural prevalence and perceived efficacy. In the author's words: 'experience testifies' its effectiveness because since the scratching Burt 'mended reasonablie, and nowe goeth to the Church'.[50] In terms of (mis)behaviour, two kinds of aggression were presented in the pamphlet. The first was the persistent malice attributable to Mother Atkins in her dealings with the community, linked to the seething resentment Satan held for humankind, and which connection Millar has found in English witchcraft literature throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[51] It was baldly stated in a contemporary work designed to explain the Jacobean Witchcraft Act, the author marked a distinction between conjurers and witches by their respective emotional dispositions: 'the Conjurer compacteth for curiosity . . . and the Witch of meere malice to do mischiefe'.[52] Whilst the second kind of aggression in the *A vvicked vvorke* was energetic but temporary, born of faultless circumstance and which resulted in physical and moral improvement. Anger itself did not feature in the lexicon for Burt; he was manic and aggressive, but these characteristics were not immutable qualities of his personality – that remained a placidity that eventually translated into him joining the congregation. The scratching, the culmination of his aggression, marked the peak and end of his dalliance with anger, whereas Atkins was shown to have been defined by her perpetually rageful encounters with members of her community. The anger of the bewitched was aberrant, the anger of the witch was typical. *A most vvicked vvorke* is a short pamphlet and it has a more dubious relationship to real events than other published stories about witches, yet I hope that this brief unpicking had shown that it possessed an internal complexity that would be entirely missed if its descriptions of emotion were excised and not contextualised holistically.

Doubt, Certainty, and an Emotional Hierarchy

Another example of a pamphlet in which the emotionality of witches and non-witches worked dialectically to form an intratextual system of emotion was *Witches Apprehended, Examined, and Executed*, published in 1613. Written in a more standard narrative format than *A most vvicked vvorke*, *Witches Apprehended* recounted the story of the confrontation between the Enger estate and Mother Sutton and her daughter Mary. It has been somewhat

[50] Anon. [G. B.], *A most vvicked vvorke*, sig. A4r.
[51] Millar, *Witchcraft, the Devil, and Emotions*, pp. 82–115.
[52] Anon., *The Lawes against Witches, and Conjuration* (London: Printed for R.W., 1645), sig. A3v.

overshadowed in posterity by the contemporaneous release of Thomas Potts' account of the trial of the Lancashire witches. Both works were printed by William Stansby and registered within a three-month span of each other, despite the former trial having taken place roughly five months before the latter.[53] Historians have tended to cite specific elements of its story – especially its defence of swimming as a successful practice of witch-detection – rather than its overall narrative. Taking a step back to consider the entirety of the text reveals that it presented the process by which doubts about witchcraft progressed to certitude, as well as how experiences were styled with a distinct emotionality.

Although the document did not contain either a formal dedicatory epistle or an address directly to readers, its introductory paragraphs served a similar function by framing the text – and its topic of witchcraft – in relation to its audience. Like *A Detection of damnable driftes*, it sought to involve its readership in the believing process through the act of reading about witchcraft. Its author bemoaned the abundant sinfulness of the material world and criticised a stereotypically heedless response to it from society, railing that 'Such is the deafnesse of our eares . . . and such the hardnesse of our hearts . . . [that] we are vnprepared of our account'. The tone of the pamphlet encouraged readers to take witchcraft seriously but warned against accusations being made in haste. Instead, the style of belief presented in *Witches Apprehended* was gradual, sceptical, and righteous. The narrative mainly described the processes whereby two people came to believe that the Suttons had bewitched them: Master Enger and his 'ancient' servant. Enger was a landowner in Milton, now Milton Ernest, near Bedford. Mother Sutton had an ambiguous social standing within her local community in terms of how susceptible she was to speculations that she was a witch. Although Sutton embodied many of the stereotypical traits associated with those accused of witchcraft – she was an elderly impoverished widow – it is unclear whether she was previously suspected of being a witch. It may have been entirely the opposite case, as she had been given the role of hog keeper within the community to provide her some relief; a position she had held for upward of twenty years and in which service she was commended 'for her dutifull care'. Our understanding of the Suttons' social standing is complicated by the fact that when the ancient servant began to consider her responsible for an accident, he gossiped about what other 'pranckes' he had heard Mother Sutton and her daughter Mary had played.[54] The text gave a streamlined account of the process of believing that witchcraft was being employed:

[53] *A Transcript of the Registers of the Company of Stationers of London: 1554–1640*, vol. III (London: Privately Printed, 1876), pp. 228, 234v.
[54] Anon., *Witches Apprehended, Examined and Executed, for notable villanies by them committed both by Land and Water* (London: William Stansby, 1613), sigs A3r–A4r, B2v.

how suspicions were raised, acted upon, confirmed, and resolved. The first loss Enger suffered was to his livestock. In an episode reminiscent of Christ's exorcism of the Gadarene demoniac, Enger's herd of pigs charged wildly into a nearby river and drowned themselves. Sutton was not initially thought to be responsible for this event, with it only latterly being incorporated into the timeline of her mischief. Suspicions were first enkindled by the unnamed ancient servant, who witnessed a black sow behaving strangely as he and a fellow servant of Enger were transporting corn from the estate to be sold at market in Bedford. The pig followed alongside the pair for a time before stopping in place and spinning itself around several times, whereupon the horses bolted, and the wheels fell off their cart. Having recovered their transport and their goods, they resumed their task, thus far 'mistrusting nothing'. But the sow intercepted them again on their return journey from the market; once again the horses were driven into a frenzy, breaking the cart in panic. This fresh embarrassment caused the servants to begin 'to haue mistrust of the blacke Sow' and they watched to see where it went next; as one might expect, the pig returned to the house of the hog keeper, Sutton. But it was at this point Enger first intervened in the belief process, withering budding suspicion on its vine when he 'made slight of it to' his servants and 'supposed they were drunke'. It was only once the ancient servant fell violently ill that suspicions hardened; although even these were admitted to have been conjectural as 'they had no certaine proofe or knowledge'.[55] The style of belief evidenced here demonstrated a gradual progression of consideration for the possibility of bewitchment, through and past a threshold of incredulity, and only after which passage was completed was suspicion truly raised.

In terms of the emotionality of our actors, Sutton's 'venomous nature' should be contextualised alongside descriptions of the moral dispositions of her accusers. The text itself framed it as such, establishing how 'Impes that liue in the gunshot of diuellish assaults, goe about to darken and disgrace the light of such as toward and vertuous'. Enger was sympathetically characterised as both compassionate and morally upstanding. He 'had not the least part of griefe for [the] extremetie' of the condition to which his ailing servant was reduced and spared no expense to relieve their suffering. This was in stark contrast to the Suttons, who not only caused suffering, but were so accustomed to inflicting it upon others that they had lost 'the sense and feeling thereof'. Whereas Enger's emotionality culminated in an escalating series of emotional responses, approved of by the author:

[55] Anon., *Witches Apprehended*, sigs B2v, B3r.

> The Gentleman did not so much grieue for the losse and hinderance hee had in his cattell, (which was much) nor for the miserable distresse that his seruant had endured (which was more) as that the hopefull daies of his young sonne were so vntimely cut off: (which touched his heart most of all).

There was a clear hierarchy of appropriate emotional responses between the loss of property, the suffering and illness of a person, and the death of his child. And despite a dramatic flourish in the description of Enger being 'wrapt in a Sea of woes', the picture of his overall emotionality was one of suitable restraint: 'his discretion [tempered] his passions with such patience, that he referred the remembrance of his wrongs to that heauenly power, that permits not such iniquitie to passe vnreuealed, or unreuenged'.[56] Enger was devastated by the death of his child, but he was capable of marshalling his feelings and, above all else, expressed them appropriately in every scenario: his emotional style of belief epitomising ideals of loyalty, compassion, faithfulness, and composure.[57]

Richard Galis and the Windsor Witches

The case against Elizabeth Stile is one of only a few for which we have multiple contemporary sources, and their fortuitous survival thus allows comparisons that would otherwise rely on inference. Two pamphlets published in 1579 concerned themselves with Stile, albeit in strikingly different terms. The first was Richard Galis' *A brief treatise*, a unique document which is examined farther below, and the second was *A Rehearsall both straung and true*, which was a much more straightforward report of the gaol examination of Elizabeth in the format of an itemised list of given answers. Juxtaposing the documents gives a clear picture of how styles of presentation altered the story of witchcraft that was told.

A Rehearsall does not explicitly mention non-witch emotions, but it did continue the theme of applying moral disapprobation to the subject of witchcraft, through its stern chastisement of society's laxity in dealing with witches – especially any reliance on the services of cunning folk – and its admonishment of disbelieving. Magistrates were criticised because 'that wholesome remedies, prouided for the curing of such cankers', execution, 'are either neuer awhit, or not rightly applied'. Although 'the Justicer bee seuere in executyng of the Lawes in

[56] Anon., *Witches Apprehended*, sigs B1r, B3r, B2v–B3r, C1v–C2r.
[57] The depths of Enger's sorrow serves as yet another mark against Laurence Stone's infamously callous, economically-minded history of the early modern family: Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex, and Marriage in England 1500–1800* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1977), pp. 420, 117.

that behalfe', it was 'the foolishe pitie, or slackenes, or both of the multitude and vnder officers that thei most commonly are wnked at, and so escape vnpunished'; this was both a 'dishonour of God, and imminente daunger on hir Maiesties leige people'.[58] In its critique of scepticism amongst magistrates it aligned perfectly with one of the key themes of Richard Galis' *A brief treatise*.

The prefacer defensively demonstrated that they were aware of some demonological concepts – of the sort that James Sharpe has tentatively categorised as constituting a 'popular demonic' – too pre-empt backlash against some of the more controversial aspects of the text.[59] The prefacer was sufficiently aware of the dangers of controversial printings to feel it was worth turning their preface into a prophylactic.[60] They specifically called out cunning folk – 'wise women' – and those who use their services as both being equally guilty of fostering witchcraft within English communities. The popular biblical reference point of Saul and the Witch of Endor was invoked to advise readers to avoid seeking 'counsaile of them'.[61] Whoever produced the pamphlet was seriously concerned with the prosecution of cunning folk through the criminality of witchcraft, which was an intent it shared with the writer of the preface to *A detection of damnable driftes*. Both texts overlapped in their production; they were published in 1579, with *A Rehearsall* entered into the Stationer's Register 24 March and *Detection* 15 April – and both were produced for Edward White by John Kingston. Marion Gibson suggests that 'the prefaces could both be written by the same person, perhaps an employee of White, if so'.[62] The providentialism of both prefaces pre-empted the ideas of George Gifford, circulating a decade prior to the publication of his 1593 *Dialogue*: cunning folk were also Gifford's pet peeve. Like many of the pamphlets that have already been mentioned, the style of authorial belief in *A Rehearsall* was characterised by deep concerns about the efficacy, as well as spiritual implications, of systematic procedures for dealing with witchcraft in early modern England.

There may, however, have been a more prosaic impetus for the preface branding all magic diabolical: one that showcases how thoroughly events shaped how believing in witchcraft

[58] Anon., *A Rehearsall*, sigs A2r–v.
[59] James Sharpe, 'English Witchcraft Pamphlets and the Popular Demonic', in Julian Goodare, Rita Voltmer, and Liv Helene Willumsen (eds), *Demonology and Witch-Hunting in Early Modern Europe* (London: Routledge, 2020), pp. 127–146.
[60] Cyndia Susan Clegg, *Press Censorship in Elizabethan England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 1–6, 218–222.
[61] Anon., *A Rehearsall*, sigs A2v, A3r.
[62] Gibson, *Reading Witchcraft*, p. 166.

was presented. In August 1578 waxen images had been found of Elizbeth I.[63] The response to this discovery, including *A Rehearsall*, is argued by Francis Young to provide evidence for a need to revise the historiographical position that early modern English monarchs were less genuinely concerned with the threat of magic than their medieval predecessors had been.[64] The three wax dolls that a labourer found in a pile of dung in a stable in Islington – or possibly Lincoln's Inn Fields – were taken gravely seriously by Elizabeth I and the Privy Council. Elizabeth was then visiting Norfolk, a stronghold of recusancy which had produced a failed rebellion in 1569. Although in the spring of 1579 the effigies were discovered to have been artefacts from a love-magic ritual entirely unrelated to the sovereign, at the time of their unearthing members of Elizabeth's inner circle initially leapt into action. John Dee was summoned from his residence at Mortlake-on-Thames to Norwich, having received multiple letters from councillors about the wax effigies. He promptly performed an act of counter-magic to nullify the power of the images. Young concurs with Peter Elmer that the Earl of Leicester, Robert Dudley, seized the investigation into the effigies immediately in order to further his political campaign in favour of a more militant Protestantism by implicating Catholic recusants in the milieu of magical threat.[65]

The salient point here being that in early 1579, as the pamphlets were being written and published, witchcraft had been politically supercharged by recent events. We know from Privy Council letters that the Council itself was aware of, and nebulously involved with, the apprehension of Elizabeth Stile in January 1579.[66] In her reported examination and confession, Stile admitted to having been part of a cadre of witches who had killed several people by representing them in 'pictures of Redde Waxe' and piercing a 'Hawthorne pricke . . . directly there where thei thought the hartes of the persones to bee sette'.[67] On 16 January 1579 the Privy Council sent a letter to Sir Henry Neville, the contents of which proved that the Windsor witches' having used image magic was known prior to the date later given in the pamphlet recounting of Stile's examination on the 28 January. The Council noted that 'there hath bene latelie discovered a practise of that device very likelie to be intended to the distruccion of her Majesties person, [and that] they be required to examyn whether the said

[63] Francis Young, *Magic as a Political Crime in Medieval and Early Modern England* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2018), ch. 4, esp. pp. 119–39.
[64] Henry Angsar Kelly, 'English Kings and the Fear of Sorcery', *Mediaeval Studies*, 39 (1977), pp. 206–238.
[65] Peter Elmer, *Witchcraft, Witch-Hunting, and Politics in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 27–9.
[66] Gibson, *Early Modern Witches*, p. 33.
[67] Anon., *A Rehearsal*, sigs A7r–v.

witches be any thing acquainted with that device'.[68] Concerns amongst the Council about image magic persisted; Lord Rich wrote to the Council on 28 October 1580 to inform them that an allegation had been made that Nicholas Johnson, a rector in Essex, had created an effigy of the Queen. In Southwark, Stephen and Jane Kylden were indicted for creating effigies in wood of William Cecil and Leicester to use as templates for the eventual fabrication of wax images, by which use of the latter they would destroy the two men.[69] This is all to say that any publications about witchcraft at that time had to be handled carefully. By including a full-throated condemnation of the practices of cunning folk as equivalent to witchcraft, the preface-writer provided a plausible defence of the material appended to the examination of Stile: indicated as 'Memorandum'. The style of these entries differed from the prior format of numerically arranged questions; they were instead written narratively, according to testimony provided against Stile. The first, given by an unnamed ostler from Windsor, muddies the clarity of the pamphlets overarching condemnation of cunning folk and is demonstrative of the relentless connotative ambiguity of magical practices. The ostler had fallen out with Stile and become unwell in a classic charity-refused form, resorting to the cunning services of Father Rosimond – 'the Wiseman' – for aid. He prescribed scratching Stile, which the ostler did, and by which action he received immediate and lasting relief. It is unlikely the ostler himself was aware of just how potentially controversial the account of his experience might be; he gave it willingly in court and it tracks to our understanding that bewitched persons commonly consulted with local cunning folk.

Despite the involvement of the highest authority in the land, there was no hint of the clandestine machinations of central government in Richard Galis' *A brief treatise* (1579). His was a story of personal tragedy and triumph; where *A Rehearsall* was remote, Galis tied behavioural and believing processes into an intimate story of familial bewitchment. It is amongst the most remarkable and unusual witchcraft pamphlets from the period: a first-person, almost picaresque, autobiographical narrative detailing the torments inflicted upon the Galis family by local witches, prefiguring many themes that would come to characterise witchcraft pamphlets after the 1590s. Barbara Rosen and Marion Gibson have identified Galis' treatise as being a text ahead of its time. In many ways it pre-empted the shift to narrative form that took place around a decade after its publication and was an early

[68] *Acts of the Privy Council of England Volume 11, 1578–1580*, ed. John Roche Dasent (London: 1895), p. 22.
[69] Young, *Magic as a Political Crime*, p. 137. These two instances can be found, respectively, in: *Acts of the Privy Council of England Volume 12, 1580–1581*, ed. John Roche Dasent (London, 1896); and C. L'Estrange Ewen, *Witchcraft and Demonism* (London: Heath Cranton Limited, 1933), p. 449.

example of a high-status victim of witchcraft presenting their version of events in print. Gibson has also noted that Galis, like later high-status victims, described the attack on his family as having come without provocation on their part – thus also being a forerunner of the 'motiveless malignity' narrative.[70] At its heart it was a story about the consequences of disbelief. In the event that this point had not been hammered entirely home through the unfurling of the narrative itself, Galis appended a helpful conclusion 'to the Reader' reiterating the danger of magisterial unbelief. The 'foolish pittie and slacknes of the Magistrates of Windesore' had allowed the conspiracy of witches to exercise their malice freely. Alas, if only Richard Readforth had heeded noble Galis' righteous kidnap, then so much suffering could have been avoided. As narcissistic as he was, Galis articulated an interesting problem for magistrates: that their disbelief could potentially constitute a ruinous dereliction of their duties.

First-person accounts written by the victims of witchcraft were rare – even the Warboys pamphlet was written in the third person, despite its likely authorship – but Galis' pamphlet also represented how a higher-class victim approached the experience of bewitchment. Galis was the son of a former mayor of Windsor and was suitably educated.[71] His writing was replete with the sort of literary flourishes, fawning professions of friendship, and classical allusions fashionable to his fellow gentlemen.[72] The senior Richard Galis was thrice mayor of New Windsor and served as a Member of Parliament twice during its 1563 and 1572 sittings. Galis Senior displayed 'strong religious convictions' as a young man, clashing with the curate of St. Andrew's Church in Holborn by denying that the censing of the altar effected anything, and later proclaimed Henry's Second Injunction and read from the Bible in church; and it seems he passed an outspoken religiosity to his son.[73] Two Acts that Galis Senior saw passed into law during the 1563 Parliament may have left an impression on him that he also conveyed to the younger Richard upon his return from London. It so happened that it was under the terms of the 1563 Witchcraft Act that the four witches of Windsor were executed, and Elizabeth Stile ultimately confessed to having 'by their deuillishe arte, killed one Maister

[70] Gibson, *Reading Witchcraft*, pp. 113–117.
[71] A grant issued in 1563 for the office of High Steward named Richard Galis as Mayor of New Windsor: TNA, DU/BOX II/12; A memorial to the elder Richard Galis as well as his wife Alice in St John the Baptist Church, Windsor gave the date of his death as 30 November 1574; His will was submitted for probate on the 14 December 1574: TNA, PROB 11/56/600.
[72] Gibson, *Early Modern Witches*, ch. 5, p. 50, n. 9: Gibson gives as example John Lyly's 1578 *The Anatomy of Wyt*.
[73] P. W. Hasler, *The House of Commons, 1558–1603: Members D-L*, 3 vols, II (London: H.M.S.O, 1981), p. 163.

Galis'.[74] Further, the Perjury Act, which extended the crime of perjury to witnesses, may have contributed in part to the outlandish professions of certainty that the younger Richard Galis would go on to make.[75] He forcibly and performatively brought Stile before then mayor of New Windsor Richard Readforth – whose succession to the office following the elder Richard Galis' third tenure may partly explain that a portion of the younger Galis' animosity and derision was animated by local politicking – communicating his conviction by 'affirming that if [he] could not prooue her by sufficient tryall to be a weed woorthye of plucking vp: [he] would receiue such punishment as might be to all (attempting the like . . .) a good ensample'.[76] When resorting to a different authority, this time local magnate Sir Henry Neville – who had served as both MP for, and High Sherriff of, Berkshire – he claimed to have repeated the sentiment that he himself would 'receiue the like punishment if good and sufficient proof were not on my side against them'.[77]

In reading Galis, one is sorely tempted to disregard all the discouragement away from retrospective diagnosis in Chapter 2 and immediately enter the role of amateur clinician. There is more than a hint of the pathological in Galis' changeability, paranoia, and impulsive violence. Indeed, scepticism about his reliability was a factor in the text existing at all, with Galis writing of his vindication in the face of a local magistracy that had dismissed his actions and accusations. The magistrates who jailed Galis were not alone in their derision of his claims; Reginald Scot recommended that if his readers wished to 'see more follie and lewdnes comprised in one lewd booke' to read 'Ri. Ga. A Windsor man; who being a mad man hath written according to his frantike humor', and repeatedly referred to it as 'foolish', made with 'impudencie', 'dishonestie', 'follie and frensie'.[78] What is instructive about the case of Galis and the witches at Windsor are the ways in which he failed to sufficiently demonstrate to officials that there was sufficient evidence for the prosecution of witchcraft or that he was the godly hero saving his community that he desperately wished to be. Galis presented his conviction of his family's bewitchment as having been catalysed by a terrifying

[74] Anon, *A Rehearsall*, sig. A7r.
[75] *The Statutes of the Realm*, 11 vols, IV (London: Dawsons of Pall Mall, Repr. 1963 [1819]), pp. 436–38.
[76] Richard Galis, *A brief treatise containing the most strange and horrible cruelty of Elizabeth Stile* (London: Printed by John Allde, 1579), sig. B1v.
[77] Galis, *A brief* treatise, sig. C1v.
[78] Scot, *The discouerie of witchcraft*, bk 1 ch. 8 p. 17; bk 2 ch. 3 p. 24; in section titled 'A Discourse vpon diuels and spirits', ch. 33 p. 543. For an exceptional re-examination of Scot's *Discouerie* as part of a religiopolitical realignment away from the pro-Puritan faction in Kent toward the severe anti-Puritan leanings of the new Archbishop Whitgift see: Elmer, *Witchcraft, Witch-Hunting, and Politics*, pp. 18–27.

midnight vision of a black cat which disappeared when a maidservant with a candle was summoned. In his febrile state, 'left tumbling and tossing in my bed, . . . sheets wringing wet with sweat', Galis recalled the bewitchment of his brother James and 'forewith coniectured that the same Cat which so amazed mee, was either some Witch or of some Witches sending'.[79] Fever, an unquiet mind, and hypnopompic hallucinations might reflexively spring to mind as explanations for what Galis experienced – redolent of Bever's questionable history of Descartes – but for Galis himself it was revelatory. The experience had revealed to him the cause of his suffering, prompting him to immediate pious action.[80] His account of the event was an act of self-fashioning, through which Galis created a persona for himself as a righteous crusader against the hordes of witches infesting communities throughout England.

Lyndal Roper contextualised the bewitchment of Stoffel Jantz as having been precipitated by the disintegration of his engagement, which prompted a suicidal depression in response to his disappointing prospects with regard to rigid socio-cultural marital institutions.[81] Galis' bewitchment was predicated on similarly binding cultural strictures: his precarious and ambivalent relation to a contemporary upper-class 'culture (if not cult) of friendship'.[82] John Lyly's *Euphues*, published the year before *A brief treatise* – and a considerable influence on its presentational style – lavished praise upon the concept of friendship as 'the iewell of humaine ioye'. Lyly rhetorised whether 'any treasure in this transitorie pilgrimage, be of more valewe then a friend?'.[83] However, Galis revealed that he was experiencing the deterioration of his friendships and struggled with the ambiguity he felt: 'some times in my raging fits detesting & abboring all Company, estsones again earnestly desiring the same'. Through his 'stedfast faith' Galis was convinced that his own person was immune to direct bewitchment but that the witches, in their unceasing malevolence, endeavoured instead to socially isolate him. Forcing 'Freends whome Nature lincked in the league of loove and feendship vtterly to detest mee, shamefully to vse mee and that which greeued mee moste maliciously to enuie mee', such that Galis considered himself an 'exile . . . hated of al without

[79] Galis, *A brief treatise*, sig. A4v.
[80] Edward Bever, 'Descartes' Dreams, the Neuropsychology of Disbelief, and the Making of the Modern Self', in Edward Bever and Randall Styers (eds), *Magic in the Modern World: Strategies of Repression and Legitimisation* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2017), pp. 33–48.
[81] Lyndal Roper, 'Beyond Discourse Theory', *Women's History Review*, 19:2 (2010), pp. 307–19.
[82] Carolyn James and Bill Kent, 'Renaissance Friendships: Traditional Truths, New and Dissenting Voices', in Barbara Caine (ed.), *Friendship: A History* (London: Routledge, 2009), pp. 111–164, quoted p. 127
[83] John Lyly, *Euphves: The Anatomy of Wyt* (London: Printed by T. Easy, 1578), p. 9r.

cause, and looued of few'. Even before Galis was physically jailed for his various assaults on those he suspected of being witches and 'inclosed in the dark, deprived of all humain company', he was acutely aware of his isolation and loneliness.[84]

Richard Galis' description of his families' tragic bewitchment relates to both the *Witches of Warboys* and Fairfax's *Daemonologia* in interesting ways, aside from the fact they all share a narrative format. Galis and the Throckmortons both celebrated that their beliefs were ultimately vindicated through the judicial system, and Galis and Fairfax both battled against magisterial disbelief and suffered social consequences for their convictions. Most importantly, all three texts were written from the perspective of the family of the bewitched. As sources, they provide historians the same type of access that Michelle Brock describes in her work on spiritual autobiographies in Reformed Scotland.

> Members of the Reformed Protestant faith generally presented their lives, and indeed their encounters with Satan, in a very self-conscious and stylised way. They tried to fashion themselves as the deserving godly they hoped to be. . . Yet even if such demonic encounters were purposefully constructed, these spiritual accounts nonetheless illustrate what educated early modern men and women believed–and indeed felt. . . Moreover, the patterns in and expectations of such demonic experiences are themselves revealing of how Reformed Scots felt they should perceive and present themselves and their inner lives.[85]

All three accounts of events were utterly biased, and that is what makes them so fascinating. They offer remarkable access to direct representations of how early modern believers in witchcraft – who encountered it as a reality and not as an abstraction – purposefully chose to present and style their experiences, actions, feelings, and beliefs. And it is to the task of uncovering the stylisation of experiences of witchcraft in the *Witches of Warboys* and *Daemonologia* that the following two chapters turn.

[84] Galis, *A brief treatise*, sigs A4r, B2r, B3r.
[85] Michelle Brock, 'Internalising the Demonic: Satan and the Self in Early Modern Scottish Piety', *Journal of British Studies* 54:1 (Jan., 2015), pp. 23–43, quoted p. 35.

Chapter 5: Belief and Emotion in *The Witches of Warboys*

From 1589 to 1593 the village of Warboys in Huntingdonshire was the stage for a protracted witchcraft drama, centred on the household of a well-connected and locally influential gentry family: the Throckmortons. Five daughters of Robert and Elizabeth Throckmorton – Joan, Elizabeth, Mary, Jane, and Grace – experienced a range of symptoms that came to be understood as the result of a bewitchment. The intense psychodrama that unfurled in the village over the course of several years culminated in the trial, conviction, and execution of three members of the neighbouring Samuel family – John, Alice ("Mother"), and Agnes ("Nan") – at the Huntingdonshire Spring Assizes. Less than three months after the trial, the Throckmortons and their allies published their account of these extraordinary events in a lengthy pamphlet entitled *The most strange and admirable discouerie of the three Witches of Warboys*.[1] In this chapter I will show how the pamphlet's authors utilised cultural notions about the act of crying and the metaphysical qualities of tears; the physical and metaphorical significance of the heart; themes of confession, forgiveness, and penance; and the projection of emotion onto spirits to craft the emotional styles of belief found within the *Warboys* bewitchment narrative.

The pamphlet was almost certainly produced by multiple contributors – who were all involved, in a range of capacities, in the prosecution of the case – and was dedicated to Edward Jenner, the judge who oversaw the trial.[2] It was intended to provide a justificatory narrative of events as attested to by 'dyuers Gentlemen, of honest report, ready to confyrme the [truth of the reported events] vppon theyr oathes'.[3] The case maintained a relatively high profile into the seventeenth century, receiving a mention by Richard Bernard in his juridical guide.[4] In terms of its modern presence, the work has been reproduced in an accessible format twice by Philip C. Almond, once partially and once fully; Erika Gasser has explored

[1] The authors themselves utilised dramatic language to frame their narrative, such as introducing Agnes Samuel in theatrical terms: 'now cometh vpon the stage with her part in this tragedie' Anon., *The most strange and admirable discouerie of the three Witches of Warboys* (Printed for Thomas Man and Iohn Winnington: London, 1593), sig. I2r [hereafter *Warboys*].

[2] The pamphlet immediately addressed Fenner: Ibid., sig. ¶2r–v; Anne DeWindt suggests that Robert Throckmorton, his brother-in-law Gilbert Pickering, the local churchman of Warboys, and the Judge Edward Fenner, were all likely co-authors (and possibly editors in the latter's case) of the work: Anne Reiber DeWindt, 'Witchcraft and Conflicting Visions of the Ideal Village Community', *Journal of British Studies*, 34:4 (Oct., 1995), pp. 427–463, p. 441, NB n. 28

[3] *Warboys*, sig. G2r.

[4] Richard Bernard, *A gvide to grand-jvry men* (London: Printed by Felix Kingston, 1627), pp. 111–14.

how gender dynamics operated within the text; and Anne Reiber DeWindt identified within it a collision of competing contemporary understandings of community and expectations about social obligations.[5] *Warboys* was not an 'objective and unproblematic' relation of a historical reality, and that is part of what makes it exceedingly interesting as an historical source.[6] The production of the document and its contents were irrefutably 'moments in a strategy', with a narrative steeped in intentionality.[7] As with Richard Galis' *A brief treatise*, the very partiality of the work is what allows us to analyse how believers in witchcraft themselves styled the presentation of their beliefs through imbuing behaviours and emotional expressions with social and moral significance. By acknowledging that 'truth is no more than a version of reality which satisfies an audience' – and that narratives were written with the express purpose of persuasion – we can consider certain literary themes and stereotypes to possess an *ipso facto* historicity. This version of events, formed from culturally shared components, could elide with, steer, and challenge the forms of 'local knowledge' that contributed to contemporary apprehensions, and navigations, of all social interaction.[8]

Familial Context

Elizabeth Throckmorton, the mother of the afflicted children, was a member of the stalwartly Protestant Pickering family, a dynasty hailing from the 'puritan centre' of Titchmarsh in Northamptonshire.[9] Elizabeth's brother Gilbert Pickering – the uncle at whose house one of the girls stayed for a spell, as well as a likely co-author of the pamphlet itself – embodied the faithful sectarianism of the family. He was, for instance, heavily involved in the retaliatory seizure of property belonging to recusant Catholics that occurred in the wake of the foiling of the Gunpowder Plot, and responses to the 1606 Oath of Allegiance that it had prompted.

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[5] Philip C. Almond, *Demonic Possession and Exorcism in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 71–149; Philip C. Almond, *The Witches of Warboys: An Extraordinary Story of Sorcery, Sadism, and Satanic Possession in Elizabethan England* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2007); Erika Gasser, *Vexed with Devils: Manhood and Witchcraft in Old and New England* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2017), pp. 37–66.

[6] Marion Gibson, *Reading Witchcraft: Stories of early English witches* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 10.

[7] Jeanne Favret-Saada, *Deadly Words: Witchcraft in the Bocage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980 [1977]), p. 25, quoted in Marion Gibson, 'Understanding Witchcraft? Accuser's Stories in Print in Early Modern England', in Stuart Clark (ed.), *Languages of Witchcraft: Narrative, Ideology, and Meaning in Early Modern Culture* (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2001), pp. 41–54, p. 42.

[8] Malcolm Gaskill, 'Reporting Murder: Fiction in the Archives in Early Modern England', *Social History*, 23:1 (1998), pp. 1–30, quoted p. 12.

[9] W. J. Sheils, *The Puritans in the Diocese of Peterborough, 1558–1610* (Northampton: Northampton Record Society, 1979), p. 40. Quoted in DeWindt 'Conflicting Visions', p. 439, n. 53.

After Gilbert's death, his son John was ordered by the Privy Council to return diverse items of property 'taken by your father . . . when he received directions from hence for the search [of Harrowden House]' to the Council's keeping for an eventual return to their original owner Edward Vaux.[10] Gilbert's interest in, and involvement with, witchcraft continued until the end of his life; as an account of the 1612 Northampton trials mentioned that Gilbert apprehended the suspected witch Arthur Bill and conveyed him to gaol.[11] John Pickering signalled his own committed Puritanism in 1618 through his involvement in a local controversy precipitated by James I's *Declaration to His Subiects, concerning lawfull Sports to be vsed* issued earlier that year.[12] Under the direction of the Puritan-sympathising regional magnate Edmund Montagu – written of approvingly by Arthur Throckmorton, the second cousin of Robert Throckmorton of Warboys – John was to enforce the implementation of stricter recreational limitations than were presented in the *Declaration*, which puritanism had been opposed by local parson John Williams.[13] In this capacity, John continued his family's traditions by keenly pursuing the implementation of godly behavioural strictures.

The Throckmortons were a similarly prominent local family to the Pickerings, and Emma Throckmorton – mother to Robert and grandmother to the children – was very likely the hotter kind of Protestant. DeWindt found a minor indication of Emma's confessional leanings in the Calvinistic language of her 1600 will, which mentioned 'all the elect of God', and Emma's specific request for Puritan divine Bartholomew Chamberlain to preach at her funeral service.[14] The funeral sermon given by Chamberlain for Anne Dudley (née Seymour), countess of Warwick, in 1587 exemplified the austerity and suspicion with which some

[10] The letter was sent to John Pickering on 27 July 1613 and on 14 May 1614 John personally returned the items and in doing so was discharged by the Privy Council for 'such thinges as were taken from Harrowden House by the said Sir Gilbert, and of any other act of thinge done at that service': *Acts of the Privy Council of England. 1613–1614* (London: H. M. S. O., 1921), pp. 157, 439–440.

[11] TNA C142/342/94; Anon., *The Witches of Northamptonshire* (London: Printed by Thomas Purfoot, 1612), C2v.

[12] James VI & I, *The Kings Maiesties Declaration to His Subiects, concerning lawfull Sports to be vsed* (London: Printed by Bonham Norton and Iohn Bill, 1618).

[13] Arthur Throckmorton's approval of Montagu's actions and disapproval of John Williams features in three letters sent in correspondence with Montagu in the latter half of 1618: Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Report on the Manuscripts of the Duke of Buccleuch & Queensbury*, Vol. III, VI, The Montagu Papers: Second Series (London: H.M.S.O., 1926), pp. 208, 210–212; Officials had added the threat of transportation for persons that encouraged and facilitated disruptive merrymaking: James I's reinvigoration of the Elizabethan Statute of Rogues: *By the King. A Proclamation for the due and speedy execution of the Statute against Rogues, Vagabonds, Idle, and dissolute persons* (London: Imprinted by Robert Barker, 1603).

[14] DeWindt, 'Conflicting Visions', p. 439, n. 54; For a problematisation of preambles to wills as formulae see: J. D. Alsop, 'Religious Preambles in Early Modern English Wills as Formulae', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 40:1 (Jan., 1989), pp. 19–27.

stricter Protestant sermonisers treated protracted eulogising. Their theological position marked by hypervigilance about any potential return to Catholic intercession in the trental and a preference for focussing on the edification of the living congregation over the deceased themselves.[15] Bartholomew Chamberlain sat firmly within this camp; his references to the deceased Anne Dudley took up only around one of the sermon's twenty seven pages.[16] Chamberlain's true interest was in impressing upon his audience that the funeral was an opportunity 'to remember death . . . For there can bee no stronger bridle to hold vs backe from sinne, neither sharper prick to stirre vs forward to goodnes'. The value of the funeral was as a chance for attendants to 'Remember the ende, [so that] thou shalt neuer do amisse'.[17] Geographically, Chamberlain actively operated within the southern orbit of Huntingdonshire well into the early seventeenth century; the probate inventory carried out upon Chamberlain's death in 1621 gave his terminal employment as parson of Hemingford Abbots, a village roughly two-and-a-half miles from Huntingdon.[18] Records of litigation confirm his close proximity to Huntingdon throughout the preceding two decades: an advowson was brought forward for the rectory and church at Grafham – around five miles from Huntingdon – and he was also named in a dispute over some barns belonging to the rectory of Sandy in north-eastern Bedfordshire – around fifteen miles from Huntingdon. In addition to Chamberlain being Emma's requested funerary preacher, he was named as a legal witness to Emma setting her mark and seal to her will.[19] And he was even involved in the bewitchment at Warboys itself, as he was almost certainly the 'Master docter Chamberlin' who took the confessions of the Samuel family at the gallows.[20] Bartholomew Chamberlain's involvement with Throckmorton-family affairs was indicative of the distinctly puritanical character of the family's religious beliefs, and their concomitant familiarity with the type of devout emotional style favoured by such a belief system.[21] But in order to

[15] David Cressy has argued for the heterogeneity of Protestant treatments of death in Elizabethan and early Stuart England, even amongst puritans: David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage, and Death: Ritual, Religion, and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002 [1997]), p. 404. Likewise Peter Marshall places the disputed genre of funeral sermonising into the wider contested space of memory in English Protestant culture in Peter Marshall, *Beliefs and the Dead in Reformation England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), ch. 7; Alan Stewart, *The Oxford History of Life Writing*, vol. ii (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), p. 149.
[16] Bartholomew Chamberlain, *A Sermon preached at Farington in Barkeshire* (London: Printed by John Wolfe, 1591), sig. A5v–A6r.
[17] Ibid. A4r, A4v–A5r, A5v.
[18] Huntingdonshire Archives, AH18/3/67.
[19] TNA PROB 11/97/306.
[20] *Warboys*, sig. P3v.
[21] It is very likely that Emma Throckmorton was personally acquainted with Chamberlain and his services as the dedicatory epistle of a sermon published for his educational sponsor, the Lord

understand how emotional styles of belief were formulated in *Warboys*, it is first necessary to explore two key cultural devices central to this process: the significance of the act of crying, and the morally determinative effects of a person's heart.

Crying: An Indicative and Transformative Behaviour

An adherence to an especially piously minded schema of emotional expression was evident in *Warboys* through the consistent deployment of a stylistically standardised format to describe events and behaviours. The most potent forms of which was crying. At various points in the narrative the Throckmorton children declaimed pious speeches whilst bewitched, exhorting all present, including the accused witches of the Samuel family, to pursue godly virtues in their living. The aesthetic of the Throckmorton's performances – their style – carried as much significance as the actual words spoken. The episodes were intense arenas in which participants emotionally performed; to that end, the children's speeches 'for the most part . . . beganne wyth teares, [and] so they continued, and alwaies ended with teares'. Their tearful mode of expression was so effective as an affective behaviour 'that there was not any that heard them, could abstaine from weeping' – the children's pious crying was a highly visible, and contagious, form of emotional expression. When witnesses mimetically wept, they engaged in a public emotional display that signified more than an empathetic reaction; their mimesis affirmed, to both themselves and witnesses, that they were collectively responding to events with appropriate feeling. Additionally, it simultaneously confirmed and duplicated the children's observable qualia of piety – alongside a spirit of Christian forgiveness 'from the bottome of their hart[s]' – through acts of participatory expression.[22] Conspicuous in her initial refusal to participate in the shared experience and expression of appropriate emotionality was Alice Samuel, who at this point was being forced to live with the Throckmortons in their family home, and who was 'little or nothing mooved' at that time. And as seen in Brian Darcy's interrogations of suspected witches in St Osyth, failure to produce tears could have deadly consequences. The *Malleus Maleficarum* had established that witches could not cry, even when tortured, and advised judges to encourage the accused to 'shed tears to the extent that you are innocent, but not

Chancellor Thomas Bromley, is signed off from Holywell in1583, which was close to Ramsey (Emma's birthplace) and Ellington (the Throckmorton's hometown); Bartholomew Chamberlain, *A sermon preached at S. Iames, before the right Honorable Lordes of her Maiesties priuie Councel, the 25. of April. 1580* (London: Imprinted by John Wolfe, 1583), sig. A4v.

[22] *Warboys*, sig. G3v.

at all if you are guilty'; 'the more they were conjured, the less they could cry' and so would be forced to feign tears by dampening their cheeks with spit.[23] James VI infamously endorsed a permutation of this idea in his *Daemonologie*, postulating that because of the sacralisation of water in the process of baptism, it thusly possessed an intrinsic divine moral-materiality, manifesting as a literal physical rejection of evil.[24] The King's words were repeated, unattributed, in the 1612 *Witches of Northamptonshire* pamphlet, reminding readers that a lack of proper affect could signify that witches' 'hearts are so hardened, that not so much as their eyes are able to shead teares'.[25] The passage in *Daemonologie* legitimised the logic behind subjecting suspected witches to ordeals by water, whilst simultaneously tying the sacred properties of water to emotional expression. In Alice's case, the eventual penitence that she expressed was reified when the Throckmortons perceived that 'she did nothing but weep & lament' after she had admitted her wrongdoing and begged their forgiveness, becoming utterly inconsolable.[26] Contemporary readers were expected to sympathise with her, not as a victim, but as a Christian on her journey to redemption: her tears corollary evidence that her wayward, hardened heart was had been sufficiently softened to receive God.

However, the association between crying and goodness could be unstable and its application inconsistent, which ambiguity was reflected in contemporary ambivalence about its status as an outward behavioural signifier of inner moral character. Throughout the period 1560–1640, weeping and the shedding of tears were subject to the suspicions born of a cultural environment paranoid about the dangers posed by Nicodemite Catholics and an insidious diabolism bolstered by a resurgent Great Deceiver.[27] The value found in 'vnfained teares' impelled a dangerous alternative: feigned tears, *crocodili lachrimae*.[28] A lack of the genuine feelings necessary to producing genuine tears could be indicative of a concomitant inability to transform oneself internally. The theologian Thomas Playfere insisted that 'Our teares must not be crocodiles teares'.[29] Tears could be misdirected, like the crocodile who, 'hauing deuoured a man, weepes ouer the scull when nothing is left, not repenting of his deed, but

[23] Heinrich Kramer, *Malleus Maleficarum*, trans. Christopher S. Mackay, in *The Hammer of Witches* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p. 549.
[24] James VI & I, *Daemonologie* (Edinburgh: Printed by Robert Waldegrave, 1597), p. 81.
[25] *Witches of Northamptonshire*, C2v.
[26] *Warboys*, sigs H2v–H3r.
[27] E.g. The Devil was continually stressed to be the father of lies in: Anon., *A packe Of Spanish lyes* (London: Printed by the Deputies of Christopher Barker, 1588).
[28] Edward Topsell, *The historie of serpents* (London: Printed by William Jaggard, 1608), p. 135.
[29] Thomas Playfere, *The meane in movrning* (London: Printed by Widow Orwin, 1596), p. 97.

because on that bone there remaines no flesh'.[30] The Catholic Church itself was accused of having successfully prosecuted a centuries-long campaign of insidiously infesting, 'like the Crocodile, by weeping and creeping . . . the best estates'.[31] The Protestant ex-soldier Barnaby Rich justified his anti-Catholic conclusions about Ireland by reasoning that it was neither 'the Countrey or the Countryman' in which he found fault but instead 'their manners and conditions'.[32] His backhanded defence of the Irish against the censorious Richard Stanihurst mirrored topoi about crocodilian tears, conceding that 'to weepe Irish' was 'To weepe at pleasure, without cause, or griefe'.[33] Rich described the practice of hiring 'a number of women to bring the corps to the place of buriall, [and] for some small recompense giuen them, will furnish the cry, with greater shriking and howling, then those that are grieued indeede, and haue greatest cause to cry'.[34] Wisdom held that for a man to weep like a crocodile: 'one doothe weepe with his eyes withoute compassion, and not with his harte and mynde'.[35] James VI & I channelled the *Malleus Maleficarum* when he offered a typically misogynistic portrait of the witch as emblematic of dishonest 'woman kinde . . . able other-waies to shed teares at euery light occasion when they will, yea, although it were dissemblingly like the Crocodiles'.[36] These same gripes were being expressed a century later, when a letter to *The Spectator* complained about practices of 'immoderate Weeping' amongst the grief stricken. The letter writer considered nothing 'so fallacious as this outward Sign of Sorrow' because 'Sorrow which appears so easily at the Eyes, cannot have pierced deeply into the Heart', as 'The Heart distended with Grief, stops all the Passages for Tears and Lamentations'. They themselves had 'lately lost a dear Friend, for whom [they had] not yet shed a Tear', prompting the editor, Richard Steele, to approve of them as someone 'well acquainted with generous Earnings of Distress in a manly Temper, which above the Relief of Tears'.[37] Misogyny notwithstanding, crocodile tears could be equally threatening to women, as Isabella Whitney cautioned young women to 'Beware of fayre and painted talke/ . . . [because] Some vse the teares of Crocodiles,/ contrary to their hart', and 'yf they cannot

[30] William Innes, *A bvndle of myrrhe: or Three Meditations of Teares* (London: Printed for R. Mylbourne, 1620), p. 30.
[31] Thomas Ireland, *The oath of allegeance* (London: Printed by Nicholas Okes, 1610), sig. E1r.
[32] Barnaby Rich, *A Nevv Description of Ireland* (London: Printed by [William Jaggard], 1610), sig. B1r.
[33] Richard Stanihurst, *The Historie of Ireland*, in Raphael Holinshed, *The Firste volume of the Chronicles of England, Scotlande, and Irelande* (London: Imprinted for John Hunne, 1577), p. 28.
[34] Rich, *Nevv Description*, pp. 12–13.
[35] Sebastian Munster, *A Briefe Collection and compendion extract of straunge and memorable thinges* (London: Printed by Thomas Marshe, 1572), Fol. 92r.
[36] James VI & I, *Daemonologie*, p. 81.
[37] *The Spectator*, no. 95 [Steele] Tuesday June 19 1711, in Henry Morley, *The Spectator: A New Edition*, 3 vols, I (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1891), pp. 349–51.

alwayes weepe', like witches in the *Malleus*, 'they wet their Cheekes by Art'.[38] Gabriel Harvey pithily summed up the rule: pay 'reuerance [to] the Teares of Christ; but feare the Teares of the Crocodile'.[39] It was nonetheless an inconsistent rule, dependent entirely upon social interpretation; expressions of emotion were not, and are not, necessarily straightforwardly understood or definitively morally coded.[40] Bernard Capp demonstrated this wonderfully in his exploration of the contentious relationship between masculinity and weeping in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England, finding that spiritual tears were an exception to many of the norms coding the appropriateness of male crying.[41] Bartholomew Chamberlain even preached on this to the Privy Council, asking why, if 'Christ shed droppes of bloud for our sinnes', 'can we not shed one teare for the same?', wishing his own 'head were a wel of water, and [his] eyes a fountaine of teares'.[42]

In addition to the emotional dialectic between witches and victims, there existed a parallel and complementary dialectic between witches and witnesses, expressed through notions of tears and hearts. Witnesses and participants could signal the depths of their compassion through their reactions to the children, as when the pamphlet told of how when the children were in the midst of 'their greatest torment and miseries . . . it made the hart of the beholders many times to melt in their bodies'. When the Lady Cromwell – wife of Sir Henry Cromwell and grandmother of Oliver – visited the children and witnessed their torments, 'it pittied [her] hart to see them, in so much, that she could not abstayn from teares'.[43] Outward tears indicated an inward emotional process that reproduced scripturally-derived emotional standards, and which standards were reiterated in English devotional texts. These were the *pietatis lachrymae* – tears of devotion – that one poet praised the shedding of as necessary to secure 'passage vnto Paradise', advising any 'Ship-wrackt soule, drench in a Sea of teares/ . . . Let bitter flouds fall from thy restles eies,/ Make heauens to pitty thy hearts wofull cries'.[44]

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[38] Isabella Whitney, *The Copy of a letter, lately written in meeter, by a yonge Gentilwoman* (London: Richarde Jhones, 1567), sig. A6r.
[39] Gabriel Harvey, *A Nevv Letter of notable contents* (London: Printed by John Wolfe, 1593), sig. C4v.
[40] For a discussion of crocodile tears and affect theory as well as some more examples of contemporary usage of the motif see: Joseph Campana, 'Crocodile Tears: Affective Fallacies Old and New', in Amanda Bailey and Mario DiGangi (eds), *Affect Theory and Early Modern Texts* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), pp. 129–152
[41] Bernard Capp, '"Jesus Wept" but did the Englishman? Masculinity and Emotion in Early Modern England', *Past & Present* 224:1 (Aug., 2014), pp. 75–108.
[42] Chamberlain, *A sermon preached at S. Iames*, sig. A6v; Chamberlain's pamphlet was reprinted several times in the decades following its initial publication: twice during Elizabeth's reign (1584 and '95) and four times during James' (1612, '13, '15, and '23) under the title *The Passion of Christ* from the '95 edition onward.
[43] *Warboys*, sigs E2v, F3r.
[44] William Evans, *Pietatis Lachrymae* (London: Printed by Edward Allde, 1602), sigs B3v, B4r.

In his 1614 work *The Deuill's Banket*, the Calvinist Thomas Adams – then vicar of Willington – shared this outlook, and wrote evocatively of the necessity of weeping and piety, particularly in the context of personal repentance:

> We haue all drunke liberally of these waters ; too prodigally at Sinnes fountaine . . . if we keepe them in our stomachs, they will poyson vs . . . *pumpe them out in riuers of teares*, for your sinnes. Make your heads waters, *and your eyes fountaines*: weepe your consciences emptie and dry againe of these waters : Repentance onely can lade them out. They, that haue dry eyes haue waterish hearts . . . let your eyes gush out teares; not onely in a compassion for others, but in passion for your selues . . . Weepe out your sullen waters of discontent at Gods doings, your garish waters of pride, freezing obduracie, burning malice, foggie intemperance, base couetise.[45]

The shedding of tears was a potent mechanism of emotional emulation in the *Warboys* narrative; the children piously wept, prompting more pious weeping from those who saw them. This mechanism was theoretically neutral but open to corruption as 'that which entreth into vs by the eyes and eares, muste bee digested by the spirite'.[46] This was part of the reason theatres were considered to be dangerously virulent spaces of emotional contagion.[47] Enacted emotions 'by the priuie entries of the eare, slip downe into the hart, & with gunshotte of affection gaule the minde, where reason and vertue should rule the roste'.[48] That these complaints were made about performances on the stage indicated considerable contemporary concern that even artificial emotional behaviour could potentially be passed on to the audience where it was made real just as 'the beholding of troubles and miserable slaughters that are in Tragedies, driue vs to immoderate sorrow, heauiness, womanish weeping and mourning, whereby we become louers of . . . lamentation'.[49]

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[45] Thomas Adams, *The Deuills Banket* (London: Printed by Thomas Snodham for Ralph Mab, 1614), pp. 30–31.
[46] Stephen Gosson, *Playes Confuted in fiue Actions* (London: Imprinted for Thomas Gosson, [1582]), sig. B8v
[47] Robert Shaughnessy, 'Connecting the Globe: Actors, Audience and Entrainment', *Shakespeare Survey* 68 (2015), pp. 294–305.
[48] This quote is incorrectly given as from Gosson's *Playes Confuted* in: Evelyn Tribble, 'Affective Contagion on the Early Modern Stage', in Amanda Bailey and Mario DiGangi (eds), *Affect Theory and Early Modern Texts* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), pp. 195–212, n. 3; It is actually from the earlier: Stephen Gosson, *The schoole of abuse* (London: Printed by T[homas] D[awson], [1579]), sig. B7r.
[49] Gosson, *Playes Confuted*, sig. C6r.

Perhaps to the eyes and ears of Robert Throckmorton, 'greatly disquieted' when Alice Samuel fell ill beneath his roof, there was a hint of sin, material and somaticised, flowing through Alice's body which elicited her terrible groaning and discomfort. And that it was this sin that required expulsion through confession and the mechanism of purgative tears.[50] The moral relationship conceived of in early modern English culture between crying and cultivating interiority was closely related to another prominent trope: the usage of the heart as both a literal and metaphorical space for similar processes of personal refinement.

The Heart as a Morally Determinative Organ

'*Rockes* make those in *them carelesse, Proud, Secure*
From feare of Danger: Stony Hearts are sure
To make all such, in whom they are, and snare
Them in great Mischiefes ere they be aware.

William Prynne, *Movnt-Orgveil* (London: Printed by Thomas Cotes, 1641), p. 31.

References to, and reflections upon, the multifariousness of the heart in early modern English discourse contributed to – and were reconstituted from – a millennia-spanning discursive practice. The historian of early Christianity Robert Wilkin commented that 'nothing is more characteristic of the Christian intellectual tradition than its fondness for the language of the heart'.[51] And although the Throckmortons and Pickerings were certainly godly, hot Protestantism was not a prerequisite for worrying about hearts; hard and stony hearts were a familiar concern across the denominational spectrum of post-Reformation English Christianity.

A softened heart, although preferred, could occasionally prove to be just as dangerous as a hardened one, a pervasive discursive ambiguity born of debates about the innate sinfulness of the worldly body despite it being a necessary vehicle for the facilitation of grace by the elect. As the preacher Thomas Adams warned, 'When the heate of tentation shall glow vpon concupiscence, *the heart quickly melts* . . . [and] Satan therefore shapes his Temptation . . .

[50] *Warboys*, sig. G4v.
[51] Robert Wilkin, *The Spirit of Early Christian Thought: Seeking the Face of God* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), p. 292.

as most fit and powerfull, to worke vpon mans affections'.[52] However, the softening of the heart and movement of the passions were generally considered agreeable processes. For Alexander Roberts, a preacher at King's Lynn, the baptism of St Augustine exemplified the potential to 'conioyne Diuine eloquence with Humane . . . when by their pleasantnesse, with delight they slide into the hearts of men, and rauish their affections'. When Augustine heard the melodious Psalms 'the words pierced his eares, the truth melted his heart, his passions were moued, and showers of teares with delight fell from his eyes'.[53] In a sermon given by John Donne in 1623 he emphasised that Christ himself 'came nearer to an excesse of passion, then to an Indolencie, to a senselesnesse, to a privation of . . . affections'.[54] In his oft-republished pamphlet *Hearts Delight* – based on his 1593 sermon – preacher and theologian Thomas Playfere commented upon how a correctly orientated heart was necessary for the proper experience of emotion, because 'euen so if thou reioice in the face, and not in the heart . . . thou canst neuer taste the sweetnesse of it'.[55] Delivered from the authoritative pulpit at St. Paul's Cross, a location that was an entrepôt for the public consumption of Tudor and Stuart Reformatory projects, the topic of the sermon was espoused upon from a platform central to any notion of an emergent early modern English public discourse.[56] The prominent location of the sermon's delivery, combined with its frequent reproduction in following decades, indicated that its message was received well and widely.[57]

The 1590s, 'that period of bad harvests and widespread fears of social breakdown', provided ample opportunity for commentators to opine on what was causing their pressing bevy of ills.[58] Dearths occasioned more speculation about forms of relief for the poor, which were naturally accompanied by reflections upon charitable almsgiving and its implications for both

[52] Adams, *The Deuills Banket*, p. 150.
[53] Alexander Roberts, *A Treatise of Witchcraft* (London: Printed by Nicholas Okes, 1616), pp. 69–70.
[54] George R. Potter and Evelyn M. Simpson (eds), *The Sermons of John Donne* 10 vols: iv (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1953–62), p. 329, quoted in Katrin Ettenhuber, '"Tears of Passion" and "Inordinate Lamentation": Complicated Grief in Donne and Augustine', in Brian Cummings and Freya Sierhuis (eds), *Passions and Subjectivity in Early Modern Culture* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), pp. 201–216, p. 202.
[55] Thomas Playfere, *Hearts delight* (London: Printed by John Legat, 1603), sigs C2v; A6v–7r.
[56] Torrance Kirby and P. G. Stanwood, 'Introduction', in Torrance Kirby and P. G. Stanwood (eds.), *Paul's Cross and the Culture of Persuasion in England, 1520–1640* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), pp. 1–16; See also: Mary Morrissey, *Politics and the Paul's Cross Sermons, 1558–1642* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).
[57] Playfere himself was appointed Lady Margaret's Professor of Divinity at Cambridge in 1596 and preached before the royal family multiple times: P. McCullough (2008, January 03), Thomas Playfere (c.1562–1609), *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128–e-22372 [accessed 9 Oct. 2020].
[58] James A. Sharpe, *Early Modern England: A social history 1550–1760* (London: Bloomsbury, 2011 [1987]), p. 225.

individuals and Christian society, and which discussions utilised invoked hearts. The popular preacher Henry Smith railed against those who were 'so hard hearted tovvards the releefe of the poore', the suffering of whom should 'breede great compassion in [Christian] hearts'. There was a reciprocity in Smith's version of almsgiving: providing for the needy softened one's heart. Such softening was imperative because 'bread that is giuen with a stony hart, is called stony bread' and those who gave 'sower bread . . . is next kinseman vnto Sathan: for he gaue Christ stoans in stead of bread'.[59] Henry Arthington utilised the same rhetorical motif of hardened hearts in his own treatise on poor relief in 1597, albeit in terms more accordant with the orthodox ideology that would imminently produce the Poor Laws.[60] He condemned beggars and the idle poor but saved his ire 'especially [for] the poore makers', those 'too hard hearted, vnwilling almost to part with any thing' whose 'bowels of tender compassion [were] shut vp'.[61] In 1620, a year before he would pen a literary foray into the subject of a penitent witch, Henry Goodcole wrote the dedicatory epistle to a religious text by Richard Brathwaite, which also utilised the language of the heart in its commentary on social tensions.[62] He commiserated with his socially respectable dedicatees about ungratefulness: 'two Heads in one Bodie, is a monstrous sight; but one vnthankfull Heart, in one Bosome, is more odious to behold'.[63] John Jewel – the Bishop of Salisbury and a man keenly interested in outfitting the resurgent Anglican Church with a suitable community of godly believers – spoke to this in a sermon given at St. Pauls upon the nature of zeal.[64] Jewel was amongst those clergymen who ardently argued that the architecture of the Elizabethan Church must have its foundations lain deeply within the populace in order to withstand a confessional

[59] Henry Smith, *The poore mans teares* (London: Printed by John Wolfe, 1592), pp. 2, 15, 28; Smith's position on poor relief was admittedly more radical than the *fin de siècle* legislative Acts of 1597/8 and 1601, as he refuted the notion that alms should be withheld from those whose identities were unknown to the giver in case they were 'an idle person', which conflicted with parts of the existing 1572 Vagabonds Act [Ibid., p. 8]; Marjorie Keniston McIntosh, *Poor Relief in England, 1350–1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), esp. ch. 6.

[60] Arthington took a less controversial line after a debacle in 1591 when he had supported the deeply unpopular messianic aspirations of William Hacket, resulting in his publishing an apology: 39 Eliz. c. 3 &4, in *The Statutes of the Realm*, 12 vols, IV: II (London: Dawsons, 1819), pp. 896–902; Henry Arthington, *The sedvction of Arthington by Hacket* (London: Printed by R. B., 1592).

[61] Henry Arthington, *Provision for the poore* (London: Printed by Thomas Creede, 1597), sigs C1r, A3r–v.

[62] Alan Macfarlane, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England* (London: Routledge, 1999 [1970]), chap. 12; Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (London: Penguin Books, 1991 [1971]), chap. 17.

[63] Henry Goodcole, *The Prodigals Teares. With a heavenly New yeeres Gift sent to the Soule* (London: Printed by B[ernard] A[lsop], 1620), sigs A4v–A5v.There is some confusion over whether parts of the text were written by Henry Goodcole or Richard Brathwaite as *The Prodigals Teares* had been originally published under Brathwaite's name in 1614.

[64] Michael Pasquarello, 'John Jewel: Preaching Prelate', *Anglican and Episcopal History*, 69:3 (2000), pp. 276–294.

reversal akin to that which its Edwardian predecessor had experienced under Mary. They advised that the Reformed faith had survived through the zeal of the Marian exiles and martyrs in the face of persecution: reasoning that because 'Kingdomes are preserued by the same meanes, by which they were first gotten[: that t]hat which is conquerable by zeale, by carefull zeale must bee kept'.[65] According to Jewel this relied upon hearts, as 'true and godly zeale . . . is moulten into the heart, . . . It taketh away the vse of reason . . . and deuoureth vp the heart' with a 'great [and] iust . . . griefe'. The key differentiator between godly zeal and 'the rage and fury of hypocrites' was that the former was 'tempered & seasoned with charity', such that 'they mourne in their heartes to see that the trueth is not recyued, and *to see the minds of their brethren so obstinately hardened . . . they are deepely touched with the feeling of suche calamities whiche GOD layeth vppon other*'.[66] The other side of the coin were the worst of all Atheists, who were 'euer Handling Holy Things, *but without Feeling*'.[67]

The literary significance of the heart persisted through the period 1560–1640 and cut across denominational lines. In 1625 Henry Leslie, then a rector in Ireland, gave a sermon to the newly ascended Charles I solely dedicated to describing, proving, and remedying the problem of hard hearts.[68] Stony hearts, and the emotional style of belief they implied, were a recurrent concern that spanned sectarian divisions, as the device was used in the works of both Leslie and William Prynne.[69] Leslie was fiercely loyal to the Laudian episcopal establishment; whereas Prynne publicly protested against Laud's 'innovations', earning a prison sentence and facial mutilation.[70] Leslie's sermon revealed how contemporaries

[65] John Jewel, *Certaine Sermons preached before the Queenes Maiestie* (London: Christopher Barker, 1583), sig. I3r.
[66] Jewel, *Certaine Sermons*, sigs H7v–H8v, emphasis added.
[67] Francis Bacon, *The Essayes* (London: Printed by John Haviland, 1625 [1597]), p. 93.
[68] James B. Leslie, *Armagh clergy and parishes* (Dunalk: William Tempest, 1911), p. 90.
[69] Illustrative in miniature of the polarity between Leslie and Prynne were their respective comments on the Laudian reintroduction of altars: Kenneth Fincham & Nicholas Tyacke, *Altars Restored: The Changing Face of English Religious Worship, 1547–c.1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), esp. chap. 5. A year before Laud would declare the altar 'as the greatest place of Gods Residence upon earth', Leslie had produced a prolixious apology for 'the authority of the church', defending altars according to Theodore Beza's argument that it 'not necessary, that the same Altar which hath beene abused unto Popish Idolatry, should be altered . . . when the abuse thereof is removed': William Laud, *A speech delivered in the starr-chamber* (London: Printed by Richard Badger, 1637), p. 47; Henry Leslie, *A treatise of the avthority of the chvrch* (Dublin: Printed by the Society of Stationers, 1637), p. 137]. Contrastingly, an imprisoned Prynne was able, via printers in the Dutch Republic, to issue an excursive treatise contravening Laud: William Prynne, *A quench-coale* (Amsterdam, 1637).
[70] For the anonymous complaint about Matthew Wren, Bishop of Ipswich and supporter of Laud, which resulted in his prosecution see: William Prynne [Matthew White], *Newes from Ipswich* (Ipswich, 1636); c.f. Henry Leslie, *A treatise Tending to vnitie* (Dublin: Printed by the Societie of Stationers, 1623).

grappled with their interiority and the interiority of others, as well as what practical measures were prescribed. A hard heart represented a loss of 'the sense and knowledge of sinne', with its hardness constituting a senselessness likened unto a callous: 'stiffe' and 'benummed'. The moral implication of this condition was a concomitant 'stiffnesse and inflexiblenesse of the will', an intractable aversion to interacting with divinely provided salvation. The 'stubburnes of heart' was signified in 'iron sinew', an instrument of otherwise natural motion rendered static, preventing movement towards God. The materiality of these two pieces of the body mattered because iron could be tamed and reshaped by fire – it was obstinate but ultimately malleable – whereas stone was utterly intractable. A hardened stone heart was thus the natural state of godless man from whose heart there was 'no Iuyce of grace, no goodness to be drawne out of them'.[71] For instance, the particular 'praier for sinners' in the English translation of Lutheran theologian Johann Habermann's *The Enemie of Securitie* – republished over a dozen times in the half-century following its initial translation, in a span of time similar to the *Articles* – continued to plead unto God 'bewailing our sins from the bottome of our harts' to transform the stony hearts of sinners into those of flesh. It was for 'the hardnes of their hart . . . [that sinners] haue no feare nor feeling of thy iudgements' with 'harts which cannot repent, & giue themselues ouer into reprobate mindes'.[72] Hard hearts remained a key framing device through which a litany of immoral and criminal acts and dispositional traits were understood and described; the second half of this chapter explores how the emotionality of the Throckmortons was styled accordingly.

In 1641, after the Long Parliament ordered William Prynne released from his captivity at Mont Orgueil castle on the island of Jersey, he released a collection of the spiritual reflections he had engaged in whilst isolated and imprisoned.[73] His verse explored and organised the ambivalent natural qualities of rocks into reflections on a range of theological topics, including stony hearts. He began by equating the immovability of rock to an obstinate, arrogant pride in 'men of Stony Hearts, [who] have Browes of Steele, Faces of Rocke, which no blush, shame can feele'. The stony hearted were characterised by what they lacked, and by which descriptions historians can get a sense of what was conventionally meritorious. They were *without* humility, shame*less*, merci*less* – 'No Cries, Parts, Vertues, Merits can

[71] Henry Leslie, *A sermon preached before his Maiesty at Windsore* (Oxford: Printed by L. L. for William Tvrner, 1625), pp. 2–4, 7, 6, 8.
[72] Johann Habermann, *The Enemie of Securitie*, trans. Thomas Rogers (London: Henrie Denham, 1579), pp. 148–53; this remains unchanged in the 1625 printing: Johann Habermann, *Enemie of Securitie* (London: Thomas Snodham, 1625), pp. 143–47.
[73] *The Journals of the House of Commons*, Vol. II (London, 1802), pp. 24, 123–4.

asswage/ Their cruell Projects, nor divert their Rage' – indicative of a fundamentally toxic emotional style. It was 'from Mens Stony Hearts [that] first flow and spring/ All Mischiefes, Murders, Warres, Sinnes, each ill thing', and to achieve 'soft Hearts' required an emotional process replete 'with fervent Prayers, Grones, Sighes, Teares' that, even when successful, could only be maintained by constant introspective vigilance to keep 'watch both night and day,/ Over our cheating Hearts, for feare lest they . . . grow hard againe'.[74] Prynne was describing the process of cultivation necessary to maintain an emotional style that was itself intimately entwined with notions of faith and believing.

Dichotomisation between humanity and stone was a fairly popular device in Elizabethan and Jacobean art around the turn of the seventeenth century. Drawing upon the theories of 'vital materialism' proposed by Jane Bennet, Tiffany Werth has identified how contemporary writers schematised 'dull' stone with 'vibrant' humanity.[75] She suggests that post-Reformation England developed a language of vitality according to an 'onto-theological' schema, by which life – even the fundamental human act of being – was inextricably bound to faith. Bennet considers Sir George More's 1597 work *A Demonstration of God* – in which the politician offered proofs of the existence of God – to have typified the association of vitality with faith and inanimateness with stone. To More the godless had dehumanised themselves, having 'the shew of men' but 'who as pictures or images . . . carry the resemblance but not the substance'.[76] When 'a shamelesse mouth, bewrayeth [a] godlesse heart . . . [indicating] that the inward man is extinguished and gone . . . [and] wanteth which is the breath of life'.[77] However, as a rhetorical device, although the motif that triangulated between heart, godliness, and stone was both evocative and effective it was notably not considered catechistically indispensable. Through the doctrinal disputation that moulded the Forty-two Articles (1553) into the Thirty-nine (1571) the specific wording of Article 10 – that the grace of Christ through God 'dooeth take awaie the stonie harte, and geueth an harte of fleshe' – did not survive the process of reconstitution.[78] The sentiments of the article were redistributed into the surrounding text but specific reference to hearts of flesh or stone were

[74] Prynne, *Movnt-Orgveil*,, pp. 29–30, 31, 36, 37.
[75] Jane Bennet, *Vibrant Matter: A political ecology of things* (London: Duke University Press, 2010).
[76] Tiffany Jo Werth, 'A Heart of Stone: The Ungodly in Early Modern England', in Jean E. Feerick and Vin Nardizzi (eds), *The Indistinct Human in Renaissance Literature* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 181–203, quoted pp. 181, 85.
[77] George More, *A demonstration of God in his workes* (London: Printed by I. R. for Thomas Charde, 1597), pp. 31–2.
[78] *Articles agreed on by the Bishoppes, and other learned menne in the Synode at London* [The Forty-two Articles of Faith] (London: Richard Craftonus, 1553), sig. A3v.

dropped.[79] Given Leslie and Prynne's evocations over half a century later, hearts evidently remained a significant, if not inviolable, framing device in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century devotional literature.

Penitent Hearts

Marion Gibson has noted a considerable resemblance between *Warboys* and *The Witches of Northamptonshire* (1612), which shared 'the concerns, the godly frame of reference and the form of the earlier work'.[80] Importantly, both also feature penitential narratives. The accused witches in *Northamptonshire* – Agnes Brown and her daughter Joane Vaughan – resisted repentance and consequently had their ungodly dispositions laid out; it was made clear that their established reputation was malign as they were 'noted to bee of an ill nature and wicked disposition, spightfull and malitious, and [for years] both hated, and feared among [their] neighbours'. Right up until their executions they continued 'with bitter curses and execrations' and their abrasive demeanours were accented by an observation that 'they were neuer heard to pray, or to call vppon God', nor did Hellen Jenkenson – another witch – who 'neuer shewd signe of Contrition . . . nor any sorrow at all'.[81] Likewise, Henry Goodcole's unique interview-cum-interrogation of Elizabeth Sawyer in 1621 presented a condensed version of a similar moral transformation, achieved through confession and repentance, which was also expressed through imagery of the heart.[82] Initially Sawyer's 'malicious heart' had been 'moued and seduced by the Deuill' to revenge herself upon her neighbours for some minor slights against her. However, once she had been arraigned and convicted for her crimes, she admitted her follies and presented herself to the minister Goodcole with contrition. Upon her execution she confirmed the legitimacy of her prior confession to the ordinary, surrendering herself to the forgiveness and mercy of God 'with all [her] heart and minde'. Goodcole confirmed her transformation through the language of moral-somatic sympathy because it was 'at that time [she] spake more heartily, then the day before of her

[79] *Articles whereupon it was agreed by the Archbyshoppes and Byshoppes of both Prouinces, and the whole Cleargie, in the conuocation holden at London in the yere of our Lorde GOD, 1562* [The Thirty-nine Articles of Faith] (London: Richard Jugge and John Cawood, 1571), p. 8.
[80] Marion Gibson, *Early Modern Witches: Witchcraft Cases in Contemporary Writing* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 158.
[81] *The Witches of Northamptonshire*, sigs B2r, B4v, D2r.
[82] Randall Martin, 'Henry Goodcole, Visitor of Newgate: Crime, Conversion, and Patronage', *The Seventeenth Century* 20:2 (2005), pp. 153–184.

execution'.[83] As visitor to Newgate gaol, Goodcole had access to a valuable commodity for the enforcement and disincentivising of certain behaviours and dispositions: exerting control over the "last dying speeches" of sentenced criminals, whose 'wordes are euer remarkable'.[84] Goodcole was evidently deeply inspired by the passage describing the penitent woman in Luke 7:38 – whose 'teares and penitent behauiour did wash away and blot out her crime and infamie' – and leveraged his position as visitor to facilitate as much emulation of it as he could. In his sophomoric publication on criminal repentance, Goodcole related how a gentleman named Francis Robinson had been convicted for defrauding people utilising a counterfeit Great Seal of England. The fraudster had a 'treacherous heart' – in contrast to the 'Noble heart' of the presiding judge and dedicatee of the pamphlet, Sir Henry Montagu – until his sudden repentance and an onset of 'heartily' expressed contrition and prayer.[85] Two complementary stylistic elements were performed by Francis Robinson on the day of his execution.[86] Firstly, he begged pardon for falsely implicating another gentleman in his crime: doing so 'on his knees, and salt teares fast trickling downe, most humbly, and heartily craued'. Secondly, he exhorted the crowd to learn from his example before going to his death – 'Like a Lambe going to the slaughter . . . prepared before to suffer the same, willingly, patiently, and ioyfully' – in a relatively straightforward *imitatio Christi*.[87] James Sharpe has explored how Sawyer, like Robinson, became one of 'the willing central participants in a theatre of punishment, which offered not merely a spectacle, but also a reinforcement of certain values'.[88] Penitential narrative threads ran through other pamphlets, creating many players in the performance. Like Goodcole's *Wonderful Discouerie*, the core text of the pamphlet *A Rehearsall both straung and true* was the product of conversations between a gaoler, Thomas Rowe, and a witch, Elizabeth Stile. Rowe 'moued' her 'to turne hir self to God . . . and mildely to beare the punishment belonging to hir deedes passed, and there withal vrged in signe of hir repentaunce, to confesse hir former follies'. Remarkably, this appears to have worked, 'she seemed to haue some remorse in conscience'

[83] Henry Goodcole, *The wonderfull discouerie of Elizabeth Savvyer, her conuiction and condemnation and Death* (London: Printed by A. Mathewes, 1621), sigs B1v–B2r, D1v–D2v.
[84] Henry Goodcole, *A True Declaration of the happy Conuersion, contrition, and Christian preparation of Francis Robinson* (London: Printed Edw[ward] Allde, 1618), sigs A4r.
[85] Goodcole, *The Prodigals Teares*, sigs A3r, A2r, B3v.
[86] For a complex exploration of a more ambivalent example of speech and behaviour at the scaffold see the discussion of the almost concurrent execution of Sir Walter Raleigh in: Andrew Fleck, '"At the Time of His Death": Manuscript Instability and Walter Ralegh's Performance on the Scaffold', *Journal of British Studies* 48:1 (Jan., 2009), pp. 4–28.
[87] Goodcole, *True Declaration*, sigs C3r–v.
[88] James A. Sharpe, '"Last Dying Speeches": Religion, Ideology and Public Execution in Seventeenth-Century England', *Past & Present*, 107 (May, 1985), pp. 144–167, quoted p. 156.

and wanted to talk with Rowe. Whether or not Stile was genuinely remorseful is largely immaterial; she played the part sufficiently for Rowe, and those witnesses present, who saw her be 'touched with more remorse'. Stile still had agency in how she navigated these conversations, interjecting that when her familiar came to free her during her transportation to the gaol 'she banished hym, hopyng for fauour'. Stile remained canny in her attempts to manoeuvre herself into a more favourable position, turning aspects of her performance – even the fact of her imprisonment – to her advantage.[89] The styling of one's emotionality and believing was not a practice participated in solely by authors.

When Goodcole returned to print in 1635, he continued to use this conceptual framework, reassuring his readers that when Alice Clarke was burnt for poisoning her husband 'it pleased God, so to mollifie her heart, that teares from her eyes, and truth from her tongue proceeded' as she confessed with an 'inward new begotten chearfulnesse'.[90] These devices formed a well of consistent conceptual and stylistic material from which writers drew throughout the period. This included Bartholomew Chamberlain in his aforementioned funeral sermon – itself published during the period of the Throckmorton's bewitchment – expounding upon penance and Christian hearts. The sermon twice elaborated on sinners and the 'hardnesse' and 'coueteousnes' of their hearts, ending with a condemnation of 'Impenitent sinners' who 'hauing no sense of sinne . . . walke in darkenes of ignorance'. In contrast, 'Penitent sinners, are they which rent their harts and not their garments . . . hauing in them that godly sorrow which causeth repentance vnto saluation'.[91] This was far from a controversial position, nor was it solely iterated upon in dedicated catechisms. In his posthumously published 1608 work *A discovrse on the damned art of witchcraft*, the Puritan divine William Perkins repudiated the efficacy of spells and charms that employed scripture in part by cautioning that 'vnlesse the Spirit of God *inlighteneth his heart, it is to no purpose*'. Although Perkins referred to hearts imprecisely and with varied connotations, he was nevertheless able to distil his terms by distinguishing between 'the thoughts of the mind, or the affections of the heart, or the constitution of the bodie'.[92] Likewise in George Gifford's 1593 *A dialogve concerning vvitches and witchcrafts*, the authorial surrogate Daniel gravely warned that 'the power of diuels is in the hearts of men, as to harden the heart, to blind the

[89] Anon., *A Rehearsall both straung and true* (London: Edward White, 1579), sigs A4v, A8v, B1r, B1v.
[90] Henry Goodcole, *The Adultresses Funerall Day* (London: Printed by N[icholas] and I[ohn] Okes, 1635), sigs C1v–C2r.
[91] Chamberlain, *A Sermon preached at Farington*, sigs A8r, B7v–B8r.
[92] William Perkins, *A discovrse of the damned art of witchcraft* (Cambridge: Printed by Cantrel Legge, 1608), pp. 146, 95, emphasis added.

eyes of the mind, and from the lustes and concupiscences which are in them, to inflame them vnto wrath, malice, enuie, . . . to puffe them vp in pride, arrogancie, and vaine glorie'.[93] The danger that hardened hearts posed to the progression of the reformed faith was a well-established theme in contemporary rhetoric. They were hazardous for more than and went just indicating an inclination to sin; they jeopardised the ability of people to properly engage in necessary believing processes. They were responsible for a malignant confessional apathy and ambivalence that 'will belieue neither' Catholic or Protestant teachings – threatening to doom the Reformation project entirely.[94] The issue was unavoidable because it was omnipresent. Chamberlain expressed this in a sermon on the passion of Christ, quoting the Church Father Isidore of Seville that 'A man may auoyd al things but his own hart: for whether soeuer he goeth [it goeth] with him'.[95]

Understanding the penitential sections in *Warboys* is vital to understanding the rest of the pamphlet's narrative, especially so the significance of moments wherein the emotionality of a suspected witch was successfully transformed through contact with the idealised form of their victim's emotionality, setting them upon a penitent path. These passages reproduced conventional standards of godly Protestant behaviour and disposition that had become cultural lodestones during the process of early Elizabethan religious settlement and enforcement, enmeshing the language of the heart into narratives of repentance. In William Evans' 1602 work *Pietatis Lachrymae*, the poet used a heart/hart pun to illustrate the interaction between emotional expression and inner state, specifically the effect that affect could have upon a stony heart: how 'stubborne stones to moyst drops yeeld'. He expressed this process in verse, writing of how 'The nimble Hart when he's beset with Hound/ . . . Weeps out a groane, & then yeelds ayre his breath;/ And makes the Hunters hart (though hard as stone)/ By reason of his sighes, his death to moane'.[96] This emotional mechanism was present in *Warboys*; the behaviour and disposition of the entirety of the Throckmorton family was the godly hart to the witch's hunter. This relationship was most keenly evident when the speech and behaviour of the bewitched children was juxtaposed with that of their supposed tormentors. The meekness and piety displayed by the children when they spoke to Alice Samuel – 'the heauenly & diuine speeches of these children in theyr fits' – was so

[93] George Gifford, *A dialogve concerning VVitches and Witchcraftes* (London: Printed by Iohn Windet, 1593), sig. C2r.
[94] Jewel, *Certaine Sermons*, sig. K1r.
[95] Addition hand-written into text due to words missing in the original printing. Chamberlain, *A sermon preached at S. Iames*, sigs B1r–v.
[96] Evans, *Pietatis*, sigs C1r, B8v.

remarkable that 'if a man had heard it, hee woulde not haue thought himselfe better edified at tenne Sermons'.[97] Their character was refined through the process of suffering, proving the adage that 'Afflictions serve/ To season Saints'.[98] Prynne would later present a version of the dispositional contrast between the godly and the 'wicked'; 'Whereas the godly are meeke, patient, still,/ And silent in the greatest stormes of ill', the wicked are 'as the Sea so they still rage, foame, roare,/ When crost, sicke, pained storming more, and more/ As their afflictions grow, and multiply'.[99] The Throckmorton children were far from mute, they expressed their godly virtues through the opposite behaviour, exhorting Alice to admit her guilt and relentlessly demanding she 'confesse and be sorry for that she had doone'. Their critique of her behaviour and emotional expressions contributed to the notion of a dialectic between themselves and the witches, and they castigated Alice's 'naughty manner of lyuing, her vsuall cursing and banning of all that displeased her, . . . her negligent comming to Church, and slacknesse in Gods service, . . . [and] Her leude bringing vp of her Daughter'.[100] Reinforcing just how interwoven expression and interiority were, the condemnation of Samuel's behaviour and comportment was simultaneously a reproof of her commitment to religion and also her inner moral character. Interiority and exteriority were inextricably entwined in both the minds of Throckmorton family, as well as how early modern English culture assessed questions of character.

A Tale of Two Hearts: One Penitent, the Other Remorseless

The conceptual and presentational currents of weeping, hearts, and repentance coalesced and ran together in witchcraft narratives like *Warboys*, colliding to produce a particular style of belief and emotionality. Although Alice Samuel eventually reneged on her initial accusation that the children's afflictions were 'but wantonnesse', admitting that their condition was unfeigned, she nevertheless continued to resist their insistences that she confess to having bewitched them. In the eyes of the Throckmortons, Alice's initial reluctance to emotionally engage in events was indicative of a serious moral failure – one that manifested somatically in the myriad pains she suffered 'so long as shee stayed in the house'. Alice's transformation from refutation to penitence was precipitated by her observation of one of Jane Throckmorton's fitful episodes – the worst that any of the

[97] *Warboys*, sig. G3r.
[98] Prynne, *Movnt-Orgveil*, p. 72.
[99] Prynne, *Movnt-Orgveil*, p. 76.
[100] *Warboys*, sigs G3r–v.

bewitched girls 'had the lyke for the space of a year or two before' – wherein she sneezed so violently 'as if it would haue caused her eyes to start out of her head', and which 'fit did greatly quayle mother Samuell, for shee her selfe did then thinke, that shee would haue seene the childe dyed at that present'. This 'wroong out of mother Samuell prayers', which only served to increase the child's torment and so further incriminated Alice to observers, rather than evidencing her empathetic character. Witnessing the children's plight had greatly disturbed Alice – to whom 'the sight of this fit was so terrible . . . as shee would many times pray that shee might neuer see the lyke againe in anie of them' – a position starkly at odds with her previous stony demeanour. The urgency of her redemption increased as Christmas approached, prompting Robert Throckmorton to further impress upon Alice that 'it is neuer too late to repent, and to aske for mercie'. By reminding her of Jane's particularly horrifying fit, and she 'remembring the terror of it', he convinced her to repeat to the children some ameliorating phrases that they had prognosticated she would eventually say to alleviate their condition. In this moment Alice Samuel had her character successfully transformed – albeit impermanently – as she succumbed to the Throckmorton's unrelenting torrent of piety and the changing tide of her own feelings. This event established the importance of a properly orientated heart, both in terms of how it metonymically described emotion, as well as its significance to proper piety. Robert Throckmorton and Henry Pickering had previously been described as 'being half terrified in their harts', and Robert successfully implored Alice to 'speake from [her] heart', with her next words spoken 'maruellous heartily'.[101] Alice's newly-found heartiness accorded with the subsequent acceptance by Elizabeth Throckmorton who, in a display of gracious absolution, forgave her 'presently without any questions . . . with all her *heart*'.[102] This synchronising of hearts in penance and forgiveness communicated to the pamphlet's audience that the behaviour of the family toward Alice has been more than just acceptable, it had been commendable. And it is possible that Alice became genuinely convinced of her own guilt through her subjection to their behaviour. It is entirely possible for innocent suspects to become convinced of their own guilt and eventually believe a narrative of their involvement in a crime. In one case from 1676, John Perry confessed to the murder of his master, William Harrison, and implicated his own mother and brother in the act, for which crime they were all three duly executed. Tragically, Harrison proved himself to

[101] *Warboys*, sigs G3v, H1r–v, G1v.
[102] Ibid., sig. H2v, emphasis added.

be very much alive when he returned to England after several years adventuring in Turkey.[103] So we ought not immediately label Alice's change-of-heart as purely a ploy.

Once a confession had finally been drawn from Alice Samuel, the following day being both the Sabbath and Christmas Eve, the Minister of the town Doctor Dorrington – a recurrent presence, a relative of the family who was intimately familiar with proceedings – declared Samuel's confession to the congregation. He chose to deliver recitations about repentance from the Psalms 'on set purpose to comfort her . . . applying his speech directlie to the *comforting of a penitent heart*, and so by consequence of her'. Robert and Elizabeth recognised that Alice was truly repentant, 'for she did nothing but weep & lament all this time'. In fact, despite their best attempts to comfort her, she wept 'all that night' and then proceeded to do 'nothing but weepe and lament' throughout the Christmas sermon.[104] To her godly contemporaries these tears were not those of a woman whose mind had been systematically pounded into dust for weeks by a barrage of pious abuse; the tears they had collectively extracted from Alice merely confirmed the success of their righteous campaign to reform her spirit. The principal spiritual mechanism of penitent weeping was that through a process of 'profitable sorrow' wherein 'the teares of Repentance' quenched 'the flames of wicked desires' and in doing so purged the soul, 'as when a darke Clowd falleth down into Raine, the Skie becommeth cleare'.[105]

In one of his miscellaneous comments about rocks William Prynne noted that 'the waters that doe streame/ And gush from stony Rockes . . . seeme/ A lively Image of those Teares that flow/ From Rockie Hearts, when they once tender grow'.[106] The godly Throckmortons had brought to bear on Alice Samuel their own *malleus maleficarum* and their haranguing exhortations had tenderised her heart until their actions were vindicated by the waters they drew forth. Alice was pulverised and liquified by her pious captors and poured by degrees into a character-mould in the shape of a penitent, and once events had run their course, this process was chased and polished by the production of a narrative text. Alice's emotional transformation was not only an edifying glaze to her confession but a fundamentally necessary aspect of the salvific process, facilitated and encouraged as it was by the

[103] Valletta, Frederick, *Witchcraft, Magic, and Superstition in England, 1640–70* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), p. 102.
[104] *Warboys*, sigs H2v–H3r, emphasis added.
[105] These quotes are from a catechism on repentance written by William Est a preacher at Bideford in Devon, where a major witch hunt would take place in 1682: William Est, *The trial of true Teares* (London: Printed by Thomas Creede, 1613), p. 10.
[106] William Prynne, *Movnt-Orgveil*, p. 43.

purposeful emotional praxis of her pious captors. Transforming Alice in this way was itself a form of emotional and moral construction on the Throckmorton's part. In this sense *Warboys* prefigured the sentiment that underlay the torture of suspects during the East Anglian hunt: that 'if honest godly people discourse with [witches], laying . . . in what condition they are in without Repentance . . . these wayes will bring them to Confession'.[107] Honesty and godliness were indelibly proven through the practice and completion of the process.

Alice Samuel was depicted more sympathetically in the pamphlet than either her husband, John, or daughter, Agnes. This was likely due in part to her advanced age, which contributed to the array of ailments that plagued her during her stay with the Throckmortons. Their neighbours in the small community in Warboys might not have looked so kindly upon further mistreatment of the infirm: especially as many were aware that Alice was subject to abuse at home. I maintain that, outside of curing the children, an increasingly crucial outcome to the saga for the Throckmorton faction was Alice Samuel's spiritual and emotional transformation from recalcitrant denial to an approximation of ideal penance. The successful extraction of a confession from Alice would retroactively justify any possible mistreatment she had suffered whilst residing with them, as well as going some way to silence any misgivings about the cause of the children's illness. And Agnes was one of the parties responsible for robbing the Throckmortons of their prized penitent. In her article on the Warboys case, DeWindt demonstrated how sensitive Robert Throckmorton was to the potential shame that could erupt from the tragedy unfolding beneath his roof and that this hypervigilance around shame motivated the continuation, and escalation, of events. Its spectre was the backdrop to the 'very emotional scene' wherein Alice repented and confessed, which would only serve to compound Robert's outrage over her subsequent recantation.[108] In fact, this episode in the narrative offers access to an even richer vein of historical feeling, taking us beyond just shame. The confession scene offers historians access to a constructed narrative relating witchcraft to the literal salvific potential of appropriate feeling and emotional comportment. Proof of a reformed heart – regardless of how briefly it maintained that status – was the vehicle for ultimate moral vindication. Alice's recantation was contextualised in a way that, although never fully absolving her, did mitigate some of her responsibility for the incident. The blame was shifted onto the rest of her family; Alice received a 'cold welcome' at the hands of Agnes and John, who 'both set vpon her' once she

[107] John Stearne, *A confirmation And Discovery of vvitch-craft, Containing these several particulars* (London: Printed by William Wilson, 1648), p. 14.
[108] DeWindt, 'Witchcraft and Conflict', pp. 441–47, 442.

finally returned home from the Throckmorton's house.[109] Subsequently, it was her daughter Agnes' turn to be kidnapped into the Throckmorton house and have her innards interrogated by the godly family and their allies. Elizabeth Throckmorton's condemnation of Agnes was partly animated by the conviction that Agnes and her father 'were the cause why thy mother did deny that, which she did once confesse, *she was in a good way* . . . & if your mothers soule be dampned, you & your father must answere for it'.[110] Agnes prayed but, just as with her mother, her prayers were dismissed as inefficacious – despite the behaviour signalling outward religious conformity – because the heart producing them was fundamentally corrupted. This was articulated by Elizabeth Throckmorton in her castigation of Agnes, when she acknowledged that Agnes 'doest oftentimes pray here at home, when we pray, and likewise at Church'. However, she informed Agnes that she was destined to 'prayest in vaine, because thou prayest not with thy heart . . . thou hast an hard hart . . . and the Deuill holdeth thy hart and will not suffer thee to confesse it'.[111] It was crucial to practise one's faith with genuine feeling, as without it – like 'the Pharises praier [and] the tears of Esau' – her prayers and tears were 'nothing; they are not accepted, because not heartily offered'. Only 'harty praier' and 'harty teares' were sufficient, and Agnes was branded as fundamentally incapable of achieving either.[112]

This conviction issued from a tenet – closely connected to conceptualisations of Christian hearts – iterated upon continually in Elizabethan and Jacobean that stressed the pre-eminence of constantly cultivating the inner self. In his 1578 Bartholomew's Day sermon at St Paul's Cross, John Stockwood – vicar of Tonbridge and headmaster of the School there – articulated the necessity of a carefully curated interiority by comparing the state of public religion to measures of urban sanitation being implemented to curb the virulent spread of plague in the years 1577–8.[113] The population of London grew by roughly one-hundred-and-sixty-six per cent in the latter half of sixteenth century and the city was synchronously racked by severe episodes of disease.[114] Orders had been issued to the sheriff and justices of Surrey during an earlier outbreak in 1574 to limit 'unnecessary assemblies' and another epidemic

[109] *Warboys*, sig. H3r.
[110] Ibid. sigs M1r–v, emphasis added.
[111] *Warboys*, sig. M1r.
[112] Brathwaite, *Prodigals Teares*, p. 18.
[113] John Stockwood, *A sermon Preached at Paules Crosse on Barthelmew day* (London: Henry Bynneman, 1578), pp. 24–5; Jeffrey Singman, *Daily life in Elizabethan England* (London: Greenwood Press, 1995), p. 52.
[114] Paul Slack, *The Impact of Plague in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985 [1990]), pp. 199–216; Population estimates of 120,000 in 1550 and 200,000 in 1600 are taken from: Stephen Porter, *The Great Plague* (Stroud: Amberley, 2009 [1999]), p. 17.

later in the decade expedited a more comprehensive list of measures to combat the plague.[115] Stockwood appropriated the anxious febrility which gripped the popular imagination and turned its images of corruption and sanitation into an exhortation to his flock for interior betterment. Practical actions such as 'commaundyng mens houses to be kept sweete', were 'laudable policie' but measures destined to be inefficacious without a concomitant 'inward purging and scouring' of 'foule and filthy hearts and consciences'.[116] The same principle of interior cultivation applied in the divine Elnathan Parr's treatise recommending practices for private prayer, wherein Parr wrote that 'The noyse of our lips, without the voice of the heart, is no more a true prayer, then ringing of belles, or babling of a Parrot'.[117] The authors of *Warboys* juxtaposed judgements on Agnes' character with the process of transformation Alice's heart underwent. To the scripturally minded, Agnes' character channelled the hardening heart of the Pharaoh in Exodus, whereas Alice had embodied the contrition of Psalm 51. In contrast, the Throckmorton family displayed emotion and confirmed their piety in an autopoietic process which channelled God's promise in Ezekiel 36:26 to 'take away the stonie heart out of your body [and] giue you an heart of flesh'.[118] Fervent emotional expression, the lachrymose pleadings of the children, and the tearful sympathy of attendants evidenced their softer hearts.

Once suspicions of witchcraft had fomented, any outwardly laudable intentions, behaviours, and expressions of faith were subject to heightened scrutiny and incredulity no matter the innocence of their appearance. Eventually no outward expression of piety was beyond suspicion. The execution of religious behaviour was perlustrated to identify any misapprehensions, deviations, and absences. Suddenly, misremembrances and theological illiteracy became directly incriminating, if they had potentially heretical or blasphemous implications, and that which would ordinarily indicate a minor mark against a person's character could become literally damning. A few years after the Warboys case, the witch suspected of causing the possession of Thomas Darling in 1596, Alice Goodridge, was

[115] *Surrey History Centre*, 'Letter from the Privy Council, Hampton Court, to the sheriff and justices of the peace of Surrey', 15 November 1574, 6729/11/21; *Orders thought meete by her Maiestie, and her priuie Councell, to be executed throughout the Counties of this Realme* (London: Christopher Barker, 1578).
[116] Stockwood, *A sermon Preached*, p. 25.
[117] Elnathan Parr, *Abba Father* (London: Imprinted by F. K., 1618), p. 45. The text was popular enough to have produced five editions by 1636: Elnathan Parr, *Abba Father* (London: Printed by Nicholas Okes, 1636 [5th edn]).
[118] *The Bible: That is, the Holy Scriptvres conteined in the Olde and Newe Testament* (London: Imprinted by the Deputies of Christopher Barker, 1590), Exodus 8:15, 8:32, 9:34 (23r, 23v): Psalms 51: 6,10,17 (II p. 11r); Ezekiel 36:26 (II p. 97v)

interrogated about her faith and admitted that it had been a year since she had last received communion – a certain indicator of her moral turpitude in the eyes of her interrogators – which explained her inconsistent recitation and doctrinal confusion during her examination. Her examiners probed at her understanding of the sacraments by asking what she received at communion, to which she answered, 'her damnation'. Questioning 'whether she knew what she said' Elizabeth responded perplexedly asking 'what shuld I receiue but my damnation?' – a state reserved for those who took communion unworthily.[119] Given her admission for sparingly attending communion Alice likely had a meagre understanding of doctrine and had decontextualised lines from the Book of Common Prayer.[120] They further insisted that she recite the Lord's Prayer and the Creed, which she hurriedly did, omitting some words and phrases in each. Her hesitant performance confirmed that she was unfamiliar with proper religion and was therefore suspiciously distanced from God. As all good Christians knew, the farther one strayed from his protective light the more deeply one retreated into the probing shadowy tentacles of diabolic influence. When Alice Goodridge's mother Elizabeth, who was known to local magistrates for having been accused of practising witchcraft, was implicated by her daughter admitting to having vexed Darling a dispatch of men was sent to her home where she was found 'on her knees'. Like Agnes in Warboys a few years prior, Elizabeth's prayers were defective as she was 'praying (no doubt) to the diuell'.[121].

When Jane Throckmorton attempted to utilise the popular method of scratching the witch to alleviate her condition, the girl fell into an uncharacteristic fit of aggression 'with such feircenesse, & rage as if she would haue pulled the flesh of [Agnes'] hand from the bones' but was nevertheless 'scarcely able to race the skin'. The reason for this marvellous stoppage of blood was given in dually physiological and spiritual terms, again through the vehicle of the sacralised heart. Jane explained to Agnes that Pluck – one of the nine spirits that plagued the girls – 'holdeth her hart & her hand . . . and will not suffer the bloud to come'. Interacting with the sacred without the right emotional praxis was additional evidence for a contemptible disposition. This cardiac misorientation had been portended when Robert Throckmorton 'laboured to teach Agnes Samuell a grace of two or three lines, but he could

[119] Anon. [I. D.], *The most wonderfull and true storie, of a certaine VVitch named Alse Gooderige of Stapen hill* (London: Printed by John Oxenbridge, 1597), sig. B1v.
[120] *The Book of Common Prayer* (London: Dept. of Christopher Barker, 1596) sigs O8r–v. If we ascribe to Alice a more provocative wit it is possible to infer that she was snidely referring to the receiving of damnation at communion if one had trespassed against their neighbours and that she was referring their having prejudged her guilty of that.
[121] *A certaine VVitch named Alse*, sig. D2v.

by no meanes get her to learne it by heart'. The importance of this phrasing was multifarious, going beyond just its vernacular or idiomatic usage to describe memorisation, which became apparent only once the imitable piety of the children revealed that it was fundamentally Agnes' heart preventing her from connecting with God.[122] These episodes of scratching revealed more than just the emotions of the witches being scratched, they were also the devices through which the emotionality of participants was textually constructed.

Emotional Exteriorisation

The stylisation of the Throckmorton's emotionality in the text was reliant upon more than just comparisons to the accused witches, it was also generated by projecting their emotions onto those witches' familiars: the cast of spirits that populated the bewitchment narrative.[123] In Chapter 3 I noted that Charlotte-Rose Millar's study of the relationship between emotions and witchcraft only included material from *Warboys* in an illustrative capacity, doing so predominantly to support broader statements about pamphlets as a genre or as additional ornamentation to deeper analyses of her core texts.[124] However, because Millar fixated so heavily upon witches themselves, she overlooked that *Warboys* featured fascinating and detailed examples of the exact intersection between witchcraft and feeling that she had proposed: familiars as extensions of participants' emotionality.[125] Intriguingly, this remarkable pamphlet represented an inversion of Millar's formulation, one which I believe is crucial to enriching our understanding of this aspect of historical witchcraft. The twist in *Warboys* was that the emotions projected through the familiars belonged not to the witches, but to the bewitched. And witch-scratching was one of the most post potent behavioural spaces for this phenomenon to emerge.

The first incident of scratching in the narrative occurred between Jane Throckmorton and Alice Samuel. Jane was considered to have been in an 'extraordinarie passion' wherein she 'scratched [Alice], with such vehemencie that her nailes brake into Spylles with the force and earnest desire that she had to reuenge'.[126] At the time the children's aggressive behaviour

[122] *Warboys*, sigs O2r, L1v.
[123] An early version of this section featured in the CHASE *Brief Encounters* Journal: Oscar Joyce, 'Feeling with Demons: Emotional Displacement and Surrogate Relationships in *The Witches of Warboys*' *Brief Encounters* 6:1 (Apr., 2022), pp. 1–12.
[124] Charlotte-Rose Millar, *Witchcraft, the Devil, and Emotions in Early Modern England* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), for the former see: p. 16 and n. 110; for the latter see p. 134.
[125] Ibid., pp. 116–140, see also 'The Familiar as Emotional Conduit', pp. 101–108.
[126] *Warboys*, sig. B2v.

was simply integrated into the inventory of strange symptoms that constituted their fits. By the time Agnes Samuels was subjected to an ordeal of multiple violent scratchings, the aetiology of the behaviour had been progressively clarified to those present through the reporting of dialogue between the children and the spirits that tormented them. The second oldest daughter, Mary, 'was something euill at ease all the morning' and when presented with Agnes the girl spoke to her so harshly that even Agnes herself 'seemed to stand amazed' at such an uncharacteristic outburst. When Agnes was bid to help carry the girl Mary viciously attacked her 'so eagerly and so fiercely, as that it was a wonder to all that saw it'. Agnes passively allowed herself to be scratched 'and cried very pittifully' but Mary was both unmoved and unrelenting, saying that 'the spirit sayd that [she] should not heare [Agnes] because [she] should not pittie [her]'; readers were assured that this was a stark departure from the usually 'mild disposition of the child'. Mary herself, that is once she had returned to her established demeanour, was remorseful for her outburst and 'seemed woonderfull sorie for that she had done', blaming it on having been controlled by the evil spirit. This exteriorisation of her anger and 'crueltie' was a comforting explanation for those who had been so disturbed by witnessing Mary's behaviour that 'it appeared to be altogether besides her nature' to them, and thus it was 'easily [concluded] that she was ouerruled in the action'. Less than a fortnight later, the middle sister Elizabeth spoke 'on the sudden in a maruellous anger to [Agnes]'. The hostile emotional outburst, sufficiently explosive 'that both her breath and strength fayled her', was once again considered alarming by those present 'for it was neuer heard by any body, that she gaue either her or her mother any euil word before'. She mimicked Mary's earlier behaviour, both during and after the attack, by attributing her actions and expressions to her limbs being manipulated by a devil. The volatile scratching episode concluded with customary lachrymosity, as 'the childe beganne to weepe, insomuch that many teares fell from her eyes, and cryed maruellous bitterly'. Likewise, after scratching Agnes twice, Joan 'fell into a merueilous weeping & sobbed so greatly, that she could not well vtter her words, saying that she would not haue scratched her, but that she was forced vnto it by the spirite'. This process of exteriorising their anger was given a poetic flourish in a passage describing how she approached Agnes and was so incensed by her presence that she wept, 'yet so mixed with anger towards the maide' that it was 'as if the euill spirit had bene whetting and kindling her furie against [her]'. It was Jane's inefficacious attack that drew water rather than blood from Agnes' hand, and Jane 'with teares trickling downe her

cheeks' justified her furious assault by promising Agnes that she 'would not scratch . . . but the spirit compelleth [her]'.[127]

The *Warboys* narrative suggests that Millar's theory – that witches' emotions were vectorised via familiars – should be expanded to include how spirits also vectorised the emotions of victims of, and believers in, witchcraft. The multiple scratchings of Agnes exemplified a contemporary process of classifying emotion according to an emotional habitus that contextualised concrete emotional behaviours through a lens of religious and moral judgement about a person's fundamental emotional disposition. The juxtaposition of Elizabeth (the daughter) and Agnes revealed some of the automatic assumptions and standards which constituted the machinery of this emotional habitus. Both Elizabeth and Agnes cried – a specific emotional behaviour – and both had the quality of their hearts – their general emotional character – described: any understanding of their words and actions was parsed through these two filters. The events and behaviours were almost certainly exaggerated given the obvious biases of the text, but witchcraft as a concept is nothing but idealisation and interpretation, from which distortions we can glean a sense of the structure through which these experiences were refracted. Agnes' did not physically retaliate against her attackers; rather, she 'cried out verie pitifully, desiring the Lord to thinke vppon her'. Agnes consistently reacted passively to being physically assaulted, as when Joan scratched her '[she] stoode stone still, and neuer once moued to goe from [her], yet cried very pittifully, desiring the Lord to be mercyfull vnto her'.[128] Whilst patience and prayer might otherwise be agreed upon as exemplary behavioural and emotional comportment, it was insufficient in this case because of the quality of her heart – as we have observed her moral, spiritual, and emotional core was considered to be 'hard' and 'wicked' – which allowed estimations of her character to retain a negative valence. The system of interpretation looped recursively to confirm and deepen certainties about her moral delinquency: an inescapable paradox that historian Thomas Dixon calls 'the witch's dilemma'.[129] Whereas Elizabeth – and by extension all of the bewitched children, who shared a homogenously positive characterisation – was absolved of responsibility for her aggression by exteriorising its cause to a foreign spirit. Behaviourally, her marvellously bitter crying was interpreted to be entirely different to Agnes' because her pious exhortations were directed at achieving redemption for another, which could be achieved if Agnes confessed her culpability and received the prayers Elizabeth

[127] *Warboys*, sigs L1v–L2v, L4r–v, N4v, O2v.
[128] *Warboys*, sig. N4r.
[129] Thomas Dixon, *Weeping Britannia: Portrait of a Nation in Tears* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 54.

offered 'with all [her] heart', in the spirit of forgiveness.[130] In this regard the children exemplified the qualities of 'a right Christian hearte, and bowels of mercie, which didde yerne, and as it were melt at the calamities of [their] brethren'.[131] The children had their behaviour and emotions presented quite formulaically during the instances of their scratching of Agnes. The eldest sister Joan, like Mary, also 'fell into bitter weeping . . . in so much that they that stoode by could not restraine from teares': those observing indicated their approval of the behaviour by mimicking a lamentation at the illness of her Aunt Pickering (wife to John Pickering of Ellington).[132] Even when the youngest sister Grace mutely and impotently raked at Agnes' skin but 'merueilous fiercely' she nevertheless 'grone[d] and weepe[t] greatly as if she had bene *doing of some thing against her will*'.[133] All present were discomfited that these outbursts represented the sisters slipping from 'godly zeale' into 'mad rage', and they were all too willing to transpose responsibility for their violence onto the shoulders of their ethereal tormentors, lest it begin to corrode the family's reputation.[134]

Unlike the many witchcraft pamphlets in which relationships between witches and their familiars were used to prove their guilt, interactions between the accused witches and their familiars in *Warboys* were barely mentioned. Instead, by far the most developed relationship between human and spirit presented was between Joan and the supposed instrument of her torment, the familiar Smack. Whilst their relationship contained hints of the romantic, its more overt themes were companionship and even collaboration. Information about their relationship was delivered in bizarrely ventriloquised dialogues that Joan acted out by speaking for herself and then repeating his responses aloud, which were then recorded by a third party. The authors relayed these dialogues cautiously, choosing to omit most, and labelling them 'foolish talke', as including these more fantastical elements risked readers disregarding the entirety of the text as ridiculous.[135] Despite the danger of being dismissed as absurd, the passages chronicling these interactions retained some strategic merit relating to the prosecution of the Samuels. They demonstrated that the children could accurately prophesise about their future episodes of illness beyond normal predictive capacity and thusly established that their testimony was imbued with supernatural veracity. This was

[130] *Warboys*, sigs L4v–M1r.
[131] Description taken from an exegetical section concerning the qualities of Cornelius the Centurion: Stockwood, *A sermon Preached*, p. 101.
[132] *Warboys*, sig. N1r.
[133] Ibid. sig. M4v, emphasis added.
[134] George Gifford, *A Discourse of the subtill Practises of Deuilles by VVitches and Sorcerers* (London: Printed by T. Orwin, 1587), sigs H4r–I1v.
[135] *Warboys*, sig. K3v.

important because it had been through one of these demoniac episodes that the involvement of the Samuels in the death of Lady Cromwell had been revealed. The Samuels being responsible for bewitching the children was insufficient to warrant a death sentence for a first offence under the 1563 Witchcraft Statute; their execution depended upon their responsibility for killing Cromwell. The fantastical conversations were evidently a contentious inclusion in the finished pamphlet, but they revealed more than just the role of the Samuels for Cromwell's death; they related a tale of a bewitched young woman forming an unlikely alliance with a demon to bring down their shared enemy.

The role of the spirits had begun to shift during Alice's imprisonment in the Throckmorton house; the godly adults present were disturbed by how the bewitched children were beginning to include the spirits in their games. As good Christians, they knew that the familiars should have been desperate to kill the children outright because the 'nature of the euill spyrite' was incontrovertibly malevolent. Therefore, they were made understandably uncomfortable when the spirits sent to torment the girls chose instead to 'sport and play' with them. This marked a shift in the allegiance of the familiars, with the children reported that the spirits 'waxed weary of theyr Dame Mo. Samuell'. Part of the phrase Agnes spoke to bring the sisters out of their fits was to 'charge thee thou diuell, as I loue thee, and haue authoritie ouer thee' to release them.[136] Her recital successfully relieved the sisters, but the relationship between the witch and her familiars, along with the 'loue' between them, had been fraying for some time. Demonic betrayal itself was consistent with all flavours of demonology available to inform contemporary interpretations of events in Warboys – learned and popular alike. The Devil and his demons were infamously capricious, giving the appearance of obedience to the witch only to ultimately deliver her soul to ruin.[137] Therefore, their betrayal of the Samuels was theoretically anodyne enough. Rather, it was the way in which they allied themselves to the sisters that carried with it the potentially dangerous implication that the sisters were colluding with spirits. Smack emerged as the most talkative and interactive of the familiars, and over time his characteristics were developed and morphed: to Joan especially, he became a caring ally, even a sort of "bad boy" suitor, facilitating her fantasies of recovery and revenge. After Mary revealed that Smack had heralded her own recovery in one of their conversations he became almost a beacon of hope

[136] *Warboys*, sigs F3r, K1v.
[137] Gifford, *A Discourse*, fols G1r–H4r.

for the sisters, who enviously 'wished that Smacke would come to them, and tell them the same'.[138]

It seems more than coincidental that the surrogate romance between Joan and Smack peaked around Valentine's Day 1593. In a piece of gallant pageantry, he insisted that he would 'win her fauour, making very faire promises to her that he would do anything for her, if she would loue him'. There were also hints of overfamiliarity surrounding the circumstances in which the imp visited her on the morning of March 2, as she was in her bed. When the condition of Joan's stricken legs improved, he did not express the dismay one might expect from a demon, but genuine joy at her recovery; even coyly reassured Joan that although he served Agnes Samuel, he did not love her.[139] His sweet nothings evoked Isabella Whitney's advice to the young women of mid-sixteenth-century England 'to beware of mennes flattery, . . . of fayre and painted talke [and] flattering tonges'.[140] Smack's tongue certainly talked the talk, and Joan "wrote" him to walk the walk. Several times she was visited by demons he had fought and injured on her behalf, conjuring the image of a gentleman chivalrously duelling with any who would mistreat his *inamorata*. And he was a prolific combatant – breaking Pluck's head, Catch's leg, and Blue's arm – but 'all the thanke' he received for these pugnacious labours was Joan wishing that all of the spirits would be hanged, him included.[141] Although Joan rebuffed him – itself an outward demonstration of propriety – she ensured those listening knew that it was nevertheless an impressive feat for him to have bested such 'very great' opponents.

On 10 February the familiars felt restless and rebellious; the authority Agnes had over them was fracturing. Blue revealed to Joan that Agnes had secretly 'intreated him not to let [Joan] haue any such extreme fits . . . But he answered that he would torment me in that sort, and not giue ouer vntil he had brought his dame . . . vnto her end'. Joan mocked Agnes' waning control of her imps, threatening they would soon 'be no longer at [her] commandment'.[142] When Smack visited Joan a few days later, she uttered a tantalisingly underdeveloped line in response to his arrival: 'I had rather that you would to keepe you away, and *come when I send for you*'.[143] There is a sense that she was toying with the much more darkly portentous

[138] *Warboys*, sigs L2r–v.
[139] *Warboys*, sigs K3v, K4v.
[140] Isabella Whitney, *The Copy of a letter, lately written in meeter, by a yonge Gentilwoman* (London: Printed by Richarde Jhones, 1567), fol. A6r.
[141] *Warboys*, sigs K2r–K3v.
[142] Ibid., sig. I4v; Gibson attributes the target of this taunt as Alice, but it is from an encounter between Joan and Agnes on 10 February: Marion Gibson, *Reading Witchcraft*, p. 106
[143] *Warboys*, sig. K3r, emphasis added.

act of usurping Agnes' power to summon a familiar to her. Bewitched persons were guaranteed practically boundless amounts of attention, but it was attention of an abnormal kind. The sheer weirdness of bewitchment provided an abundance of gawking fascination and pity but scant amounts of camaraderie with a peer-group. By 9 February Joan's social isolation was such that it had already become her 'common custom' to descend into talking 'very familiarly' with Smack each evening. A little of her loneliness spilt sadly into one interlocution wherein he recommended she stay with friends to avoid an especially terrible week of fits, and she responded that she had 'no friends house to go vnto'.[144] She was fifteen when she and her sisters were first troubled in 1589, and so when this conversation took place in early 1593, she was around the age of eighteen. Her illness had dominated her life, and she had been shipped to-and-fro to reside with various family members and friends. Immobilised by both her illness and her entanglement in the narrative threads that she and her sisters had spent years spinning, and which by 1593 were tightening around her, it isn't difficult to see the appeal to Joan of the ability to summon a friend to her side at will. In the words of Lyndal Roper: 'coming to understand oneself can involve learning to recognise one's feelings in terms of a theory, psychoanalytic or diabolic'.[145] Joan came to understand, and style, her beliefs and behaviours about the course of her illness and isolation through an ongoing deployment of concepts in popular demonological theory.

In the next chapter I consider the case of the bewitchment of Edward Fairfax's daughters and the piece of writing their father produced in defence of experience his household endured. Although it shared many features with *Warboys*, Fairfax's *Daemonologia* could not emulate the former's indulgences of promoting the family's pious emotionality. In *Warboys* this emotionality was able to be proven through a godly style of belief in witchcraft, one that drew heavily upon the cultural vocabulary of weeping and Christian hearts, and which was ultimately justified through the conviction of the accused witches. Fairfax's narrative reflected the growth of judicial scepticism towards witchcraft, meaning that there was no judicial validation for his narrative to lean upon – quite the opposite in fact – and I will elucidate how this forced him to style his presentation of believing in *Daemonologia* accordingly.

[144] *Warboys*, sigs I3v, L3r.
[145] Lyndal Roper, *Oedipus and the Devil: Witchcraft, sexuality, and religion in early modern Europe* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 207.

Chapter 6: Edward Fairfax's *Daemonologia*

Edward Fairfax (d. 1635) came from a highly influential northern family and was related to two famous figures: being half-brother to Thomas Fairfax, First Lord Fairfax of Cameron; and great-uncle to Lord Fairfax's grandson of the same name, the famed Parliamentary commander and general, Thomas Fairfax. As a poet and translator in his own right, Edward's work was held in high esteem. His most significant literary contribution being his translation of Torquato Tasso's *La Gerusalemme liberate* – a fictionalised account of the first crusade – which work was praised for its eloquence by both John Dryden and David Hume.[1] His translation was supposedly also held in high esteem by the royal family. In 1624 the King's printer, John Bill, produced a run of *Jerusalem Delivered* at 'the command of his Maiestie' and dedicated to the heir apparent Charles.[2] Edward, his wife Dorothy, and their family resided in Newhall in the parish of Fewston in Yorkshire. After their infant daughter Anne died in the autumn of 1621 two of their daughters – Hellen and Elizabeth – suffered from strange ailments for around eighteen months, claiming to have been bewitched by a cabal of seven local witches, five of whom were neighbouring women: Margaret Waite and her daughter Peg Waite; Jennet Dibble, her daughter Margaret Thorpe; and Elizabeth Fletcher, daughter of the notorious witch Grace Foster.[3] After none of the accused witches were convicted at trial, the bewitchment petered out and at some point Edward compiled his notes about the experience into a manuscript: *Daemonologia*. In this chapter I explore the factors that contributed to how the style of believing in witchcraft was presented in the text, such as how failure to secure convictions of the witches at the assizes led to the adoption of a highly apologetic tone; how Edward Fairfax used his education and intelligence to manage, manipulate, and defend his daughters' storytelling about their bewitchment; and how he constructed a dialectic between his preferred style of belief and that of his detractors.

Edward characterised Hellen and Elizabeth as having had radically different temperaments. Hellen was sanguine, 'slow of speech, patient of reproof, [and] of behaviour without offence', giving an overall impression of someone placid, agreeable, and indisposed to

[1] William Grainge (ed.), *Daemonologia: A Discourse on Witchcraft* (Harrogate: R. Ackrill, 1882), pp. 13–19 [hereafter *Daemonologia*].
[2] Torquato Tasso, *Godfrey of Bovlogne: or The Recouerie of Iervsalem*, trans. Edward Fairfax (London; Printed by John Bill, 1624), fol. 2r.
[3] The sixth witch was Elizabeth Dickenson – who was more involved in the related bewitchment of Maud Jeffray – and the seventh was a mysterious figure who was never successfully identified.

fantasising. She was 'rather hard to learn things fit', which admission, rhetorically, avoided accusations that Edward was over-idealising her character.[4] Elizabeth was significantly younger than her sister – 'scarce seven years' – and was a precocious little girl 'of a pleasant aspect, quick wit, active spirit, able to receive any instruction, and willing to undergo pains'. She was the picture of an energetic and capable child, ready to receive instruction from her parents to be 'a faithful Christian and obedient subject'. The theme of parental instruction was mirrored in Fairfax's descriptions of the witches Peg Waite 'agreeing with her mother in name and conditions', and Margaret Thorpe being 'an obedient child and docile scholar' of her mother Jennet Dibble. Henry Fairfax, Edward's youngest son – who was very briefly afflicted on the night of Shrove Tuesday 1622 – was also described as suitably pious and was often found reading his Bible.[5] However, his illness lasted only a few days before he made a full recovery, and never relapsed. Hellen, and later Elizabeth, remained the core Fairfax demoniacs of the story.

Different Outcomes: Different Styles

Hellen's ailments first manifested when she fell into a trance on Sunday 28 October 1621. She was insensible and uncommunicative, laying 'several hours for dead', after which her trances began to resemble those of the Throckmortons, becoming largely insensible to her family and narrating aloud her visions and experiences. There were several notable similarities between the Fairfax bewitchment narrative and that of the Throckmortons in *Warboys*. Both involved the years-long supernatural affliction of multiple daughters from well-off families, whose households had only relatively recently moved to live in the specific town where events took place, and who both held considerable social and political influence in their local areas. The most obvious disparity was in their consequences: Fairfax's case did not result in a conviction, which gave his narrative a higher justificatory imperative above even that present in *Warboys* – as discussed in the previous chapter. This difference in outcome was reflected in a significant divergence in the core motivation behind the production of each text. The judicial response to the cases proved to be fundamental in determining what styles of belief were presented. Although the incidents took place roughly three decades apart, in distant counties, and under different monarchic dynasties the Fairfax case sufficiently resembled *Warboys* enough to consider it as a usefully comparable version

[4] *Daemonologia*, p. 33.
[5] Ibid., pp. 32, 92–3, 79.

of a broadly similar episode of bewitchment in which circumstances did not align to produce convictions. Although *Warboys* did contain justificatory elements, the veracity of the Throckmorton's bewitchment – and the conviction of the Samuels – could rest upon its validation by the legal system. Thusly, narrative and textual space were available to explore the moral condition of the family more thoroughly: allowing content that was more promotional than defensive. In contrast, the veracity of the Fairfax bewitchment was repeatedly challenged and rebuffed in court – especially with regard to its ambiguous entwinement with another bewitchment, that of Maud Jeffray, which was discovered to be fraudulent – and so Edward's writing was inherently orientated towards defensively justifying his reasoning in believing in the supernaturality of the episode. In other words, there was even more pressure on Fairfax to effectively style belief than there had been on the Throckmortons.

Another result of the difference in outcome was that emotions figured less prominently in Fairfax's manuscript than the Throckmorton's pamphlet: although they were not entirely absent. In one instance, wherein Peg Waite appeared to his bewitched daughter Hellen during a trance on 13 February 1622, Fairfax provided a strange piece of doxastic logic regarding emotion. Hellen recognised and identified her immediately 'at which the woman blushed'. Edward considered 'the woman's blushing [to be] a strong testimony of her real presence', recalling that 'no authority doth remember such a show of alteration and sudden passion in any spirit'. Edward repeated his conviction that emotions indicated real presence when his children claimed that he could still hit and hurt the witch that appeared only to them, which he did. This proved 'the woman's agony, her tears and trouble for her beating, were so many arguments of a solid body', again remarking that he had not 'read any precedents of such passions showed by the Devil at any time'. Crying was once again found to be a significant emotional expression – albeit serving a different function than it had in *Warboys* – as on the 22 May 1622 Jennet Dibb appeared to Hellen in the form of a black cat 'and wept so sore sore that the tears ran down', which revealed to Hellen that it was Dibb in disguise as 'the cat cannot weep' and she could feel the cat, meaning that it was not a spirit.[6] Even the emotions of apparitions could be woven into how Fairfax styled the processes of believing practised by his family. Emotions in *Daemonologia* were mostly configured and utilised according to an alternative matrix than they had been in *Warboys*, as a prism through which processes of believing could be justified. Consequently, Edward followed prevailing

[6] *Daemonologia*, pp. 75, 90, 86, 114.

wisdom that reason was best tempered by dispassionate logic, and so these aspects were more pronounced. As he framed it, emotion was central to his critics' arguments that his daughters had fabricated the bewitchment 'to be more cherished'.[7] Anne DeWindt's emphasis on the concept of shame in the Warboys case – specifically, how the threat of either the Samuel or Throckmorton family would be socially burdened by the shame of the witchcraft accusation motivated their actions – was actually even more applicable to *Daemonologia*. Fairfax's story was much more explicitly invested in shame as a concept.[8] The social stakes of the bewitchment narrative played a larger role as antagonism from their neighbours was both more pronounced and judicially efficacious. Edward devoted more textual space to proving how he and his household confirmed the reality of the bewitchment, rather than accentuating the stylised morality of their response. *Warboys* and *Daemonologia* still shared many features. *Daemonologia* contained plenty of references to Hellen's pious speeches and diligent reading of the Bible, akin to representations of the Throckmorton's godliness, and moments of familial tenderness occasionally emerged through their diligently kept notes.[9] When Hellen thought her sister Elizabeth had been carried away by the witches she 'fell into an extreme weeping' and when Elizabeth was laid back down beside her she 'turned her suddenly and embraced the child with great joy'. That evening, Hellen temporarily could not recognise Elizabeth, but when 'she did know her again, [she] embraced her with as much affection as before'. On 8 June 1622, which was Whitsun Eve, Hellen bundled her five-year-old sister Mary into her arms to prevent Margaret Thorpe from carrying them away. Within a fortnight, Elizabeth had pain in her feet 'so that she wept sore; but her sister took her upon her knee, and did embrace and kiss her, exhorting and encouraging her to defy the black cat which they saw then'. And together they read from Psalms 'till light failed'.[10] Some of Hellen's behaviour also mirrored the godly exhortations of the Throckmorton sisters. When Margaret Thorpe showed her contract with the Devil to Hellen, the latter 'advised her to throw it in the fire and to forsake her master', advising her that 'He hath nothing to give but fire'. The nearest alignment in behaviour between the bewitched Throckmortons and Fairfaxes occurred within a passage chronicling a dramatic escalation in the severity of Hellen and Elizabeth's illness in the first week of February 1622.

[7] *Daemonologia*, p. 124.
[8] Anne Reiber DeWindt, 'Witchcraft and Conflicting Visions of the Ideal Village Community', *Journal of British Studies* 34:4 (Oct., 1995), pp. 427–63.
[9] Andrew Cambers has examined how the relationship between books and witchcraft in *Daemonologia* represented 'a paradigmatic shift' from the witch as user of books to books being used against the witch: Andrew Cambers, *Print, Manuscript, and Godly Cultures in the North of England, c. 1600–1650* (Unpublished Thesis, University of York, 2003), p. 193.
[10] *Daemonologia*, pp. 66, 117.

Hellen, convinced of her imminent death, prepared herself for the end by kissing her family goodbye and spoke piously to a vision of Margaret Thorpe in the same terms that had been crucial to the style of belief in *Warboys*; she 'freely' forgave Thorpe and 'exhorted them to repentance'.[11] Her steadfast pseudo-martyrdom was encapsulated in her exclamation that her tormentor-spirit 'cannot hinder my father, for you dare not appear to him, but only to me: which I thank God for, and take patiently, for you can do no more than please God to suffer you'.[12] Hellen had already proved her spiritual resilience on 14 November 1621 when a handsome phantasm had attempted to seduce her. Themes of diabolism and socio-sexual anxiety played out here similarly to Lyndal Roper's analysis of the testimony of Stoffel Jantz in mid-seventeenth century Germany, as well as in the relationship between Joan Throckmorton and the familiar Smacke in *Warboys*.[13] A dashing young prince bedecked in fashionable garb – 'the devil . . . but a shadow' – proposed to Hellen, despite it requiring him to abandon his existing phantasmagorical wife.[14] Hellen rejected his proposal and then withstood his exhortations that she should kill herself, thereby thoroughly exteriorising both her lascivious and self-destructive impulses.[15]

Members of the extended Throckmorton family experimented on the demoniacs extensively to ensure that their beliefs and conclusions could be credibly styled as foundationally rational and rigorous. And just like Gilbert Pickering and Robert Throckmorton before him, Edward recorded the several ways in which he empirically tested the nature of this daughters' bewitchment through experimentation.[16] Elizabeth was sent to stay elsewhere for several days 'to satisfy the request of some that desired to have trial if the change of place might avail'. When praying, the Fairfaxes attended to whether the afflicting spirits reacted more to particular lines; when they 'perceived by [Hellen's] words and gestures' that 'at those words the cat seemed enraged' they went on to 'iterate the trial six or seven times'. When Peg Waite, was physically brought to the sisters, they were temporarily insensible to all but her, which occasioned Edward to test from which places in the house his children could hear

[11] *Daemonologia*, pp. 87, 67.
[12] Ibid., p. 57.
[13] Lyndal Roper, 'Beyond Discourse Theory', *Women's History Review* 19:2 (2010), pp. 307–319.
[14] *Daemonologia*, pp. 38–39.
[15] Suicidality symptomatically connected Hellen's bewitchment to that experienced by the wife of one Henry Robinson. Like Hellen, she was 'a very good and honest woman' but bewitched so that she 'often moved to destroy herself' or even harm 'her child, or some of the family': *Daemonologia*, pp. 40, 93.
[16] Anon., *The most strange and admirable discouerie of the three Witches of Warboys* (Printed for Thomas Man and Iohn Winnington: London, 1593), sigs B4v–D5v.

Peg.[17] He also tactically allowed Robert Pannell – who he admitted to knowing was of good social standing and regularly sat on juries at the assizes – along with other curious strangers to perform 'many experiments to satisfy themselves'. Because the Fairfax's bewitchment had not been legitimised by the legal system it was far more incumbent upon Edward to promote the rationality of the process by which they had come to believe that witchcraft was afoot.

Daemonologia was Edward's collated response to the case being dismissed twice at the assizes, and attendant attacks on his believing practices. Most of the text was a straightforward, chronological recounting of events with occasional digressions into defensive argumentation and the conceptual underpinnings of Fairfax's positions. His process in constructing the text – diligently collecting data, performing experiments to accurately diagnose ailments, and progressing logically to a conclusion of bewitchment – was itself a reinforcement of Edward's rebuttal to his critics, as the manuscript was a compilation of notes that were scrupulously recorded during the course of the bewitchment. One of Elizabeth's trance-speeches revealed that these records were being collected and stored: held in a 'trunk in which they lay their fond papers (meaning the notes of these accidents about the witches)'. Both these notes and some commentary appear to have been actively written as events unfolded. For instance, Edward wrote bitterly about the outcome of the August 1622 assizes and informed his readers that Maud Jeffray was at death's door, explicitly dateingis comment to 28 August 1622. He was so certain of Maud's imminent death, that he used it as an opportunity to shoot a barbed comment at the ridiculous denialism of his detractors, snidely questioning whether they would insist that 'perhaps she can counterfeit dying'. Awkwardly for Edward, Maud did not die, and she was mentioned again by Elizabeth in October and December of that same year. It was also evident that Edward actively transcribed the speech of his children during the trances themselves; in one instance the spectre of Margaret Waite explained to Hellen that she wanted to leave because 'thy father will write what I say'.[18] Despite the ultimately unrefined status of the manuscript, Fairfax reviewed the records his family had produced, ordered them chronologically, and collated evidence of supernatural occurrences to construct his rebuttal to the family's doubters. This was evident towards the end of the document as Edward had combed over his previous notes to find scenarios featuring particular supernatural qualities; such as when his daughters' 'speeches in trance [were] far above their capacities'; 'actions, in which the agents were more than natural'; and information was provided 'which came to the intellect

[17] *Daemonologia*, pp. 63, 65, 80.
[18] Ibid., pp. 144, 124, 135, 149, 138.

not *per sensus*'. Edward provided the dates of occasions when the children had been able to distinguish between witches and their familiars by touching them, as well as when they were most violently afflicted, all to prove all these happenings 'cannot be counterfeited'. The structure of this section indicated an abandoned intent to apply the same method to its remaining supernatural themes. This passage was likely intended to provide a provisional conclusion to the narrative, as the entire August assize section of the text was somewhat disjointed. Information about the assizes was given on page 123 but was interrupted by the aforementioned defensive argumentation, then the next paragraph again began with Edward informing readers that in August he went to 'York to the assizes'. A similar inconsistency arose from a note made about 9 December 1622 wherein Edward recorded that 'since that time [Elizabeth] hath been perfectly well', despite the text going on to catalogue the handful of times Elizabeth was further troubled the following year. Taken together, these inconsistencies indicate that Edward was experimenting with the organisation of the piece and reflected its overall unfinished state.

Mediation and Manipulation of the Bewitchment Narrative

One of the principal functions of the manuscript was as an opportunity for Edward to intellectualise, sanitise, and mediate the story that his children told about their bewitchment. This task was not only achieved through the production of the text, but Edward – alongside others in his household – also actively shaped how the bewitchment progressed in real time. A tension persisted throughout the narrative regarding the degree to which adults influenced the bewitchment experiences of children and adolescents. This influenced the style of belief presented in *Daemonologia* more so than *Warboys* due to a combination of the particulars of the Fairfax case, failures at trial, as well as developments in the broader history of witchcraft prosecution in England over the course of the preceding quarter-century.

Data on the Home Circuit Assizes show that indictments for witchcraft declined significantly from 1590 to 1640. By 1619 the number of indictments was only marginally higher than that of the 1560s, having fallen to around a quarter of the peak decade 1580–89, with the two decades after 1620 seeing rates drop even further.[19] Witchcraft was nevertheless still

[19] James Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness: Witchcraft in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Philadelphia Press, 1996), p. 109.

considered to be enough of an exceptional crime that witches were included amongst those offenders who were not eligible to have their sentence reprieved in exchange for penal transportation, alongside wilful murders, rapists, and burglars.[20] Two decades into the reign of James I, the climate around witch prosecutions under his rule was utterly unlike that which contemporaries might have reasonably assumed it would look like when the King of Scotland descended to his new English throne. That James had personally overseen two wide-scale witch hunts in 1590 and 1597; published a lengthy academic treatise about witchcraft and demonology; and – only a year after being crowned – passing the 1604 Witchcraft Act, which codified the demonological milieu around witchcraft into a legal device that could deliver even harsher sentences to convicted witches.[21] After acquiring the English crown, however, James' relationship with the concept of witchcraft, as well as the procedure of witch trials themselves, can be best described as deeply ambivalent. When confronted at Oxford with a supposed bewitchment and possession in 1605, James – the same man who had introduced his disquisition as an attempt 'to resolue the doubting harts of many . . . against the damnable opinion' of Reginald Scot – chose to give care of the case to Richard Bancroft: knowing that Bancroft would then pass it on to his own chaplain, the noted sceptic Samuel Harsnett.[22] Harsnett had cemented his sceptical credentials through his excoriation in print of the Puritan exorcist John Darrell in 1599, and recusant Catholics in 1603.[23] And James himself also personally engaged in the discovery of counterfeit bewitchments in England, meaning that presiding over a witch trial in the early seventeenth century had become a decidedly risky scenario for magistrates. In 1616 James personally intervened in a possession case in Leicester and uncovered the bewitchment was fraudulent, utterly humiliating the presiding judges, who had accepted the veracity of the possessed boy's testimony. John Chamberlain, in one of his regular correspondences with his friend and protégé Dudley Carleton – the newly appointed ambassador to the Dutch Republic – reported that 'Justice [Humphrey] Winch likewise [was in disfavour] and Sergeant [Ranulph] Crew are somwhat

[20] *Acts of the Privy Council of England: Colonial Series*, vol. I 1613–1680 (Hereford: Anthony Brothers Ltd, 1908), p. 11.
[21] James VI & I, *Daemonologie* (Edinburgh: Printed by Robert Waldegrave, 1597), p. 81; Malcolm Gaskill, 'Witchcraft, Emotion, and Imagination in the English Civil War', in John Newton and Jo Bath (eds), *Witchcraft and the Act of 1604* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), pp. 161–178, quoted p. 162; for an overview of the Act see: John Newton, 'Introduction: Witchcraft, Witch Codes, Witch Act', in Newton and Bath (eds), *Witchcraft and the Act of 1604*, pp. 1–27.
[22] James, *Daemonologie*, A2v; James Sharpe, *The Bewitching of Anne Gunter* (London: Profile Books, 1999), p. 179
[23] Samuel Harsnett, *A discovery of the fravdvlent practises of Iohn Darrel* (London: Printed by John Wolfe, 1599); Samuel Harsnett, *A Declaration of egregious Popish Impostures* (London: Printed by James Roberts, 1603).

discountenanced for hanging certain witches in theyre circuit at Lecester'.[24] The debacle prompted Ben Jonson to write a play in which he ridiculed the comical credulity of officials confronted with a demoniac.[25] It has been long speculated that the monarch took an increasingly dim view of witchcraft as his reign progressed and the evidence of diminished witchcraft prosecution in the latter Jacobean period would seem to reflect such a darkening in the monarch's attitude.[26] However, the king's personal position on witchcraft, even towards the end of his reign, had not shifted to dismissing the phenomenon entirely. On 26 February 1620 a schoolmaster called Mr Peacock was 'committed to the Tower and tortured, for practising sorcery upon the King'.[27] Peacock was strung up by his wrists, but 'though he were very impatient of the torture and swooned once or twise', John Chamberlain reported that he did not 'learne that they haue wrunge any great matter out of him'.[28] When it came to direct attacks against his person, James seemed perfectly willing to revisit the severity of his exploits in North Berwick and resurrect some of the paranoia exhibited by Elizabeth's Privy Council in 1578.[29] The clergyman and judicial writer Richard Bernard summed James' immediate posthumous legacy, in terms of witchcraft, as characterised 'by his wisedome, learning, and experience [to] discouer diuers counterfeits, his reign marked by a deepening ambivalence within the apparatus of the state about the issue.[30]

But, as Malcolm Gaskill notes, the lull in trials partially attributed to James' juridical scepticism did not necessarily mean that 'the population at large had forgotten about witchcraft; on the contrary, anxiety may have been increasing precisely because the law no longer seemed to offer protection'. And despite the king's 'exposures of fraudulence, most witchcraft accusations were not cynical plots cooked up to further private vendettas, but

[24] Norman Egbert McClure (ed.), *The Letters of John Chamberlain*, 2 vols (Philadelphia; The American Philosophical Society, 1939), p. 26; *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic. Edward VI, Mary, Elizabeth, and James I*, vol. 9 (London: HMSO, 1858), p. 398 uses the term 'disgrace'.
[25] G. L. Kitteridge, 'King James I and "The Devil Is an Ass"', *Modern Philology*, 9:2 (Oct., 1911), pp. 195–209; The play was performed in 1616 but was only printed in 1631 as part of a bundle; the possession occurred in Act V Scene VIII: Ben Jonson, *The Diuell Is An Asse* (London; Printed by I.B., 1631), pp. 166–170; Broader context to the play is given in: Robert C. Evans, 'Contemporary Contexts of Jonson's "The Devil Is an Ass"', *Comparative Drama*, 26:2 (1992), pp. 140–176.
[26] Wallace Notestein, *A history of witchcraft in England from 1558–1718* (London: Oxford University Press, 1911), pp. 137–145. For the breakdown of a possession-bewitchment case late in James' reign see: Richard Raiswell, 'Faking It: A Case of Counterfeit Possession in the Reign of James I', *Renaissance and Reformation*, 23:3 (1999), pp. 29–48.
[27] *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, of the Reign of James I. 1619–1623* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1858), p. 124.
[28] TNA, 'Chamberlain to Carleton.', SP 14/112 f.188.
[29] James Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness: Witchcraft in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), pp. 47–50.
[30] Richard Bernard, *A gvide to grand-iury men* (London: Printed by Felix Kingston, 1627), p. 34.

resulted from a sincere perception of danger'.[31] This did not mean that the people of early seventeenth-century England were so naïve as to assume that the realms of supernatural intervention were free from grifters, intent on exploiting sympathies for monetary gain. Thomas Paman of Newmarket wrote a public apology in 1629 for feigning his bewitchment in an attempt to have his father provide him 'better maintenance or portion for his marriage'.[32] And in 1622 Thomas Saunders and Katherine Malpas were prosecuted for having faked their daughter's possession, receiving 'much money . . . by such persons as should come to her, in pity & commiseration of so strange a sight'.[33] Even so, parents were not always responsible for coaching their children to fake symptoms of possession. In 1620, shortly before the events of *Daemonologia*, in the village of Bilston – then situated in the county of Staffordshire – William Perry was found to have feigned bewitchment at the hands of Joan Cocke. She was tried on the tenth of August 1620 and the judges – embodying the juridical scepticism applied to witchcraft cases in the latter Jacobean period – dismissed 'the idlenesse of such fantasticall delusions' and freed Cocke.[34] *The Boy of Bilson*, a polemical pamphlet, was subsequently written, which located Perry's imposture amongst feigned exorcisms by recusant Catholics. Thomas Morton – Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, and himself an author of anti-papal treatises – placed Perry under observation, which ultimately led to the revelation that Perry had falsified his possession, duping multiple Roman priests into attempting to use his exorcism propagandistically.[35] The boy's father Thomas Perry, however, was not implicated, and rather praised as 'an honest Husbandman, of sufficient ability, innocent and ignorant of any practice' who earnestly sought out help for his son 'in diuers places': likewise his mother who 'did rather desire to haue some learned scholer or Diuine that was no Papist'.[36] The account given by the Catholic priests themselves admonished the parents for their reluctance to pledge their conversion to Catholicism but still described the parents as 'mooued with tender compassion'. Despite the willingness of the Perrys to resort to various forms of illicit relief for their son, they were not condemned by any of the writers whose works comprised the *Boy of Bilson* pamphlet. They were deeply misguided but also clearly appreciably desperate to alleviate their son's suffering, and it

[31] Malcolm Gaskill, *Witchfinders: A Seventeenth-Century English Tragedy* (London: John Murray, 2005), quoted p. 32.
[32] TNA, SP 16/161 f. 89.
[33] TNA, STAC 8/32/13.
[34] Philip C. Almond, *Demonic Possession and Exorcism in Early Modern England: Contemporary Texts and their Cultural Contexts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), esp. ch. 7.
[35] Brian Quintrell, 'Morton, Thomas (bap. 1564, d. 1659), bishop of Durham.' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2003).
[36] Richard Baddeley, *The Boy of Bilson* (London: Printed by F. K., 1622), pp. 58, 63.

cannot but have helped that they ultimately cooperated fully with the demands of the judicial and spiritual authorities, allowing their son to be lengthily examined and brought back before the assizes in July 1621. At which showing he was to crave forgiveness for his scandalous behaviour and beg the mercy of Joan Cocke, the purpose of which – beyond the personal and spiritual interests of William Perry – was to have a restorative effect on public perception of, and confidence in, the capacity of the Church to discover falsity and deliver justice where credulous recusancy had entirely failed. As seen in the discussion of Henry Goodcole in Chapter 5, themes of correction and repentance were readily amplified in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century literature. Thomas Morton invoked the grievousness of William Perry's sin so potently that the latter 'melted into Tears'. His petrified spiritual state was mirrored in his somatic and emotional insensitivity, with proper religiosity as the only corrective: 'the Deuil so hardned him in, that all the Torments and Pains inflicted by Man could not produce a Tear, till God that melted the Rock had first touched the Heart'. A version of the story released in 1698 completed this spiritual transformation by inventing an historical arc for Perry: Morton arranged for his apprenticeship and he eventually 'proved a good Man'.[37]

Both Edward and Dorothy were directly involved in influencing how their daughters experienced and interpreted their bewitchment. On the evening of 10 December 1621, Hellen had begun sewing her apron and 'seemed to be much pleased with her work', which Edward noted was 'the first time that ever she took a pleasure in anything said or showed to her in trance or vision'. He qualified that 'her mother picked out of her apron the branch she had sewed, lest she should take some delight in it afterwards, – which I well approved'. Enjoyment in a diabolically altered state was more potentially problematic for their story than mere agony. In response to Dorothy's redirection, Hellen seemed to waver in her commitment the bewitchment narrative. Initially, 'she was in so great agony and wept so extremely, that her words by reason of her sobs and tears could not be understood', and afterwards claimed complete amnesia, having 'forgot what she had seen in her trance, [and] all that had happened unto her before, denying that she had been in any such trances, or seen any such visions of spirit or witch, or ever ailed anything'. Absolute denial was the method Hellen would eventually use – implemented over a period of several months after the August 1622 assizes – to successfully extricate herself from the story of her bewitchment. In this first instance 'none could persuade her to the contrary', until an exasperated Edward

[37] Robert Howson, John Bonsey, and Nicholas Wade, *The Second Part of the Boy of Bilson* (London: Printed by E. Whitlock, 1698), pp. 7, 9.

brought her into the parlour alone. Hellen's condition had been a feature in the life of the Fairfax household for roughly six weeks at this point, and in recent weeks several notable members of the community had visited to assess the situation for themselves. It would have been devastatingly detrimental to the standing of the family for Hellen to renege on her bewitchment; significant social capital had been invested in attempting to convince respectable neighbours of the severity of the bewitchment. Edward supposed 'that [Hellen's] silence proceeded rather from fear than forgetfulness [and] encouraged her to defy the devil'. Hellen did not respond, and when he 'earnestly pressed her' she collapsed into another trance; whereupon Edward brought in company to collectively pray around her. It was this intervention that brought Hellen out of her fugue state, and with the restoration of her memory came the resumption of the bewitchment narrative.[38]

The family were faced with the unenviable task of sanitising the bewitchment story, having to intervene and moderate experiences as theologically fraught as the introduction of God directly into the story. On 13 January 1622 Hellen had described being visited by 'a man of incomparable beauty, with a beard' who emitted beams of light. There was already some active negotiation at this stage of proceedings, as although she initially identified him as God she subsequently declared him 'an angel come from God to comfort her'. Given their earlier interventions, Edward – or others present – likely insisted as Hellen spoke that it was not God himself and she responded somewhat to their mitigating suggestions. Despite this, 'all that night she was persuaded this was God, or some angel . . . and could not be removed from that opinion'. Much to Edward's relief, the 'next morning with some difficulty we persuaded her to the contrary, by such reasons and scriptures as our small knowledge could afford'. Only a few days later Hellen had incorporated this into the story of her trances, disavowing the deceptions of the 'glorious apparition' who had obeyed the narrative redirection and transformed into 'a most terrible shape', horned and threatening.[39] The family had moulded dangerous claims about divine visitation into entirely more intellectually and rhetorically palatable illusions conjured by the Devil and his instruments. But a similar controversy reared its head when Edward and Hellen attended the assizes in early April 1622. This time it was Elizabeth's turn to introduce grander cosmological implications to their bewitchment, claiming that one of the witches had come to her and related that the Devil had gone to request permission from God Himself to harm her brother Henry again. The prospect of an interventionist Satan who directly conspired against the elect and personally

[38] *Daemonologia*, pp. 52–4.
[39] Ibid., 62–4.

involving himself in their lives was far from an outlandish or uncommon idea in the genre of godly autobiography, wherein such pious neuroses were a staple. Over three hundred of the rustic physician Richard Napier's patients exhibited some form of spiritual anxiety. One of whom, Joan Ekins, was convinced she had personally given her soul away to Satan.[40] However, to implicate God directly as Elizabeth raised again the theological issues that Edward and Dorothy had tamped down in Hellen's encounter with the sacred in January. It spoke to an underlying tension, even something of a paradox, in the broad emotional style of the godly. Election made one special, but such a status could occasion pride and assurance – antithetical to their idealisation of humility – whilst the ultimate unknowability of one's election entailed an endless process of spiritual anxiety. Implying that God himself was intimately involved in one's familial affairs was both considerably harder sell to dubious members of one's community, and an intentionally shaky foundation for establishing a sense of emotional stability. Henry's continued good health nevertheless gave some credence to the notion of divine protection. Here Edward acted as a retroactively moderating force, rather than an active one: somewhat limply justifying it by citing instances of Satan asking leave of God to act in Scripture.[41] Both Hellen and Elizabeth's visions raised the thorny issue of magical transformation, but through the shrewd navigation of such treacherous waters there was an opportunity for Edward to flex his scholarly acumen, and in so doing imbue his believing with an impression of intellectual rigour. To this end he explored the scholarship around the metaphysical nature of Satanic illusion by citing numerous classical accounts, as well as modern reports. He employed the authority of St Augustine to concur that the Devil was not capable of producing real material metamorphosis, 'only change the appearance of things created by the true God so as to make them seem to be what they are not': arguing that any apparent 'metamorphosis is only an illusion by which he doth abuse both the spectators and the witch herself'.[42] Satanic deceptions were a standard explanation for all sorts of sensory curiosities. 'The diuell', as John Cotta put it, 'is a Iuggler'.[43] In 1592, the London preacher Henry Smith broadened the argument that the Devil could mislead the senses to appear as an angel of light as well as in other guises.[44] And in that same year, Lancelot Andrewes warned of the deceptive 'Angell of light . . . commeth here lyke a white

[40] MacDonald, *Mystical Bedlam*, pp. 118–120, 155.
[41] *Daemonologia*, pp. 94–8.
[42] Saint Augustine, *The City of God, Books XVII-XXII*, trans. Gerald G. Walsh and Daniel J. Honan (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2008), p. 237; *Daemonologia*, p. 98.
[43] John Cotta, *The Triall of Witch-craft, shewing the trve and right methode of the Discouery: with A Confutation of erroneous wayes* (London; Printed by George Purslowe, 1616), p. 33.
[44] Darren Oldridge, *The Supernatural in Tudor and Stuart England* (London: Routledge, 2016), p. 111.

diuell'.[45] Edward leveraged his knowledge of demonology to prove that the accused witches – not just their familiars in disguise – were directly contacting his daughters during their trances. Two women visited Newhall on 9 April, prompting Hellen to report that Margaret Thorpe had come to her and insisted that Hellen identify these two visiting women. Edward span this to reason that because Thorpe could not recognise these women herself 'it showeth that it was her person indeed which appeared unto the children, and therefore that her knowledge was not exceeding the capacity of any other women . . . for if she herself had been a spirit she had not needed another devil to give her intelligence'.[46] Edward's intellect and learning – upon which *Daemonologia* founded its style of believing – was at once one of the family's best defensive tools, as well as something that was itself under threat from their continued disappointments in the courts of law and public opinion.

The Style of Edward Fairfax's Belief

In the epistle to *Daemonologia*, Edward Fairfax constructed idealised versions of his, and his readers', styles of belief. Rhetorically, it was an exercise in championing moderation of judgement, wishing his audience to 'read this without vindicating passion, and in reading let thy discretion precede thy judgement'. This opening paragraph was an indirect call for them to adhere to Baconian inquisitiveness rather than assumption. Fairfax had recorded the information 'truly', so this evidence should be observed 'seriously' and 'with learning', or 'with reason and religion' to logically arrive at a conclusion solid enough 'to assure the wise physician that there is more than natural disease'.He purposefully singled out physicians here because, as a well-educated man, Edward was aware of the circulating medical explanations for bewitchment. Emphasising his initial interpretative circumspection, he caveated that during the early period of Hellen's illness 'she had perfect symptoms of the disease called "the mother"; and for a long time we attributed all she said or did to it'.[47] This was a reference to Edward Jorden's 1603 *A brief discourse of a disease called the Suffocation of the Mother*, which proposed that bewitchments and possessions were symptomatic of a "hysteric" condition.[48] Although Fairfax was no physician, it was necessary for him to engage

[45] Lancelot Andrewes, *The wonderfvll Combate (for Gods glorie and Mans saluation) between Christ and Satan* (London: Printed by John Charlwood, 1592), p. 54.
[46] *Daemonologia*, p. 104.
[47] Ibid., pp. 31, 37.
[48] Edward Jorden, *A Brief Discourse of a Disease Called the Suffocation of the Mother* (London; Printed by John Windet, 1603).

with medical theory in order to disprove its applicability to this particular case. He even co-opted medical vocabulary to subtly impress upon his readership that he was familiar with such discourse, describing the bewitched as 'patients'.[49] In the same vein, he described Hellen as 'of complexion sanguine [and] free from melancholy', explicitly demonstrating his awareness of humoral theory.[50] He deepened this impression of learned impartiality by acknowledging that sceptical members of his community had opined that his daughters' symptoms were explicable as 'natural infirmity'. They had lent him some books 'in physic' to convince him but, having diligently pored over them all, Edward could even more firmly pronounce that he remained unpersuaded: his newly gained medical education only confirming to him that aspects of their condition could only be supernatural.[51] Harkening back to my critique in Chapter 2 of "rhetorical scepticism" as an overly cynical formulation, Edward's discretion should not be dismissed as merely a gesture of doubt. For beliefs, and believing, to be widely credible they had to be presented in a style that communicated to audiences that an idea had had to pass over a reasonable threshold of incredulity before the supernatural was invoked. Witchcraft pamphlets commonly established that ailments were assumed to have been natural until conventional medical treatments had continually failed, and only then were suspicions of witchcraft raised. For instance, the sickness that preceded Thomas Darling's possession was attributed to 'some strange ague' and even when he saw green cats and angels gambolling about the room his visions were 'judged by his friends to proceede of lighnes in his head'. And Darling's aunt twice brought his urine to a physician to examine; something that the Throckmortons also did, consulting a Cambridge physician, Doctor Barrow, three times and even seeking out a second opinion. In both of these cases it was claimed that physicians were the first to suggest potential bewitchment.[52]

All this fed into Edward Fairfax's taxonomy of belief-styles in opposition to his own. This taxonomy was unfortunately left incomplete, which is apparent because Edward ordinally introduced those who 'attribute too much to natural causes' – including some divines and physicians – but did not continue the list. Even so, in this introductory passage Fairfax encapsulated his style of belief, and explicitly presented it to the reader:

[49] *Daemonologia*, p. 32.
[50] Ibid., p. 32.
[51] *Daemonologia*, p. 36.
[52] Anon. [I. D.], *The most wonderfull and true storie, of a certaine VVitch named Alse Gooderig of Stapen hill* (London: Printed by John Oxenbridge, 1597), sigs A3r, A3v; Anon., *The Witches of Warboys*, sigs B1v–B2r.

> I intreated you to be assured that for myself I am in religion neither a fantastic Puritan nor superstitious Papist; but so settled in conscience that I have the sure ground of God's Word to warrant all I believe, and the commendable ordinances of our English Church to approve all I practice; in which course I live a faithful Christian and obedient subject, and so teach my family.[53]

His tone was combative, challenging his audience to explain how Hellen could report conversations between Edward and others to which she was not privy: 'I marvel what supposal of counterfeiting can be in this, or how could I be abused myself or made a fool of in this particular?' Similarly, when William Fairfax and the Vicar Nicholas Smithson sighted a hare in Birkbanks field, Elizabeth identified it as a witch in disguise and accurately predicted its reappearance, which prompted Edward to quip that 'the detractors and slanderous scoffers of this infant may be confounded'.[54] And when image magic was introduced into the narrative, Fairfax chose to display the breadth of his scholarship rather than reference better known material.[55] He purposefully provided no British examples, explaining haughtily that 'because [of] their nearness to our times they have not the reputation which accompanies antiquity'. Fairfax instead elected to cite obscure historical precedent – the execution of Joseph Boniface de La Môle for possessing an effigy of Charles IX – as well as mentions of the practice in works of antiquity by Virgil, Horace, and Theocritus. He also proved his awareness of international news, citing a 1590 pamphlet about the lycanthropy of the German murderer Peter Stumpp.[56] Fairfax's aesthetic and presentational choices in this passage epitomised how he mixed erudition and superciliousness to create an intentionally intimidating style of argumentation in defence of his beliefs.[57]

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[53] *Daemonologia*, p. 32.
[54] *Daemonologia*, pp. 69, 96.
[55] There were many contemporary or near-contemporary instances for Fairfax to cite. We know Fairfax was acutely aware of the recent Lancashire witch trial, as he mentioned that his neighbour's wife had been killed by the Lancashire witches as well as 'the book made of those witches': *Daemonologia*, p. 93. Some of the Lancashire witches confessed to having used image magic to harm their victims: Potts, *The Wonderfvll Discoverie*, sigs B3v, E3v. There was also the panic over fears that image magic was being used to target the queen, which bled into the 1579 investigation of witchcraft in Windsor, the pamphlet account of which – analysed in Chapter 4 – included the accused Elizabeth Stile admitting to piercing 'pictures of Redde Waxe' with thorns to kill people: Anon., *A Rehearsall both straung and true* (London: Edward White, 1579), sigs F4r, A7r–v.
[56] Anon., *A true Discourse. Declaring the damnable life and death of one Stubbe Peeter, a most wicked Sorcerer, who in the likenes of a Woolfe, committed many murders, continuing this diuelish practise 25 yeeres, killing and deuouring Men, Woomen, and Children* (London: Printed for Edward Venge, 1590).
[57] *Daemonologia*, pp. 73–75.

Failure to secure a conviction at the assizes for a second time in August 1622 catalysed and galvanised Edward's intellectual defensiveness, and his response to the judge's decision to free the accused witches epitomised it. He quite deftly navigated his consternation with the ruling through a sophisticated intimation of his own godly character and rationalisation for the judgment:

> It pleased mercy to interpret law in their favour, thereto moved as it seemed chiefly for that the children were presented in court and well liking. And I am not aggrieved that they escaped death, which, deservedly, they might perchance have suffered, for the lives of so many ought to be very precious in the eyes of Christian charity. Notwithstanding, the proceedings which made the way easy for their escape, I fear, was not fair; either the hardness of hearts to believe, which made some of the best sort incredulous, or the openness of hands to give in some of the meaner, which waylaid justice, untying the fetters from their heels, and unloosing the halters from their necks, which so wise juries thought they had so well deserved.[58]

The justices examined his daughters along with Maud Jeffray, and it was her from whom they extracted an admittance that she had been instructed her to dissimilate her symptoms by her father. From this discovery came insight into disparagement Edward subsequently faced. He related that 'upon myself was put an aspersion, not of dishonesty, but of simplicity', which implicated his daughters in the Jeffray's charade and held that Edward 'like a good innocent, believed all which I heard or saw to be true and not feigned'.[59] To be accounted simple was unconscionable to a learned person like Fairfax. Any poet and translator as accomplished as he would be mortified at being described in the same terms as Richard Burt from *A most vvicked vvorke*: the simple bumpkin mentioned in Chapter 4, whose rusticity was such that he carried his apple pie with him all the way to Hell and back.[60] Edward countered immediately, alluding to the writings of Pope Gregory I and appealing to the empirical spirit with which he had approached investigating the whole affair. From this passage we can divine two prongs of the attack laid against Edward in the wake of his household's crisis, both of which skewered his style of belief. The first alleged that Fairfax's advocacy for a partially debunked demonic irruption in the locale was due to his innate intellectual vacuity. This he could disprove through the act of producing of a piece of well-written prose that frequently alluded to relevant scholarship: learned medical texts and

[58] *Daemonologia*, pp. 123–4.
[59] Ibid., p. 124.
[60] Anon., *A most vvicked vvorke of a wretched Witch* (London: R[obert] B[ourne], 1592), sig. A2v.

demonological theories. The second prong of attack was the implication that Fairfax's process for determining the reality of the situation was flawed. He bristled at those who would 'wrong [his] my integrity' but he did not expect readers to solely trust the evidence his family had provided. To enhance the believability of the supernaturality of the case he named others who could attest to events: Elizabeth Smith, one of his servants, observed a peculiar black cat; and Francis Pullein saw a white cat in early February. Additionally, 'divers persons testifying by oath' before a justice that they had seen a mark upon Margaret Thorpe's face, which spot had supposedly been where her familiar had sucked blood from her. On the night of 28 January Charles Nichol reported to two of his companions that upon exiting the house he had seen 'a vision, at which he stood amazed' of a squat woman creeping around Newhall.[61] Edward defended against the impugning of his methods by peppering testimonials throughout the narrative that affirmed others could attest to the remarkable situation occurring in his household.[62]

Fairfax's presentation of his open-minded and rational approach to the topic contained indicators of an accompanying, albeit submerged, emotional style. In the above-quoted introductory passage in which Fairfax described his believing style, he characterised his process as one which avoided the excesses of either wild imagining or prideful incredulity. This bled into his general social demeanour, which he described in terms of propriety and acquiescence – being 'a faithful Christian and obedient subject' – qualities that he transferred to his children through their education. Emotional control was both practically and aesthetically beneficial – abandoning oneself to passion was often considered mutually exclusive with reasonable thought – and English Protestants were keenly aware that times of emotional turmoil were opportunities for Satan to strike most efficaciously.[63] Edward reassured readers, lest they consider him 'carried away with my passion, or to be credulous above cause, or so feign to be, because of my interest' that he retained his rational faculties.[64] By emphasising how uncontentious his position was, Edward situated himself alongside other late-Jacobean witchcraft pamphlets that similarly styled themselves as possessing no controversial intentions. As was mentioned in Chapter 4, the 1619 pamphlet *The Wonderfvl Discoverie of the Witchcrafts of Margaret and Phillip Flower* – which reported

[61] *Daemonologia*, pp. 84, 67–8.
[62] E.g. John Williams and Robert Pannell: Ibid., pp. 118, 80.
[63] Owen C. Watkins, *The Puritan Experience* (London; Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972), pp. 13–15; Michael MacDonald, *Mystical Bedlam: Madness, anxiety, and healing in seventeenth-century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 219.
[64] *Daemonologia*, p. 98.

on the bewitchment of the Earl of Rutland's children at Belvoir Castle – literally began with a disclaimer by the author that their intention was 'not to make any contentious Arguments about the discourses, distinction or definition of Witchcraft'.[65] Likewise, two years later in 1621, Henry Goodcole disclaimed that he did not intend to 'discusse, or dispute of Witches or Witchcraft' when writing about the Witch of Edmonton.[66] Regardless of any caveating, *Daemonologia* did raise some contentious issues, which Fairfax was obviously aware of because, as noted above, he dedicated time, effort, and space to expounding upon demonological theory. These divisive concepts were intimately linked to Edward's intellectual process, as well as the social scrutiny that that same process faced from members of the community. One such idea was the power of the Devil: how his agency manifested and what the limits of his influence were. A common line of attack against witch-belief was that it represented a form of superstition, an excess of belief that attributed far too much agency to Satan and the demonic. This notion had attendant theological implications as it could be levered into an attack by framing the act of believing superstitiously as equivalent to a repudiation of God's omnipotence. In Hellen's more faith-orientated speeches her words of rebuke to the witches touched upon the problem of agency, as she declared that their 'god is the devil of hell, and he can do nothing but what our God doth suffer him'.[67]

In terms of folkloric remedies, Edward kept to a safe doctrinal line, insisting that he abhorred them and had left 'charms, tongs, and scratchings to them put confidence in them, and to the devil who devised them'; instead having relied 'upon the goodness of God and invoked his help, without tempting Him by prescribing the means'. Nevertheless, Fairfax was 'often moved to seek help by . . . scratching, which was urged to me as a remedy ordained of God'.[68] As seen in *Warboys* and numerous other examples, scratching was a resilient folk remedy that remained a ubiquitous element of English witchcraft belief even into the twentieth century.[69] It could occasionally even cut both ways, as when the Bermudan planter John Middleton testified that a witch scratched his face.[70] The theological and legal status of the

[65] Anon., *The Wonderfvl Discoverie of the Witchcraft of Margaret and Phillip Flower, daughters of Ioan Flower, neere Beuer Castle: Executed at Lincolne, March 11. 1618* (London: Printed by George Eld, 1619), B1r.
[66] Henry Goodcole, *The wonderfull discouerie of Elizabeth Savvyer, her conuiction and condemnation and Death* (London; Printed by A. Mathewes, 1621), A3r.
[67] *Daemonologia*, p. 68.
[68] Ibid., p. 88–9.
[69] Susan Hoyle, 'The witch and the detective: mid-Victorian stories and beliefs', in *Witchcraft Continued: Popular Magic in Modern Europe*, ed. by Willem de Blécourt and Owen Davies (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), pp. 46–68.
[70] Virginia Bernhard, 'Religion, Politics, and Witchcraft in Bermuda, 1651–55' *The William and Mary Quarterly* 67:4 (Oct., 2010), pp. 677–708, p. 699.

practice was controversial; its ambiguity perfectly demonstrated in how the scratching of Alice Goodridge by Thomas Darling was framed in the pamphlet *The most wonderfull and true storie*. Its author disclaimed that 'thogh it be commonly receiued as an approued meanes to discry the witch, and procure ease to the bewitched . . . it is to be receaued amongst the witchcrafts'.[71] In that case it was some bystanders who first suggested it, but it was actually the visiting magistrate Humphrey Ferrers who ordered it the second time.[72] So much cultural confidence was invested in scratching that in 1717 a deponent at a Leicester trial testified that 'the most infallible cure [for bewitchment] was to fetch blood of the witches'.[73] By distancing himself from such practices Edward was able to mitigate the inevitable accusations of superstitiousness that their usage would have invited.

Fairfax described Fewston parish itself as a generally superstitious place, populated by parishioners who were swift to blame the abundance of suspected witches thereabouts for their losses and ailments: 'For remedy whereof they would go to those whom they call Wiseman . . . whereof I know that experiments have been made by the best of my neighbours, and thereby they have found help, as they reported'. Edward lamented and disavowed such practices, efficacy notwithstanding, and consistently distanced his family's situation from the problematic parallel bewitchment taking place in the Norwood household of John Jeffray: claiming to 'know [Maud] not so well as to speak her with assurances', nor 'her parents but by sight'. Edward's aversion to these associations was passed on to his children, as when Hellen was visited by a spirit clad in the guise of a cunning person who offered to help treat her as he had treated Maud, she responded archly that 'It is like enough, for they run to witches and wizards for remedy. . . I will none of thy amends. God shall mend me when it pleaseth him, and none other'.[74] The discovery in court of Maud's imposture had ruined the prospect of judicial recourse for the bewitchment and made it imperative for the Fairfaxes to thoroughly differentiate and distance themselves from the Jeffrays narratively, intellectually, and spiritually.

[71] *The most wonderfull and true storie*, sig. B1v.
[72] Ferrers and Greysley served in the capacity of Justices of the Peace in the Staffordshire Quarter Sessions for years prior – they oversaw the licencing of an alehouse in Tutbury on the 18 November 1589: *The Staffordshire Quarter Sessions Rolls*, 5 vols, I (Kendal: Titus Wilson & Son, 1931), p. 319.
[73] C. L'Estrange Ewen, *Witch Hunting and Witch Trials* (New York: The Dial Press, 1929), p. 315.
[74] *Daemonologia*, pp. 35, 32, 43.

The Characterisation of Doubters and Opponents

The other side of the dialectic employed in *Daemonologia* by Fairfax to style his family's believing included the thought-orientations of both his critics and his potential audience. Addressing them, he adopted a centrist position, answering the 'superstitious ignorant' and 'the incredulous' alike, and he clearly counted most of his neighbours amongst the former. The longstanding problems with witches in Knaresborough, which occasioned many to resort to the services of cunning folk, caused Edward to lament that 'so little is the truth of the Christian religion known in these wild places and among this rude people – on whose ignorance God have mercy'.[75] Highlighting local faithlessness and irreligion was an oblique attack upon the vicar of Fewston, Nicholas Smithson, who did not support the prosecution of the witches and eventually helped to secure their exoneration. Fairfax might have denied being 'a fantastic Puritan' but as believers he and his family certainly lent in a godly direction. When Hellen was found in her first trance-like state she imagined herself to have been attending a sermon at a church in Leeds given by Alexander Cooke. Who was a preacher that was consistently painted as a Puritan in media depicting the various sectarian struggles involving his ministry in early-seventeenth century Leeds. For example, in one exchange of vitriolic pamphleteering, Cooke was the doggedly divisive "Puritan" in dialogic opposition to the more irenic and plainly termed "Protestant".[76] Cooke had a complimentary cameo in *Daemonologia*; when Hellen resisted diabolic encouragement to commit suicide; it was a spirit in the shape of Cooke that came to comfort her, exhorting 'her to have a good heart, and to trust in God'. In an aside, Edward strongly implied that the spirit that had taken Cooke's form was 'a good angel appointed for her particular guard'.

Fairfax described the area surrounding his home as a 'wilderness', a spiritual desert, in which it was exceedingly difficult for the bookish Fairfax to acquire the sufficiently sophisticated reading materials required to maintain his intellectual status. Access to those texts was 'as rare as civility . . .or learning itself' in the region. In emphasising the dearth of literature and faith in his immediate vicinity, Edward's biblical and classical allusions shone all the brighter. In contrast to his own style of believing, Fairfax venomously penned that, because it was so commonly acknowledged that witches could transform themselves into animals, 'none but the stupidly incredulous can wrong the credit of the reporters, or doubt of the certainty'.[77]

[75] *Daemonologia*, pp. 31, 35.
[76] Maggie Bullet, '"Son of Thunder or Good Shepherd", Contesting the Parish Pulpit in Early Seventeenth-Century Leeds', *Northern History* 55:2 (2018), pp. 161–177, quoted p. 168.
[77] *Daemonologia*, pp. 40, 96, 97.

Later, Edward's lexicon shifted to further implicate the moral character of the incredulous as 'malicious'. He also explicitly associated disbelieving of his family's bewitchment with lax religiosity: 'no man, either Christianly religious or morally honest can doubt' their story.[78] The malice of sceptics also featured in *The most wonderfull and true storie*: a sceptical stranger interrogated Thomas Darling and harangued him until the boy cried. The emotional styles of sceptics and believers were juxtaposed in the text when Darling was thrown into a fit and 'that man which thought there was no witches departed. But [Pastor Eccarshall] being present staied still comforting the boy and his sorrowfull mother'.[79] *Daemonologia* was a much more emotionally muted affair than *The most wonderful and true storie*, let alone *Warboys*, and this largely due to the difference in outcome meaning that Fairfax had to dedicated himself to defending his beliefs, rather than promoting them.

Although specific details about the April assizes were conspicuous in their absence, we can nevertheless read against the grain to uncover Edward's thoughts about why the case against Waite and Fletcher had failed to produce a conviction. There was an immediate emphasis on the fallibility of the senses, which was intimately connected to questions about the nature of the supernatural entities that appeared to Hellen and Elizabeth. Edward mentioned that objections from detractors could include 'that it may be only spirits' and that the children's 'hearing and seeing may . . . be deluded'. To counter these criticisms, he specifically mentioned how 'often and infallibly the trials were made by the children', in that they reached out and reported the corporeality, or incorporeality, of particular visitors, 'and how they were distinguished without effort'. For instance, on the 23 April Elizabeth confirmed that the black cat she saw was 'a spirit, and but a shadow', whereas when it came to Dibb 'she desired to feel, and so did'.[80] Checking the materiality of the people and animals that populated the sisters' trances became a recurring feature of his reports and was linked to Fairfax's earlier engagement with demonological theories about the materiality of spirits, as well as diabolic deception of the senses. To prove his point, Edward invoked Christ's post-resurrection appearance before the Apostles, focussing on the tangibility of his body as evidence for his real presence: 'for a spirit hath not flesh and bones'.[81] He connected the *ostentation vulnerum* and doubting Thomas to his own situation by stating that 'If there had been any colour of avoiding this certainty, no doubt he who sought to sift and winnow the

[78] *Daemonologia*, pp. 109, 122.
[79] Anon. [I. D.], *The most wonderfull and true storie, of a certaine VVitch named Alse Gooderig of Stapen hill* (London: Printed by John Oxenbridge, 1597), sigs C2r–v.
[80] *Daemonologia*, p. 109.
[81] *KJV*, Luke 24:39.

Apostles would have presented it to their weak faith' and so 'the feeling of these women by the children may nonpluss all pleaders for Baal, and make them either yield to truth, or for shame no longer bark against it'.[82] The threat the witches continued to pose to the community was implicit but the mechanism that had allowed them their freedom was not: it was incredulity that had allowed these dangerous people back into Fewston. Fairfax was not only resisting demonic ingress into his home: he was also fighting against the sceptical forces of Sadducism within his community. The Sadducees' denial of the immortality of the soul had been adduced as exegetical evidence of the foolishness of unbelief, in texts both polemical and didactic, since printed works had been embraced as a technology of the Reformation. The sect was often invoked simultaneously with the indulgent heresies of Epicureanism, and alongside – or occasionally as – atheism to illustrate the dangers of unbelief. Across confessional boundaries, authors cynical and earnest alike leveraged anxieties about unbelief to accuse their enemies of atheism and kept the bibliometric incidence of unbelief proportionally apace with the torrent of propagandising campaigns that flooded out of 1640s presses.[83]

After the witches and devils, Henry Graver,a prominent figure in Fewston and a man of good social standing, and Nicholas Smithson, the vicar of the town, were the tertiary antagonists of *Daemonologia*, whose steadfast repudiation of the witchcraft accusations represented the dangers of disbelief in the community rather than the courtroom. The opinions of these two men determined how the bewitchment case would proceed. This was one of the starkest differences between *Daemonologia* and *Warboys*, as the Throckmortons were able to leverage the legitimacy and pageantry of their local church because the rector, Francis Dorrington, was married to Robert's sister Mary.[84] By the end of November 1621 Edward Fairfax was actively attempting to convince both Smithson and Graver that Hellen was supernaturally afflicted. His cajoling intertwined with how Edward chose to narrate the progression of his family's belief that witches were the ones truly responsible for Hellen's condition. He interjected that the family 'had no suspicion that this should be witchcraft' – although 'many being evil reputed' – until an unusual incident with a penny from Margaret Waite led them 'to surmise that it might be the action of some witch . . . but we were slow to believe'. Hellen was visited by a phantasm in the shape of Waite on 5 December, resulting

[82] *Daemonologia*, p. 110.
[83] For a brief overview of this rhetorical escalation see: Alec Ryrie, *Unbelievers: An Emotional History of Doubt* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019), pp. 153–60.
[84] C. Wickliffe Throckmorton, *A Genealogical and Historical Account of the Throckmorton Family* (Richmond, VA.: Old Dominion Press, 1930), p. 264.

in her vomiting and becoming convinced that she had expelled her life's blood and would soon die, which event 'more confirmed' their suspicions. This appeared to have been a reordering of events in the believing process, as Fairfax had invited Smithson to dinner on 25 November. They discussed the strangeness of the penny then, which would only make sense if Edward was already endeavouring to convince Smithson of the supernaturality of Hellen's condition, because – according to his own timeline – he would otherwise be doing so before he was convinced of it himself.[85] Her trance on 5 December appeared to prompt a visit from Henry Graver, who came to the house the following day, although little was reported of that interaction.[86] Edward summoned Margaret Waite to Newhall on the eighth so that he could confront her with their allegations of witchcraft. As he relayed his suspicions to her in the garden, Hellen had a simultaneous conversation with a spectral version of Margaret in her chamber. Upon learning of this Edward 'threatened [Margaret] should be carried before a Justice': undeniably indicating that he considered her to have perpetrated this malady and, eager to demonstrate this evidence, he sent for Graver and Smithson. Edward claimed he did so because he 'expected advice' from them but, given his actions over the preceding several weeks, we can infer that both men had expressed doubts – or outright disbelief – in their respective meetings with Edward and that he considered this a mete opportunity to win them over. His framing of these events was vital to how he styled his believing as a reasonable progression: he was not already convinced of supernatural involvement but 'the strangeness of the case' had forced him to consider that witchcraft was involved. He made no mention of discussing the possibility of bewitchment with either Graver or Smithson at their earlier meetings. This seems highly unlikely given that Hellen had been experiencing bizarre and distressing trances for an entire month at that point – the content of which was explicitly spiritual – and Waite had already been implicated through strange occurrences with her penny. We can therefore conclude that the version of the believing process given in *Daemonologia* was predominantly a rhetorical device. Edward's actions belied his taking of an aggressive posture against the prospective witches earlier than he claimed. His anger boiled into the open on December 2, when Margaret Waite's penny reappeared before the fireplace after it had seemingly been destroyed therein during Nicholas Smithson's visit.

[85] *Daemonologia*, pp. 45–6.

[86] The date of Graver's initial visit was incorrectly given as Saturday 6 December when this was a Thursday. We can be confident that it was the day of the week and not the day of the month that was wrong because conversations that Hellen had in her trance on Friday 7 December mentioned information from the trance on the sixth in the past tense.

Edward once again melted it with sulphur and flame and proceeded to ensure its destruction by utterly pulverising it, smashing the representation of Margaret against the floor.[87]

In Edward's version of events, on December 7 he requested counsel from two substantial members of the community but was 'deceived in that expectation, for these men were great friends to the woman, and turned all their speeches to entreat [him to] suffer the woman to depart, and to make further trial' before bringing her to a Justice. In Edward's eyes, he had been betrayed. Subsequently, Graver and Smithson were subject to ignominious praise by the Devil that tormented Hellen, praising 'Henry Graver and the vicar of Fuystone [as] good men, for they do not bear with you [Hellen]', to which she replied that 'He is not worthy of being a vicar that will bear with witches, and for Graver, he is afraid of you'.[88] Over the course of January and February 1622 Elizabeth started to mimic some of Hellen's symptoms and behaviour and Hellen had begun to tell a new tale about their bewitchment. There were supposedly seven witches responsible for their condition, and on 12 February a phantom – later identified as Jennet Dibble – revealed to Hellen that Henry Graver was responsible for commissioning the bewitchment. The apparition claimed that this nefarious plot had begun as soon the Fairfax family had moved to Newhall in the summer of 1619 on 'the first Sunday that ever she came to Fuystone church'. Then 'they were hired to bewitch her [Hellen] by the best man Fuystone parish, and that he did look upon her the last time she was at church, but did not speak to her, and he would do so again'. Hellen responded that 'The best man in Fuystone parish is Henry Graver . . . and indeed he did look at me, but spake not to me'. Edward confirmed it 'true that upon the Sunday following they both went to the church, and there Henry Graver did look earnestly at them, but spake not to them at all; whereof especial notice was taken, because of the words of the old woman'. Graver's incredulity now meant more than disbelief: it meant complicity. His adversarial position towards the Fairfax's accusations of witchcraft became indicative of his intimate role in commissioning the bewitchment of the sisters. It was imperative that Graver's reputation be muddied, because of both his influential social position and that he continued to support the accused women. Prior to the April assizes he provided for Margaret Waite financially, as well as by offering her legal advice. Reports had made it to the Fairfaxes that Graver visited her at her house 'divers times after she was first questioned, and before she went to the gaol; that he had talked there with her and encouraged her, and said she could not be hurt because they had

[87] *Daemonologia*, pp, 49–50.
[88] *Daemonologia*, p. 58.

taken away no life'.[89] Graver's advice was not platitudinous but neither was it entirely accurate. The Witch Act of 1604 had expanded the list of offences that warranted the death penalty to include "harm" inflicted on top of causing death. Clive Holmes has noted that the language in the Act used to describe harm barely deviated from its Elizabethan predecessor; of 'wasted, consumed, pined or lamed', only pined was a new addition.[90] Despite the more draconian sentencing stipulations in the statute, its practical effects on witch trials in pre-civil war England did not appear to have resulted in higher indictment or conviction rates.[91] For instance, there was a marked decline in witchcraft indictments on the Home Circuit decade-on-decade after a zenith in 1580–89.[92] John Dibb – son of Jennet Dibble and brother of Margaret Thorpe – also acted in concert with Graver to support the accused, having 'procured a certificate to the judge, that the women were of good fame; and never till that time ill-reported of for witch-craft; and that Henry Graver solicited and induced many persons to set their hands to the same'.[93] Collecting signatories to attest to an accused witch's good character was by no means an exceptional action. In 1606 neighbours of Johane Guppie of South Perrot, Dorset certified that she 'behaves herself in all things well and honestlye' and 'alwayes hath lyved of good name and fame without any Spott or Touch of [illegible] Sorcerye or witchcrafte'.[94] Sometimes these letters were more ambivalent about the character of the accused, as when despite the better sort of Padstow affirming 'that they think [Anne Piers] to be no witch and that they never knew any such thing in her neither ever heard her suspected therein' they still felt compelled to disclose that 'otherwise she hath been accounted a woman of loose life'.[95] Ultimately, the sceptical side to which Graver belonged won out in court: the case collapsed, the accused women were freed, the Jeffrays were disgraced, and the Fairfaxes were publicly embarrassed. Within the narrative, Graver was positioned as the head of the group of men who 'at feasts and meetings spread reports and moved doubts, inferring a supposal of counterfeiting and practice in the children, and that it was not serious, but a combination of malice', which ideas 'they suggested to our next

[89] Ibid., pp. 73, 77, 92.
[90] Clive Holmes, 'Witchcraft and Possession at the Accession of James I: The Publication of Samuel Harsnett's *Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures*', in John Newton and Jo Bath (eds), *Witchcraft and the Act of 1604* (Boston; Brill, 2008), pp. 69–90: pp. 88–9.
[91] See: Marion Gibson, 'Applying the Act of 1604: Witches in Essex, Northamptonshire and Lancashire', in Newton and Bath, *Witchcraft and the Act of 1604*, pp. 115–128.
[92] There were 166 cases in that decade, 128 from 1590–99, 76 from 1600–09, 45 from 1610–19, 20 from 1620–29, and 19 from 1630–39: James Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness: Witchcraft in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Philadelphia Press, 1996), p. 109.
[93] *Daemonologia*, p. 127.
[94] TNA, E 163/17/5.
[95] TNA, SP 12/150 f. 96.

Justices, where it found a welcome'.[96] Graver was the face of the anonymous category of 'worser sort of the people' that, decades earlier, Robert Throckmorton posited would 'imagine that this [bewitchment] was but some deuise'.[97] Whilst the villainising of Graver and their sceptical neighbours would do little to repair the reputation and relationships of the Fairfaxes within their community, that bridge was already rather charred. By leaning into conspiratorial notions, Edward was able to salvage a modicum of respect through insinuations, and outright accusations, that the trial process had been tampered with: softening the blow to the family's credibility that was their failure to have the accused witches convicted and punished. It was a messy, awkward, and unsatisfying ending to the bewitchment saga that failed to resolve persistent aporetic uncertainties about the truth behind the strange occurrences, mirroring the frayed and frustrating nature of witchcraft as an historical phenomenon.

An Unfinished Narrative

Part of the reason that *Daemonologia* was never printed was because the events in Fewston did not lend themselves to a neat and thematically satisfying narrative format. In Warboys, the Samuels were convicted and executed, and the Throckmorton children were relieved from their bewitchment after making all efforts to save their souls beforehand: ultimately, a tidy, vindicatory ending. Despite his considerable efforts – in terms of expended time, energy, and social capital – Fairfax was unable to achieve the same result. Both the April and the August assizes triggered sizeable shifts in the development of the bewitchment experience, and the concomitant narrative, that rendered it less-and-less credible. We know that none of the accused women were convicted in April and that they returned home. This embarrassingly public failure galvanised the Fairfaxes into aggressively pursuing the allegations and by 22 May they had succeeded in sending Margaret Thorpe to gaol.[98] More space in the text was devoted to establishing the witches' physical presence, for both demonological and evidentiary reasons. When Jennet Dibb first visited Hellen, special mention was made that she was 'very wet with rain' due to an ongoing downpour that she had been soaked by because Edward had been blocking her from entering by standing in the

[96] *Daemonologia*, p. 36.
[97] Anon., *The most strange and admirable discouerie of the three Witches of Warboys* (Printed for Thomas Man and Iohn Winnington; London, 1593), sigs H3v–H4r.
[98] *Daemonologia*, p. 124.

doorway.[99] Along with some other strange occurrences – coins and cakes going missing – this was Fairfax's proof that 'the woman herself, and not her spirit, did these things'. They were intent on allowing no ambiguity about the technical status of the witches' degree of direct involvement.

However, whilst failure at the April assizes energised the Fairfaxes, the aftermath of the August assizes broke them. Their experience at that trial proved the truth of Henry Holland's comment that doubters were to be found 'especially among magistrates and iudges, which doe suppose all these things to be but vaine and fabulous'.[100] Despite his best efforts over the year, Edward was forced to confront the reality that 'nothing can mollify the stony and senseless incredulity of some'. This time judicial failure led Hellen, who had acted as the catalyst and principal driver of the family's collective bewitchment experience, to abandon the enterprise altogether. The loss of her engagement with the narrative destroyed the experiential foundation and engine at its core, and without her the story could have no satisfying final act. Hellen's visions, trances, and speeches – alongside some gentle parental nudging – steered the direction of the narrative and it was Helen who Edward chose to bring with him to York in April, when they first sought official legal recourse. In the immediate aftermath of the August discovery of Maud Jeffray's imposture, Hellen was despondent and her condition worsened: experiencing intermittent deafness and languishing lethargically between her bed and the fireside. There was concern that her body was withering away so quickly that her death might be imminent, and Hellen herself divulged to her brother Edward that she thought a particular meal on 16 August would be her last. That same day 'she wept and complained that the strange woman urged her to kill herself, and offered her a knife'.[101] Many suicidal people in early modern England experienced their intrusive thoughts as a visit from the Devil or a demon. Thomas Clark, a fisherman from Barking who had previously angered the witch Mother White-cote, saw a vision of the witch walking in the water and was then invaded by a spirit that 'mooued him to kill him selfe'.[102] Elisabeth Hayford declared that the Devil had told her she could not be saved and 'sayeth, look where the Devil stands' and Robert Lea described a demon that would 'speak often to him and appear in the likeness of a man, and to kill him'.[103] Hellen's own suicidality was followed by a period of several days during which she remained almost entirely deaf. On Monday 20 August she very briefly

[99] Ibid., pp. 71–3.
[100] Holland, *A Treatise*, sig. G3v.
[101] *Daemonologia*, pp. 125, 131.
[102] Thomas Johnson, *A vvorld of vvonders* (London: Imprinted for William Barley, 1595), sig. E3r.
[103] MacDonald, *Mystical Bedlam*, p. 134.

recovered her hearing but her amnesia had returned, and she claimed not to 'remember any of the witches, [nor anything that did concern the matter'.[104] It may not have been the most sophisticated stratagem, but denial was the method she chose in order to disengage herself from the bewitchment. She exhibited forecasting behaviour that was very much redolent of how the Throckmorton sisters had used their prognostications to control the direction of their experience. Hellen conveniently prophesied the arc of her recovery prior to diving headlong into the Lethe, divulging to her brother William that even before the assizes Margaret Thorpe had 'foretold her that she might come home again, and then she would make her deaf, and as weak as ever was any, and then they could bewitch her no more'.[105] Her exit trajectory had been locked in.

Hellen's disengagement necessitated a radical change in the text and from September 1622 Elizabeth became the focal point of the notes. During the post-assize months Hellen ailed quietly in the background of these accounts. Her amnesia was total; the family 'found that she had forgot all, and her memory was so quite gone concerning the business, that she could not remember any of the witches or that she did see them or their spirits, or that she was ever in any trance, or sick, or troubled at all, to our great admiration'. The void in Hellen's recollection killed any chance of the case being brought to another trial. And it made Elizabeth the new driving force behind the narrative, which brought a host of problems. Elizbeth was significantly younger than Hellen and equally less creative in her storytelling. Events took on a noticeably more juvenile structure. Her trances conveniently coincided with duties and activities from which children often desire to escape. On Sunday 10 November Elizabeth declared that she could not attend the church service because Margaret Thorpe would not allow it and during a reading lesson with her father she was suddenly interrupted again. Another time, she and her brother climbed a mound of hay in the barn so that they could see a cow being slaughtered for its beef and she fell. The fall was nasty enough that many adults, her father first amongst them, rushed to check if she had injured herself. Elizabeth blamed Thorpe for having pushed her. She projected her childish, if understandable, embarrassment onto Margaret, who Elizabeth said mocked her having been 'made a fool'. The experiences she reported having were also more of a collection of greatest hits than new material. For instance, on 30 November she mimicked the encounter Hellen had had with a God-like figure in January of 1622. She even repeated her behaviour, initially believing it to truly be God before later recognising it as an imposture, and referenced Psalms

[104] *Daemonologia*, p. 132.
[105] *Daemonologia*, p. 133.

71 and 140, which were biblical passages that Hellen had favoured.[106] Enthusiasm for the bewitchment narrative was waning by Christmas 1622, with only five episodes recorded between January and April of 1623 before the manuscript abruptly ended. The explanation given for why the Fairfax daughters ultimately recovered from their ailments was limp and perfunctory. In December 1622 Jane and Hellen Jeffray 'did fall to be in the same state' as Hellen and Elizabeth Fairfax.[107] Edward concluded that 'God of his great mercy hath heard our prayers, and delivered my children out of the hands of the devil and his ministers' with 'the witchcraft seemeth to be removed to that man's [William Jeffray's] house'. With a final flaccid jab, Edward noted that this 'same William Jeffray was a special instrument to draw and persuade some in authority near him that my children ailed nothing, and the whole matter in them was counterfeit'.[108] Without a decisive and convenient conviction of the accused the narrative collapsed upon itself and flailed for an appropriate ending before petering out with one last vindictive lash against doubt. The inconclusiveness of the episode leaves us stewing in a frustration that mirrors that which the Fairfaxes felt in the aftermath of failing to stamp any judicial finality upon the experience.

It is for these structural and compositional reasons that I fundamentally disagree with a comment made by Barbara Rosen that compared the Fairfaxes and Throckmortons. *Daemonologia* was not 'a record as complete and detailed as that of the Throckmortons at Warboys', and could never be, precisely because of the difference in legal outcome between the cases.[109] Both Robert and Edward may have shared the practice of daily notetaking, but they did so to record quite different details of their experiences for posterity. Fairfax had no space in the *Daemonologia* for the vivid emotionality that characterised the *Warboys*. His was a text on the defensive from the start, one that reacted to the pressures of community-incredulity by hardening its outer shell of learned erudition and logical reasoning: producing a colder, more detached style of belief that was better able to fend off critique.

[106] Ibid., pp. 133, 143, 141, 136, 146–49, 150.
[107] Although this family shared the Jeffray surname, they were not the same household as John Jeffray and his daughter Maud. The surname Jeffray was common in the area, with eight householders that paid the hearth tax in 1672 being Jeffrays.
[108] *Daemonologia*, p. 151.
[109] Barbara Rosen, *Witchcraft in England 1558–1618* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1969), p. 27.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

The thesis began by framing belief in witchcraft as an *aporia* and it is worth reiterating that the shift in perspective I have proposed – to examine the styles of emotionality and belief, and their interrelation in historical sources – is not a way out of that *aporia*. If anything, it is route into it. Throughout this work I have repeatedly stressed that historians of witchcraft need to confront the concept of belief. Discussions of witchcraft beliefs constitute core parts of almost every scholarly entry into the historiography of English witchcraft, but belief itself has either been aetiologically displaced or domesticated into statements that can be catalogued or systematised. One might speculate about the state of the field would be had W. B. Carnochan's 1971 article not been overshadowed by the works of Macfarlane and Thomas. Like this work, Carnochan also queried the use of the term "belief" by historians, proposed a history of witchcraft that was simultaneously an entry into a general history of belief, and associated belief with 'shades of feeling'; but his ideas were not the catalyst for this thesis.[1] In fact, I stumbled across his article entirely by accident whilst researching the execution of Thomas Colley. And in an extraordinary case of parallel thinking occurring fifty years apart, I found that someone had already suggested a critical intervention be staged between witchcraft historiography and the concept of belief. Suffice it to say, such an intervention has been a long time coming.

My approach throughout the thesis has been an attempt to 'ask more questions . . . with reference to current anthropological and analytical thinking'.[2] I have tried to effectively address the problematic tendency in witchcraft historiography to collapse believing into belief statements. Diane Purkiss has described this as an act of conceptual subjugation, the result of which is itself aporetic, 'a hollowness at the centre of historical discourse on the supernatural, which displaces the very subject it promises to address'. Rather than asking *what* people believed about witchcraft, my interdisciplinary approach is instead directed at asking *how* people believed in witchcraft, endeavouring to meet the supernatural on its own terms, and to avoid '[transforming it] into something else so that it can be discussed' more

[1] W. B. Carnochan, 'Witch-Hunting and Belief in 1751: The Case of Thomas Colley and Ruth Osborne', *Journal of Social History* 4:4 (Summer, 1971), pp. 389–403, quoted pp. 391, 403.
[2] Marion Gibson, 'Becoming-Witch: Narrating Witchcraft in Early Modern English', *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft*, 14:3 (2019), pp. 317–335.

easily.[3] By recognising beliefs only as the expressions of underlying believing process, a path emerges for a further historicisation of belief in witches. In this regard, the works of Nils Bubandt and Mathias Pelkmans have been crucial to expanding the conceptualisation of belief that informs this study, one which emphasises a reintegration of uncertainty into the process. To approach witchcraft in this way is to hold two seemingly contradictory views and to actively choose not to resolve the resultant dissonance: to accept that expressions of doubt in witchcraft pamphlets were simultaneously strategic elements in a text and reflections of a genuine process of believing. In a sense, it is an imitation of the state of persistent uncertainty in which the Buli exist with regard to the indeterminacy of witchcraft in their culture.[4] Closely reading sources with this perspective in mind has revealed interesting aspects of the style of belief presented in some of the pamphlets. Early modern readers expected a certain amount of instruction to accompany their literature, which didacticism was readily found in several of the pamphlets analysed in Chapter 4, with some even plainly describing to their readers the significance of believing in witchcraft. Authors contextualised belief in witchcraft within a cosmic moral paradigm, the great conflict between good and evil. The association of witchcraft with the Devil and his demons was more than just an expression of a 'popular demonic', it also coded believing itself with spiritual significance.[5] Certain acts took on new moral import. Reading about witchcraft became an act of edification, and to anticipate the potential for diabolical machinations occurring in one's own community was to be the best sort of Christian neighbour. There was a deep tension between the encouragement of credulity and the practical need to maintain a threshold of incredulity. Alec Ryrie has described the ambivalence of Reformation teachings on the matter as a 'high-wire act' that encouraged 'both credulity and a corrosive scepticism, teaching believers simultaneously to doubt and to loathe doubting'.[6]

A similar ambivalence was displayed regarding what measures people took before illnesses were thought to be the result of bewitchment. Several pamphlets claimed that the families of the bewitched first consulted physicians – and more controversially cunning-folk – before any suspicion of bewitchment was raised: as Thomas Darling's aunt, the Throckmortons, and

[3] Diane Purkiss, *The Witch in History, Early modern and twentieth-century representations* (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 77–78.
[4] Nils Bubandt, *The Empty Seashell: Witchcraft and Doubt on an Indonesian Island* (London; Cornell University Press, 2014), pp. 43–44.
[5] James Sharpe, 'English Witchcraft Pamphlets and the Popular Demonic', in Julian Goodare, Rita Voltmer, and Liv Helene Willumsen (eds), *Demonology and Witch-Hunting in Early Modern Europe* (London: Routledge, 2020), pp. 127–146.
[6] Alec Ryrie, *Unbelievers: An Emotional History of Doubt* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019), p. 60.

Edward Fairfax were all shown to have done in Chapters 5 and 6. Similarly, the Earl of Rutland Francis Manners, was described as 'little suspecting' that bewitchment was the cause of his children's deaths and the ailing of his wife.[7] Robert Burton was right when he noted that 'T'is a common practise of some men to goe first to a VVitch and then to a Physitian [as] if one cannot the other shall', although this was not necessarily always the order of operations.[8] Even pious people, who otherwise conformed to ideals of godliness, consulted cunning-folk, despite consistent propaganda against the notion of there being "good witches" being issued by divines from the pulpit and the press.[9] This ambivalence mirrored what Alexandra Walsham identified in the popular adoption of providentialism, that 'parishioners subtly edited, altered, and ignored' the tenets issued by the learned.[10] The 'world of the past was not a world of unquestioning belief'.[11] It would be a mistake to dismiss these testimonies as merely "rhetorical scepticism", and to consider them to occupy the same strata of unreality containing the visions of demoniacs. In order not to miss potential expressions of doubt we should show people in the past 'the same kind of consideration that we would like to receive [ourselves]'.[12] The style of belief evidenced in the pamphlets was shaped to appear as discerning as possible. Fairfax's *Daemonologia* is especially revealing in this regard because his intellectual acumen was called into question after it crashed into the rocks of judicial scepticism and he was forced to attempt to salvage his reputation as a learned and rational man. Thus, Fairfax styled the process through which he eventually believed that his daughters were bewitched along the contours of rationality and empiricism and by disavowing superstitious detritus like the practice of scratching.

Through the application of this new approach to a close reading of English witchcraft pamphlets printed between 1560 and 1640 this study has proved that these texts contained more emotionality than has previously been recognised. This approach to the pamphlets sought to establish how the style of emotionality presented in the texts related to instances

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[7] Anon., *The Wonderfvl Discoverie of the Witchcrafts of Margaret and Phillip Flower* (London: Printed by G. Eld, 1619), sig. D2.
[8] Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (London: Printed by John Lichfield and James Short, 1621), p. 289.
[9] E.g. George Gifford, *A dialogve concerning VVitches and Witchcraftes* (London: Printed by Iohn Windet, 1593), sigs E2v–F2v; Alexander Roberts, *A Treatise of Witchcraft* (London: Printed by Nicholas Okes, 1616), pp. 72–73.
[10] Alexandra Walsham, *Providence in Early Modern England* (Oxford; Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 331.
[11] David Wootton, 'Unbelief in Early Modern Europe', *History Workshop Journal*, 20:1 (Autumn, 1985), pp. 82–100, quoted p. 82.
[12] Susan Rosa and Dale Van Kley, 'Religion and the Historical Discipline: A Reply to Mack Holt and Henry Heller', *French Historical Studies*, 21:4 (1998), pp. 611–629, quoted pp. 628 & 629.

of belief therein, with an intention to explore the relationship between the emotionality of witches and non-witches. My contention was that arguments made in recent scholarship in the field of witchcraft and emotion have focussed too heavily on constructions of the witch. Consequently, they have failed to account for how the emotionality of the witch was part of an overall intratextual style of emotional presentation which tied their emotionality to that of non-witches. My examination of the pamphlets found considerable evidence in support of this argument. Witches' emotions were described in explicit terms more often than those of non-witches. However, by expanding the scope of emotionality to encompass other factors relevant to the production of an overall sense of emotional disposition – comportment, behaviour, speech, and actions – more of a sense of the dialectic governing emotionality in texts has emerged. For instance, *Witches Apprehended, Examined and Executed* (1613) portrayed Master Enger as a 'vertuous' man, who cared deeply for the suffering of his servant, and hierarchised Enger's responses to the effects of bewitchment.[13] The disposition of Francis Manners was extolled in the pamphlet relating the bewitchment of his children. He was a paragon of noble lordship, whose manor was a 'Pallace of entertainment . . . for all sorts both rich and poore'. He even bore the death of his Children 'most nobly'. His wife Cecily was likewise described as kind and charitable. When Cecily discharged Margaret Flower from her service she provided Margaret a sum of money, a bolster, and a woollen mattress.[14] Whereas Richard Galis' treatise revealed a man struggling to rationalise his loneliness and loss of friendship, eventually conceiving of their abandonment of him to have been a form of bewitchment.[15] Non-witch emotions were not the exclusive domain of the bewitched, all participants in witchcraft stories had a chance to prove themselves. The 'greatest torment and miseries' of the Throckmorton girls 'made the hart of the beholders many times to melt in their bodies'. And when the Lady Cromwell visited the children her reaction was 'that it pittied [her] hart to see them, in so much, that she could not abstayn from teares'.[16]

The Witches of Warboys featured the most developed emotional style of any of the pamphlets examined, which was partially a product of it being substantially longer than almost every other source. The text portrayed a complex emotionality at play in the

[13] Anon., *Witches Apprehended, Examined and Executed, for notable villanies by them committed both by Land and Water* (London: William Stansby, 1613), sigs C1v–C2r.
[14] *The Wonderfvl Discoverie*, sigs C2r–v, D2r, C4v
[15] Richard Galis, *A brief treatise containing the most strange and horrible cruelty of Elizabeth Stile* (London: Printed by John Allde, 1579), sig. B2r.
[16] Anon., *The most strange and admirable discouerie of the three Witches of Warboys* (Printed for Thomas Man and Iohn Winnington: London, 1593), sigs E2v, F3r

Throckmorton household: combining lachrymose piety, godly exhortations, and heartfelt attempts to bring the witches to repentance. Narratives of repentance were a vehicle that allowed for a more sympathetic portrayal of witches' emotions. But the transformation in witches' emotionality from malice to contrition was attendant to a positive accounting of those that brought them to that repentance. Henry Goodcole was advertising his professional skills as a minister to criminals when he described how he brought Elizabeth Sawyer and others to confess their sins and surrender themselves to the mercy of God.[17] Likewise, the prospective repentance of Alice Samuel contributed to a styling of the Throckmorton as a family of deeply godly and forgiving people. The *Warboys* narrative also had fascinating implications for arguments made by Charlotte-Rose Millar: namely, the portrayal of familiars as emotional conduits and the existence of surrogate sexual relationships between witches and their familiars.[18] It was the relationship between Joan Throckmorton and Smacke that contained themes of romance and courtship, with Smacke swearing to win her affection and fighting his impish brothers to protect her from them.[19] Several of the Throckmorton girls were described as having expressed remarkable aggression and violence, which the spirits that accosted them were ultimately held responsible for. Devils were considered to be able to stoke the rageful hearts of witches to malice and *Warboys* demonstrated that the same process could also affect the bewitched.[20] A testament to the efficacy and resilience of these stylisations is that, almost a century later, an unnamed young maid from Great Gaddesden was possessed and her disposition was described in the same glowing terms as those of the Throckmorton girls: she was 'descended of honest Parents of good repute and by them carefully educated in the Principles of Christianity', a being of 'lovely innocent Beauty, sweet Carriage, or virtuous Disposition'. When she frothed in a 'desperate rage' and rained 'abominable blasphemies' upon the heads of her would-be exorcists she was excused, and her behaviour was attributed to her resident demon.[21]

The intention in conceptually unifying styles of belief with emotional styles was to better explore the interrelatedness of the two within witchcraft sources. I would tentatively posit that the idealisation of behaviour contributed to the stylistic shift Gibson identified towards

[17] Henry Goodcole, *The wonderfull discouerie of Elizabeth Savvyer, her conuiction and condemnation and Death* (London: Printed by A. Mathewes, 1621), sigs B1v–B2r, D1v–D2v.
[18] Charlotte-Rose Millar, *Witchcraft, the Devil, and Emotions in Early Modern England* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), pp. 116–140, 101–108.
[19] Oscar Joyce, 'Feeling with Demons: Emotional Displacement and Surrogate Relationships in *The Witches of Warboys*' *Brief Encounters* 6:1 (Apr., 2022), pp. 1–12.
[20] *Warboys*, sigs L1–O2v.
[21] Anon., *Wonderful news from Buckinghamshire* (London: Printed for D. M., 1677), pp. 7, 5.

attributions of "motiveless malignity" on the part of accused witches. But the direction of causality between narrativity and stylisation here is difficult to parse. The switch in the format of witchcraft pamphlets around 1590, from documentary reporting to narratives, untethered authors from reproducing trial documentation and gave them significantly more leeway to stylise their version of events. As the analysis of *The Witches of Warboys* in Chapter 5 demonstrated at length, idealisations of witches and their victims were linked; the stylistic refinement of either imagined figure altered the presentation of both, resulting in accentuated witches and accentuated victims. By focusing so intently on the narrative environment in which witchcraft belief was placed in early modern literature, I hope to have successfully emulated some small portion of the quality for which Ronald Hutton has been so praised: exhibiting an 'anthropologist's attunement to the power of stories and respect for the people who tell them'.[22]

The anthropologists Catherine Lutz and Geoffrey White contended that 'cultures are characterised as much, if not more, by the emotional lives of their members than by the intellectual content of their ideologies'.[23] But the culture fostered in sixteenth- and seventeenth- century England by the ideological precepts of Protestantism was one saturated with emotionality. It was characterised by intense introspection, prodigious spiritual cultivation, and – in extreme situations – the utilisation of suffering for religious edification. The relationship between belief and emotion was most commonly expressed in witchcraft pamphlets through the motif of somatic materiality: the hardness and softness of hearts. Hard hearts were associated with religious incredulity and this connection was transferred to belief in witchcraft. Fairfax thought that the 'the hardness of hearts to believe . . . made some of the best sort incredulous' about witchcraft.[24] The *Witches of Northamptonshire* advised its readers that witches' 'hearts are so hardened, that no much as their eyes are able to shead teares', and that it was in the heart that dangerous doubts could take root.[25] *Witches Apprehended, Examined, and Executed* attributed spiritual unpreparedness to 'the hardnesse of our hearts'.[26] And *Warboys* was riddled with references to the state of various hearts. The Devil 'as a snaile, he gathers vppe himselfe into his shell

[22] Laurel Zwissler, 'History as Anthropological Time-Travel: The Work of Ronald Hutton', *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* 17:1 (Summer, 2022), pp. 41–49, quoted p. 41.
[23] Catherine Lutz and Geoffrey M. White, 'The Anthropology of Emotions', *Annual Review of Anthropology* 15 (1986), pp. 405–436, quoted pp. 417.
[24] William Grainge (ed.), *Daemonologia: A Discourse on Witchcraft* (Harrogate: R. Ackrill, 1882), pp. 123–4.
[25] Anon., *The Witches of Northamptonshire* (London: Printed by Tho[mas] Purfoot, 1612), sigs, C2v, A3v–A4r.
[26] *Witches Apprehended*, sigs A3r–A4r.

and house of the heart, when he feares discouery, and puts not forth his hornes. Sometimes he playes not in the Sunne actually, but burroughes deepe in the affections'.[27]

At the very least this critical intervention has added another mote of colour to the vivid kaleidoscope of witchcraft scholarship. More optimistically, it has provided a fresh potential lens through which belief can be historicised. Through an exploration of the relationality of belief in witchcraft pamphlets, I have found considerable connections between the style of belief espoused and the styles of emotion through which it was expressed. In this, I agree partially with Jan Machielsen's statement that 'witchcraft was always a vehicle for the expression of other things', although I baulk at his reasoning that this was because it was 'a false belief'.[28] The interconnectedness of witchcraft belief to its cultural context is not attributable to the falsity of its premises and is perhaps better expressed as a quality of belief in general.

There does seem to be a growing historiographical movement towards historicising belief itself. Alec Ryrie has written on this in relation to the history of religious unbelief in early modern Europe and contends that if historians only consider '"atheism" as a system of ideas" then they will miss what 'clearly existed in *practice*'. [29] Ethan Shagan has also attempted to historicise belief over the long durée, arguing that the Reformation resulted in increasingly exclusionary forms of religiosity. One repercussion of the confessional escalation was a concomitant progression in strictness of demands for religious conformity that amplified over the decades and resulted in an irrevocable loosening of how people believed.[30] Some of the responses to Thomas Adams preaching bear out this logic, there were complaints that he had 'made the Gate of Heauen too narrow, and they hope to finde it wider'.[31] The crux of Shagan's argument is that the Reformation and Counter-Reformation had made belief significantly more difficult than it ever had been. He characterised this as an authoritarianism in Catholicism and as an abiding spiritual anxiety in Protestantism. In essence, Shagan deploys the concept of styles of belief here without naming it so. He even cites the article in which Jonathan Mair articulated the concept, and comments that Mair had successfully pinned down the problem of belief.[32] He practically redescribes styles of belief when he

[27] Thomas Adams, The Blacke Devill (London: Printed by William Iaggard, 1615), p. 43.
[28] Jan Machielsen, 'Bad Reasons: Elites and the Decline of Magic', *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* 16:3 (Winter, 2021), pp. 406–414, quoted p. 406.
[29] Ryrie, *Unbelievers*, pp. 3–5.
[30] Ethan H. Shagan, *The Birth of Modern Belief: Faith and Judgement from the Middle Ages to the Enlightenment* (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2018).
[31] Thomas Adams, *The White Deuil* (London: Printed by Melchisedech Bradwood, 1613), sig. A4r.
[32] Jonathan Mair, 'Cultures of belief', *Anthropological Theory*, 12:4 (2012), pp. 448–466.

writes of the historiographical problem that scholars 'searching for nascent incredulity in the Christian West, have been so concerned to ask *whether* people believed that they have rarely noticed that the great problem of the sixteenth century was *in what sense* people believed'.[33] Although Protestantism demanded creedal attention 'we should not be fooled into thinking that the "reformation of belief" was fundamentally propositional. Belief was much harder than creedal assent, hence the Reformation was much more than a conflict over doctrine'.[34] The approach this thesis has taken to belief as a concept applies many of the same principles as espoused by Shagan to the domain of belief in witchcraft. And the observations that have been made through the application of this approach represent only a miniscule portion of the enormous philosophical, conceptual, and temporal scope of the conversations required to truly historicise belief. Nevertheless, the experiences of Galis, the Throckmortons, and Fairfax, can be read as representative of broader cultural shifts regarding belief in witchcraft in English society over the period. Galis' triumph over disbelief was achieved as elite attitudes increasingly aligned with the enthusiastic type of believing he embodied. The Throckmortons were thoroughly vindicated by the legal system, which allowed them not only space to defend their beliefs but also to advertise the godliness of their practices. Whereas Fairfax was repeatedly frustrated by the disjuncture between his convictions and growing scepticism within the English judiciary, and his confrontation resolved itself in such a way that he was forced to defend the rationality of the process by which he arrived at his belief.

To conclude, as much as the history of witchcraft is haunted by the spectre of belief, this thesis is haunted by the spectre of disenchantment. The circumstantial difficulties under which this thesis was produced, combined with the adoption of an approach that required a concentrated analysis of sources has meant that, for practical reasons, the scope of the study be limited to the period 1560–1640. This means that the work can only hint at and foreshadow the rift between popular and elite conceptions of witchcraft that opened up over the course of the seventeenth century and which were legislatively cemented through the passing of the 1735 Witchcraft Act.[35] Were it possible for me to approach the topic anew, with my methodology intact but without having to allocate so much space to its articulation, I would eagerly examine all of the witchcraft pamphlets published in England to 1735. This would allow for an investigation into how emotional styles of belief developed over the

[33] This is an incredibly compact summary of Shagan's argument that does not do the work justice: Shagan, *The Birth of Modern Belief*, pp. 87, 96, 74.
[34] Ibid., pp. 74, 96
[35] Owen Davies, *Witchcraft, Magic, and Culture: 1736–1951* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), pp. 1–100.

entirety of the period during which witchcraft was criminalised, facilitating a fuller comparison of my findings to those of scholars whose work covers the whole of the seventeenth century. It would also offer space for a more direct discussion of contemporary styles of religious belief and how these related to styles of belief in witchcraft. It would be the next logical step to take, should the opportunity arise for me to continue my research into the topic. Should it not, then I am content with my findings on the emotional styles of belief in early modern English witchcraft pamphlets to be my small contribution to the discipline I love so dearly.

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