DEBATES ABOUT WITCHCRAFT IN ENGLAND 1650 - 1736

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DEBATES ABOUT WITCHCRAFT IN ENGLAND 1650-1736: SHORT ABSTRACT

This thesis shows the evolution of educated belief in witchcraft in England from 1650, at the end of the last decade of large-scale prosecution, to 1735/6, when the Jacobean witchcraft legislation was repealed. It looks at this belief as a body of ideas more or less susceptible to serious use, rather than as the property of a social group, something measurable in statistical terms.

There are three overlapping areas:

1. The early chapters show how witchcraft theory had an ideological import in the years 1650-1670. For Sir Robert Filmer, witchcraft prosecution was tainted by its association with puritan politics and theology. Hobbes viewed the metaphysical underpinnings of the theory with disdain, but felt it necessary to preserve witchcraft as crime within his system. For Meric Casaubon, witchcraft theory was an ideal embodiment of the restoration of traditional belief, and a boundary condition of a religiously defined community. The third chapter shows how witchcraft belief could colour mutual perceptions of Anglo-Scottish relations.

2. Having been a useful symbol of a broadly-based, religious, but non-factional society for the Harleyite Daniel Defoe in the crisis of 1710-11, witchcraft was coopted into the party struggle during the notorious Wenham case. Subsequently, witchcraft theory was a dangerous subject for a regime which, as Walpole's did, sought to disentangle the religious and secular threads which the

witchcraft issue bound together.

3. Witchcraft, factionalized, became for Defoe a satirical symbol of party rule. Elsewhere it emerged, verbally and visually, whenever ferment about Church-State relations bubbled once more to the surface. These issues are examined in chapters on the last great witchcraft debate, images of witchcraft, and on repeal of English, Scottish, and Irish witchcraft legislation. The central conclusions are chronological and causal. Witchcraft theory continued to count well into the eighteenth century; and its demise had very specific political and ideological occasions.

DEBATES ABOUT WITCHCRAFT IN ENGLAND 1650-1736: LONG ABSTRACT

Questions about the decline of witchcraft belief are often posed in a way which precludes an answer. Two reasons are apparent for this. By seeking to discover when the tide turned, when educated people stopped believing in witchcraft, historians are often implicitly appealing to the model of an opinion poll for which we have no eighteenth-century data, and which has a fairly dubious relation to any adequate account of what a belief is. Even if we had access to a comprehensive series of Gallup polls on the issue of the existence of God, running from a supposedly unproblematic period - say 1500 - through ages of enlightenment and scepticism to our apparently secular age, it is clear that we would learn little about the strength or nature of religious belief. Even the sophisticated polls we have today which try to tell us how many people in England believe in God or Devil, Heaven or Hell, mean little out of context. The data they provide is contradictory and opaque.

There is a similar problem with belief about witchcraft. One question we can ask is when witchcraft belief became a silly belief, a matter of ridicule, the prerogative of the fringe. In other words, when did the élite discourse of witchcraft cease to be viable ? When, to adapt a phrase from Dr Johnson, did witchcraft seem "beyond the need for rational confutation". Popular belief is another matter, and its persistence into the twentieth century has been well-documented.

Throughout the period of the persecution of witches there were published and influential sceptics. They deployed the same arguments in the 1590s as in the 1730s. What had changed in the mean time to render these positions more plausible ?

The early chapters of this thesis set out to show the power of witchcraft as an ideology, its appeal, and its ability to be moulded to serve new interests. During the 1640s, witchcraft prosecution had become associated with disorder, notably through the dangerous witch craze initiated and sustained by the witchfinder general, Matthew Hopkins. At the Restoration, it was easy to ridicule the persecution of witches as the favourite pursuit of lunatic sectaries. Meric Casaubon saw the virtues of preserving traditional supernatural beliefs, however, bringing them to the aid of the whole process of a miraculously guaranteed and sacred Restoration. The force of the previous chapter on Filmer and Hobbes is to show in the first case how witchcraft belief could have political and religious affiliations which rendered it unattractive; and in the second, how the reality of demonic agency was not a necessary feature of witchcraft's appeal. Witchcraft was still a functioning feature of Thomas Hobbes's system. Any notion that the discourse of witchcraft had somehow spent its force by the 1650s is untenable.

The following chapter on the significance of witchcraft to Anglo-Scottish relations explores the rhetoric of those

opposed to English intellectual and religious colonisation of the Scots nation. Witchcraft played a symbolic role in this, especially within covenanting attacks on the variety of English infidelities, both religious and political. For many Scotsmen the English were both leaguers with the Devil and an impediment to godly resistance to witchcraft. Yet English responses to Scottish prosecutions of witches show no mounting scepticism in the 1690s, despite Scots fears of this. On the contrary, publication of Francis Hutchinson's major sceptical work on witchcraft was delayed by English ecclesiastical sensitivity to such Scottish perceptions, around the time of the union of 1707. The belief in the validity of laws against witches remained a feature of Scottish intellectual life long after the union. Any resistance that there was to the repeal of the witchcraft legislation in 1736, came from the Scottish opposition to Walpole, in the figure of James Erskine. This chapter serves once again to demonstrate the powerful appeal of the rhetoric of witchcraft as a way of organizing political and religious perceptions.

As a demonstration of the continuing relevance and political content of belief in witchcraft after the Civil War, the first part of the thesis is an essential preliminary to the central portion which sets out to describe how political events and ideological trepidation contrived to undermine such belief.

The treatment of witchcraft in the rage of party, 1710-

14, is therefore the crux of the thesis, in that it comes nearest to answering the traditional question of when and how people in England came to stop believing in witchcraft. This problematic question has, of course, been reformulated. We are looking for the moment when witchcraft ceased to be a serious subject of elite concern. This chapter focuses on one writer, the journalist and novelist Daniel Defoe. It sets out the importance of supernaturalism and the occult in much of his work, and sketches his relationship to a dissenting tradition of supernaturalism. The major problem of interpretation is Daniel Defoe's apparent volte face on the issue of the existence of witchcraft. In 1711, at the height of party conflict, and as a writer in the interest of Harley's administration, Defoe produced an article in his Review which thoroughly endorsed belief in witchcraft as a piece of Christian orthodoxy. Yet, in the 1720s he produced works pursuing a far more sceptical line. From analysis of the texts and contexts, it seems that in 1711 support for witchcraft belief was a position calculated to appeal to the sort of cross-party coalition which Harley and his agent, Defoe, were trying to construct. In October 1711, it was a non-party issue, both secular and religious, which could embody a vision of a broad, Christian commonwealth defined against the image of depravity and deviance, the witch. This is a role it had played for Meric Casaubon, and it was to form part of Richard Boulton's stillborn defence of traditional belief in the 1720s. However, in 1712, during

the contentious trial and pardon of the supposed witch, Jane Wenham, the issue of witchcraft itself became politicised in a welter of pamphlets for and against the conviction. These employed the rhetoric of party conflict, the Whig and Tory hobbyhorses of priestcraft and the church in danger. Furthermore, during the course of the period between Defoe's Review article and the works on the occult he published in the 1720s, his Harleian vision of non-party, religious government evaporated. Party rule triumphed. Witchcraft thus lost its much of its use for the likes of Defoe reappearing in his work, parodically inverted, as a metaphor for party conflict and party rule themselves. In Defoe's history of the Devil, witches properly speaking were no longer needed because diabolism reigned at the very seat of power.

The analysis of witchcraft during and after the "rage of party", focused on discursive transformations in the work of one individual, Daniel Defoe, is then extended. Initially the bipartisan theory of witchcraft, seized upon in the party struggle, became increasingly perceived as the intellectual property of a discredited clique of highflyers and Tory extremists. Witchcraft itself embodied the amphibian nature of political authority in the highflying scheme of things, as an offence which blended together civil and religious apostasy. The belief in it was perceived both as wrongheaded, and as having a dangerous potential for raising uncomfortable issues and civil disturbance. Having then become associated with the losers in the political

struggle, belief in witchcraft came to be seen as fit matter for ridicule. In the debate between Francis Hutchinson and Richard Boulton between 1715 and 1722, the former pointed out the dangerous religious factionalism and potential for popular ferment which licensed witchcraft belief involved. Boulton's attempt to resurrect the vision of a unified Christian community defining itself against the enemies of society harks back to Defoe. It retrospect, it was a piece of anachronism.

By considering John Locke's remarks on spirit, however, it can be seen that witchcraft was not ruled out by the new epistemology. Locke's conception of human understanding could be used in favour of belief in witches, as it was in Boulton's work. Witchcraft belief was not exterminated by new forms of reasoning about the material world, as Locke's works show. The metaphysics and the epistemology to support such beliefs remained intact. But in political terms, we can see why witchcraft theory had little appeal for such as Locke, with their radical separation between secular and religious jurisdiction.

A chapter on images of witchcraft sets out the development of the iconography of the witch. The stages by which the stereotypical modern figure of the witch emerged are sketched. Seventeenth-century illustrations remain non-specific; it is within the context of the masquerade, and in the period during which witchcraft is successively factionalized and fictionalized, that a legible stereotype

is defined. This development is traced in the work of William Hogarth. Unrecognized diabolical resonances in his art are teased out. An examination of the political print shows how the image of the witch was satirically deployed, and how a variety of pernicious activities could be subsumed under the symbolism of witchcraft and diabolism. This chapter therefore contributes to the description of the fate of the configuration of ideas about witchcraft in the wake of the "rage of party".

Bien-pensant writers now constantly associated a serious belief in witchcraft with high-flying Toryism and non-juring principles. The topic of witchcraft tended to resurface at times when religious debate was at its most vigorous. The repeal of the witchcraft statutes in 1736 took place in the midst of great debates over heresy and the place of dissent within the English state, in a decade of intense anticlericalism. During the furore over Jewish naturalization in the 1750s, the spectre of witchcraft was once again raised. And finally, the sole pamphlet which opposed the repeal of Irish witchcraft legislation in the 1820s, couched its argument in high-church terms, and obviously formed part of traditionalist resistance to the religious and political reforms of that period.

This leads on to a wider methodological point. The crime of witchcraft persisted in a society which had room for a conception of a confessional state, a state and a society defined by a sense of religious belonging. In the

early seventeenth century, the individual witch was seen as the inversion of the godly ideal, the negative embodiment of theories of contractual relations between God and man. In making a contract with the Devil, the witch threatened Christian society; but the notion of the possibility of such an inverted contract reinforced the plausibility of contract theology. As a bigger concept, as the focus of the threat to society, witchcraft performed another defining role in ecclesiology and civil theology. This amphibious crime, essentially religious, yet proceeded against in secular courts, served to emphasize the divine nature of the body politic. As with Defoe, this emphasis could function in a fairly loose way, defining a very wide body of Christian believers against the utter depravity of witchcraft, and of those godless miscreants who denied the possibility of witchcraft. So, if we accept the periodisation offered by revisionist historians of the eighteenth century, who want to see the end of the confessional state in 1828/9, we should not be surprised that witchcraft resurfaces occasionally during the eighteenth century, that it comes up in the theological debates of the 1820s, or that Johnson and the great jurist Blackstone make such tantalizingly ambiguous remarks about the crime of witchcraft. As noted in the chapter on images, it is after 1828 that the Devil seems to disappear from the political satire.

The recession of witchcraft belief was a complex process. To start with, there is the model offered by

Christina Larner. Ideal for an age of Reformation and Counter-reformation, the crime of witchcraft was the special instrument of the evangelizing and self-consciously religious state. That sort of state in England received a massive set-back, it cannot be denied, with the advent of toleration in 1689. Yet the ideal of the Christian state remained as a resource, even beyond the defeat of Robert Harley's administration. Ideals remained, but realities were changing. The proportion of national energy devoted to persecution, and to the pursuit of a comprehensive national church, was in decline. The developments of the 1820s put an end to the discourse of a sanctified and confessionally defined state which had already been to a large extent marginalized.

We have to fit the story of debates about witchcraft into this two-part model, which identifies a significant, but not total shift in political realities around 1689, and a much later extermination of a set of religious and political traditions. After 1689 witchcraft as a crime had lost much of its rationale, at least from our hindsighted point of view. What we can trace from 1689 to the 1720s is the way in which a belief, losing some of its roots in the ideological construction of society, could persist, only to be driven out of public and polite discourse by the contingencies of politics rather than the inevitability of rational confutation. Witchcraft belief lived on after 1720, but it led a fugitive existence amongst the outed and those

regarded as eccentrics. Its occasional reemergence into the political limelight was a measure of the persistence of ideals of a confessional society up to the 1820s. And it is no coincidence that it was in the 1820s that a truly historical approach to the problem of witchcraft belief began to emerge.

INTRODUCTION

Witchcraft has been a favourite subject for historians ever since the emergence of a whig history of rationalism in the nineteenth century. Both W.E.H. Lecky and H.T. Buckle saw the disappearance of prosecution for witchcraft throughout Europe as a victory for reason over a self-evidently false belief. H.C. Lea collected together materials on witchcraft with the intention of compiling a sequel to his similarly whiggish - and Protestant - history of the Inquisition. The writers of the early twentieth century, Wallace Notestein and George Lincoln Burr among them, followed much the same path. They cast themselves as successors to the honourable men who had exploded this outmoded belief in the eighteenth century. They did not examine the motives of earlier sceptics; they simply adopted their insights, and assumed their rectitude. The disappearance of witchcraft belief among educated people was a triumph for humanity and for rationality. Motives were questioned no further than this. More confident than their eighteenth-century predecessors, distanced from the insecurities which had hedged a live debate, they nevertheless had little occasion to flirt with the crypto-relativism offered much earlier by Charles Lamb:

> We are too hasty when we set down our ancestors in the gross for fools, for the monstrous inconsistencies (as they seem to us) involved in their creed of witchcraft. In the relation of this visible world we find them to have been as rational...as ourselves...There is no law to judge

> of the lawless, or canon by which a dream may be criticized.[1]

Progressive rationalism and romantic pessimism were to be yoked together in the new brand of sociology advocated around 1900 by Max Weber. His vision of the progressive disenchantment of the world, in the wake of the scientific revolution and the growth of the spirit of capitalism, and of the construction of an "iron cage of rationality", has exercised a powerful influence on historical writing about magic ever since. It has confirmed the nineteenth-century trend, but offered greater scope both for complex historical argument touching on the social and the intellectual; and for an attractive concession to the undeniable appeal of irrationality, as substantive rationality was increasingly usurped by its formal shadow, the rational method seeming to

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[1]Charles Lamb, "Witches and other Night Fears" (1821) in Selected Writings, Penguin edition, 1988; W.E.H. Lecky, A History of England in the Eighteenth Century, 7 vols., 1878, i pp266-7; idem., History of the rise and influence of the spirit of rationalism in Europe, 2nd edition, 2 vols., 1865, i, pp1-150; H.T. Buckle, The History of Civilisation in England, new edition, 3 vols., 1871, iii p363; H.C. Lea, A History of the Inquisition of the Middle Ages, New York 1955; idem., Materials toward a History of Witchcraft, ed. A.C. Howland, 3 vols., New York 1957; Wallace Notestein, A History of Witchcraft in England from 1558 to 1718, Washington 1911, esp. pp313-333, and tribute to Lecky, pix; G.L. Burr, ed., The witch-persecutions..., Philadelphia 1897. A similarly positivist tradition culminated in the German monument of Hexenstudien, W.G. Soldan, Soldan's Geschichte der Hexenprozesse neu bearb. von H. Heppe, 2 vols., Stuttgart 1880. For earlier British treatment, see also the pioneering work of Sir Walter Scott, his Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft of 1830; Percy Bysshe Shelley's thoroughly romantic Of the Devil and Devils, 1821; and his father-in-law William Godwin's utterly rationalist Lives of the Necromancers, 1832.

frustrate the very ends which reason sought.[2]

Much recent writing about witchcraft has, consequently, assumed some causal connection between the intellectual ferment of the seventeenth century, the definitively rational moment of our historical era, and the demise of a quintessentially irrational belief in the power and existence of witchcraft. It is nothing new, of course, to point out the difficulties with such a point of view[3], ranging from philosophical worries about the very nature of rationalism and science, to the historical fact of the long-term participation of leading natural philosophers, including Robert Boyle and Isaac Newton, in a scientific programme to establish the existence of active spiritual substance, and the intervention of God in the world. But even those who issue these caveats, have failed thoroughly

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[2]On formal versus substantive rationality, see Max Weber, Economy and Society, 3 vols., New York 1968, i pp85-6. On the disenchantment [die Entzauberung] of the world, a phrase significantly adopted from the arch-romantic Friedrich Schiller, Max Weber, "Science as a Vocation" (1919) in From Max Weber, ed. H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, 1970, pp139f,148,155; and "Religious Rejections of the World and their Directions" (1915) in loc. cit., p337. Generally, see Anthony Giddens, Capitalism and modern social theory, Cambridge 1971, pp169-184. Weber's influence is obliquely reflected in Keith Thomas's influential work, Religion and the Decline of Magic, Harmondsworth 1973 (originally London 1971), whose title harks back to Tawney's treatment of the Weberian problem, Religion and the Rise of Capitalism, 1926.

[3]Charles Webster, in his From Paracelsus to Newton: Magic and the making of modern science, Cambridge 1982, p12, crystallizes the danger:

> There is a risk that science is bearing too much of the explanatory burden with respect to the important issue of the decline of the magical worldview.

to disentangle these processes of change. The underlying assumption, the ubiquitously supposed truism at work behind all the explanations so far offered of what is called the decline of magic, is that 1700 is the rational horizon. After 1700, no one could seriously believe in witchcraft. This requirement is never even questioned, and the starting-point of this thesis is an attempt to do just that.[4]

Another strain of sociological thinking dispenses with the question of innate rationality, and examines the issue of social function: not truth, but utility is the thing. Forget whether witchcraft was or was not a true theory, scientifically speaking, and ask what function it played in the operation of social structure. The work of both Keith Thomas and Alan Macfarlane looked at accusations of witchcraft within their local context, in the light of functional anthropology. On this basis, useful models of peasant action, motivated by the dynamics of guilt, and taking place in an era of declining neighbourliness have been elaborated[5]. This approach, drawing on the alternative,

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[4]Eg. Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic; Brian Easlea, Witch Hunting, Magic and the New Philosophy, Brighton 1980; Barbara Shapiro, Probability and Certainty in Seventeenth-Century England, Princeton 1983, chapter 6; Brian Levack, The witch-hunt in early modern Europe, 1987, esp. pp217-224; E.W. Monter, "The historiography of European witchcraft: progress and prospects" in Journal of Interdisciplinary History, 2, 1972, and his more recent, brief, review article, which concludes that witchcraft remains a mystery: "European Witchcraft: A Moment of Synthesis ?", Historical Journal, 31, 1988.

[5]Religion and the Decline of Magic, pp599-637; Alan Macfarlane, Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England, pp147-207.

Durkheimian strain in the sociology of religion has been most thoroughly applied to popular behaviour and belief systems.

The intellectual demise of witchcraft has never been studied to symmetrical effect. In other words, proponents and opponents of witchcraft belief have not been treated as equal and opposite for the purposes of historical study. Such evenhandedness is a necessary feature of specifically historical explanation. We would not explain the triumph of Newtonian mechanics by asserting that Newton was right, if only because he was not. In invoking the grand historical induction which reminds us that the vast majority of past theories have been false, we recognize that it is unsafe to regard any theory as unassailable. Hence, historical explanation of beliefs should be neutral as regards truth-content. Furthermore, unless we attempt to be symmetrical, we fail to come to terms with the motives, prejudices and dispositions of historical actors. The history of truth, which is what asymmetrical history of ideas amounts to, collapses to an ideal, Platonic process, removed from time, and only imperfectly acted out in the real, messy business of history.

Even the social history of witchcraft beliefs effected by functional anthropology has not allowed an escape from these misconceptions. Instead, it has offered an alibi. The unspoken assumption has been that witchcraft <u>was</u> wrong, <u>so</u> what did it do ? Asking such a question at the village level

has allowed historians to draw on anthropological resources, and to deal with a supposedly "primitive" culture in early-modern society. But the continuing arguments about the validity of the functionalist perspective - largely unresolved, except through the inexorable operation of fashion and retirement - have obscured another fruitful approach employing functional explanation,[6] one which focusses on elite, rather than popular, culture. Concentrating on the function which the notion of the witch played within the ideologies -social, political and religious - of the educated elite, this could examine the historical relationship between the fortunes of witchcraft theory and the ideologies with which it had become associated, or for which it had a particular affinity.[7] In studying these aspects of the belief in witchcraft, we cannot evade the problem of symmetry which has been raised, and which will be further discussed both in this introduction and the body of the thesis.

Parting company with two of the traditional approaches to the witchcraft "problem" clearly affects the choice of materials used in this thesis. There is much scope for teasing out apparently peripheral remarks about witchcraft

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[6]For a convincing defence of properly understood functional explanation, see G.A. Cohen, Karl Marx's Theory of History: A Defence, Oxford 1978, chapters 9 and 10.

[7]Moves towards such an approach have been made in the work of Christina Larner and Stuart Clark [see bibliography] but neither followed the consequences through for the issue of decline in belief.

embedded in more wide-ranging expressions of ideology; or for relating works on witchcraft to other, often better-known, or more "mainstream" books, by the same author. One applies a neglected method - set out in the previous paragraph - to a set of texts being juxtaposed in a hitherto unfamiliar way. This has here encouraged the examination of Hobbes, Casaubon, Filmer, and even the initially unpromising Locke, in the context of witchcraft theory. The results illuminate witchcraft itself; and also throw new light on the broader outlook of the authors being discussed. The authors and incidents chosen have a particular ideological thread to be drawn out in detailed analysis, but sources are not simply selected to suit the argument. It is more a case of concentrating on under-explored areas in order to look for new ways of understanding the witchcraft issue in this period.

The approach adopted here goes beyond this essentially pragmatic strategy, however, by looking in new ways, as well as in new places; by examining familiar texts in greater depth than is customary, but also with a self-consciously philosophical emphasis. In seeking to ask <u>why</u> the old explanations of the decline of witchcraft belief, so-called, seem inadequate, the thesis draws on insights from Wittgenstein's later writings.

To start with, an analogy can be made between Wittgenstein's contributions towards an understanding of meaning, and a particular approach to historical accounts of

intellectual change. In defining a word, we move from one word to another. Ultimately, however, it is the word-in-action which supplies a definition: the meaning is in the use. Much the same can be said about the justification of beliefs - beliefs about witchcraft, for instance. Certainly there is justification, a complex web of supporting intellectual argument, but, strictly speaking, justification must always come to an end, and an end which is not simply a matter of certain propositions somehow striking us as true. Such a process uses a visual analogy; we see the truth. Instead, Wittgenstein offers an emphasis on actions, on the behavioural. At the root of a supposedly grounded belief, there is always an ungrounded belief, and the deed.[8] To explain a change in belief system, and the shift in language which that entails, it is necessary to go back to the arena of deeds, the world of human interests, to explain. Otherwise, the network of language enmeshes us. Consequently, the most plausible explanations, a priori, of what happened to magical beliefs in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, are ones which examine things such as the nature of the state, or the availability of fire insurance.[9] Instead, we are too often told that evidence, empirical, "hard" evidence convinced people in that period

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[8]Ludwig Wittgenstein, Zettel, ed. G.E.M. Anscombe and G.H. von Wright, Oxford 1967, para.253.

[9]Christina Larner, Enemies of God, 1981, passim but esp. pp72-3 and 198-9; Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic, pp779-82. These are also, of course, typically functional explanations.

that certain things simply could not be the case. We take sides in the debates of the past. But justification by experience also comes to an end, and if it did not, it would not be justification. If one were to mistrust a physicist's declaration that water boils at around 100°C, a matter of convention, how could one undermine his point of view ? Set up experiments of one's own ? What could they hope to prove ? If another person prefers to resort to an oracle instead, and is told that they are "wrong", is this not an illegitimate use of one language-game to attack another ? Of course, all sorts of slogans can be brought into play, and "Where two principles really do meet which cannot be reconciled with one another, then each man declares the other a fool and a heretic." In historical terms, intellectual battles are just that - battles, combats, which oppose different principles and employ any number of slogans, the point about slogans being that they bite on the world, grip the attention because they appeal to interests. These are the parts of the debate which do the work, and particular thinkers win because interests move their way:

> I said I would "combat" the other man, - but wouldn't I give him reasons ? Certainly; but how far do they go ? At the end of reasons comes <u>persuasion</u>. (Think what happens when missionaries convert natives.)

Natives are not converted by being shown the truth. It is the power, the force and the persuasion behind the truth

that convinces them and drags men before new altars.[10]

It is necessary, then, to discard the fallacy which claims that the common-sense notions of evidence and truth can uniquely construct an adequate account of changes in belief. This sort of model is both too empiricist - men changed their minds because evidence accumulated[11] - and too intellectualist - false beliefs change just because they are false.[12] Those who were sceptical about witchcraft did not uncover the truth by looking at things more closely. This conceptual critique can be bolstered by historical evidence. We have to ask why one sceptic like Reginald Scot failed to win the argument in the late sixteenth century, while another, Francis Hutchinson, seems to have won in the eighteenth. One thing is certain: the arguments did not get any better.[13] Something else must have changed.

Hitherto, this discussion has used the term belief as an unproblematic category. In fact, its use has been a form of shorthand, and its innate confusions need to be resolved. It seems fair to say that the common-sense view of the

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[10]Ludwig Wittgenstein, On Certainty, ed. G.E.M.Anscombe and G.H. von Wright, Oxford 1969, paras. 604,609,611,612.

[11]Although it should not be denied that the accumulation of evidence can effect change in certain circumstances - though in the case of witchcraft belief this requires the sort of metaphysical consensus as to what evidence is that was lacking around 1700.

[12]The historical induction mentioned above - most theories have been false - vitiates such an explanatory model.

[13]As Thomas recognizes, Religion and the Decline of Magic, p684.

historian of belief is that individual beliefs are somehow convertible, via the social network, into common beliefs.[14] People believed or did not believe in witchcraft at such and such a date; English witchcraft belief was, alternately, weak or strong. These are remarks we unthinkingly make, and their familar form conceals a flawed conception of the relationship between the individual's beliefs, and social dogma. More importantly, perhaps, they lead historians to ask a number of misconceived questions typified by that which asks when people in England stopped believing in witchcraft. The progression from individual to mass belief is notionally made by a process of aggregation resulting in a rough and ready, and spurious, quasi-statistical proposition - quasi-statistical because based on inadequate data, spurious because concealing the complexity which questions of belief necessarily involve. The Gallup poll is set up as an ideal to which the historical explanation, lacking sophisticated data, must somehow approximate. But, even if we had such a poll, it would not be enough. It would form part of an account but, on its own, would mean very little.

With this flawed model in mind we start worrying about when the tide turned, when majority opinion swung across the no-man's-land separating belief from its opposite. We can

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[14]Though see Michel Foucault, The Order of Things, 1970; Edward Said, Orientalism, 1985; Ian Hacking, The Emergence of Probability, Cambridge 1975; and Richard Rorty, Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature, Oxford 1980, for examples of alternative approaches.

imagine a balance, with ever more weight applied to one side until an instantaneous equilibrium of belief is immediately succeeded by the triumph of an opposite point of view. A continuous process therefore culminates in a discrete moment of change. This is not an appealing picture of the relationship between individual and social belief, which has, surely, a more dialectical character.

The foregoing is a crude parody which no historian would swallow as an accurate reflection of his argument. Nevertheless, it is no straw man but rather the ultimate corollary to the traditional positions set out. Any account founding itself on the commonsensical use of the concept belief has to grapple not only with all the, admittedly bogus, problems of inaccessibility which "belief" entails - how can I possibly know what another person is thinking ? - but also with the mechanism of change - how do we define the moment at which the erosion of the belief in witchcraft turned into a rout. When 51% of people had turned ? 50% ? 40% ? And which people are we talking about ? How do we draw a line around the elite ? Whom do we include among this magic circle ? Escaping from this paradigm involves some further recognitions.

The unwieldy concept of belief can be usefully replaced by that of discourse. Discourse, as understood in this thesis, is definitively public, and its frontiers remain pragmatic. It is fairly easy to draw an acceptable boundary around elite discourse, the published writings of the

educated and politically informed, and associated unpublished texts. Specifically, we need to ask why, when, and how the discourse of witchcraft ceased to be a viable one. In other words, when did it become impossible, within the public space of the elite, to engage in serious debate or conversation about witchcraft without suffering ridicule or retreating to the margins ? Why did the debate cease to matter ? How did it become the prerogative of the fringe ?

It should also be noted that discourse is political. Writing a treatise or preaching a sermon is a necessarily political act, and we need to ask why people chose to write about witchcraft. Knowledge is power; and engaging with a form of knowledge often involves engaging with social order.[15] In writing about witchcraft, the authors discussed here often seem to be telling us about "other" things, about law, religion or the place of the spiritual in the secular order. This tells us not that they were using witchcraft as an occasion for digression, but rather that witchcraft was part of these political issues, unavoidably implicated in the business of government in its widest sense.

Treating the witchcraft issue in terms of the fate of a particular discourse also allows one to bring another dictum of Wittgenstein's to bear on the material. "A whole mythology" he suggestively wrote, "is deposited in our

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[15] I have been much influenced here by Simon Schaffer and Steven Shapin, Leviathan and the Air-Pump, Princeton 1986.

language."[16] Language now, as it were, bears the traces of our history; and much of what is sometimes called the history of belief can be looked at in terms of changing linguistic practice and shifting "grammatical" boundaries. Consequently, one may investigate the process by which the elements of the witchcraft discourse, bound up with each other, and tied by inumerable links[17] to all the other overlapping discourses of seventeenth-century thought, became dislodged and rearranged. Parts would have become fictionalized, or entered the realm of metaphor; while others may have been absorbed into discourses which remained

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[16]"Remarks on Frazer's Golden Bough" translated by A.M. Miles and Rush Rhees in The Human World, 3, 1971, p3 [from "Bemerkungen über Frazer's The Golden Bough" in Synthese, xvii, 1967. Wittgenstein did also subscribe to the sorts of belief about magic which have bedevilled the study of its history. For example:

> Frazer says it is very difficult to discover the error in magic and this is why it persists for so long - because, for example, a ceremony which is supposed to bring rain is sure to appear effective sooner or later. But then it is queer that people do not notice sooner that it does rain sooner or later anyway.[loc.cit., pp29-30]

This perceptive criticism of Frazer's approach to primitive ritual is marred by Wittgenstein's adherence to the rationalist's clear-cut distinction between magic and science, myth and reason:

> There is a mistake only if magic is presented as science.[loc.cit., p31]

Or again,

> There is nothing in magic to show the direction of any development.[loc.cit., 37]

[17]Willard van Orman Quine, "Two Dogmas of Empiricism", final section, in From a Logical Point of View, Harvard 1964.

legitimate.[18] Once again, this avoids the unconvincing model in which supporters of non-belief accumulate until the scales tip. Instead we are left with a much more subtle process in which an ever-present metaphorical aspect of the language of witchcraft emerges as predominant within the literature, both in terms of genre, and more generally. In what was itself a period of generic uncertainty, when the limits between history and fiction were in flux, this involves close attention to and detailed examination of texts and oeuvres in order to understand exactly what is going on.[19]

In admitting that statistics, or pseudo-statistics, about belief are an inadequate measure of the real historical issue, one can go beyond the refusal to aggregate individual beliefs, and question the underlying assumptions which historians have made about the progress of belief in this period. Statistics concerning the level of prosecution are not only unreliable; they also have no necessary indicative relation to the prevalence of belief in witchcraft among individuals or, indeed, the viability of the discourse of witchcraft. Peaks of prosecuting zeal in the late-sixteenth and mid-seventeenth centuries, extraordinary events, epidemics as it were, are followed by

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[18]Compare Simon Schaffer, "Newton's Comets and the Transformation of Astrology" in P.Curry (ed.), Astrology, science and society, Woodbridge 1987.

[19]On genre see Michael McKeon, The Origins of the English Novel, Baltimore 1987, passim.

long periods of endemic prosecution of witches at a lower rate. Now, if witchcraft theory can be studied in the functional manner outlined earlier, if the witch can be seen as a symbolic variable within the shifting formulae of early-modern ideology, it has no self-evident dependence on the intensity of prosecution. We cannot simply assume that the elite discourse needed a high, or even a moderate level of prosecution to thrive, especially since prosecutions after the Restoration, few in number surely, could be well-reported in journals and pamphlets. If the witch is the enemy of and embodiment of opposition to the Christian state - one convincing symbolic function canvassed by Christina Larner - then a well-chosen, well-publicized, exemplary prosecution will be as, perhaps more, effective than a dangerous and uncontrollable wave of panic. A low-level of endemic prosecution is quite compatible with the significance of the witch as a marginal, but nevertheless defining, social actor. If rates of prosecution were substantially lower after 1660, lower than in the period which had followed the 1590s, we have to accept the possibility that this may be, partly at least, a process of stabilisation. It may be that other factors interact, that some sort of ideological transformation was also under way, one which sapped the credibility of witchcraft as a crime or a symbol, but this needs to be demonstrated and related to the possibility of stabilisation, not taken for granted after a cursory look at a raw statistical measure.

A more concrete set of misconceptions relate to the comparative perspective with which any historian of witchcraft belief has to contend. How can one supply a general explanation for the decline of witchcraft belief throughout Europe in this period, one which can embrace the suposedly polar opposites of English moderation and Continental excess, mediated by Christina Larner's picture of a Scottish system of belief and prosecution which somehow straddled the divide between the diabolical pact and the sabbat on the one hand, and peasant notions of _maleficium_ on the other.[20] This supposed pattern of difference is a source of confusion. Surely, the difference betwen Scotland and England lay mainly in the field of legal procedure and the definition of admissible evidence. English tracts and pamphlets on witchcraft are full of the diabolical pact; its invisibility in so many trials is no indication of a fundamental diference in belief. Moreover, the work of Soman and others[21], has corrected the picture of a crazed continent and sane island kingdom, based on the level of persecution. There is no evidence that the level of prosecution in the kingdom of France itself was any higher than in the neighbouring kingdom of England. High levels of prosecution tended to occur in areas, such as Germany and the borderlands of France, where authority was fragmented

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[20]Larner, _Enemies of God_, pp134-191 and passim.

[21]Usefully summarized by Robin Briggs in "Witchcraft and the community in France and French-speaking Europe" in his _Communities of Belief_, Oxford 1989, pp7-65.

and political control weak. There is no necessary connection between these statistics and the patterns or fate of belief. Since, as already noted, a low level of prosecution can sustain belief, there is no reason to expect that high levels of prosecution reflect anything other than hysteria projected on to the witchcraft issue. The hysterics have continued to this day, fixating themselves on new objects. Witchcraft belief has, on the whole, not. This is what the historian, as opposed to the social psychologist, wants to explain.

Above all, we can avoid the traditional Enlightenment account - right-thinking individuals all over Europe stopped holding this ridiculous belief - by breaking down the chronologies. While European intellectual fashion clearly had a part to play in the demise of educated demonology, the processes in each culture were very different, involving different relationships betwen law, the Church, central government, natural philosophy and popular traditions. This thesis offers a case-study of the fate of the witchcraft discourse within one particular polity.

CHAPTER ONE

THE CONTRACT THEORY OF WITCHCRAFT AND ITS OPPONENTS

The political context of belief in witchcraft in the 1650s has already been treated by Robert Trevor Davies, but the results seem to have been enough to have scared other historians away from such an approach. For Davies witchcraft was an all-embracing cause: the Pilgrim Fathers set sail to escape the frustration of their desire to persecute witches; the conflict between King and Commons was largely concerned with witchcraft policy; Oliver Cromwell took issue with his king because of his religious convictions, and that these "were affronted by Charles I's protection of witches is in a high degree probable, although no word of his can be quoted to this effect".[1] Throughout, a sorry lack of evidence is combined with a refusal to dismiss the thesis proposed. Nevertheless, we should not allow easy ridicule to conceal more fruitful approaches to the basic proposition.

There can be no doubt that the witchcraft literature of the 1650s was highly politicized, although no simple party line can be drawn on the basis of the witchcraft issue. John Teall, for England, and E.W.Monter, for Geneva, have dismissed any systematic correlation between Calvinism and demonology.[2] In his treatment of William Perkins, George

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[1] R.T.Davies, Four Centuries of Witch-Beliefs, 1947.

[2] John Teall, "Witchcraft and Calvinism in Elizabethan England" in Journal of the History of Ideas, 23, 1962 ; E.W.Monter, Witchcraft in France and Switzerland, Ithaca 1976.

Gifford, and Reginald Scot, Teall presents us with the range of beliefs: an "orthodox" belief in the diabolical compact and demonic agency; the limited critique which exalts divine sovereignty, denies the power of demons, but condemns the malice of witches; and "the more profound and thoroughgoing protest", one which denies that the gulf between the spiritual and material realms can be bridged.

The problem with this analysis is its failure to consider the question of Scot's orthodoxy in relation to his contemporaries, and its assumption that the absence of a cut-and-dried equation between Calvinism and witchcraft beliefs indicates no affinity whatsoever between the two. Scot was a very eccentric figure, despite his influence on the sceptical writers about witchcraft of the seventeenth century. His sadducism ensured this, and his supposed followers spent much of their time misrepresenting him.[3] William Perkins was as concerned as Gifford to define a proper role for the Satanic, to prevent witchcraft beliefs from spilling over into Manichaeism. These two might draw a different boundary - though the distinction between an active and a permissive God, upon which this difference

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[3] See Sydney Anglo, "Reginald Scot's Discoverie of Witchcraft: Scepticism and Sadduceeism" in S. Anglo (ed.), The Damned Art, 1977.The works Teall discusses are: Scot, The Discoverie of Witchcraft, 1584; Gifford, A Discourse of the Subtill Practises of Devilles by Witches and Sorcerors, 1587; and Perkins, Discourse of the Damned Art of Witchcraft, Cambridge 1608.

rests, is one that Calvin himself would have refused[4] - but for both, the witch's crime is the same. It is simply that in Gifford's account, the witch is even more deluded than in Perkins's, in falling for the Devil's counterfeit rewards. The special features of Calvinist doctrine, and notably the emphasis on predestination, were apparently compatible with the belief in witchcraft. The Calvinist insistence on the depravity of man made the diabolical alliance a plausible one. The witch as enemy of human society was no particular invention of Geneva, of course; and, as Monter has pointed out, the plenitude of divine justice, the inadequacy of the human variety, might rather have suggested that severity, in as doubtful and complex a crime as witchcraft, should be reined in.[5] But, if the restriction of the miraculous caused a shift from much of the scheme laid out in the Malleus Maleficarum, and put an increasing burden upon the diabolical compact, this was a development well-suited to the language of English Calvinism. Tempering predestination with the alloy of the covenant, and so acting against antinomianism and allowing for lay initiative, English Calvinists put a divine compact at the centre of their theology. That their anti-theology should come to emphasize a diabolical covenant is hardly

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[4] See W.J. Bouwsma, John Calvin: a sixteenth-century portrait, Oxford 1988, p168.

[5] E.W.Monter, "The historiography of European witchcraft: progress and prospects" in Journal of Interdisciplinary History, 2, 1972.

surprising.[6] And is it not striking that while the courts concerned themselves with maleficium, the majority of seventeenth-century tracts dealt with compact as the main issue ? [7]

William Perkins was perhaps the most eminent exponent of English Calvinism, and "one of the most widely read English writers" according to Nicholas Tyacke.[8] His classic work, Armilla Aurea, appeared at Cambridge in 1590, translated the following year as A Golden Chain...containing the Order of the Causes of Salvation and Damnation. As Tyacke has shown, predestination, double and absolute in Perkins's sense, though not necessarily supralapsarian (dating election before the fall, as Perkins did), was the prevalent doctrine in the Church of England at the accession of Charles I:

> ...the cause of the execution of God's predestination is his mercy in Christ, in them which are saved, and in them which perish the fall and corruption of man: yet so as that the decree and eternal counsel of God concerning them both

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[6] On federal theology and its transplantation from Heidelberg to England, see R.T.Kendall, Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649, Oxford 1979, chapter 2 and passim; and David Zaret, The Heavenly Contract, Chicago 1985.

[7] See Keith Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic, Harmondsworth 1973, pp526-7. On the issue of maleficium versus diabolical compact as defining features of the crime, see the chapter on Scotland below. The difference between England and Scotland is not so much one of belief (with Scotland as a notional mid-point between English and Continental doctrines) as of legal procedure, the contrast between what could happen under common-law and inquisitorial procedures respectively.

[8] Nicholas Tyacke, Anti-Calvinists, Oxford 1987, p29.

hath not any cause beside his will and pleasure.[9]

This was the doctrine against which Arminius directed his fire in the fullest account of his doctrine, the posthumous Examen Modestum of 1612. "Quia verum est Deum velle omnibus hominibus salutem ea conditione, si crediderint" [God truly wants the salvation of all men, on condition that they believe], he wrote, speaking not of the irresistible force of God's grace, but of "leni et suavi suasione" [mild and sweet persuasion].[10] In the division between these points of view, some have found the engine of civil war. In relation to this complex debate it is enough here to point out that the questions of grace, election and freewill which such doctrines as predestination raised, were at the centre of intellectual discourse prior to the civil war, and that, to a large extent, these doctrines were discredited in the course of the 1640s and 1650s. They were on the losing side, and what is more, were seen to lead inexorably to threatening sectarianism and, ultimately, the horrors of antinomianism.[11]

But it was the contractual elements in English Calvinism which distinguished it from its Genevan parent.

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[9]William Perkins, Workes, 2 vols., Cambridge 1609, i, "A Golden Chaine", "To the Christian Reader", p9.

[10] Jacobus Arminius, Examen Modestum, Leiden 1612, pp196,22

[11] For evidence of such a perception see eg., Thomas Hobbes's Behemoth, 1679; Samuel Butler's Hudibras, 1662, 1663, 1672; Meric Casaubon's introduction to Dee's Relation, 1659 [all discussed below]; or William Dugdale's A Short View of the Late Troubles in England, Oxford 1681.

For the historian, Perry Miller, the covenant of grace was the "marrow of Puritan divinity"[12]; for a contemporary, Nicholas Byfield, it was part of The Marrow of the Oracles of God.[13] Perkins had it that "the stipulation of the couenant of grace... is the substance of the gospel..."[14] Before the 1590s, this contract had been largely conceived of as a unilateral phenomenon, used primarily to combat radical heresy and separatism by Puritans within the church of England. The heavenly contract was an inheritance, a generous gift from God, which separatists should not refuse to the sinful multitude.George Gifford defended the English church on the basis of a unilateral covenant, all Christians being "from ancient descent within the covenant".[15] But it was a bilateral covenant that came increasingly to the fore as the focus shifted to pastoral issues. A need to strike a balance between hope and despair in the assurance of grace, both of which could lead to complacency, became apparent. "Now the meanes to be in this Couenant with God, is to performe the condition of Faith" wrote Downame.[16] Yet faith itself was a gift of God through the aid of grace - a duty

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[12] Perry Miller, "The Marrow of Puritan Divinity", Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts, 1937.

[13] Published 1640.

[14] Perkins, Workes, ii, p327.

[15] According to Henry Barrow in his "A Refutation of Mr Giffard's Reasons", 1590/91 in Elizabethan Nonconformist Tracts, ed. Peel and Carlson, 6 vols., 1953-70, vol.V, p337.

[16] John Downame, A Treatise of Securitie, 1622, p98.

and a gift. Thus Sibbes:

> The covenant of grace is so called because God is so gracious to enable us to perform on our part.[17]

From such resources, Puritan casuistry developed, asserting that introspection could bring retrospective knowledge of election. The godly were led to search for evidence of the contract. The seminal source of such theorizing was, according to the historian David Zaret, William Perkins, who consistently advocated an ambiguous blend of activism and determinism in the pursuit and enjoyment of grace. The activities of the church were to be interpreted within such a framework. Baptism was "the seal of the covenant of grace", communion an ongoing symbol of consent. In Puritan pragmatics, an election to grace, located in the past, became a conditional offer to believers in the present. Sermons too, formed part of this scheme, and were even more essential, since Downame had it that "the preaching of his word is the covenant of grace".[18] This theory is, of course, the solution to the tension made central in Max Weber's account of the Protestant ethic; the productive resolution of salvation anxiety. The heavenly contract was proclaimed by preaching, and offered redemption to all on condition of faith. If this condition was fulfilled, salvation was guaranteed; but only the elect were

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[17] Sibbes, Bowels Opened, 1639, in Works, ed. A.B. Grosart, Edinburgh 1862, ii, p183, from the 20th sermon, use 3.

[18] John Downame, The Christian Warfare, 1634, p117.

able to believe and repent.

This Calvinist ideology can be seen at work in a witchcraft pamphlet of the 1650s, Doctor Lamb Revived, an account of the case of Anne Bodenham, executed for witchcraft at Salisbury.[19] In the obstinacy of the witch, the author writes,

> ...we may see much of the Justice of God... that those that will rebelliously harden their hearts against God, shall be judicially hardened by him.

A twofold process is in evidence - those that harden will in turn be hardened, all this within the predestinarian framework. Those that will harden their hearts are chosen from the very beginning, and "what a madness rests in the sons of men, to think they can repent when they will".[20] God's promise of saving grace is for the elect, "not...the wicked, because the Couenant is not made with them, by reason they agree not to the Condition of becomming Gods people".[21] The bilateral nature of the contract is strikingly clear, since God is "content to be sued on his own bond", and "we should learne thus to importune God; tell him, Lord, I have a sure promise...".[22]

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[19] Political resonances here are fairly obvious - Doctor Lambe, whose servant Anne Bodenham had supposedly been, was the Duke of Buckingham's astrologer and favoured magus in the 1620s.

[20] Edmond Bower, Doctor Lamb Revived, or, Witchcraft condemn'd in Anne Bodenham..., 1653, p42.

[21] Daniel Dyke, Two Treatises, 1618, p88.

[22] Preston, Breast-Plate of Faith and Love, 1634, vol.I, p75.

Thus the Genevan idiom of Calvinism - the emphasis on the depravity of man's nature, on free grace and predestination - was modified by the contract, which thoroughly infused Puritan theology. This was a direct affront, of course, to the Arminian party which came to dominance in the 1630s, and to Canterbury in 1633. In particular, Puritan dualism was directly opposed to the sacramentalism of the Laudians. Baptism and communion were not seals of a covenant, but efficacious outpourings of mysterious grace, available to all men. Laud, indeed, sought to limit the teaching of covenant theology, and removed charts depicting the sacraments in covenantal terms from several London churches, as bishop of that diocese.[23] Perkins's immersion in the doctrine is vitally relevant to the Laudian his work on witches, Sir Robert Filmer's particular attention to him, in his Advertisement to the Jurymen of England, Touching Witches of 1652, a function of the political and religious debates of the 1640s and 1650s.

The rationale for the severity of the punishment meted out to the convicted witch, and the particular noxiousness of the crime, lay, for Perkins, in the overt rejection of the covenant and its seals:

> ...they renounce the Lord that made them, they make no more account of his favour and protection, they doe quite cut themselves of[f] from the covenant made with him in Baptism, from the Communion of Saints, from the true worship and service of God.

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[23] See Zaret op.cit. p143.

Since witches "covenant to use his [the devil's] helpe for the working of wonders", they are not only rejecting the generous covenant of God, but also binding themselves to an anti-contract which, to Perkins's mind, is the essence of witchcraft, and a precise corollary to the theology of covenant. The positive vision of salvation is dramatized by the anathematization of its mirror-image. Within Perkins's scheme witchcraft fulfils a specific function as the inversion of orthodox soteriology. We may contrast Perkins's conscription of witchcraft theory with anti-materialist uses of witchcraft in the 1660s and 1670s, or its ecclesiological relevance in the early eighteenth century.[24] That which makes a witch is that which makes a saint, namely "the yeelding of consent upon covenant".[25] This interpretation is even clearer in the epistle to Perkins's book, written by Thomas Pickering and addressed to Sir Edward Coke. The Devil

> composeth his courses...by way of counterfait and imitation, not of the actions and dealings of men, but of the order of Gods owne proceeding with his Church; holding it a sure principle in policie, That actions will be much more effectuall, when they be framed unto the best presidents, then when they are suited to the direction of meaner examples. To this purpose, as God hath made a Covenant with his Church, binding himselfe by promise to be their God, and requiring of them the condition of faith and obedience; so doth Satan indent with his Subiects by mutuall confederacie, either solemnly or secretly; whereby they bind themselves on the one part to observe his Rules, and he on the other to accomplish their desires.

The inversion of Perkins's covenant theology is precise -

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[24]See chapters below.

[25] Perkins, Discourse, p170.

"as God hath made a Covenant...so doth Satan indent with his subiects by mutuall confederacie..." The comparison extends to embrace ceremonies and the word, all this being undertaken by the deceiver to "maintaine his owne principalitie".[26]

For Perkins, the "soveraigne preservative" against the onslaught of the Devil and his human servants was "to be within the covenant of grace". Like is fought with like, one covenant with another. And Perkins takes this opportunity to reiterate the theology of covenant, which is "made and confirmed in the Gospel by the blood of Christ", and must be held to "not outwardly in profession only, as all those be which are within the compasse of the Church, but truly and indeed as all the elect are". The core of the ambiguous doctrine, bridging free will and determinism, follows:

> ...a man is then in the covenant, when God of his grace in the use of meanes, gives him a true knowledge of the nature of it, and of conditions required in the same on both parts: and withall gives him a true and lively faith, to apprehend and apply to himselfe the promise of God in Christ, touching remission of Sinnes, and life everlasting: yea further to shew forth his faith by the fruits of true repentance, and new obedience. [my emphasis]

It is clearly a question of the apprehension of the truth, something given by God, yet requiring that one "shew forth his faith". The nature of faith as a matter either of will or of cognition is an issue to which we shall return with

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[26] ibid., preface.

Filmer's tract on the blasphemy of the holy ghost.[27]

Perhaps the most interesting and revealing passage in Perkins's treatise is that which answers the question as to why all witches are not speedily detected. It makes clear the use of the devil as God's instrument - the lesson of Job - and the absolute nature of predestination. That is, it presses the balance of covenant theology away from free will of a sort, towards determinism, for a moment, in order to maintain the equilibrium of the whole work. For the paradoxes of covenant theology - admitted by Perkins himself [28] - are resolved by a continual flux of shifting emphases. So, one reason for the failure to discover all witches speedily is

> because some one or more of them may belong to Gods election: and therefore albeit for causes best knowne to himselfe, he may suffer them to be holden in the snares of Satan, yet at length in mercie he reclaimes them, and in the meane time suffereth not the devill to exercise the depth of his malice in discovering them to their confusion.

Yet, if witches, those covenanters with the Devil, may nonetheless be elect, by God's mercy (thus is it heinous sin only for the reprobate - "There is no condemnation to them

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[27] ibid. p220. Sir Thomas Browne gives a fine exposition of English Calvinist orthodoxy as regards predestination in his Religio Medici, 1642, I,11: "[it] is in respect to God no prescious determination of our estates to come, but a definitive blast of his will already fulfilled at the instant that he first decreed it." In any subsequent discussion of a role for human will in faith, this must be kept in mind as a limitation on the extent of such a doctrine within a Calvinist framework.

[28] See Perkins, The Whole Treatise of the Cases of Conscience, Cambridge 1606, p86.

that are in Christ, Rom.8.1. because no sinne is imputed unto them"), so too may the reprobate be sunk further into their witchcraft by the justice of the Lord, who will

> suffer them not to be disclosed, that living under the meanes, where they might be reclaimed, and wilfully contemning the same; they may live to fill up the measure of their iniquities, and thereby be made finally inexcusable, that they may receive their iuster condemnation.[29]

This system of witchcraft belief was disseminated widely; Perkins was an influential writer. John Gaule in his Select Cases of Conscience, followed Perkins almost exactly on these issues. He remarks "how utterly opposite the diabolicall Covenant is, to the Covenant of Grace" and is insistent upon the covenantal nature of witchcraft:

> The formall cause of a Witch, is the Covenant, Compact, Contract, Confoederation, League, societie, familiarity with the Devill.

The nature of witchcraft as a sort of upside-down godliness is reiterated:

> Besides the Devil is Gods Ape, and one that faines to imit[a]te him though in contrary wayes. And therefore as God makes a Covenant of Grace with his: so doth the Devill with his a Covenant of death.[30]

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[29] ibid. p217. Compare Perkins's doctrine of temporary, and hence inefficacious faith, which is granted by God to the reprobate only to be withdrawn, the taste of it making their final condemnation all the more bitter. See Kendall ...English Calvinism on this issue.

[30] Pp 55,68.Gaule, 1646, stresses [p46] that in witchcraft cases, the Devil should be considered as the efficient, and God only as the deficient cause. This does seem to distinguish him from Perkins. John Smith's Select Discourses of 1660 (he died in 1652) include a discussion "Of a Christians Conflicts with, and Conquests over, Satan" which alludes to the witchcraft theme. He warns of the Devil's attempts to "make merchandise" of men, of his

II

In examining the work of Sir Robert Filmer, we can see his brief tract on witchcraft forming part of a general attack on Calvinism as he conceived it, both in its covenantal form, and its original. First came the analysis of old-fashioned Calvinist accounts of faith as residing in the understanding; then the demolition of the foundations of the newfangled covenant theology. Either Filmer failed to see the difference between these two theological species, or pretended to for the purposes of argument; or he recognized the covenantal version as a new threat which had to be combatted in a civil war era resounding with the effects of covenant.

Filmer, who could count the Arminians Heylyn and Donne among his circle, published his Advertisement to the Jurymen of England, Touching Witches in 1653, the year of his death, coming out against the equation made between the Hebrew witch and the English, and for a large dose of caution and scepticism:

"com[ing]...in a formal way to bargain with them for their Souls". Ordinary sins - malice, envy, and revenge - are the forerunners of these "Diabolical contracts"; and any mysterious rites or ceremonies are diabolical though the Devil "may not be corporeally present, or require any further Covenant". These rites include astrology, or the use of "Insignificant forms of words". In conclusion, "As God will onely be convers'd withall in a way of light and Understanding; so the Devil loves to be convers'd with in a way of Darkness and Obscurity". Though not as specifically as Gaule, Smith's teachings are clearly influenced by Perkins's work on witchcraft.John Smith, Select Discourses, 1660, paragraph 10.

> To have nothing but the publique faith of the present Age, is none of the best evidence, unlesse the universality of Elder times doe concur with these Doctrines, which ignorance in the times of darknesse brought forth, and credulity in these dayes of light hath continued.

The chronology is left nicely uncertain here. Those "Elder times" refusing to concur with newfangledness could include those of the humanist scholar, the patristic era, or even the 1630s, when Filmer's friends had ruled the roost, and witch persecution had been practically eradicated. The tone is extremely ironic - the phrase "none of the best", the glance at "credulity" in what Filmer could hardly have regarded as "dayes of light". The occasion of the work was the "late execution of Witches at the Summer Assizes in Kent", on 30th July 1652, before Peter Warburton, at Maidstone. One of the supposed witches had been taken before a justice of the peace by soldiers of one Colonel Humfrey's regiment.[31] Filmer's motives are not entirely clear, but one may surmise that, having suffered imprisonment at the hands of Parliament men, he would not have welcomed the interest of victorious witchhunters in his county's spiritual welfare. Kent was a notoriously divided region in the civil war, disputed between a controlling minority of Parliamentarians, and a grumbling majority of Royalists who rebelled, with near decisiveness, on two occasions.[32] Filmer

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[31]No colonel in C. Firth assisted by G. Davies, The Regimental History of Cromwell's Army, Oxford 1940, 2 vols., fits the bill.

[32] Alan Everitt, The Community of Kent and the Great Rebellion, Leicester 1966.

had previously subscribed to orthodox witchcraft beliefs, as we can gather from his manuscript treatise Theologie: Or Diuinity.[33] What seems decisive to the political context, in the light of the circumstances of the trial, and the tone of the opening passages of the Advertisement, is its concern to attack the views of William Perkins, the doyen of godly theorists, that "great Rabby" as Filmer calls him. Filmer had attacked the English Calvinist tradition before, in at least one publication, and it is to this work we will turn, before considering the witch trial and the Advertisement.

Filmer's Of the Blasphemie Against the Holy Ghost was published in 1646.[34] The greater part of this short work is directed against the writings of Calvin, representative of those who "follow their own zealous conceits", one of the number of "Divines of the Reformed Churches, [who] have started aside from the Scripture, and have given us...intricate and contradictory definitions...as tend only to the perplexing the tender Consciences of weak

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[33] This manuscript is in the possession of Mr Peter Laslett of Trinity College, Cambridge. Many thanks for his help and advice. Since the Advertisement was published in the year of Filmer's death, it seems overwhelmingly probable that the manuscript was written before it, and before the trial. For a discussion of it, see below.

[34] Anonymously, and mistakenly attributed to John Hales in a collection of 1677. See R. Filmer, Patriarcha..., Oxford 1949, P. Laslett (ed.), introduction; and G. Schochet, "Sir Robert Filmer: Some New Bibliographical Discoveries" in Transactions of the Bibliographical Society, XXVI, 1971.

Christians". [35] Here Filmer appears as a Laudian elitist, worried about the destabilizing effects of Calvinist intellectualism on less subtle minds. In the definition of the sin against the holy ghost - which the precise Filmer, working from scripture, prefers to call a blasphemy - it has to be admitted that "Arminius also useth Mr Calvin's words", but this fleeting remark is not allowed to obscure the real target:

> I shall chiefly apply my self to Mr Calvins definition, because his judgment hath gained the greatest reputation among the multitude.[36]

"Reputation" and "multitude" indicate a certain distaste on Filmer's part. He then supplies a translation of the relevant passage from Calvin's Institution:

> They sin against the Holy Ghost, who of determined malice, resist the known Truth of God, to the end only to resist.[37]

By choosing Calvin as his primary target, Filmer is picking on the patron saint of the movement he is opposing. In doing so, he tends, when treating the nature of faith, to ignore the subtle modifications of Calvin's theology undertaken by Beza, Perkins, and Perkins's pupil William Ames.[38] Calvin located faith in the understanding. Faith is

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[35] [R. Filmer], Of the Blasphemie against the Holy Ghost, 1646, pp1-2.

[36] ibid. p25.

[37] ibid. p25-6.

[38] My major source here is Kendall op.cit., pp13-76, 151-64 and passim. His approach is not always totally convincing, though his knowledge of the relevant texts is profound. He imposes an ideal of consistency to which

acquired by a process given, intellectual, passive, and assuring; best described by words like scientia, illuminatio, certitudo, or cognitio. "Voluntatem dico aboleri", I say the will is abolished.[39] The doctrine of limited atonement and elements of voluntarism as regards faith were, however, introduced into the mainstream of English Calvinism via Beza and the Heidelberg theologians. In this sense English Calvinism owed more to Calvin's successors than to Calvin himself. The development of covenant theology was part of this process of allowing a role for introspection and the will in preparation for the recognition of grace - although, formally, this process of recognition through self-discovery was preceded by God's eternal election of justified and reprobate. The elect should look within themselves to find assurance of grace. Nevertheless, grace is irresistible, and the decree of predestination is not based on God's foreseeing an individual's faith. This system is founded on a "practical syllogism" which is summarized by Beza:

> Nowe when Sathan putteth us in doubte of our election, we maye not searche first the resolution in the eternall counsell of god whose majesty we cannot comprehende, but on the contrarye we must

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Perkins, Beza, Arminius and Ames are seen to conform in differing degrees. Yet, the introduction of voluntarism in matters of faith seems always to have been balanced by a commitment to the nature of faith as an "assent of the understanding." Filmer certainly made little distinction between the varieties of Calvinism, lumping them together as doctrines of intrinsic unsoundness and dangerous potential.

[39] J. Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, ed. J.T. McNeil, 2 vols., Philadelphia 1960, II iii.6.

> beginne at the sanctification which we feel in our selves...forasmuch as our sanctification from whence proceedeth good works, is a certaine effect of the faith or rather of Jesus Christ dwelling in us by faith.[40]

Perkins, the most prominent English Calvinist, and the one whom Filmer chose to attack in his tract on witchcraft, was quite explicit that faith had its seat in one faculty, and that was the understanding; this despite all his covenant theory. Even his pupil Ames, whom R.T. Kendall describes as having made the voluntary nature of justifying faith explicit, maintained a central role for the understanding in his account of faith. Here he is on apostates, in a work "Published by order from the Honourable the House of Commons":

> These are opposed to Faith not only as they take away that assent of the understanding which is necessary to Faith, but also as they bring and include a privation of that election and apprehension of Faith which is in the will.[41]

Ames sees apostasy as the end point of a progression which moves from doubt, to error (compounded of doubt and

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[40] A briefe and piththie summe of the christian faith, 1565?, pp36a/37.[alternate pages are numbered] This is a system in which an inscrutable gift of grace, predestined by God, but unknowable, creates in the elect a justifying and fruitful faith which can be used as experimental evidence of pre-election. The cycle moves from grace to faith and back again. The argument is essentially circular. Its distinction from Calvin's position is that, because of the limited atonement (Christ died only for the elect, whereas Calvin said that he died for all men) we cannot go to Christ directly, we have to seek this experimental evidence. For Calvin, on the contrary, "Christ is more than a thousand testimonies to me". [Concerning the Eternal Predestination of God, 1961, p130.]

[41] Ames, The Marrow of Sacred Divinity, 1642, p257.

assent), to heresy (erroneous and stubborn), to apostasy itself (heresy and universality of errors). The cognitive elements remain vital.

Laudianism, or English Arminianism, was not a movement which fully subscribed to a canon constructed by Arminius himself.[42] Indeed, Kendall has demonstrated how close Arminius's doctrine of faith was to those of Perkins and of Ames. Laudians would have found themselves opposed to the Calvinist doctrines of faith, however voluntarist in implication, because of their ultimate denial of the contribution of the will to salvation, and of any efficacious role for the sacraments. Genevan doctrines are too heady and "perplexing" (to use Filmer's word) to form the basis of the sort of socially conservative religion which men like Filmer wanted - this, at least, is what they thought. And so Filmer ignores the subtleties of debate, either purposely or because, like most polemicists, he failed to notice them.[43] The common ground is vacated, and

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[42] "Arminius also useth Mr Calvin's words", Filmer, Blasphemy, p25.

[43] For contemporary confirmation see Gilbertus Voetius, ...Selectarum Disputationem Pars Quinta, Utrecht 1669, p289. While he differs on the role of understanding in Ames, saying that the latter attributed faith unequivocally to the will, he does note that among all contemporary theologians, Ames was virtually alone in this:

> Quis ordo inter illos actus constituendus fit, & quis quem praecedat aut sequatur. Tres sunt potissimum sententiae: Prima eorum qui fidei justificantis subjectum & actum formalem tribuunt menti: quales Zanchius, Beza, Piscator, Perkinsus, Gomarus, Maccovius. Dan. Dyke in commentariis in epistolam ad Philemonem. Secunda eorum, qui soli voluntati: tales pauci sunt. Unum novi Amesium,

Filmer treats English Calvinism as a straightforward branch of Calvinism proper, making his attack at source.

Filmer's reasoning against Calvin's proposition begins on a scholastic note. Calvin "doth not define what the sin is, but who they are that commit it; whereas by the rules of Logick, Concretes admit of no definition, but only Abstracts". He considers the terms of Calvin's statement. In order to avoid a vacuously large definition, truth must be restricted to the truth of the Gospel. "Known" must have reference to belief, "for Faith is properly by believing, not knowing the truth"; while resisting "must mean unbelieving: for if receiving of the Truth be by belief, then Resisting of the Truth must be by Unbelief". So, having set out his notion of faith, Filmer applies the techniques of close reading he commonly uses for scriptural interpretation to Calvin's ipsissima verba, and finds these wanting:

> qui ex Professo hoc defendit. Tertia est communior; quae...praeter fidem seu assensum mentis generalem, in fide requint applicationem specialem, & voluntatis fiduciam. Et hanc tenent plerique Doctores reformati, imprimis illi qui Papatui se opposuerunt. [my emphasis]

[What order is to be established among those acts, and which precedes or follows. There are three opinions above all: First the opinion of those who attribute the subject and formal act of justification to the mind: such as Zanchius, Beza, Piscator, Perkins, Gomarus, Maccovius, and Daniel Dyke in his commentary on the epistle to Philemon. Secondly, those who attribute these to the will alone: these are few. I have encountered only Ames who explicitly defends this view. The third opinion is more common. Apart from faith or general assent of the mind, this requires special application in faith, and trust of the will. And this most reformed doctors hold, primarily those who oppose the papacy.]

> So by this definition, to resist the known Truth is all one, as if Mr Calvin had said in proper terms, for a Man at once to unbelieve that which he doth believe; which two things it is impossible to do together? [44]

This dismantling of Calvin's definition has obvious relevance to the theory of grace. If truth is the foundation of faith, Calvin is forced to imply that one can unbelieve something that one believes. Indeed, opposition to truth, the question of its wilfulness, or its categorization as a sin if not wilful, are closely related to the cogency of double predestination, and to reprobation in particular. With this remark, a Calvinist could easily concur: "No Man can force himself to believe what he lists, or when he lists." But we cannot but assent to a truth which is known. Hence, if we encounter "a suspension of...Faith" in ourselves, a "trepidation of...understanding, not knowing which way to turn", we can hardly term such an experience "resistance".[45] In other words, the argument works in reverse - we cannot disbelieve at will, and hence disbelief cannot be a form of resistance. Filmer does not erect an alternative system to Calvin's, but seeks to reveal Calvin's own model as a conceptual mess:

> he defines the Sin against the Holy Ghost, to be such a Sin, as no Man possibly can commit. And yet in the other extream...he makes it such a sin as no Man living but commits.[46]

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[44] Filmer op.cit. pp25-28.

[45] This passage is possibly directed against doctrines of temporary faith, see Kendall op.cit., pp65-67.

[46] Of...Blasphemie..., pp29,30,32.

The sin is being defined as the wilful disbelief of something one actually believes, to the purpose only to disbelieve. This is a nonsense, for Filmer; the Pharisees did choose to reject Christ's miracles "which in their hearts they believed", but only because of that which they considered "a better Truth", namely their Law. Thus for them, Christ's miracles were true, but not good, not desirable. And as Filmer writes, "truth is one degree neerer the Soul of Man than goodness", which makes it clear that despite his opposition to Calvin's emphasis on the role of the understanding as the seat of faith, Filmer is nevertheless a sound Protestant. But, looking at the issue from another aspect, "What Man is there that doth not daily, in some Point or other, forsake the word of God, and ceases not to impugn it, and is convinced thereof in his Conscience..." Filmer is himself impugning Calvinism's dangerous potential for extremism, its fragile suspension between the certainty of depravity and the assurance of grace; the logical conundra of Calvinism are unable satisfactorily to bridge the gap between determinism and free will. And,

> What dangerous consequences weak Consciences may draw to themselves, out of this unbridled, unlimited proposition of Mr Calvins, let others judge.[47]

This is an implicit condemnation of the danger of the entire system, with its alternative "unbridled, unlimited" perils -

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[47] ibid. p30,33,33/4.

reprobate licence, and the antinomianism of the saints. Filmer refuses the assimilation of weakness to contumacy, since "falling away and resisting, are no more alike, than fighting and running away..." He vigorously refutes the possibility of an unforgiveable sin. The "sin unto death" of I John 5.16, is a sin, a prayer for which will be "very hardly or difficultly heard", not simply refused. Filmer lights on the central problem of malice:

> he saith, the Sinners against the Holy Ghost resist, to the end only that they may resist; and yet withall he tells, they resist out of a determinate malice.[48]

Calvin's psychology of sin is riven by contradictions, too. Filmer's arguments replace the dangerous certainties of motiveless malice and the wilful refusal of grace (to unbelieve that which we believe is to resist God's grace, since we believe only through His grace - thus Calvin), with a more humane picture of human striving and imperfection, and a less thoroughly implacable God.

We may profitably compare this with William Perkins's view of the third degree of "sins of presumption", which is

> when a man sinneth, not onely wilfully and contemptuously, but of malice & spight against God himselfe, and Christ Iesus. And by this we may conceive what is the sin against the holy ghost: which is not every sinne of presumption, or against knowledge and conscience: but such a kind of presumptuous offence, in which true religion is renounced: and that of set purpose and resolved malice, against the Maiestie of God himselfe and

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[48] ibid. p34/5

Christ.[49]

If Filmer denies the cogency of this "Presumptuous offence in which true religion is renounced", which deserves certain reprobation, is "wilful...", and yet somehow of divine origin, he also implicitly denies the certainty of election which the saint can find in the heavenly contract. And surely such an act of "resolved malice, against the very Maiestie of God" is very nearly witchcraft itself. Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, while witchcraft, the original, is an act of rebellion against God - though Perkins denies that witchcraft is a sin against the holy ghost.

Like all Filmer's theological work, the tract on the blasphemy against the holy ghost is anxious to rely on Scripture, to outsaint the "rabbys" as it were. In a typical piece of close reading, he distinguishes "not saying we should pray" from "saying we should not pray", thus avoiding "bad Grammar, and worse logick."[50] The general argument on this sin bears in two ways on witchcraft. First, we cannot accuse witches of the sin against the holy ghost. The latter is a conceptual mess, while the genuine scriptural crime, blasphemy against the holy ghost, is of the era of Christ, one which the Pharisees committed, and which is now

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[49] William Perkins, The Whole Treatise of the Cases of Conscience, Cambridge, 1606, p22. The notion of a sin against knowledge is one that Filmer would have found particularly unattractive.

[50] Filmer, Blasphemy, p21.

obsolete.[51] We cannot today see Christ's miracles, and thus we cannot deny them in the way the Pharisees did. Furthermore, the Calvinist concept of treason against God as unforgiveable sin gives rationale to the execution of the witch after confession, which distinguishes the crime from heresy. Secondly, the blasphemy is temptingly close to the sin which believers in witchcraft commit - namely the misattribution of the miraculous, God's realm and Christ's seal, to the Devil. In all consistency, Filmer could not make such a charge, but Francis Hutchinson effectively did in one of the sermons appended to his Historical essay concerning witchcraft of 1718.[52]

Filmer's treatise Of the Blasphemie Against the Holy Ghost is important as the first instalment of an anti-Calvinist polemic. It is also the embodiment of a religious understanding which questions the plausibility of any act of "resolved malice, against the very Maiestie of God", at least within a Calvinistic system which had utterly confused the concepts of determinism and free will.

III

Most of Filmer's Advertisement to the Jurymen of England, Touching Witches, is concerned to refute William Perkin's covenantal theory of witchcraft. Much of the attack is directed towards Perkins's analysis of the means of

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[51] ibid. p11.

[52] On which, see below.

discovering witches; in ridiculing the distinctions Perkins wants to make between presumptions and proofs, between weak proofs and strong proofs, Filmer sets himself against legal tradition, within which presumptions lead to arraignment and proofs to conviction. Within the framework of a trial, the relationship between the two, and the usual legal procedure was usually clear. Filmer also traduces Perkins on the issue of confession; a bare confession is not sufficient for Perkins, as Filmer suggests, but only one "after due examination taken upon pregnant presumptions".[53] Filmer's attack on Perkins's arguments for the case when confession is refused, seems at first sight more apt. The requirement for two witnesses to the diabolical compact is all very well, but since the league is "closely made" it is very difficult for proof of its occurrence to emerge. Perkins's answer is that "Satan endeavoreth the discovery, and useth all meanes to disclose witches".[54] Yet, as Filmer points out, no proof is offered for this view - and how can we seriously accept the testimony of a devil whom Perkins has manifestly discredited ? Further still, as Filmer has earlier made clear, in relation to the devil's role as principal in the crime of witchcraft, "the Devill can never be lawfully summoned according to the rules of our Common-Law".[55] The resort to the literal here is somewhat satirical

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[53] Perkins, Discourse, p212.

[54] Filmer, Advertisement, p14.

[55] Filmer, ibid., p7.

- the earnest pursuits of common-law theorists are perhaps ridiculed - but also serves to underline Perkins's very reasonable case. Since the devil is God's agent, to be used "as shall be expedient for their [the elect's] good and salvation" and, apparently, to punish the reprobate, Satan's endeavour to uncover the witch is part of the providential plan, and God's justice will not be frustrated. As long as we proceed cautiously, using presumptions and proofs in tandem, injustice will not triumph. Thus Perkins stresses the need to preserve innocent blood. One should not proceed by presumption alone. But Filmer also recognizes the Biblical injunction relating to witches, and the requirements of equity - the innocent should not suffer, but neither must the guilty go scot-free.[56]

Filmer has two main thrusts in his argument. He seeks to explode the equation of Hebrew and English witch, and to deny the indispensability of contract to the crime of witchcraft, nicely citing one puritan divine, Ainsworth, against another, Perkins. The dispute about Biblical etymology was not resolved by Filmer's work, which stoops to logic-chopping at points - "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live" is not an "affirmative precept", but only a negative one, which might mean no more than not to consult, and hence support, witches.[57] In the matter of the contract, Filmer

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[56] Perkins, Discourse, preface: "the Lawe of Moses, the equitie whereof is perpetuall".

[57] ibid. p23.

likes to stress maleficium as an alternative. He dismisses the problems which the existence of a statute condemning witchcraft presents to him, with its central place for the diabolical pact, by citing the practice of the courts:

> Although the Statute runs together altogether in the disjunctive Or, and so makes every single crime capitall, yet the Judges usually by a favourable interpretation take the disjunctive Or for the copulative And; and therefore ordinarily condemne none for Witches, unlesse they be charged with the Murdering of some person.

"Favourable interpretation" is a revealing expression, seeming to sum up the approach on either side to biblical hermeneutics, and the insoluble problem at the heart of scriptural argument - no text can contain within itself unambiguous, unmistakeable instructions on how to read that very text. In this, Catholics, with their reliance on historically-sanctioned authority, external to the text, have the edge. Indeed Filmer himself admits that "This Statute presupposeth that every one knowes what...a Witch is..as being to be learned best of Divines"[58], an argument that might just as well be applied to Holy Writ. Filmer goes on to apply the idea of witchcraft as essentially maleficium to debunk prosecution tout court, with a typically precisian approach to terminology. Witchcraft must be the witch's art, not the devil's, for it to be her crime, and yet "It is confessed on all hands that the Witch doth not worke the wonder, but the Devill onely". How can the witch be exercising a craft, then, if her only skill is to command

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[58] ibid., p2.

another to act ? This is one of the the cruxes, if a slightly frivolous one:

> how can the accessory...be <u>duely and lawfully convicted and attainted</u> according as our Statute requires, unlesse the Devill who is the Principall be first convicted, or at least outlawed, which cannot be, because the Devill can never be lawfully summoned according to the rules of our Common-law.[59]

Yet it is the earlier stage of the progression that must attract our attention, the concern to construe the diabolical pact as unintelligible. The pact is denied scriptural warrant, with ironic applause for King James, who at least admitted as much, since "[he] doth not medle with it at all, but takes it for granted that if there be Witches, there must needs be a Covenant, and so leaves it without further proof". Such an approach is clearly attributable to Perkins, who in producing only one supporting text that "intimateth" the covenantal nature of witchcraft, seems to assume that witchcraft implies covenant. The key to the progression is not Scripture at this point, however, but a simple consideration of the viability of such a contract. And Filmer's denial of viability to the diabolical covenant impugns, in the scheme of Perkins and his followers, that heavenly compact in whose image it is constructed. The problem as far as Filmer is concerned is that "they call [it] a Covenant, and yet neither of the parties are any way bound to performe their part, and the devill without doubt notwithstanding all his

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[59] ibid. p7.

craft hath far the worst part of the bargaine". The covenantal theory of grace is revealed in all its contradictions, since the witch, if he "have so much grace as to repent", can avoid fulfilment.[60] The hemming-in of diabolical power in this context also has its own difficulties since, if the witch requires what God will not allow the devil to do, "the Devill may lose his credit, and give occasion of repentance".[61]

All these arguments fail, of course, to engage with the ambiguities of covenantal theory. They draw its strands apart, unravel them, and isolate contradictions by the application of a robust common sense. Subtlety is not allowed. Filmer taints Perkins throughout the book by blithely comparing him to the Papist, Delrio; the process reaches its apogee with discussion of the contract, which for Delrio means the denial of "faith, and Christianisme, and Obedience to God, and reject[ion of] the patronage of the Virgin Mary". The juxtaposition of Delrio's Catholicism with Perkins's puritan conception of the diabolical contract as a renunciation of God and of the baptismal seal, is meant to be subversive. This leads to another contradiction in the devil's pact; if only Christians can become witches, what of reports of witchcraft in "Heathenish Nations"?[62]

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[60] ibid., p5.

[61] ibid. p6.

[62] ibid., p6. The attack on witchcraft belief was an ideal Arminian resource because it threw back the charge of crypto-popery in the faces of those who had accused them.

In a later passage, Filmer highlights the conflict between grace and contract, by considering the Satanic inversion of that very conflict. On the one hand, the devil's motive is to secure the soul and body of the witch, to persuade a human agent to contract; on the other, according to Filmer's version of Perkins:

> ...the Precepts of Witchcraft are not delivered indifferently to every Man, but to his owne Subjects, the wicked; and not to them all, but to speciall and tried ones.

Thus the aim seems to be "not to gaine Novices for new subjects, but to make use of old ones to serve his turne".[63] The relevance of this to the divine system of conversion should be noted. And another ambiguity in the demonological account has obvious implications for soteriology. For, if "by vertue of the precontract, the Devill is cock-sure of his instrument", it is also true that "though he have good hope of them...some by the Mercy of God have bin...freed from his Covenant".[64]

Filmer's earlier manuscript treatise on "Theologie: Or Diuvinity" deals, in the sixth chapter of a section on the ten commandments, with "the doctrine of the first precept". Here, Filmer moves from hatred to fear in general, and thence to forms of false fear. In particular, he discusses idolatry, apostasy, and witchcraft. As regards the last, his

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Similarly, well-known popular prints of the 1640s showed a composite figure, half-sectarian, half-Jesuit.

[63] ibid., p8.

[64] ibid. p14.

position is strikingly different from that adopted in the 1650s. "Witchcrafte is an arte; powerfull by faith in a covenant: formall or open...made with Sathan." This could easily have been lifted from Perkins's Discourse of the Damned Art of Witchcraft. Here at least, Filmer seeks to save the phenomenon of witchcraft by steering well clear of dangerous Manichaeism, and strictly limiting the Devil's power. All Satan's wonders are to be explained either naturally, by virtue of his great knowledge of nature; rhetorically, in that he is given to "speakinge doubtfully"; by his knowledge of "politique causes"; or "by vertue of his Speciall Commission" from God, as in the case of Job, for instance. Emphatically, "he cannott, worke a miracle [,] as beinge actually damned".

This approach is pursued in examining several cruxes in scripture, taking a shot at puritanical and popish manipulation of spirits on the way:

> the Jewes caste out Sathan: not by miraculous authority: Nor by fastinge and praier...but by magicall consent.[65]

Witchcraft is then divided into theoretical and practical branches; but the pivotal remark concerns conviction and punishment:

> Witches are to be convicted either by their owne witnesse, voluntary, or extorted by the rack: or by the witnesse of others yt can prove theire league with sathan: or Supernaturall operations.

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[65] Canon 72 of the church canons of 1604 forbad the casting out of devils "by fasting and prayer" without episcopal licence. Apparently, no such licence was ever issued. See Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic, p579.

> They shall be punished with death: not for their hurte, but for theire League.[my emphasis]

This passage has been cited in print before, by Peter Laslett. The phrases I have emphasized were, however, omitted.[66] Laslett's consequent interpretation was that the trial of witches which Filmer attended at Maidstone in 1652 led to a volte face on his part.[67] This led to the composition of the Advertisement, Filmer's recantation and his swan song. Laslett's reading was based on Filmer's supposed rejection of self-incrimination, or uncorroborated confession, in witch trials. Having seen in court the tawdry hysteria of confession, the only form of proof, Filmer turned. This is the story. Yet he had, as we have seen, already accepted the witness of others, and the centrality of the league. In other words, he had been prepared to confirm both the reality of the contract with the Devil, and the possibility of admissible evidence over and above bare confession. His belief in witchcraft had not been based solely upon the fragile assumption that what people admit, must be true.

An examination of the political and religious publications of Sir Robert Filmer provides an explanation of his change of mind on the witchcraft issue which, while not rejecting the Maidstone trial as a plausible occasion for

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[66] Peter Laslett, "Sir Robert Filmer" in William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd series, V, no 4, 1948.

[67] On this trial see C. L'E. Ewen, Witchcraft and Demonianism, 1933, pp321-322.

going public, runs deeper than emotional trauma. One of Filmer's primary aims in the Advertisement was to throw doubt on the puritan theology of covenant by demolishing its demonological counterpart; he had attacked another godly doctrine in his tract on the blasphemy against the holy ghost, but in the years of civil disorder, covenant had evidently come to the fore. His mockery of presumptuous and fantastical covenants in the Advertisement goes hand in hand with his theory of sovereignty.

The conceptual congruity of covenant theory in divinity and government evoked a broad response from Filmer in the decade after the Solemn League and Covenant. Many of the remarks he devoted to Hobbes echo the witchcraft pamphlet, or apply common lessons. Thus, "For a man to give up his right to one that never covenants to protect [and does not the Devil do all in his power to discover his agents, is his credit not empty ?] is a great folly". In God's natural sovereignty over man, with grace freely available via mysterious sacraments, the Devil cannot intrude to seek allegiance:

> if a contract be the mutual transferring of right, I would know what right a people can have to transfer to God by contract.[68]

This goes headlong against the mutuality of covenant theology, and undermines that of consensual theories of

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[68] Filmer, Observations on Mr Hobbes's Leviathan, 1652, in Patriarcha, pp244, 248.

sovereignty.[69] It sets up a notion of contract which demonological accounts of witchcraft can barely satisfy. Covenant and witchcraft theory place too much emphasis on the breaking of the seal, and do not properly engage with the phenomenology of sin - the very point we saw Filmer arguing in the tract on the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, "as if the beginning only of a rebellion were an unjust act, and the continuance of it none at all".[70] Patriarcha also evinces a concern for the technicalities of covenanting in considering the Oaths of Kings:

> Let it be supposed for truth that Kings do swear to observe all the laws of their kingdoms, yet no man can think it reason that Kings should be more bound by their voluntary oaths than common persons are by theirs. If a private person make a contract either with oath or without oath he is no further bound than the equity and justice of the contract ties him.[71]

Contract is too fragile a creature on which to build a polity. Contracts operate within kingdoms, whether human or divine, not as regulative principles between subject and god, be he mortal or otherwise. Filmer's interest in covenant is most plausibly a reaction to the religious and political events of the 1640s, and a thoroughgoing reaction at that, one which touched his demonology as much as his

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[69] cf "...it was not in their power to choose whether God should be their God, yea, or nay: for it is confessed He reigned naturally over all by his might." Filmer, op.cit, p248.

[70] ibid. p247.

[71] Filmer, Patriarcha, p104.

theology or his ideas on government. We need to see witchcraft theory in the seventeenth century more as a branch of philosophy, with sensitive links to religious, scientific, and political debate, than as the detritus of an increasingly marginalized folklore.[72]

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[72]See also Filmer's remarks in his treatise "In Praise of the Vertuous Wife" [Laslett MS]:

> If she be accused in the gates of Judgment, either for witchcraft or whoredome, or be molested in suites of lawe defend her by declaring her former innocencye. Use. 1. Deedes doubtfull are charitably to be interpreted according to the former integritye. Use. 2. Children must defend their parents in warre, and lawe, As heere, and Psalme 127.5.

In the second chapter of his Leviathan, "Of Imagination", Thomas Hobbes makes an apparently fleeting reference to witchcraft. Fancy can lead "even [those] that be perfectly awake, if they be timorous, and supperstitious, possessed with fearful tales, and alone in the dark...[to] believe they see spirits and dead mens Ghosts walking in Churchyards". Upon such dispositions, and an inability to distinguish fancy from sense - since sense itself is an externally provoked phantasm - Hobbes believes, the edifice of pagan theology, the "Religion of the Gentiles", was built. And that religion, of "Satyres, Fawnes, Nymphs and the like" is juxtaposed to current beliefs of "rude people" in "Fayries, Ghosts and Goblins", in "the power of Witches":

> For as for Witches, I think not that their witchcraft is any reall power; but yet that they are justly punished, for the false beliefe they have, that they can do such mischeife, joyned with their purpose to do it if they can.

This was John Selden's position, as recorded in his Table Talk. Its force here is quite clear; sociability is to be enforced. It is one side of a functionalist account of how witchcraft worked in the village, one which admits, rather than ignores or marginalizes, the actuality of witchcraft beliefs, their grounding and issue in malice, for some, if not the majority, of the accused. In this connection, however, Hobbes continues with a remark which, elliptical as it is, invites closer analysis:

> ...their trade being neerer to a new Religion,

than to a Craft or Science.[73]

There is another well-known Hobbesian dictum on witchcraft, recorded by Margaret Cavendish in her life of her husband, published in 1667. It seems likely that Hobbes himself would have been asked for his recollections of conversations with his friend and patron, Cavendish. Two exchanges are, in fact, recorded. Both occurred in Paris; one concerned the feasibility of man-powered flight; the other considered a related issue, the powers and nature of witchcraft:

> ...they falling into a discourse concerning witches, Mr Hobbes said, that though he could not rationally believe there were witches, yet he could not be fully satisfied to believe there were none, by reason they would themselves confess it, if strictly examined.[74]

If this passage is itself "strictly examined", we can observe a tension between rational belief on the one hand, and empirical procedures on the other. This is fully consonant with Hobbes's approach - he had prior grounds for doubting the real power and thus, perhaps, the very existence of witchcraft. In the same way, he disputed the cogency of vacuism from an apriorist stance.[75] Yet, in the

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[73] Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan, [1651],Penguin edition 1968, p92. John Selden, Table Talk, Oxford 1892, section CL, p195. On sense as phantasm see Hobbes op.cit. chapter 1, pp85-86.

[74] Margaret Cavendish, The Life of William Cavendish, C. Firth (ed.), 1886, p198-9.

[75] See Hobbes, "Dialogus Physicus", translated by S.Schaffer in S.Shapin and S.Schaffer, Leviathan and the Air-Pump, Princeton 1985, pp345-391.

case of witchcraft, empirical evidence gave him some cause for doubt, if not sufficient to undermine utterly his confidence in the initial belief. It was Cavendish who filled in this gap between reason and evidence. His first response was to reject the metaphysical : "...for his part he cared not whether there were witches or no"; in other words he did not see that confession necessarily had any relevance to the putative reality of witchcraft itself. Instead he maintained a scepticism founded upon indifference, as we shall see. The occurrence of confession was then examined in a religious and psychological light:

> ...the confession of witches, and their suffering for it, proceeded from an erroneous belief, viz., that they had made a contract with the devil to serve him for such rewards as were in his power to give them; and that it was their religion to worship and adore him; in which religion they had such a firm and constant belief, that if anything came to pass according to their desire, they believed the devil had heard their prayers, and granted their requests, for which they gave him thanks; but if things fell out contrary to their prayers and desires, then they were troubled at it, fearing they had offended him, or not served him as they ought, and asked forgivenes for their offences.

This is the religious part of the phenomenon - with all the trappings of covenant theology's version of witchcraft, the inversion of true religion, but without the reality of demonic intercourse of any kind. God is mocked in the prayer for forgiveness, in the pretence of a diabolical providence. The psychological account is eminently Hobbesian:

> Also...they imagine that their dreams are real exterior actions; for example, if they dream they

> fly in the air, or out of the chimney top, or that they are turned into several shapes, they believe no otherwise, but that it is really so. And this wicked opinion makes them industrious [an intriguing diabolical inversion of the language of the puritan "work ethic"] to perform such ceremonies to the devil, that they adore and worship him as their god, and choose to live and die for him.

Quite properly, the religious theme is recapitulated, its centrality reaffirmed.

This, then, was Cavendish's view, "which Mr Hobbes was also pleased to insert in his fore-mentioned book", that is, Leviathan; we see what lies behind that laconic clause concerning "their trade".[76] I think we may legitimately assimilate Hobbes to Cavendish here, as far as the interpretation of witchcraft as a social and religious category is concerned. It will be seen that the view then adopted meshes well with Hobbes's wider outlook on belief and idolatry in a Christian commonwealth. On the metaphysical issue, however, he and Cavendish clearly differ, within a common framework distinguishing essentials from adiaphora or inessentials. I quote Cavendish, via his wife, again:

> yet my lord doth not count this opinion of his to be so universal, as if there were none but imaginary witches; for he doth not speak but of such a sort of witches as make it their religion to worship the devil in the manner aforesaid.

Cavendish pulls, or is pulled back from a radically sceptical account. His opinion is one that applies not

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[76] Margaret Cavendish's editor, Firth, failed to make the connection between the two texts. See his introduction to the Life.

universally, but to specific types of witchcraft. He suspends judgment in a matter indifferent:

> Nor doth he think it a crime to entertain what opinion seems most probable to him, in things indifferent; for in such cases men may discourse and argue as they please, to exercise their wit, and may change and alter their opinions upon more probable grounds and reasons; whereas in fundamental matters both of Church and State, he is so strict an adherent to them, that he will never maintain or defend such opinions which are in the least prejudicial to either.

Such deference to authority in church and state is the hallmark of a pupil of Hobbes. The difference between Hobbes and Cavendish on the issue of the real power of witches was that while the latter "cared not", Hobbes thought the matter material to the constitution of church and state. Witchcraft beliefs of a traditional kind were grounded in a doctrine of separated essences which was "prejudicial to" both. Equally, his understanding of what witchcraft in fact, as practised, was, can be seen as a function of the leading thread of his theology, an increasingly unfashionable, and unyielding, voluntarism, as well as his conception of what religion, properly speaking, is. These issues will be dealt with in turn.[77]

Hobbes's opposition to reasoning upon spirits as a distinct substance, his refusal to admit immaterial substance as a proper term of philosophical analysis, was set out early in his career. The discourse on Human Nature, written in 1640, and published as part of the Elements of

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[77] Cavendish, Life, pp198-9.

Law in 1650, has as its eleventh chapter a discussion of the supernatural, "forasmuch as we give names not only to things natural, but also to supernatural; and by all names we ought to have some meaning and conception". Subsequent paragraphs treat of God, the virtues attributed to him, and the proper conception of spirit, of good or bad angels. God Himself is defined in a resolutely voluntarist sense [78]:

> ...forasmuch as God Almighty is incomprehensible, it followeth, that we can have no conception or image of the Deity, and consequently, all his attributes signify our inability and defect of power to conceive any thing concerning his nature, and not any conception of the same, excepting only this, that there is a God.[79]

The existence of God is assured by our knowledge of a first cause; the attributes we erect on the basis of this bare existential statement "are such as signify either our incapacity or our reverence". Later remarks, in Leviathan, and in the various replies to Bishop Bramhall, make it clear that, nevertheless, God is conceived of as material.[80] When we apply the term immaterial substance to him, it signifies an incapacity to conceive of the divinity, whom we therefore designate infinite, omnipotent, ineffable; and our desire to

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[78] Theologically voluntarist as regards God [distinguish this from eg.voluntarism as regards faith] - ie. God's primary attribute is will rather than intellect or essential goodness. Therefore, given his omnipotence, he is morally and, ultimately, rationally inscrutable.

[79] Hobbes, "Human Nature", 1650 [written 1640] in English Works ed. Molesworth, 11 vols., 1839-45, iv, p59.

[80] "An Answer to Bishop Bramhall's Book", 1682 [written c1668] in English Works, iv, p59. Leviathan, chapters 12 and 34.

do him reverence. In itself, as the subject of a proposition, immaterial substance cannot be construed, the adjective cannot be brought to bear upon the noun it qualifies in any rationally definable sense; it is a contradiction in terms:

> ...though men may put together words of contradictory signification, as Spirit, and Incorporeall; yet they can never have the imagination of any thing answering to them.

If the title "incorporeall Spirit" is given to God, it is "not Dogmatically, to make the Divine Nature understood; but Piously, to honour him with attributes, of significations, as remote as they can from the grossenesse of Bodies Visible".[81] Yet elsewhere, Hobbes makes it clear that God's location, the fact that he has place, vouched for in Scripture, and his nature as first cause, ensures his materiality, as a "most simple corporeal spirit".[82]

Hence, Hobbes moves on, in Human Nature, to spirits in general. First, the definition:

> By the name of spirit, we understand a body natural, but of such subtilty, that it worketh not

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[81] Leviathan p171.

[82] "An Answer", p306. On some of these issues, see Arrigo Pacchi, "Hobbes and the Problem of God" in G.A.J. Rogers and A. Ryan (eds.), Perspectives on Thomas Hobbes, Oxford 1988. It is important for Hobbes that God is identified as first mover, not necessarily as creator (this was one of his objections to Thomas White's work). A philosophical conundrum does emerge from Hobbes's position - for how can one reconcile God's status as unknowable, with His known existence ? Pacchi suggests that Hobbes's solution was to make God's existence a hypothetical or grounding statement, rather than a demonstrative truth. As Pacchi puts it, "If philosophy refers man to faith, theology picks up the hint" - but the two remain divorced.

> upon the senses; but that filleth up the place which the image of a visible body might fill up.

Our notion of spirit thus conforms to an image of figure without colour; not, as the Schoolmen had asserted, substance without dimension, which is inconceivable. Hobbes goes on to make a parallel point to that he had made regarding our knowledge of God:

> Concerning other things, which some men call spirits incorporeal, and some corporeal, it is not possible by natural means only, to come to knowledge of so much, as that there are such things.

This is then embroidered:

> We that are Christians acknowledge [as part of Christian doctrine, derived from Holy Writ] that there be angels good and evil, and that there are spirits, and that the soul of a man is a spirit, and that these spirits are immortal: but, to know it, that is to say, to have natural evidence of the same, it is impossible: for, all evidence is conception...and all conception is imagination, and proceedeth from sense...And spirits we suppose to be those substances which work not upon the sense, and therefore not conceptible.[83]

In Leviathan, Hobbes preserves a very strict voluntarism, emphasizing God's power, and is thus compelled to maintain that, formally at least, "there is no doubt, but God can make unnaturall Apparitions"; but he goes on to say that scriptural references to spirits coming, descending, going, and dwelling, seem to imply locality, and thus dimension and body, however subtle. The overarching conclusion is firm: Scripture favours the corporeality of angels and of spirits. The central point is, however, that spirits, be they

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[83] "An Answer", p306. "Human Nature", pp60-61.

considered as corporeal or incorporeal, are not available to sense, and are, consequently, no fit subject for natural philosophy. Demonology is not a science.[84]

The implications of this are various, but we would do well to concentrate on the question of interest which Hobbes himself explicitly raised. Cui bono ? [for whose benefit ?] is his own, not our invented, query: if all this is so, if we can know nothing of spirits except by revelation, why have the Schoolmen erected, dogmatically, their doctrines of incorporeal substance and separated essences ? I quote at length from chapter 46 of Leviathan:

> ...this doctrine of Separated Essences built on the Vain Philosophy of Aristotle, would fright...[men] from Obeying the Laws of their Countrey; as men fright Birds from the Corn with an empty doublet, a hat, and a crooked stick. For it is upon this ground, that when a Man is dead and buried, they say his Soule (that is his Life) can walk separated from his Body, and is seen by night amongst the graves. Upon the same ground they say, that the Figure, and Colour, and Tast of a peece of Bread, has a being, there where they say there is no Bread: And upon the same ground they say, that Faith, and Wisdome, and other Vertues are sometimes poured into a man, sometimes blown into him from Heaven; as if the Vertuous, and their Vertues could be asunder[85]; and a great many other things that serve to lessen the dependance [sic] of Subjects on the Soveraign Power of their Countrey.

And here is the answer to the question, in whose interest? :

> For who will endeavour to obey the Laws, if he expect Obedience to be Poured or Blown into him ? Or who will not obey a Priest that can make God, rather than his Soveraign; nay than God himselfe ?

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[84] Leviathan, p92.

[85] Enthusiasts of whatever denomination are being attacked. See also note 16 below.

> Or who, that is in fear of Ghosts, will not bear great respect to those that can make the Holy Water, that drives them from him ?[86]

The learned belief in witchcraft, and its demonological foundations, depended on the same central resource, and collaborated to the same destabilizing effect. Hobbes dismantles possession and exorcism in particular, and demonology in general, as one of the "Remaines of Gentilisme" which his friend Aubrey was later to catalogue.[87] Priests wield this metaphysical weapon, being a caste of pseudo-experts who construct their own "science" to bolster a counterfeit prestige. "By their demonology, and the use of exorcism, and other things appertaining thereto, they keep, or think they keep, the people in awe of their power" and thus intend "to lessen the dependance of subjects on the soveraign power".[88]

It is difficult to overestimate the importance of this double strain, both anti-metaphysical and anti-clerical in Hobbes's thought. In his Six Lessons to the Professors of 1656, he identifies the occasion of Leviathan, and one of its major tasks, as the consideration "of what the ministers before, and in the beginning of, the civil war, by their

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[86] Leviathan p691-2.

[87] John Aubrey, "Remaines of Gentilisme and Judaisme" in his Three Prose Works, Fontwell 1972.

[88] Leviathan, chapter 47. Exorcism was, of course, both a Roman, and a sectarian and puritan phenomenon.

preaching and writing did contribute thereunto".[89] Papists are especially condemned in Leviathan; in this sense, its discourse on superstition and demonology is in the tradition set out by Scot, and continued by Ady.[90] The perpetrators of superstition themselves constitute the true kingdom of darkness - the title significantly attached to the fourth part of Leviathan. But Presbyterians too are enemies, and especially those ministers attacked in the 1656 sally against the Oxford professors. They are semi-papistical in their assertion of an independent spiritual jurisdiction.[91] In Behemoth, his history of the civil wars, Hobbes again stresses the important contribution of "metaphysical doctrines" and "like points" to the outbreak of hostilities; these were "the study of the curious, and the cause of all

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[89] "Six Lessons to the Savilian Professors of the Mathematics", in English Works vol.VII [181-356] p335.

[90] Followed by Wagstaffe in his The Question of Witchcraft Debated, see below.

[91] For a different view of Hobbes's motives, see Noel Malcolm's piece on "Hobbes and the Royal Society" in Rogers and Ryan, Perspectives.... Hobbes's own reading of his reasons for writing Leviathan is to be preferred - and those reasons certainly seem to match the substance of the book, in which presbyterianism is seen as a form of modified Popery, an overhesitant step on the way to a truer reform. Nobody in England in the 1650s needed a book as sophisticated as Leviathan to tell them that Popery was a bad thing. By saying that Part 4 of Leviathan "was directed against scholastic Aristotelianism", Malcolm misses the way in which Hobbes compounds his intellectual enemies. He held that belief in an ontologically distinct spiritual substance was, consciously in the case of some, unwittingly in that of others, a contribution to Church government iure divino, and more generally the sort of division of authority in the state which had led to civil war.

our late mischief".[92] As this relates to witchcraft, we have a sort of secularized version of Thomas Ady's given reasons for the war.[93] Witchcraft is not essential to Leviathan in the way it is to A Candle in the Dark, but it evidently forms part of a complex of obnoxious doctrines which are set out as early as chapter two. They are, moreover, given a whole chapter in, and perhaps determine the title of, part four. These passages require commentary.

Much of chapter 45 of Leviathan, "Of Daemonologie" is addressed directly to the topoi of the witchcraft tracts. Christ's being led into the wilderness "in the spirit", is no evidence of spiritual or demonic possession. For one thing, "Christ and the Holy Ghost, are but one and the same substance". The phrase, "in the spirit" indicates a visionary experience. No mountain was high enough to show our Lord all the kingdoms of the world in a physical sense; and thus, the supposed possession by the Devil in this account, is also denied. If part of the story is to be read metaphorically, all of it must be so read. No enthusiasm, no diabolism.[94] Hobbes also forms part of the sceptical

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[92] "Behemoth", (1679; written 1668), p232, in English Works, Vol. VI, [161-418].

[93] Ady sees the war as a punishment for England's sins, the shedding of the innocent blood of witches crying out for vengeance. Thomas Ady, A Candle in the Dark, 1655.

[94] See John Bramhall, Castigations of Mr Hobbes...[&] The Catching of Leviathan Or the great Whale, 1658, p488: "He fancieth that all those devils which our Saviour did cast out, were phrensies, and all daemoniacks, (or persons possessed,) no other than mad men."

tradition in one of his definitions of the biblical crime of witchcraft:

> the worship of [idols] with Divine Honour, is that which is in the Scripture called Idolatry, and Rebellion against God.[95]

Here is an oblique reference to witchcraft, since "rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft". Passages in part three, "Of a Christian Common-wealth", are also of distinct relevance to the debate. The chapter "Of the WORD OF GOD, and of PROPHETS" demolishes the sort of apocalyptic scheme favoured by Nathaniel Homes[96]:

> the Doctrine of Devils, signifieth not the Words of any Devill, but the Doctrine of Heathen men concerning Daemons, and those Phantasms which they worshipped as Gods.

The famous incident in Samuel, the story of the witch of Endor, is given naturalistic gloss, one which spurns either diabolical or divine intervention:

> The woman of Endor, who is said to have had a familiar spirit, and thereby to have raised a Phantasme [nb. Hobbesian term of art] of Samuel, and foretold Saul his death, was not therefore a Prophetesse; for neither had she any science, whereby she could raise such a Phantasme; nor does it appear that God commanded the raising of it; but onely guided that Imposture to be a means of Sauls terror and discouragement; and by consequent, of the discomfiture, by which he

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[95] Leviathan, p665.

[96] See Nathaniel Homes, Daemonologie, or the character of the Crying Evils of the Present Times: In which, Beside the transcendent wicked practises of Men that never sipt of Religion: and the unparallel'd impious Principles of Hypocrites degenerated from their Profession of Religion, whether SEEKERS, SHAKERS, FAMILISTS, RANTERS, ADAMITES &c. Are handled the DOCTRINES of DEVILS, 1650. These horrors are "the idioms and proper markes of the LAST DAYES" [title-page].

fell.[97]

Chapter 37, "Of MIRACLES, and their Use" blurs the whole precarious distinction between mira and miracula, so necessary to any protestant belief in witchcraft [98] :

> By Miracles are signified the Admirable works of God: & therefore they are also, called Wonders.

Miracles themselves are relativized - what seems a miracle to one may not seem so to another - and are defined as necessarily rare, and devoid of apparent natural causation. They are "wrought for the procuring of credit to Gods Messengers, Ministers and Prophets", and need to be used sparingly. This discussion culminates in the definition of a miracle:

> A MIRACLE, is a work of God, (besides his operation by way of Nature, ordained in the Creation,) done for the making manifest to his elect, the mission of an extraordinary Minister for their Salvation.

The elision of wonder and miracle both in the opening paragraph, and in the discussion of scriptural cruxes - notably the feats performed by the magicians of Egypt in response to Moses[99] - tends towards a fresh distinction, that between pretended, lying wonders, often called "Enchantment", and true wonders or miracles, which belong to

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[97] Leviathan, pp453,458.

[98] In the sense that the mass is a perpetual and contemporary miracle, and therefore Protestants want to restrict miracles to the past, as does Hobbes. See Leviathan p414.

[99] The recognized problem here being how these heathen could have procured such miraculous, rather than merely wondrous, effects.

God alone. Hence, enchantment, like the work of Pharaoh's magi, is "Imposture, and delusion, wrought by ordinary means; and so far from supernaturall, as the Impostors need not study so much as of naturall causes, but the ordinary ignorance, stupidity, and superstition of mankind, to doe them". To return to our main concern, "those texts, that seem to countenance the power of Magick, Witchcraft, and Enchantment, must needs have another sense, than at first sight they seem to bear".[100]

So, in the course of Leviathan, our point of departure, the denial of "any reall power" to witches takes on a new aspect, and derives polemical force, from the denunciation of a priestly ontology, and the unveiling of imposture. The assertions of demonology are part of a nonsensical and pernicious philosophy; nonsensical because founded on a doctrine of separated essences; pernicious because tending to divide power in the commonwealth between a spiritual and a secular or material order, personated by the clergy and the laity.

The concept witchcraft is broken up, and its fragments variously reapportioned in Hobbes's work. Demonology is false. Any wonders that are currently on offer - ranging from those of the village conjuror to those of the Roman priest - are the legacy of ignorance, or the issue of cunning, high and low. The witchcraft condemned in the Book of Samuel is idolatry. The witches of current human

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[100] Leviathan pp469,471,473,474,475.

experience are, as we would expect, denied efficacy or "reall power". Like the witch of Endor, they have no "science" - they work no wonders by devil, or by nature. They have no craft, and are to be distinguished in this from village conjurors, who are most crafty. In having a "new Religion", they are clearly idolatrous, and Cavendish sets out the details.

Hobbes manages to dispose of the metaphysical portion of witchcraft belief, dishing dangerous doctrine and striking a blow against overt and clandestine Popery, sacerdotalism in all its forms, while maintaining the anti-devotional and anti-social core of the crime of witchcraft. And his belief in the justice with which this crime is punished should not be ignored or taken lightly. It is a serious issue, and a capital one. Hobbes in fact constructs a system of witchcraft belief purged of the accrued antique débris - real maleficium, the contract with the Devil - a system reduced to the essentials of purpose and belief, a rebellion against God, and the desire to cause harm. All this needs to be placed within the wider context of Hobbes's voluntarist theology, and related to the covenant theology tradition we have already sketched.

First, however, let us look at a couple of contemporary reactions to Hobbes's demonology.The absence of the Devil in Hobbes's writings clearly worried John Bramhall:

> "So T.H. hath killed the great infernal devil, and all his black Angels, and left no devils to be feared, but devils incarnate, that is wicked

men."[101]

For a slightly later response to Hobbes's position on demonology and witchcraft, Thomas Tenison is intriguing:

> "such, as publickly deny Witch-craft, are sawcy affronters of the Law, and therefore, for their opinion, which rather establisheth irreligion than subverts the faith, they ought to be chastiz'd from those Chairs of Justice, which they have reproachfully stain'd with the bloud of many innocent and misperswaded people...I have heard it elsewhere said...that our Witches are justly hang'd, because they think themselves so; and suffer deservedly for believing they did mischief, because they mean it.
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> But methinks, that Law were to be accused of unreasonable severity, which should take away the Life of those, knowingly and deliberately, who before they make confession of their inefficacious malice, are in no sort hurtfull to the Commonwealth, which is not concerned in our thoughts; and when they make confession, not of any evil practices, but of their delusions of distemper'd fancy, appear to be possessed with madness rather, than a Daemon, and ought rather to be provided for in Bedlam, than executed at Tyburn. But could we grant it to be a piece of Justice; yet would that evasion be too thin to shelter those from the censure of the Law, who (as I think) do most insolently revile it, by denying all real confederacy with Daemons. For the Statute of King James, whom you somewhere honour with the attribute most wise (Lev.19.p101 [= p251]) condemns to death only such Authors of Enchantment and Witch-Craft, as are convicted of real effects: And it is not felony without Clergy, (though it be imprisonment, with shame of the Pillory) to attempt to tell of stollen goods, or to destroy or hurt mans body by Conjuration. The Statute also mentioneth the making Covenants with some evil and wicked Spirit, as a practice granted and notorious.[102]

Tenison upbraids Hobbes most severely on the issue of what

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[101]Bramhall, Castigations, p488.

[102][Thomas Tenison], The Creed of Mr Hobbes Examined; In a feigned conference between him, and a student in divinity, 1670, pp62-4.

the law. as promulgated by the sovereign actually is. Inasmuch as Hobbes sought always to embody that law in his teaching, the criticism is effective. To imply that Hobbes is a "sawcy affronter...of the law", that he confuses legality and justice, is a nice ironic hit. It is notable, however, that when it comes to nailing Hobbes, he cannot be caught on the issue of the public denial of witchcraft [for which, see his remark on witchcraft in his Dialogue on the Common Laws], but only on misconstrual of the statute in its provisions, a technical point, and of its definitions. It is Hobbes's denial of confederacy with demons, of covenant-making with the Devil, of diabolical intercourse, that is given centre-stage. At the same time, it must be emphasized that by 1670, well after the Restoration, the covenantal resonances of witchcraft theory had become of less interest in England.[see chapter 2 on Casaubon]

Hobbes's voluntarism has been characterised in detail by several authors, his relation to the theology of his day set out in detail.[103] It has been shown that in his fulminations against Hobbes's monstrous doctrines, John Bramhall was hurling the traditional anathemas of anti-Calvinist polemic. The arguments over Leviathan can be seen duplicated in Bramhall's attack upon William Twisse, for instance, who published a restatement of English Calvinist

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[103] See especially Noel Malcolm's "Thomas Hobbes and Voluntarist Theology", Cambridge PhD. thesis 12565, 1983. Also, Pacchi op.cit., and Leopold Damrosch Jr., "Hobbes as Reformation Theologian" in Journal of the History of Ideas, 40, 1979.

orthodoxy in the 1640s.[104] Bramhall's words can be applied indifferently to the orthodox Twisse, Hobbes, or the sectarians:

> It is the mode of these times to father their own fancies upon God, and when they cannot justify them by reason, to plead His omnipotence.[105]

Bramhall and his allies preferred to rely instead on an ethical intuition which made God's will subservient to his essential goodness, and after 1660, their doctrines caught on. Hobbes's voluntarism, anti-essentialist in its emphasis, was one of the strongest determinants of his remote place on the intellectual spectrum after the Restoration.[106] Thomas Pierce was one who used Hobbes as a whip for the predestinarians:

> Mr Hobbs...is as able a Calvinist (as to these points) as their party had.[107]

Hobbes went further than Twisse, however, who had defended a doctrine of sin as a privation of being, which was consequently unattributable to God. For Hobbes this was nonsensical, and his emphasis on the arbitrary justice of

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[104] William Twisse, The Riches of Gods Love unto the Vessells of Mercy Consistent with His Absolute Hatred or Reprobation of the Vessells of Wrath, Oxford 1653.

[105] John Bramhall, Works, ed. A.W.H., 5 vols, Oxford 1842-5, Vol.IV, p76.

[106] See I.C. Bostridge, "Jurisprudence and Natural Philosophy: Matthew Hale and Thomas Hobbes", Cambridge M.Phil. thesis, Department of History and Philosophy of Science, 1987.

[107] Thomas Pierce, Autokatakpisis or Self-Condemnation, 1658, cited in N. Malcolm, "Hobbes's Voluntarist Theology", p105.

God's will was thoroughgoing:

> That which men make among themselves here by pacts and covenants, and call by the name of Justice...is not that by which God Almighty's actions are to be measured or called just...That which he does, is made just by his doing it.

Or, in the words of the Book of Job, "Where wert thou when I laid the foundations of the earth ? " And Hobbes's gloss : "Power irresistible justifies all actions, really and properly, in whomsoever it be found."[108]

That reference to pacts and covenants deserves attention, especially if we return to Leviathan, and a portion cited in the Considerations[109], one of particular relevance to the covenant theology of the pre-war era, and the covenanting of the 1640s:

> Whereas some men have pretended for their disobedience to their sovereign, a new covenant made, not with men, but with God; this also is unjust. For there is no covenant with God, but by mediation of somebody that representeth God's person; which none doth but God's lieutenant, who hath the sovereignty under God.

Hobbes evidently wished to rub this point in:

> ...this pretence of covenant with God, is so evident a lie, even in the pretenders' own consciences, that it is not only the act of an unjust, but also of a vile and unmanly disposition.[110]

He utterly denies the logic of a truly divine covenant, paralleling Filmer's refusal of intelligibility to the

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[108] English Works, iv, "Of Liberty and Necessity", [229-278], pp249-50.

[109] "Considerations upon the Reputation, Loyalty, Manners, and Religion of Thomas Hobbes" in Works, iv, p434.

[110] Leviathan, p230.

diabolical pact; and, indeed, the reality of one reflects on that of the other. The Old Testament covenant was made by the prophet Moses, personating God, with divine authority, and representing Israel. No bilateral contract[111] existed between Israel and either God himself, or Moses. This was a deliberate echo of the authorization process in civil government.[112] That of the New Testament was made by Christ, as a man vested with the Father's authority, and representing the people of God, the elect, via his humanity. The "marrow of Puritan divinity" is anathema to such a

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[111]"the mutuall transferring of Right", Leviathan, p192.

[112] The initial covenant "between" God and the Hebrews was instituted by Abraham; it was renewed by Moses. Yet, the real test remains effective sovereignty. Abraham was "supposed to have had a lawfull power, to make them perform all that he covenanted for them "; in the same way, "none but the Sovereign in a Christian Common-wealth can take notice what is, or what is not the Word of God". The problem for Moses was that he had no claim to authority by inheritance from Abraham, and that therefore "the people were obliged to take him for Gods Lieutenant, [no] longer than they beleeved that God spake unto him". The only solution to this problem was, that "his authority...as the authority of all other Princes, must be grounded on the Consent of the People". Leviathan, pp500-502. Thus, in the case of the divine covenant, the process which lends efficacy is the same consensual process involved in the creation of the civil sovereign, one which does not bind the sovereign or his lieutenant any more than in the alternative account of sovereign authority, power irresistible, called in God's case a natural dominion.[In neither case is there a real pact with the sovereign - the pact is between the people]. In the same way, Christ's kingship is akin to that of the civil sovereign. "The Kingdome of Christ is not to begin till the generall Resurrection" but, "by the renewing of their Pact [suitably vague word] with God in Baptisme, they were obliged to obey him for King". [p514] Hobbes's position refuses the notion of any direct, unmediated covenant between God and people. The Puritan construal of an individual covenant between the regenerate and God was opposed by Hobbes; the inversion, the individual diabolical pact, was consequently jettisoned too.

scheme. A bilateral contract, in which we can sue God "on his own bond", derogates from God's majesty, and can hardly be reconciled with those remarks on "power irresistible." Hobbes's extreme position on the issues of divine will and sovereign inscrutability, destroys the reality of the divine covenant proper, and thus, symmetrically, makes the real diabolical covenant redundant.

How then should we interpret that remark which calls the witch's trade a "new religion", and preserves the social reality of the witch's own beliefs ? The key is Hobbes's notion of religion as law, best encapsulated in a sequence of passages from Behemoth. To start with,

> I like not the design of drawing religion into an art, whereas it ought to be a law.

This nicely matches the dictum on witchcraft, which is not an art, a craft or a science, but a matter of religion, and thus of law. Now, the nature of religion has been mistaken; it has been "for a long time...taken for the same thing with divinity to the great advantage of the clergy". In more detail, the problem has been the

> mingling [of] our religion with points of natural philosophy, as freedom of will, incorporeal substance, everlasting nous, ubiquities, hypostases, which the people understand not, nor will ever care for.

Some pages later, Hobbes repeats his demand:

> ...religion in itself admits no controversy. It is a law of the kingdom and ought not to be disputed.[113]

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[113] Behemoth, pp236,276.

In the light of these passages, we can highlight an conceptual opposition set out by Hobbes, that between religion and witchcraft, which are related as type and antitype, law and rebellion. And then, if religion is not a matter of divinity - the abstruse consideration of doctrinal arcana - neither is witchcraft a matter of heresy in the normal sense. This scheme of true as against false concepts - religion: divinity, witchcraft: heresy - is confirmed both in Hobbes's Dialogue...of the Common Laws and in his Historical Narration Concerning Heresy. In the latter, Hobbes is clear that heresy is "no more than a private opinion" to be punished by the "ordinary censures...of the church"; that no doctrine is heretical unless "declared and published" as such by civil authority or the first four ecumenical councils. His point is that the law of England, as set down since Elizabeth's reign, has repudiated all former heresy laws, and provides no details as to the punishment of heresies left defined by the early councils of the church. His complaint is a bitter one, the more so for being personal:

> So fierce are men, for the most part, in dispute, where either their Learning or power is debated, that they never think of the laws, but as soon as they are offended, they cry out, crucifige.

That which can be punished is a matter of law and religion; heresy in itself, as a private opinion, is not punishable. The corollary is that witchcraft is punishable by law not only as an act of malice, but also as a rebellion against

established religion.[114]

The passage on witchcraft in the Dialogue is significantly juxtaposed to the section "Of Heresie", and forms a part of the discourse "Of Crimes Capital". The opinion expressed is shrouded in the same sort of surface ambiguities as those in Cavendish's Life. The lawyer talks of "Conjuration, Witchcraft, Sorcery and Inchantment" which are undeniably capital crimes by statute. His companion, the philosopher, displays a healthy indifference: "...I desire not to discourse of that Subject." The point is surely that we should not bandy divinity words in a matter of religion and law, since

> ...though without doubt there is some great Wickedness signified by those Crimes; yet I have ever found my self too dull to conceive the nature of them, or how the Devil hath power to do many things which Witches have been accused of...[115]

Hobbes is not here maintaining a thoroughly sceptical position vis-à-vis witchcraft. The irony of the tone does tend to suggest the implausibility of many accusations, but the philosopher does not conclude that, as a consequence, the laws on the matter should be expunged; this is of a piece with the other passages we have examined.[116]

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[114] "An Historical Narration concerning Heresy, and the Punishment thereof" in English Works, iv, pp387,406-407.

[115] A Dialogue Between A Philosopher and a Student of the Common Laws of England, (1681), ed. J.Cropsey, Chicago 1971, p122 [p123 in original edition].

[116] Note again Hobbes's desire to have his system conform to existing, sovereign-made law, though Hobbes's view of which laws had authority during the Interregnum is

Having established the affinity of covenant theology with a particular and widespread understanding of witchcraft - a detailed inversion of godly practices with a lesser emphasis on miracula than the Malleus Maleficarum - and having set out the political charge, the topicality which this gave the witchcraft issue in Filmer's work, we have gone on to expand and explain Thomas Hobbes's numerous but disparate remarks on witchcraft. Most fundamental is the parallel between the ideas set out in the conversation recorded by Margaret Cavendish, and Hobbes's remarks on witchcraft in Leviathan.

More generally, Hobbes's theology and his Erastian anti-clericalism encouraged him to deny the status of natural knowledge, or of expertise, to pneumatology and, consequently, to demonology. Only revelation tells us that spirits exist. We cannot reason upon this knowledge, and we have no sense-experience about spirits since, though material, they are, by definition, exceptionally subtle. Nothing is in the intellect which has not been in the senses. The Hobbesian approach to miracles or wonders - and note the avoidance of the copulative and (ie. there is not much difference between them, metaphysically speaking) - withdraws "magical" actions altogether from the realm of reality, and completes the reformers' eschewal of the

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not clear. Tenison [see text accompanying note 101 above] may have thought he had a point, in that Hobbes allowed Leviathan to be republished in Latin after 1660, when the legal position was much clearer, and more unfavourable to the opinions expressed in the book, but see note 113 below.

Catholic supernatural. Witchcraft theory shadows the development in theology. The holy and the demonic move in step. The paradoxes of the covenant theologians' version of witchcraft are thus variously resolved. The emphasis on the inversion of the holy as an act of dérogéance - Hobbes himself talks of the "liturgy of witches" - is extended so as to exclude the physical reality of mira and maleficia.[117] In the Latin Leviathan, carefully supervised by Hobbes,he does not use the latter term, but rather the phrase mala facinora - criminal, vicious evils.[118] His version of covenant forbids the systematic bilateral covenant of the likes of Perkins, in either the holy or demonic spheres. In holding religion to be a matter of law established, Hobbes maintained witchcraft as a crime, one of rebellion joined with malice. As we would expect, his ideas on witchcraft, the category which symbolizes the inversion of desirable values, reflect Hobbes's particular vision of human relations with God, and the place of religion in society. He

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[117] Leviathan chapter 12, p172.

[118] Latin Works, ed.Molesworth 1839-1845, Vol.III p13: "Nam etsi sorcilegiam potentiam aliquam realem esse non putem, puto tamen sorcilegos puniri jure posse, cum mala facinora et facere posse credant, et conentur quantum possunt." It is important to note the difference between the English version, and the Latin, which introduces a conditional, "Nam etsi...non putem" [even if I did not think]. The English has a straight negative, "I think not" This must relate to what is said at footnote 116 - the legal situation in 1651 was fairly murky, and thus Hobbes could constructively interpret the law. By the time the Latin Leviathen was published, it was quite clear that the 1604 witchcraft statute was back in force, and hence, Hobbes's denial of real effects to witchcraft is modified.

can even make an explicit comparison between the subversion of the state by a charismatic individual, and the actions of witches, those other enemies of society:

> ...this proceeding of popular, and ambitious men, is plain rebellion; and may be resembled to the effects of witchcraft.[119]

Returning to one of the principal scriptural texts at issue, which tells us that rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, we can note that this crime makes particular sense within Hobbes's system. Rebellion against the sovereign is the same as rebellion against God, because the sovereign, as sole interpreter of religious experience, is the only mediator between God and the subject, the only representation of God that the subject can know.

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[119] Leviathan, p374, cf De Cive [English version], ed. Warrender, Oxford 1983, p155-6: "So the common people through their folly (like the daughters of Pelias) desiring to renew the ancient government, being drawne away by the eloquence of ambitious men, as it were by the witchcraft of Medea, divided into faction, they consume it rather by those flames, then they reforme it." For Leviathan Hobbes converted this classical reference into one of a more general resonance.

CHAPTER TWO

MERIC CASAUBON AND THE RESTORATION OF WITCHCRAFT

In recent years, the decline of magical beliefs has been speculatively associated with the Restoration reaction against enthusiasm. Michael MacDonald's work on the Elizabethan medical practitioner, Richard Napier, ends with a general consideration of psychological healing which, noting the replacement of magical remedies and diagnoses by medical technology, and emphasizing the relative inefficacy of the latter, lays the blame on elite fears of subversive, plebeian enthusiasm.[1] Jonathan Clark summarizes the argument:

> It was not the "advance of science" which eroded popular belief in religious therapeutics or in witchcraft in the early eighteenth century, but the course taken by political events, and by controversy within the governing elite, which made the expression of those beliefs impossible.[2]

Such an approach commands a good deal of immediate literary evidence. The concern with both witchcraft persecution and enthusiasm as expressions of a politically dangerous vulgar

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[1]Michael MacDonald, Mystical Bedlam, Cambridge 1981, chapter 5; idem., "Religion, Social Change, and Psychological Healing in England 1600-1800" in Studies in Church History 19, Oxford 1982. On enthusiasm more generally, see: M. Heyd, "Reaction to Enthusiasm in the 17th century" in Jnl.Mod.Hist. 53, 1981; George Williamson, "The Restoration Revolt against Enthusiasm" in Studies in Philology 30, 1933.

[2]J.C.D. Clark, English Society 1688-1832, Cambridge 1985, p169.

is notable in the writings of Francis Hutchinson.[3] In the Restoration period, there is the work of Meric Casaubon, including his preface to the papers of John Dee; and that of Samuel Butler, the poet whose works epitomize the reaction against the fanaticism of the Civil War and Interregnum. As a confidant of Selden's, and an author whose writings show the pervasive influence of Hobbes, Butler is an apt representative of the state of play in one strand of discourse about witchcraft in this period.[4]

Butler's example seems, at first sight, straightforward. Canto III of the second part of Hudibras includes a short satire on the witch craze of the 1640s. Matthew Hopkins, the "witchfinder general" is singled out

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[3]Francis Hutchinson, A Short View of the Pretended Spirit of Prophecy, 1708; idem, An Historical Essay Concerning Witchcraft, 1718. And see chapter on Hutchinson and Boulton below.

[4]Meric Casaubon, A True and Faithful Relation of...Dr John Dee..., 1659. Samuel Butler, (1612-1680), spent the early part of his career in the household of the countess of Kent. Selden lived under the same roof, and is said to have trained his mind. Aubrey writes that Selden "much esteemed him for his parts." He "studyed the Common Lawes of England, but did not practise...After the restauration of his majestie...he was...[made] the king's steward at the castle there [Ludlow]...[Hyde and the King after the publication of Hudibras] both promised him great matters, but to this day he haz got no employment...The Lord Chancellor Hyde has his picture in his library over the chimney." He did eventually receive a pension. Hudibras, his mock epic, was started in 1658, but could not be published safely until after the Restoration. The first part appeared in 1662, followed a year later by the second, and in 1677 by the final part. Most of the rest of his work was produced in the years from 1677 until his death. His difficulties in getting into print during the Protectorate make this follower of Hobbes an apt companion for Casaubon as well.[see below on Casaubon's publishing record.]

for attention:

> Has not this present Parliament
> A Ledger to the Devil sent,
> Fully impower'd to treat about
> Finding revolted Witches out ?
> And has not he with in a year,
> Hang'd threescore of 'em in one Shire ?

And then the reductio ad absurdum:

> Some only for not being drown'd,
> And some for sitting above ground,
> Whole days and nights, upon their breeches
> And feeling pain, were hang'd for Witches.

The few lines which precede this are a typically Butlerian exercise in the disclosure of puritan hypocrisy, but they should interest us here primarily as a parody of the relations between the godly and the Devil set out by theorists like William Perkins. For the latter, as we have seen, made it quite clear that the elect might fall into the sin of witchcraft and yet retain their justification in Christ. Butler exploits this by associating it with the liberty of the Saints and virtual antinomianism, and by satirizing the parliamentary resort to astrologers or conjurers during the 1640s and 1650s.[5] Ralph, the Independent, teaches Hudibras, the Presbyterian, who asks,

> ...If thou canst prove, the Saints have freedom,
> To go to Sorc'rers, when they need 'em.
> Says Ralpho, There's no doubt of that:
> Those Principles I quoted late,
> Prove that the Godly may alleadge
> For any thing their Priviledge;
> And to the Dev'l himself may go,
> If they have motives thereunto.

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[5]On astrology in this period, see Patrick Curry, Prophecy and Power: Astrology in Early Modern England, Oxford 1989, chapter 2.

Butler then slyly equates the self-styled godly with the very witches they abhor:

> For as there is a War between
> The Dev'l and them, it is no Sin,
> If they by subtle Stratagem,
> Make use of him, as he does them.

A few lines later, another dig:

> Quoth Hudibras, The case is cleer,
> The Saints may 'mploy a Conjurer;
> As thou hast prov'd it by their practice.

A neat move is made from justification by "those Principles", to proof by practice itself.The Parliamentarian godly are satirized for the persecution of witches and simultaneously presented as covert libertines and diabolists. These two charges are confounded by the use of the interrogative - "Has not this present Parliament ?" Parliamentary action is presented as just one more example of godly cant, witch-hunting as a process of making agreements, or even contracts (a Ledger[6]) with the Devil. The tables are turned both here and in the suggestion that the godly, despite, or perhaps because, of their outward show, may be possessed by the Devil (If they by subtle Stratagem/Make use of him, as he does them.)

Within the scheme of Butler's cynical scepticism, however, all the implications remain satirical and sarcastic. Witchhunters are just like witches, but both pursue a chimera. Butler's discussion of witchcraft in

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[6]The OED has one meaning as commissioner, agent, or even "ambassador of the Gospel". The latter makes for a more complex irony, as does the hint at an alternative meaning focussed on mercantile transaction.

Hudibras is meant as part of the general anti-fanatical diatribe.[7]

Turning for a moment to Butler's prose remains, we find his attitude to witchcraft falling within the tradition of Selden and Hobbes.[8] "What a stupendious operation", he writes,

> has the Malice of witches (for nothing else Qualify's them to be such,) who if the Laws of the Land are but true and just, are able to do feates, which the wisest men in the world are not able to understand ?

The use of the figure "are but true and just" gives a hint of disquiet vis-a-vis the law, an ironic shade of discontent. The premium placed on malice is important, as is the incomprehension of contemporary wise men or magi, which is comparable to the remarks of Hobbes's philosopher in his Dialogue of the Common Laws. Indeed, the remark is part of a passage which, with Selden, seeks punishment for malice above all:

> Malice is so great an Odds in any Contest between Man and Man; that the Law do's not condemne one man for killing another, for any Reason so much, as for having Malice Prepensd on his Side: as if it were one of those Illegall weapons, which the

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[7]Samuel Butler, Hudibras, ed. J. Wilders, Oxford 1967, Pt. 2, Canto III, ll 127-148 and 189-191

[8]See T. Hobbes, Leviathan,(1651), Harmondsworth 1968, p92; J. Selden, Table Talk, Oxford 1892, section CL, p195. For further evidence of Hobbes's influence on Butler, see Wilders' introduction to the Oxford edition of Hudibras. Casaubon had a similar literary theory to Hobbes and Davenant, and alludes to their arguments. He felt the same problems in writing heroic poetry in the new age, but adopted a different approach by mocking heroic convention. See Wilders' introduction to Hudibras pxxvi.

> Statute of stabbing provide's against.[9];

Another passage emphasizes the antisocial nature of the witch, while firmly denying the reality of witchcraft:

> Detraction is like witchcraft that always strives to do mischief to the Absent, but if either were effectuall, or could but do so much hurt to others as it often do's to those that use it, the world would be quite another thing, and in little time, Nothing.

A sort of justice is implied in the idea of malice reflecting itself back upon the witch or detractor. Two adjacent remarks retain the naturalistic approach:

> We do not finde that the Possessions of the Devil have ever don half so much mischief as mere Temptations.

So, the fanatics who use the devil are not so much possessed as tempted. And

> rebellion is sayd to be like the Sin of witch-craft because both are promoted, and manag'd with nothing else but Lyes, and cheates, and Impostures. For civil Armes can neither be raysd, nor maintaind, by honest meanes.

This is another very Hobbesian remark (compare Hobbes's words on witchcraft and subversion of the Commonwealth in Leviathan[10]). So Butler, while insisting that pretence lies behind the supposed preternatural acts of witches, maintains the political and social uses of the rhetoric of witchcraft for the condemnation of acts of malice, social

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[9]Samuel Butler, Prose Observations, ed. H. de Quehen, Oxford 1979, p61, ll 5-13. Compare with the conclusion of Thomas Ady's A Candle in the Dark, 1655, "An Instruction for Lawyers", p172.

[10]Leviathan, p374.

subversion and rebellion.[11] He remains very close to the position of his mentor, Selden, and his mentor's friend, Thomas Hobbes.[12]

Hudibras himself can lead us back to Meric Casaubon, as he lights upon an issue which obsessed the author of A Treatise concerning Enthusiasme. Sidrophel the astrologer in Butler's poem "had read Dee's Prefaces before/The Dev'l", and reference is made to Casaubon's edition. The knight's words therefore seem to point in Casaubon's direction:

> Quoth Hudibras, Alas What is't to us,
> Whether't were sayd by Trismegistus:
> If it be nonsense, false, or mystick,
> Or not intelligible, or sophistick.
> 'Tis not Antiquity, nor Author,
> That makes truth truth, altho time's daughter.

Casaubon had a longstanding concern with issues of antiquity and authority; and while on the one hand, his revered father Isaac had debunked the corpus hermeticum, he on the other was one to whom "nothing is incredible".[13]

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[11]ibid., p198 ll 26-30, p35/6 ll 32 and 1-3
See also his remarks on Glanvill, p137 ll 15-21.

[12]This position involves describing a wide range of threats to social cohesion, whether village malice or high political subversion, in terms of witchcraft or enchantment.

[13]Hudibras, part 2, canto III, ll 235-6, 659-64
Meric Casaubon, Of Credulity and Incredulity in things Natural, Civil and Divine, 2nd ed., 1672, p157.
Meric Casaubon, (1599-1671). Born at Geneva, the son of the great classical scholar Isaac Casaubon , and the only son who pleased his father. He attended Eton and Christ Church where he was consistently favoured with royal patronage. His first two books were defences of his father's reputation against Roman Catholic and scholarly attack. Created D.D. at Oxford by the order of Charles I in 1636. He was advanced in the church by Lancelot Andrewes and later William Laud, but deprived of all his preferments by Parliament around 1644. According to Walker's Suffering of the Clergy he "was

It is an account of Casaubon that constitutes the locus classicus of the association between enthusiasm and belief in witchcraft. The passage in question anticipates Jonathan Swift's onslaught against enthusiasm, written as it was by Swift's employer, Sir William Temple, in 1690:

> And I am sorry the Natural History or Account of Fascination has not imployed the Pen of some Person of such excellent Wit and deep Thought and Learning as Casaubon, who writ that curious and useful Treatise of Enthusiasme, and by it discovered the hidden or mistaken Sources of that delusion.

Temple, bemoaning the lack of a Casaubonian Treatise of Witchcraft, goes on to depict the virtues which such a book could instil:

> I think a clear Account of Enthusiasm and Fascination from their natural Causes would very much deserve from Mankind in general as well as from the Commonwealth of Learning, might perhaps prevent many publick disorders, and save the Lifes of many innocent deluded or deluding People, who suffer so frequently upon Account of Witches and Wizards.[14]

The irony of course is that Casaubon did write on witchcraft, in his Of Credulity, and to a very different purpose from that suggested by Temple. Temple's preferred model, the Treatise Concerning Enthusiasme, As It is an Effect of Nature: but is mistaken by many for either

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abused, fined, and imprisoned". Asked by Cromwell to write a history of the civil war, offered money or the restoration of his father's library, he refused. He declined an offer of employment from Queen Christina, Descartes's unwittingly murderous benefactor. He married well in 1651, and was restored to all his preferments in 1660. See DNB. On Isaac Casaubon and the corpus hermeticum, see Frances Yates, Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition, 1964, pp398-431.

[14]Cited by George Williamson, note 1, loc.cit.

Divine Inspiration, or Diabolical Possession does indeed contain in its very title a promise to restrict the operation of the supernatural, to give medical explanations for the supposed action of spirit or devil in a variety of enthusiasms. It covers divination, philosophy, rhetoric, poetry, and prayer. The avowed aim is to prevent men from "embracing a Cloud, or a Fogge for a Deity" which in the years of Civil War and Republic was, according to Casaubon, a common and "foul mistake".[15] The treatise therefore stands alongside Henry More's Enthusiasmus Triumphatus and a handful of other works as an attempt to depict the sects or fanatics of the 1650s as bad physicians in their diagnosis and manipulation of possession, themselves requiring physic in the lunacy of their precatory enthusiasm.[16] Of course, the treatise ranges much wider than this, but the preface confirms this as the main subject, the spur, and the political motive. Nevertheless, the preface also includes what should be a warning not to take Casaubon's stance as a simple, naturalistic, anti-enthusiastic one:

> to conclude of particular cases, by generall Rules and Maximes; I knew full well, to be a principall cause of most strifes and confusions.[17]

We have two letters relating to the genesis of

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[15]Meric Casaubon, Treatise Concerning Enthusiasme, 2nd edition, 1656, To the reader.

[16][Henry More], Enthusiasmus Triumphatus, or a Discourse of the Nature, Causes, Kinds, and Cure of Enthusiasme; written by Philophilus Parrasiastes, and prefixed to Alazonomastix his Observations and Reply, 1656

[17]ibid.

Casaubon's next work, his edition of Dee's papers on his commerce with the spiritual world. One is from Nicholas Bernard, protegé of Archbishop Ussher, chaplain and almoner to Oliver Cromwell, and disputant with the Arminian controversialist, Peter Heylyn. The letter purports to clear up a misunderstanding over a current report, saying that Bernard had claimed "that my Lord Primate Ussher thought it [Dee's relation] a dangerous book". Ussher had indeed borrowed the manuscript of Sir Thomas Cotton in London, "and each night I read a great part of it to him, and for my own satisfaction ran over the most part of it". On the point at issue, however, Bernard did "not remember any such speech of his", indeed

> I have cause to believe that if he were alive, he would not discourage you the publishing of it,

although, as for Bernard himself,

> I should think it worthy of advise in some particulars, which might be omitted.

Casaubon did not, as far as we know, submit his proofs to Bernard, as the latter had hinted; no doubt, Archbishop Laud's protegé needed no advice from Cromwell's chaplain. The preface by the editor might have struck Bernard as being as "impertinent" as some of the "confused" matter he had complained of in Dee's own relation.

Attached to this letter is a statement by John Cotton, supporting Bernard's testimony, that Ussher had in fact declared that

> it was an excellent book to convince atheists &c.

and wished it printed.[18]

The religious use of the witchcraft theme, for the convincing of atheists, central to the concerns of Glanvill, Boyle, More and Hale, was evidently already apparent to those of an earlier generation. The practical "atheism" of the 1640s and 1650s, as much as the theoretical materialism of Thomas Hobbes, stimulated such concerns.[19]

A clear statement of the book's aims is contained in, as the manuscript is described, "a letter written by Dr Casaubon and entred in a blank page before the Earl of Angleseas Copy".[20] The relevance of the work to Interregnum enthusiasm is evident from the first, Casaubon's aim being

> to sett out to the view of all then, the condition of those...when...they were acted by pretended inspiration and special guidance of the Spirit: and it is probable, that many were really deluded, who might think...preaching and praying on, and in much shew of zeal, God must needes be here.[21]

This state of affairs was of deep concern to Casaubon, a concern evinced further in his Vindication of the Lords Prayer, published a year later than the Dee relation, in

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[18]See under name in DNB. Bodleian MSS Ashm. 1788 f65 (1658)

[19]On Hobbism as a perceived threat, see Samuel Mintz, The Hunting of Leviathan, Cambridge 1962, passim.

[20]Arthur Annesley, (1614-1686), Irish statesman and 1st Earl of Anglesey. In the late 1650s he was "in the confidence of the royalist party, though a professed friend to the Presbyterians". His was a moderate voice at the Restoration, and he held a number of high offices. He was one of the first peers to give time and money to forming a great library.

[21]Bodl. MS Ashm. 1788 f.65. Another copy in MS Rawl. D 923 f.205

1660. In this work, Casaubon defends the provision of prescribed prayers; but he also hints at the restraints under which he operated, since the work was composed before "this blessed alteration" of 1660:

> ...if it had been now to do...my expressions might have been fuller and plainer, in some places.[22]

So, in Casaubon's writings of the 1650s, we must expect some cryptic phrasing of dangerous sentiments. Publishing a sixteenth-century manuscript as postscript to an attack on religious fanaticism is certainly one way of trying to avoid official scrutiny. The relation of text to preface is set out in Casaubon's letter:

> in this relation...[is] a miserable account of a Man deluded...for the preachings and prayings of Spirits (real devils) with shew of great devotion, and the very language of the tymes observable in many places. [my emphasis]

Before continuing, simply note the change from the 1656 work on enthusiasm. There the aim was to show certain forms of divine and diabolical possession to be natural. Here it is to show "precatory enthusiasm" as a form of traffic with the Devil. Casaubon did not consider Dee's text with the reverence which some historians of alchemy and astrology might expect:

> If your leisure will serve you to run over the table (after the Preface) it will give you a view of the whole Book, which otherwise is tedious and full of impertinent and confused stuff, much like, in many things, the canting language that was then in use.

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[22]Meric Casaubon, A Vindication of the Lord's Prayer, 1660, To the Reader. Cf Butler's unwillingness to publish in the 1650s, above.

In other words, read my preface, my summary, and think of the relation itself as verbose proof of the links between Dee's activities and those of the fanatics, both stylistic and substantive.

Nonetheless, the book did attract unwanted political attention. Cromwell's chaplain had been spared the preface; his master saw it, and was, according to Casaubon, concerned:

> The book was stopped at the press, and in question at the Councill table. If the Protector had lived it had not been printed. But upon his death...it was got out.[23]

Cromwell well knew the power of Casaubon's pedigree, his father's recognized place as doyen of European scholars. "His very name carried an impressiveness hardly to be measured without a precise chronology of scholarship." So well did the Lord Protector know this, that he had tried to inveigle Meric into writing an impartial account of the Civil War. Casaubon refused, preferring to compose covert attacks on the usurping power and its clients.[24]

The first thing to notice in the True and Faithful Relation is its claim, in the title, that John Dee's activities had tended

To a General Alteration of most STATES and

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[23]Bodleian MS Ashmole 1788, f65.

[24]George Eliot, Middlemarch [1871-2], Harmondsworth 1965, p33
On this episode see DNB under Casaubon, Meric,. Also see M.R.G. Spiller, "Concerning Natural Experimental Philosophie". Meric Casaubon and the Royal Society, The Hague 1980.

KINGDOMES in the World.

Straightaway we are brought to consider political consequences, and to ascribe similar tendencies to the "Anabaptists" - scaremongering terminology on Casaubon's part - who are continually compared to John Dee. For instance, Dr Dee had illusionary comforts,

> such as the Saints (as they call themselves) and Schismaticks of these and former times have ever been very prone to boast of, perswading themselves that they are the effects of Gods Blessed Spirit.

Such men "become Saints before they know what it is to be Christians". Dr Dee's devils too were "perswaders to Piety and godliness", and to a similarly pernicious end. The Devil is "a notable Polititian" and

> can any man speak better than he doth by the mouth of Anabaptists and Schismaticks.[25]

Casaubon's point is that these enthusiasts, in their irregularity, their departure from custom and from legitimate authority, are "such men as can give no account of their calling". When dealing with "so great and weighty a business as the salvation of Souls is" one must, for safety's sake, "use the means that God hath ordained". The editor goes beyond mere noting of the similarities between Dee's practices and those of enthusiasts, and the insinuation of a common, if unwitting, diabolical involvement. Talking of Dee's spirits' "confident and reiterated Addresses unto, and Attempts upon so many great

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[25] A True and Faithful Relation, pp31,34,36. Defoe was to extend this image of the Devil as the politician par excellence as discussed in chapter 4 on Defoe, below.

men in Power and Authority", he asks us to

> consider it well, we have reason to praise God for it since England might have been over-run with Anabaptism...long before this.

The covert hint that Anabaptists are well on their way to power in the 1650s is pushed home:

> (when I say Anabaptism, I mean Anabaptism confirmed and in full power, not as it appears in its first pretensions.)

By appealing to "all truly sober and Religious" men to pray for a preservation from this, Casaubon is by implication condemning those who tolerate[26] such outrages. Dee's spirits have been implicated in an Anabaptist conspiracy. Returning to Dee's account, credit for the thwarting of this fanatical nightmare is given to "the Wisdom and prudence of their Majesties Councel", a moot contrast with the laxness of the English Commonwealth.[27]

Perkins's theory held witchcraft to be the inversion of a divine order and liturgy, and consequently placed great emphasis on the witch's contract with the Devil. This inversion of the divine compact with the godly acted as a structural and psychological reinforcement of contract

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[26]My emphasis. This Cromwellian toleration could perhaps be contrasted with the "comprehensive", solution which Casaubon leant towards after the Restoration. But see Blair Worden, "Toleration and the Cromwellian Protectorate" in Studies in Church History, 21, Oxford 1984, especially his helpful remarks on liberty of conscience, p209-10, and the widespread desire for union on all sides. Cf. Casaubon's view on comprehension in its broadest sense, below.

[27]Casaubon, Relation, p52

theology.[28] Casaubon's strategy is somewhat different. Reclaiming the doctrine of witchcraft from the saints, he turns it around. An imitative conception of the diabolical can be redirected against the soi-disant godly. For instance,

> The Divel we see can Pray and Preach...and talk of Sanctity and Mortification, as well as the best.

Casaubon's image is not so much of inversion as of feigned symmetry - "as to outward appearance we mean" - impossible to distinguish from the real thing without the sanction of established authority. Those "enthusiasts" who "can give no account of their calling" must be suspected of a league with the Devil, or at least, of acting under diabolical inspiration.[29] Casaubon does also use the imitation of the divine order by the Devil to give a perverse sanction to his own ecclesiastical and social preferences. "Holy furniture" is central to Dee's practices, what with "the Holy Table" and "this personated sanctuary". Casaubon makes

> no question but the Divel in all these things had a respect to the Ceremonial Law especially,

as one would expect from an Anglican of his ilk.[30]

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[28]See previous chapter, and also P. Stallybrass and A. White, The Politics and Poetics of Transgression, 1986, pp4-26, esp. pp23-25.

[29]See note 20, p52/3

[30]ibid. p47-8. He does also damn practices by showing them to be diabolical: "That sad story of their promiscuous Copulation, under the persuasion of obedience to God". [p45] Surely this is part of the attack on the perceived threat of the extreme sectarians, such as the Ranters ? On this threat as a matter of perception, see J.C. Davis, Fear, myth and history; the Ranters and the historians, Cambridge 1986;

Before looking at Casaubon's later works which deal with witchcraft, it is worth trawling the preface to Dee for his general ideas on demonology. The diagnosis of witchcraft is an expert science, but one which he admits to have been abused:

> It cannot be denyed but this whole businesse of Witches, what through ignorance, what through malice, is very lyable to many mistakes and divers impostures. And it were to be wished that in all such Trials some prudent Divines, and learned experienced Physicians might be joyned.

He is anxious to show that one or two instances of fraud do not make the phenomenon entirely discredited, "as if a man should deny the power of herbs because a thousand things have been written of them of old, and are yet daily falsely and superstitiously".[31] No guilt by association; yet such therapy was to be discredited, despite its demonstrable efficacy.[32] For Casaubon it is clear that the evidence for witchcraft cannot be reduced to a few spurious examples. It is corroborative, and well-distributed in time and space. He presents witchcraft as singularly unproblematic, and his reasons for this are those that made the phenomenon a favoured whip for atheists in the 1660s and 1670s:

> it is a Subject of that nature as doth not admit of many Arguments, such especially as may pretend to subtilty of Reason. Sight, Sense and Experience

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and see also the reply by G.E. Aylmer, "Did the Ranters exist ?" in Past and Present, 117, 1987.

[31]ibid. p13. cf. idem, A Treatise of Use and Custome, 1638, p186, where he warns "lest conforming to the vulgar in those things, hee himselfe become one of them".

[32]See MacDonald, Mystical Bedlam, esp. pp226-227.

> (upon which most Humane Knowledge is grounded) generally approved and certain, is our best argument.[33]

Casaubon, disciple of the antique, and no friend to the new philosophy, sets out the basis of pneumatology, while denying its pertinence:

> The very word Spirit, is a term of great Ambiguity; We understand by it, commonly, substances, that are altogether immaterial. Many of the ancient Fathers, it is well known, [Tertullian is one cited by Hobbes] did not allow of any such at all, besides God: But we think that to have no visible Body, and to be purely immaterial, is all one: God knows how many degrees there may be between these, but we cannot know it, neither doth it concern our salvation.[34]

Charles Webster has shown how for Henry Power, "the corporeal was allowed to merge imperceptibly into the incorporeal"; the same was true for the experimental judge, Matthew Hale, and his friend, Richard Baxter. This continuum

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[33] A True and Faithful Relation, p14. Cf J[ohn] W[agstaffe], The Question of Witchcraft debated..., 1669 [first edition], p59 (Wagstaffe is discussed at greater length at the end of this chapter):

> ...they are wont to wave arguments, and to cry out, this is a question not to be disputed on, in regard it is a matter of fact, and consequently the object of sense, not of reason.

Casaubon's is the sort of common-sense empiricism, absorbing tradition and textual authority, which Defoe was later to use in his Review article on witchcraft. See chapter on Defoe below. Cf R.T., The Opinion of Witchcraft Vindicated. In an Answer to a Book Intituled the Question of WITCHCRAFT Debated. Being a Letter to a Friend, 1670, p62, on the dangers of "becom[ing] a Sceptick, and reject[ing] the Testimony of...[the] Senses".

[34] ibid. p42. The invention and success of the concept gas is obviously vital to the decline in this way of thinking. Gases are quintessentially invisible and material. The concept is so ingrained in us, that understanding this alternative division of the world is very difficult.

allowed the experimentalists Mayow, Hooke, Boyle and the like to manipulate spirit in the laboratory to the confusion of ill-disciplined enthusiasts and empty materialists alike. Witchcraft reports, as Boyle saw it, could form part of this programme.[35] But Casaubon would have thought such endeavours fruitless, as a pursuit of the unknowable - "God knows..." - and a distraction from the business of salvation. He was satisfied to postulate hierarchies of spirits, good, evil, and indifferent[36], and to condemn the arrogance of the natural philosophers, a theme he took up again in one of his last works, the letter to Peter du Moulin.[37] The preface itself takes a distinctly anti-Baconian line:

> I wish that our great undertakers and reformers ... of arts and Sciences would seriously think of this,

asking them to remember Adam and Eve, the dangers of pride and curiosity,

> they especially who take upon themselves to make all men wise and of one mind, and to reconcile all doubts and differences in Religion and otherwise; in a word, to make Truth to be imbraced by all

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[35]Charles Webster, "The Experimental Philosophy of Henry Power", Ambix 14, 1967. Richard Baxter, Of the Nature of Spirits..., 1682. idem, Additional Notes of the Life and Death of Sir Matthew Hale, 1682. See also Simon Schaffer, "Godly Men and Mechanical Philosophers: Souls and Spirits in Restoration Natural Philosophy", Science in Context, 1, 1987.

[36] See A True and Faithful Relation, p42, and Of Credulity and Incredulity, p195

[37]Meric Casaubon, Letter...to Peter du Moulin...Concerning Natural Experimental Philosophy, 1669, reprinted in Spiller, "Concerning Natural Experimental Philophy".

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This is a sharp retort to those who sought the "great instauration". He asserts the inability of man alone to overcome the lapsarian forgetting of the prisca sapientia, and compares the reformers, implicitly, to the enthusiasts themselves:

> Should these men tell us that if they had had the creating of the world, and the ordering of all things (and there be, I think, in the world that have said little less) from the beginning, they would have made an other guess of things then God hath done [a singular piece of hyperbole]: We would have considered of it perchance what might be the ground in any mortal man of such wonderful confidence.[38]

Here then is the comparison with the fanatics. Compare the remark in Of Credulity and Incredulity:

> ...besides profest or secret Atheism and infidelity; there is not, among them that profess to believe...any greater cause of miscarrying, than presumption.[39]

Surely it is the presumption of the fanatic to which he is referring ? And the natural philosophers partake in the same sin.[40] Casaubon's approach to spirit is very different.

Finally, Casaubon's brand of conservative, religiously-founded scepticism, or cynicism emerges:

> But such being the condition of the world, as it is, and such of men, naturally; or to speak as a Christian, since the fall of Adam, and the consequences of it, the curse of God, &c.,[-] to make all men wise, of one mind, good, religious,

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[38] True and faithful Relation p33

[39] Of Credulity..., p185

[40] And "they...would reduce all learning, to natural experiments", Of Credulity and Incredulity, p296.

> without an infinite omnipotent power, such as of nothing was able to create a world: can any man (sober and wise) hear it; hear it with patience, that thinks it impossible, yea strange, that Castles should be built in the air, or the heavens battered with great guns ?[41]

Casaubon's views on witchcraft are to be thoroughly distinguished, then, from the scientific programme of Boyle, Glanvill and More. Those views are founded on a conservative scepticism thoroughly removed from the blend of utopianism and cocksure scepticism which the Royal Society men often espoused. The division between ancients and moderns was working itself out in this issue, as in so many others. But the substantial conclusion as to the existence of witchcraft was not necessarily any different.

Casaubon's view of the miraculous is a striking exception to the received view that all Protestants rejected contemporary miracles[42]; and that mainstream churchmen

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[41] True Relation, p33.

[42] Cf, eg, [William Sherlock, D.D.], The Notes of The Church, As Laid down By Cardinal Bellarmin; Examined and Confuted", 1688, p252:

> We of the Reform'd Church, as we do not pretend to the working of Miracles in our Age, so if we did, we could pretend to prove nothing by them but what hath been already sufficiently prov'd by the Miracles of Christ and his Apostles.

Or, for another point of view, [John Gilbert, M.A.], Reflections on Dr Fleetwood's Essay upon Miracles: Shewing the Absurdity, Falshood, and Danger of his Notions. With a Supplement, Wherein is represented the Extent and Strength of the Evidence which Miracles give to Revealed Religion, 1707. Pages 86-119 provide a defence of a robust position on the power of the Devil:

> [we] suppose...the Devil to have a Power to work Miracles, and that he may empower his Agents also, Whether the Devil's Power in this Case be his Natural Power that he was created with, or some Power given him for this particular Purpose, the

opposed the use of exorcism. To wonders or mira, Casaubon had the same approach as Hobbes, relativization.[43] As spirits, and creatures of long experience, he asserts, devils must have "perfect knowledg of all natural things". Some might quarrel with this use of the term perfection, which should be God's prerogative, but Casaubon explains that he means relative perfection, "incomparably greater than man is capable of".[44] Again, despite the admitted occurrence of imposture, he believes in the possibility of "supernatural things, as cures, &c...in every age, for which no reason can be given, which also for the strangnesse may be called Miracles". If we retreat to the strict definition of miracula, proceeding from God alone,

> I shall not be very ready to yield that many such Miracles are seen in these Dayes.

While underplaying the miraculous - "not very ready", "not many" - he does not banish it altogether. Despite the canons of 1604, he defends a moderate, non-superstitious practice of exorcism, and this despite the dangers of fraud. His safeguard is, as with witchcraft, expert opinion; a

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> World perhaps does not think it self concerned to enquire, neither knows any certain means of being satisfied...And this the World thinks to be the Difference between the Power of God, and the Power of the Devil in working Miracles; the one's Power is absolute and omnipotent, the other's finite, limited and restrained; and that consequently which appears restrained, the World supposes is not to be thought the Power of God. [p92]

[43]See Leviathan, pp469-478 and chapter on Filmer and Hobbes, above.

[44]True and Faithful Relation, p37

physician should always be in attendance at such undertakings.[45]

Such calculated moderation - between credulity and incredulity - is a persistent feature of Casaubon's thought. His father's hesitation between Rome and Geneva, and final choice of the English via media was, as were so many of his qualities, his son's inspiration.[46] Meric Casaubon was the model Anglican, as his book on the Necessity of Reformation confirms. It is the fierceness of many Protestants, following the example of Luther and Calvin, that has hindered a true reformation. It should never be denied that the church of Rome, despite its waywardness, is a true church. The Pope is Bishop of Rome, not Antichrist. Any other position is "contrary to the judgment and declaration of the Church of England". There is here a connection, which is to be found in later writing, between an apologetic for witchcraft belief, and a desire to moderate anti-

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[45]ibid. p18. Canon 72 of the 1604 canons related to exorcism, and effectively forbad the practice without special episcopal licence. See Keith Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic, Harmondsworth 1973, p579. In France it was an age of miracles, see Jean de Viguerie, "Le Miracle dans la France du XVIIe siècle" in XVIIe Siècle, 140, 1983. Cf [N. Orchard], The Doctrine of Devils proved to be the grand Apostasy of these later Times. An Essay tending to rectifie those Undue Notions and Apprehensions Men have about Daemons and Evil Spirits, 1676, p102:

> [it is] a rebellious Doctrine; some Exorcists upon the account of it, instigate to rebellion; we conquer Devils, can flesh and blood stand out ?

[46]On Isaac's career see DNB and Yates, Giordano Bruno, pp398-431.

Catholicism.[47] We can also notice in Casaubon's works the sort of eirenic temper which should not be seen as the exclusive preserve, or necessary attribute, of the so-called Latitudinarian party. Here is a typical Casaubonian passage which tries to conscript Calvin himself into the English fold:

> But for Calvin, though he was a rigid man, naturally; and especially in point of Ceremonies; and might overshoot himself sometimes, in his censures and opinions; yet he was a godly pious man, otherwise...and by what he writes of some particular Ceremonies; in some places, very moderately; but especially, of the necessity, or expediency, at least, of a standing Liturgie; we may probably guess, had he lived in England, and had been better acquainted with the true state of businesses, he would have been of another mind, in many things.[48]

Surely the key to this vapid entreaty, this appeal to the better nature of the long dead, is an earlier remark concerning "Scisme", which is "the most horrid of crimes that can be committed by the wickedest of men".[49] There was an affinity between those who sought comprehension -

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[47]See chapter on Richard Boulton below.

[48]M.Casaubon, Of the Necessity of Reformation..., 1664, p156. On Latitudinarianism as a label, see John Spurr, "'Latitudinarianism'and the Restoration Church" in Historical Journal, Vol. 31, 1, 1988. Laud called the Church of Rome a "true" but not a "right" church. See his Conference with Fisher the Jesuit,(1639), 1901, vii, p145-6. He was accused of this dangerous moderation when on trial. The thirty-nine articles refer to the bishop of Rome [xxxvii] and to the church of Rome having "erred" [xix].

[49]Necesssity of Reformation, "To the Reader". Cf Henry Dodwell, ...The Sinfulness and Mischief of Schisme, 1679, especially chapter XIV on the sin against the Holy Ghost. Dodwell's views on schism led him to become a nonjuror after the Glorious Revolution, returning to the main body of the church towards the end of his life.

including Hale and Orlando Bridgeman, who put down a bill for it in the 1660s[50] - and witchcraft apologetics of the type set out by Casaubon. For that judgment on schism relates to a desire to comprehend, or come into communion with, ordinary Catholics (who, despite Roman excess, remain a true church)[51] and ordinary Calvinists (whose prophet can be toned down); while the wickedest of schismatics are those who put themselves entirely in opposition to God's order, the enemies of God and man, the witches. No crime "can be either more injurious to the Divine Majesty, or more pernicious to the community of men" than witchcraft.[52] By identifying a certain type of enthusiasm as tantamount to witchcraft, and again, calling such men "Saints...and Schismaticks", Casaubon is drawing the boundary within which comprehension, in a broader sense than often understood, can be legitimately pursued, and diabolizing the excluded. The relevance of witchcraft to what became the issue of comprehension, an interest later, broadly speaking, of both Daniel Defoe and Richard Boulton, was manifested in Casaubon's work around the time of the Restoration.[53] The

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[50]See entries under name in the DNB. Hale put down a bill in 1660; Hale and Bridgeman in 1668.

[51]Casaubon denied Catholic responsibility for the Great Fire, see Of Credulity, p200.

[52]Of Credulity, p170.

[53]A True and Faithful Relation, p31. On comprehension, and Anglican approaches both to Presbyterians and Gallicans see: N. Sykes, From Sheldon to Secker, Cambridge 1959, esp. chapters III and IV, and his Church and State in the 18th Century, Cambridge 1934, p18; Joshua Basset, An Essay

crime of witchcraft hedges the divine community, and binds together the commumity of men.

II

Another motive for Casaubon's interest in witchcraft is discernible in a later work, Of Credulity and Incredulity in things Natural and Civil (1668), which was followed by a discourse extended to things "divine", in 1670.[54] The first two parts were reissued posthumously in 1672 as A Treatise proving Spirits, Witches and Supernatural Operations. The work was one of a succession of books on the witchcraft issue - Wagstaffe's Question of Witchcraft Debated [1669, 2nd edition 1672], a certain R.T.'s response [1670], and Orchard's The Doctrine of Devils [1676]. Casaubon's work itself, however, is also something of a sequel to his pre-war Treatise of Use and Custome. A note in the front of the Bodleian copy tells us that the latter was originally planned to have the title "A Treatise of Use and Custome in things natural, civil and divine", which confirms this

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towards a proposal for catholic communion, 1704. See also John Spurr, "The Church of England, Comprehension and the Toleration Act of 1689", EHR CIV (1989) pp927-946 [according to Spurr the bulk of clergy ended up believing "better a schism without the church, than a faction within it".] Hale and Bridgeman both presided over witch trials which resulted in convictions: W. Cobbett, State Trials, vi, pp687-702. We will return to this broad notion of comprehension, one involving catholics and transcending the legislative proposals of 1690, in chapters 4 and 5.

[54]The latter is much taken up with the virtues of Plato - in opposition to the thrust of his opponent, Wagstaffe's, work.

impression. As we will discover, the centrality of custom and the grounds of belief certainly had a renewed significance after two decades of civil discord and innovation. But already in 1638, Casaubon recognized custom as

> being a thing of great force in a body politick, as well as in a body naturall, and of much importance every way, either to the peace or disturbance of any Commonwealth.

Beyond this commonplace, he expresses an almost common-law aversion to "altering old customes", especially since "the reason of some...cannot equally appeare at all times". Nevertheless, the book is not a strident assertion of the claims of simple custom, but rather an exploration of how far one may trust to custom without neglecting the proper demands of reason.[55]

The Treatise opens with a general consideration of the relative virtues of otium and negotium, the old humanist dilemma, which Casaubon attempts to reconcile. He moves on to an anti-voluntarist account of ethics in which "voluntas necessario determinatur ab intellectu" [the will is necessarily determined by the intellect]. "It is not

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[55]J[ohn] W[agstaffe], The Question of Witchcraft debated; Or a discourse against their Opinion that affirm Witches, 1669. Meric Casaubon, A Treatise of Use and Custome, 1638, Bodl. Lib. Vet A2 e 295; Cf Meric Casaubon, A Discourse CONCERNING CHRIST HIS INCARNATION AND EXINANITION. As also, concerning THE PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIANITY..., 1646, p7:

> Divinity also hath her common principles; which though perchance they be not of that degree of evidence as the priciples of some other Sciences are, yet they are evident enough to satisfie any rationall man.

enough", Casaubon writes,

> that what wee doe be laudible of itselfe, and as the Schoole men speake, materially good; except we know it to be so, and doe it upon that ground.

This leads to the inevitable distinction between the praiseworthy, well-grounded but unsuccessful physician, and the mere "Empiricke", be he never so efficacious. Thus,

> Vertue is not Vertue properly, but as it is the frute and effect, of true knowledge and sound reason.

Justa facere [to do good things] requires justum esse [being good], and truth is vital to genuine happiness.[56] Such a position is not irrelevant to Casaubon's work on witches. It implies that vice is not properly vice unless "the frute and effect, of...knowledge", seeming to deny the cogency of the deluded maleficent notions of witchcraft, both Weyer's and Hobbes's. Furthermore, it is of great importance to Casaubon's understanding of religion, and the vital place of reason within it; a distinctively Anglican position, thoroughly different from Roman authoritarianism, or Protestant spiritual individualism.[57]

We move on to custom in things natural, and a

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[56]Cf Of Credulity and Incredulity, p202:
> not the outward actions barely, is that that can denominate a man truly sober and temperate; but the opinions...from which those actions do proceed.

[57]ibid., pp6,4,5. Hobbes loc.cit. J. Weyer, De praestigijs daemonum..., Basel 1564. On the place of reason see passage cited in previous note, and in the same work passim. Also, Henry R. McAdoo, The Spirit of Anglicanism: A Survey of Anglican Theological Method in the Seventeenth Century, 1965 and John Spurr's sceptical view in "Rational Religion in the Restoration", forthcoming.

discussion of the role of habit in nature. Again, this touches on the elements of witchcraft belief. Here, Casaubon uses a confused terminology which bodes ill for the clarity of these discussions of the supernatural. The effects of custom are "rather supra naturam; then contra naturam directly"; yet at the same time the habitual excesses of men, for instance those who subject themselves to ever-increasing doses of poison, may produce effects against nature. This is not all. The relativization of the miraculous noted elsewhere, is taken to a destabilizing extreme:

> As for Miracles, though above nature, yet are they not properly against nature, since they are his proper worke, who is the Author of nature, and therefore originally, and sutably to his Nature, did reserve unto himselfe a power to dispense with his owne lawes whensoever hee thought fit.

The conclusion is that

> All Gods workes of themselves, and in regard of God, are equally naturall, though not in regard of us.

The same ambivalence as to what is truly supernatural informs the opening of the 1668 sequel. It is implied that the natural includes the actions of spirits, the term supernatural being restricted to miracles, the works of the divine. As Casaubon puts it, since the Devil works by nature,

> the word, Diabolical, or Demoniacal, since there was no need, I was willing to forbear.

But a mere fifteen or so pages later he is dividing the supernatural into sub-categories of things we do not know

the cause of (once more, a relative definition) and the immediate actions of Devils and spirits. These confusions over terminology left plenty of openings for Casaubon's opponents and for the rhetoric of naturalism. The naturalists[58] often shamelessly asserted that the apologists for belief in witchcraft were virtual Manichaeans. This was partly effected by exploiting these difficulties of terminology, artfully confounding the precarious distinctions which writers like Casaubon laboured to maintain between the miraculous, the supernatural, and the preternatural.[59] If we seek to be more generous to Casaubon's account, we will notice the understandable reluctance to circumscribe an omnipotent God, together with an acceptance that

> Nature in a generall sense is not mutable, that is cannot exorbitate or go beyond the bounds that were at first set unto it by its author.[60]

Another shade of the word natural, a morally charged one, is then expounded:

> Certainely, art may doe much, and custome much; but to follow nature (where nature herselfe hath

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[58]In his Treatise concerning Enthusiasme, Casaubon had presented himself as a naturalist ["Contents": "naturall causes [are]...our onely Subject and ayme in this Treatise], but his naturalism went so far and no further.

[59]This is R.T.'s complaint about Wagstaffe:
> I found the Author in his Preface, laying about him like a Hercules furens, or an Ajax mastigophorus, and charging his opposers with no less than Paganisme, acknowledging plurality of Gods, and ascribing omnipotency to the Devil. [Opinion of Witchcraft, p1.]

[60]Treatise of Use and Custome, pp44,60,60,6,70

> not degenerated:) is alwaies both the surer, and most commendable.

We can thus apply Casaubon's doctrines of nature to witchcraft on two planes. Natura naturata, created nature, is immutable of itself, and any interruption in the natural course must be the work of natura naturans, or rather, of God. Morally, the attempt to escape the natural order is vicious, this being one of the many sins that the witch falls into. And, since the Devil's art is subtle, witchcraft may well appear to us as somehow supernatural. That in itself is a sign of its depraved character.[61]

The opponents of witchcraft belief frequently tried to pin Manichaeism on to the apologists, and ascribe vulgar views to a credulous elite.[62] Casaubon was well aware of the problem, and the treatises on custom and credulity display an anxiety to establish a sound position free from the possibility of such taunts. The "custome of the common people", he agrees, is "commonly [to] like that best, which is worst". In matters of religion, he warns against following custom when it departs from reason,

> lest conforming to the vulgar in those things, hee himselfe become one of them.

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[61]ibid. p77

[62]See Wagstaffe, Question of Witchcraft..., pp34 and 99 on the vulgar, p50 on Manichaeism. All authors attacked Manichaeism, while tracts attacking the belief in witches sophistically attached the label to their opponents. Cf R.T.'s variation on the theme:

> ...common people...search no farther than the outward senses. [Opinion of Witchcraft Vindicated, p30]

In "the very substance" of religion, whether in practice or in doctrine, "custome is not considerable". In lesser matters, it is hierarchy which achieves precedence. A surrender to custom may be proper. Or, as Casaubon puts it, superiors "may yeeld", while inferiors "must always submit".[63]

The Treatise of Use and Custome is a key to the understanding of much of the later Casaubon. While he is sure that "by bookes especially wee come to the knowledge of Truth", he still worries about the proper grounds of credit. He praises Plato, as he was to again in Of Credulity and Incredulity. He takes sidelong swipes at religious extremists, Brownists, and ceremonial puritans in particular.[64] But it is in its examination of the relative bounds of reason and custom, and its concern for authority and order, that the Treatise is most properly the precursor of the consideration Of Credulity and Incredulity. By the 1660s, however, the consideration of reason had become more sophisticated, given the lauding of what Casaubon attacked as "plain reason", by such as Thomas Hobbes and Herbert of Cherbury. What is more, the political climate was very different.[65]

Casaubon's apparent target in Of Credulity and

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[63]Treatise of Use..., pp162,186,181

[64]ibid., p83. And see pp130,176-7

[65]References to "plain reason" to be found throughout Casaubon's Letter...to Peter du Moulin...

Incredulity is the perceived threat of atheism. Those who refuse to believe in witches, devils and the like, "if not all Atheists themselves" are nevertheless helping to promote atheism, and are in turn aided and abetted by atheists. The question of the reality of atheism in the seventeenth century is an insoluble one. What is undeniable is that the fuss about atheism was prodigious, the quantity of properly atheistic literature virtually nil. Several interpretations of this are possible. It has been suggested that atheism was a covert creed, expressed only in code. David Berman has seen Hobbist atheism as the main threat after 1660, Rochester and Daniel Scargill as Hobbist pupils.[66] Hobbes himself was no atheist, but the reaction to his writings was certainly anti-atheist in its self-image. Scargill and Rochester may, ironically, have been taught their Hobbes by Hobbes's bastardizing opponents, those inadvertent instructors and disseminators of the Hobbist creed. The problem is that our own knowledge of this supposed atheism is almost entirely drawn from suspect sources: Rochester's pious swansong, as told by Gilbert Burnet; and Scargill's enforced recantation. Michael Hunter has recently tried to use Wagstaffe's The Question of Witchcraft Debated as an indication of thriving coffee-house scoffery. This is quite

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[66] Of Credulity..., p29. David Berman, A History of Atheism in Britain, 1988, pp48-67.

plausible, but does not add up to atheism pur sang.[67]

Casaubon's avowed aim was to present witchcraft narratives as evidence to confute an atheism centred on

> the not believing the existence of spiritual essences, whether good, or bad; separate, or united; subordinate to God, as to the supream, and original Cause of all; and by consequent the denying of supernatural operations.[68]

It is undeniable that those within the scientific and philosophical milieu about Boyle found Hobbes's philosophy a menace. It presented a threat to their interests, to their view of natural philosophy and the place of legitimate authority within the natural philosophical community. They slighted his materialism as atheistic, and sought verified reports of supernatural phenomena to contradict him. Whether coffee-house atheism, or ale-house denials of the reality of witchcraft had such a structured intellectual format is to be doubted. In the wake of civil war, and after the restoration of a Frenchified court, the most obvious threats were the social dipoles of rakish libertinism and plebeian insubordination. These are the sorts of thing which would have most worried a restored cleric like Casaubon. Looked at from this perspective, Of Credulity and Incredulity should be seen not only, or even primarily, as a blast against

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[67]On the Hobbist threat and its literature see Mintz op.cit. Daniel Scargill, Recantation publickly made before the University of Cambridge (of which he was formerly a member), 1669. Gilbert Burnet, Some Passages of the life and death of...John earl of Rochester, 1680. Michael Hunter, "The Witchcraft Controversy and the Nature of Free-Thought in Restoration England", forthcoming

[68]Of Credulity, p7

rampant philosophical atheism, but as a discourse on the grounds of belief in the wake of a severe disruption of social and constitutional order. This, surely, is why the work yokes together the natural and the civil in its very organisation.

In his preface to the reader, Casaubon apologizes for the delay in producing Of Credulity and Incredulity, which he had first hinted at in the preface to "Doctor Dee's book". The long gap between the two (which were clearly associated in Casaubon's mind) was the result of "other things, or cares, occasioned by that miraculous revolution of affairs in this Kingdom" [my emphasis]. The works published by Casaubon in the meantime, alongside his renewed clerical duties, included the Vindication of the Lord's Prayer of 1660, and Of the Necessity of Reformation of 1664, both of which had a distinct political relevance. Of Credulity and Incredulity should be considered in the same light. The problems surrounding the doctrines of witchcraft after the Restoration were numerous. Prosecutions of the war years, as has been seen, had associated the persecution of witches with the Parliamentarian cause. The classic theory of witchcraft was now firmly set within the framework of an unmodish theology with dangerous affiliations. Casaubon had dealt with some of this in the preface to Dee's relation. What needed more stressing, evidently, was the danger of incredulity; the value of customary belief. Thus, much of the work is a recap of old arguments, with a new twist.

Casaubon starts by making himself the embodiment of a divine providence (a severe illness relented, allowing him to write) and of his very argument: his sickness

> would be <u>incredible</u> unto many...I was unto my self, I am sure, a <u>wonder</u>.[69]

The witch's contract with the devil is barely mentioned at all in what follows. We have only the occasional glance at the old theory:

> I think it very seldom, that God doth grant true repentance unto such, who wilfully and deliberately have put themselves into the hands of the <u>Devil</u>, and either <u>directly</u> (as many do) or <u>tacitly</u>, which must be supposed, have abjured any right, or pretention to Gods mercy.[70]

This is the nearest we get to a contract; and at the same time, Perkins's idea of the witch as justified sinner is given short shrift. Then again, Perkins's assurance, in his <u>Discourse</u>, that the truly godly will escape the ministrations of the Devil is effectively denounced as a piece of gross impudence:

> to believe that none are <u>possessed</u>, or otherwise annoyed by the <u>Devil</u>, but wicked men, is a very uncharitable and erroneous opinion.

Casaubon's first argument in favour of belief in witchcraft is central to the purpose of the whole work. To reject a phenomenon because of its abuse - and Casaubon

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[69]For a contemporary comment very possibly relating to this see <u>The Doctrine of Devils</u>, p178:

> Some Old, Crazie-Brain'd, Doting, Melancholical, Hypochondriack Dreamers in the Paroxysm of their Distempers

- these are the only people who defend the belief in witches.

[70]"To the Reader" and p86

admits that witchcraft accusations have been abused - "is a popular way indeed, and with vulgar judgments, of great force: but it is the way to deny all truth, and to overthrow all government, and whatsoever is most holy among men". This politicization of epistemology is the keynote of the book and is allied to a resort to concensus generis humani [the agreement of humankind]. Casaubon observes the value such a concept has already had to the confutation of atheism:

> ...what use hath been made by ancient Heathens and others, of this general consent of mankind, to prove that there is a God, is well known.

The consent given has been wide, unpartisan, and material. In the context of Restoration, consensus is a conservative argument, one which could be applied as much to kingship as to divinity. The links between a rational credulity in things natural, and allegiance to a consensual political order is made quite clear in the section which covers things civil. To start with,

> Have we not seen a most godly religious Prince, and King...by his own Subjects, in multitude, pretending not to Christianity only, in general; but to the Protestant Religion, (or Reformation rather) upon pretences of Justice and Religion, massacred in cold bloud...Have we seen this, and wonder to hear, that there was, or is yet, any such people, or Nation, who when their Parents, Fathers and Mothers, are grown old and crazy, knock them on the head...and feast themselves with their flesh.[71]

This is more than a rhetorical figure. One of the two recent martyrdoms of the English church - the other being Laud's -

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[71]ibid., pp186-7,164-5,36,199. On Perkins, see chapter on contract theory.

is to be given credit as a wonder, not rationalized as an act of secular politics. Any attack upon a, presumably ipso facto, "godly religious Prince", can only be founded upon the "pretence...of Justice and Religion". The positive side is revealed in the next example. Should we wonder at the miraculous nourishment of Romulus and Remus, when

> we well ponder that connexion, and concatenation of providences, which attended our present Gracious Sovereign [Charles II]; and among others, by what hands he was led, lodged, and fed in a Tree, whilst his enemies round about did hunt and pursue him; to preserve him to as miraculous (because without bloud, and by those hands, in part, that had been active in his Father's ruine) a Restoration.

The comparison with the founding fathers of Rome is no doubt a conscious modulation of the imperial theme. In general, the reader is being asked to assent to the myths that attend the restoration of order, as he must also assent to the existence of witches.[72] The structure of the sentences - if you believe in the Royal wonders, as you must, you should believe in others - belies the rhetoric, which makes regicide cannibalism (a practice against nature) and transforms the Boscobel oak into a nourishing she-wolf.

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[72]The theme of witchcraft is also employed in a context of restoration in The English Devil: or, Cromwel and his monstrous witch discover'd at White-Hall: with the strange and damnable speech of this hellish monster, by way of revelation, touching king and kingdome; and a narrative of the infernal plots, inhumane actings, and barbarous conspiracies of this grand imposter, and most audacious rebel, that durst aspire from a brew-house to the throne, washing his accursed hands in the blood of his royal soveraign..., 1660. The Restoration was a divine miracle; and for sure, the Protectorate was a conspiracy of diabolical intent and inspiration.

Consensus helps general belief; for specifics, Casaubon has provided a set of rules.[73]

Royal wonders are on show again later, with a more explicit reference to the grounds of belief:

> I remember well, that when I was in the Isle of Wight...I was told of some extraordinary cures done by Charles the First, (since a Martyr) whilest he was a Prisoner there; not only upon some that had the King's Evil (as we call it) but upon some others also, who laboured of other diseases. Which, if true, and certain (as, because told me by persons of quality, I am apt to believe) it is pity, it should not be more known.[74]

The witnesses are worthy, and so the relation should be accepted. Yet, as with Christ, the proof is not in such individual miracles, but in the wonder of his whole life:

> We need no counterfeit miracles; his death, and his book[75] [Eikon Basilike] are sufficient miracles to canonize him.

Part of the effect is to suggest the credibility of the

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[73]ibid. p199. See ed. William Matthews, Charles II's Escape from Worcester: A Collection of Narratives Assembled by Samuel Pepys, Berkeley and LA, 1966. For the rules, see Of Credulity and Incredulity pp159ff, and note the summary on p172:

> ...it is the part of an intelligent reader...to consider the nature of the thing, and all the circumstances...[some] cannot be so thoroughly examined and searched...[while others are] not accompanied with convincing circumstances.

This is much the same as what Casaubon implies in the naturalistic Treatise concerning Enthusiasme, text at note 17 above.

[74]Of Credulity..., p293. Cf. A Miracle of Miracles: wrought by the Blood of King Charles the First, of happy memory, upon a Mayd at Detford foure miles from London, who...by making use of piece of handkircher dipped in the Kings blood is recovered of her sight, etc., 1649.

[75]Cf note 20 on Anglesey and Eikon Basilike, above.

miracles, of course; if we need none, those we do report are unlikely to be concoctions. The parallel with Christ is almost idolatrous - his death and his book (word?) - and it is followed to its extreme:

> they that could not, cannot yet be converted from their rebellion and schism, (I may now add, Atheism) by either; I think I may say of them, that though one rose from the dead, or an Angel did appear unto them from Heaven, they would not be converted, or believe.

Atheism, schism and rebellion are conflated as common enemies; and the definition of the proper bounds of credulity is a task performed in the defence of social order.[76]

Casaubon's work on credulity needs to be seen, then, as a contribution to an intellectual restoration which was to match that accomplished in the political sphere. It was one among many such projects. Traditional beliefs, like that in withcraft, were to be rescued from sectarian hands. Moreover, a proper degree of credulity, a belief in the operation of the supernatural and the marvellous, was

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[76]ibid. This deployment of witchcraft belief in the service of a renewed political tradition - Casaubon scorning "that malignant humor of innovating" - runs throughout Of Credulity and Incredulity. The whole repertoire is brought into play. For instance, the issue of God's permissiveness in relation to the commission of diabolical acts of witchcraft is given a political twist:

> How can they so much wonder at this, who know that God in all ages hath suffered, sometimes, as lately amongst us, eminently a wicked cause to prosper: and Godly men, his faithful Ministers and servants [that is, me]; yea godly Kings and Princes (whereof our late most pious sovereign [my patron], a rare example) to fall into the hands of the wicked ? [p117-8]

essential to the continued security of the Royal state.

A brief look at Casaubon's major opponent, John Wagstaffe, serves to confirm this political gloss on Of Credulity and Incredulity. Wagstaffe's book sets out in a political vein, with its opposition to standing armies, Eastern absolutism and priestcraft. Witchcraft is a piece of deception practised upon the body of the people. Later on, he gets nearer to home:

> ...wise Politicians, famous in their Generations [my emphasis - surely this is Casaubon], and very well experienced in the Nature of Man...they promoted these [superstitious] fears of the people, and improved them for the designs of Government.[77]

There are numerous other areas in which Wagstaffe opposes himself to all that Casaubon stands for[78], but it is his political reading of witchcraft theory that is most striking. In the second edition of 1671, he puts this in a characteristically Hobbist way: "we ought chiefly to consider, cui bono...". He anticipates Hutchinson's insistence on the dangerous extremism, the enthusiastic passion of the subscribers to belief in witchcraft, whose doctrines are

> all bloody...full of dangerous consequence, unto

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[77] The Question of Witchcraft, pp2, 70

[78] He dismisses Plato ["who can read with patience, such notorious lies in prose"], speaks irreverently of the "notorious mistakes of our English [Biblical] Translations", and refuses to accept medical expertise in demonology, exposing "want of knowledge in the Art of Physick" as one of the roots of the problem. See The Question of Witchcraft..., pp6,66 and on Plato, 2nd edition, 1671, p141.

> the lives and safety of men.[79]

Wagstaffe defends his book in its second edition as being "agreeable to Scriptures, and in no wise contrariant to Church or State". He falls in with Hobbes again by offering a parallel sort of witchcraft in statecraft, and calling Calvin's reading of the prophet Nahum as evidence, who thought of witchcraft as a whole range of

> Plots and Arts which a great City useth to subdue her Neighbours.[80]

It is not only a political reading of Casaubon as Restoration ideologist which Wagstaffe can support. It is also striking that his first published work was an attack on the pretensions of the Roman church, utterly different in tone from Casaubon's emollient outpourings. Furthermore, the Popes' success is spoken of in terms that are positively demonic. With "notorious jugling" they have "possessed the minds of men", insinuating "the Cobweb subtilty of a wordy nothingnesse...of a nature so aequivocal, and jugling". Those who follow are of a "praepossessed understanding".[81]

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[79]ibid., 2nd edition, pp125,147

[80]2nd edition, p27

[81]John Wagstaffe, Historical Reflections on the Bishop of Rome: chiefly discovering Those Events of Humane Affaires which most advanced THE PAPAL USURPATION, 1660, pp4,26-7. See also a passage which anticipates another notorious Hobbist, Henry Stubbe:

> ...why did they [the writers of the dark ages] (out of envy or ignorance or both) bury in profound silence, the glorious proceedings, of that thrice renowned Saracenical Empire. An Empire of as wonderfull a growth, and as noble actions, as ever any since the Creation" [p38 and cf. Casaubon's criticism of "Enthusiastick Arabs in On

Given Wagstaffe's redefinition of witchcraft as essentially idolatry - in which he follows in a long tradition, including, most recently, Thomas Ady - his position must be seen as the mirror-image of Casaubon's. Casaubon uses witchcraft to support traditional authority, and to define a notion of Christian fellowship which can include Catholics and Protestants alike in the service of a true reformation. Wagstaffe exposes Casaubon's ideological stance, the political content of his plea for credulity. The language of witchcraft is redeployed against popery, while, on a more literal plane, he redefines witchcraft as exactly the sort of priestly imposture practised by the Roman church he had attacked so vigorously in 1660, or even by the restored creature of the martyred Laud, Meric Casaubon himself.

Credulity and Incredulity, p34.]
On Stubbe, see J.R. Jacob, Henry Stubbe, Radical Protestantism and the Early Enlightenment, Cambridge 1983.

CHAPTER THREE

WITCHCRAFT AND ANGLO-SCOTTISH RELATIONS

I

John Locke evidently had an interest in toleration as a practical issue well into the 1690s. For instance, he gathered together letters, documents, and petitions relating to the affair of Thomas Aikenhead, tried and executed at Edinburgh in 1696 for the crime of blasphemy. Some of these materials were sent him by his friend James Johnstoun, Scottish secretary of state from 1691 to 1696. Johnstoun's covering letter reveals that he sent the papers "to satisfie...[Locke's] curiosity", so they had clearly been requested. The letter is endorsed, "Aikenhead 96/97 The Acts against Blasphemy", and the documents were marked by Locke. One of them, previously unexamined, and not printed in Howell's State Trials along with the others, moves from the issue of blasphemy to that of witchcraft, a suggestive transition. It is a copy of a letter sent from "Mr W from Scotland upon burning the 7 witches". The original is now in the Scottish Record Office. The anonymous correpondent was Robert Wylie, Presbyterian minister and covenanter; the recipient, William Hamilton, Laird of Wishaw, the renowned antiquary.[1]

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1 Bodl. MSS Locke b4 f107 (Wylie's letter); ff 86-106 (the remainder.) Cobbett, Howell et al eds., A Complete Collection of State Trials, (1816), xiii 917-40. For the identification of Mr W and Hamilton, see David Laing in Proceedings of the Society of Scottish Antiquaries vol. xi,

The drift of this letter is apologetic, defensive, with its forceful repudiation of foreign, English slurs upon Scottish actions. The writer must have felt quite venomous:

> I have heard much of the Censures past upon the Go[v]ernmt. here by some pious & charitable Witts at London & elsewhere upon occasion of the Sentence given against Aikenhead the Atheist.

The point is that they have misunderstood Scots law, "the ground of that wretches Sentence". This was a "mistake of the case & matter of fact". These wits have confused blasphemy, "a perverse malicious railing against the adorable object of Christian worship, which simply inferrs death", with heresy or something similar, "a retracted errour of the Judgment". Wylie wonders if those who have condemned the sentence "are capable of thinking or understanding any thing but a bold sparkish Jest".

Wylie makes a vital distinction, between simple belief and action, which would undoubtedly have interested Locke.[2] The railing continues against the London wits, these "witty Criticks" who would do well to consider "that Reason[,] Common Sense and good manners (their own Trinity) do require that no man should in the face of a people spitefully revile

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p438. See also Michael Hunter's "Aikenhead the Atheist" (forthcoming.) I must thank Dr Hunter for sending me a copy of this paper, although I disagree with him on some points of interpretation. Wylie's letter is dated 16 June 1697, SRO GD103/2/3/17/1.He died in 1715. Johnstoun's letter is correctly identified and printed in: The Correspondence of John Locke, (E.S. de Beer ed.), Oxford 1978-, vi,p.17. (1981).

[2] On this see especially: Richard Ashcraft, Revolutionary Politics and Locke's "Two Treatises of Government" , Princeton 1986, Ch. 2. For further consideration of Locke, see appendix to the next chapter.

& insult the object of their adoration".[3] The implication is that denial of the Trinity proper goes together with these "pleadings against Aikenheads condemnation"; certainly, the denial of the Trinity was a central feature of the young man's crime. Wylie continues with a piece of relativism remarkable coming from a man of his party and sentiments:

> a Christian could not be innocent who should raile at or curse Mahomet at Constantinople.

The minister's outrage seems primarily directed towards foreign, more specifically English, misunderstanding of Scottish law; a perverse misunderstanding which tried to appropriate "Reason[,] Common Sense and good manners" for itself. This reading makes more sense than one which views the letter as a formulaic outburst of religious bigotry. Such an interpretation cannot satisfactorily account for the specific content of Wylie's diatribe, the distinction between blasphemy and heresy, the legal terminology, and the comparative insight drawn with Constantinople. It cannot make proper sense of his target, English wits, either. We know that at least one eminent Scotsman, James Johnstoun himself, objected to the sentence[4] and surely there can have been no shortage of native wit to attack. The choice of London in particular is the key to the political context of

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[3] This is what witches do in secret - "revile & insult the object of their adoration".

[4] See his covering letter in de Beer op.cit.: "Laws long in dessuetude should be gently put in Execution and the first example made of one in circumstances that deserve no compassion, whereas here ther is youth, Levity, docility, and no designe upon others."

these remarks, centring on the question of Anglo-Scottish relations. It is possible to demonstrate similar perceptions, perhaps xenophobic, relating to the issue of witchcraft. The coincidence of the execution of Aikenhead, and that of seven Renfrew witches in the case of the afflicted Christian Shaw, was no mere coincidence.

In his farewell epistle, Aikenhead did not deny the main substance of the charges against him; he only denied, in parting from his friends, that he had "practised magick and conversed with devils".[5] This association between blasphemy and witchcraft, both seen as diabolical practices, is also reflected in Wylie's letter, as it moves from Aikenhead's case to the witches of Renfrew. He clearly thought that the Aikenhead affair should have been enough to silence English wits and critics. "After all this", he suggested, such people should surely "be more sparing & cautious". In view of the "distance" and "such uncertainty of report" these same scoffers ought to avoid making "little rash Judgments". Again, the opposition are classed as foreigners, by implication at least, too far away to be proper judges of the affair. And, again, these unworthy aspersions are being cast upon "the late proceeding of this Government". Unwarranted interference by the absent subjects of a neighbouring kingdom is rejected. These cosmopolitan types are given another blast of punning, sarcastic abuse, reviled as "these Esprits forts, ... Sagacious & nice

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[5] State Trials p933.

conjurers themselves". Are we hearing the rage of the covenanter against the perfidious English here ? A few lines later, Wylie comes straight out with it:

> I see not with what modesty or good manners The proceedings of the Government in another Nation can be Judged & Censured...

Throughout the remainder of the letter, Wylie lays the responsibility for action against the witches upon the government, who will take further "measures", and whom "your Sparks at London blame...of severity", while "there are some here no less apt to complain of their remissness". He is at pains to insist that the process was "exceeding wary" and to show his own moderation, both by pointing to those who blamed the government for laxity, and by adding, in parenthesis, that "many Stories that pass in the Country I do not regard". But in general the witnesses are "credible", the confessions "exactly agreeing in circumstances". Indeed, "I am as much for waryness & caution as any in such dark & abstruse matters where the vulgar is easily imprest by Superstitious fears, and the Devil mingles fables", as opposed to "well attested narrative", presumably "to conceal or discredit truth".

Those who deny the existence of spirits or witches have "renounced humanity as well as Religion" and they go against an express "Scripture Law". Any not convinced by a full account of the trial must have, like a witch, "harden[ed] themselves against all conviction".

So, for Wylie, the problem was not merely that of

"Atheism and Sadducism"; it was that of atheism, sadducism and irreverent wit embodied in an English culture which threatened Scots independence and Scots rectitude. Wylie's sensitivity to this issue was later displayed in the memorial of grievance he sent to the Rev. Thomas Linning in 1714.[6] In his covering letter, Wylie went back to the 1690s, recalling two things which had "especially in King William's reign, done us much hurt". One was the failure to "use that freedom we might and should have done in laying before his Majesty the nature and rights of our constitution", a failure to keep Scots matters independent of English interference; and then, the Presbyterians had relied too much on their fellows about the king, who, contrary to expectation, "valued themselves upon keeping Church matters, in an Erastian dependence upon the Court". The memorial itself seems to make explicit the outrage already seething in Wylie's earlier, more moderate letter to the Duke of Hamilton in 1693 [for which, see below]:

> Was it not, then, strange treatment of a legally established and secured national Church, for the Legislature of another nation, - for such the Parliament at Westminster is still, - notwithstanding of our scanty and pickt representative in it, and those, too, of different principles, - to take upon them to determine what was or was not agreeable to Scots Presbyterian principles, which can only be declared by a General Assembly ? Does not this look more like

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[6] The Correspondence of the Rev. Robert Wodrow, Edinburgh 1842, Vol.1, p592ff.

the usage of a conquered than a united people.[7]

He calls the union "a very nice point" which is nevertheless "an universal grievance to the nation", and, what is more, "a heavy yoke wreathed upon their unwilling necks", something which they were "wheedled into". At this point, it is worth mentioning Francis Hutchinson's troubles over the publication of his sceptical work on witchcraft, the Historical Essay, in 1706, and the Archbishop of Canterbury's doubts as to the wisdom of Hutchinson's attacking the belief in witchcraft, pending the sensitive negotiations towards Anglo-Scottish union. The book was stopped at the press, and did not appear until 1718. [see next chapter] [8]

In his letter, Wylie had implied the imminent publication of an account of the Renfrew witch case. One

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[7] ibid. The letter to Hamilton is printed in Historical Manuscripts Commission Supplementary Report on the MSS of the Duke of Hamilton, 1932, p129. For a quotation from it see note 32 below.

[8] Francis Hutchinson, An Historical Essay concerning Witchcraft, 1718. On opposition to the union, see Memoirs of the Life of Sir John Clerk of Penicuik..., ed. J.M.Gray, Edinburgh 1892 : "The bulk of the nation seem'd altogether averse to them [the articles of union]." "The basis of any Union" was ensuring the existence "of presbiterian Government and its security". This was "the only Expedient to bring over the ministers of the church of Scotland, to give the Articles of the Union so much as a hearing." Because of differences among a diversity of parties, "nothing was left to the Commissioners of the Union and to the Ministry of Scotland, than firmly to resolve amongst themselves how to act, and leave the event to the providence of God". [p64-5]

account was published in London in 1697.[9] Another, fuller, relation was advertised as Sadducismus Debellatus and published by the same outfit in 1698. A great deal of the preface to this book is intrinsically noteworthy. It advances the notion that the Devil may be constrained to make "stupendous Appearances against his Will" in order to supply a "visible Testimony superadded to the greater Gospel proofs" that there are spirits. Aikenhead's denial of this is mentioned here, with the rider that "he died in full Conviction of it". It is thus implied that the Devil appeared to Aikenhead himself. The effect of the passage is to associate these two incidents, the blasphemy and the great apostasy (as the very title does), and to set up a continuum of sinning. A whole variety of sins "pav[e] the way" to witchcraft, including malice, envy, and sinful curiosity. The use of charms, often motivated by such feelings, is an open invitation for the Devil to step in.[10]

The author's vision of the state of religion in the two neighbouring kingdoms is an extreme and derogatory one. Britain should be called the "Unfortunate Island...Africk never having been more fertile in the production of Monsters". Indeed "it['s observ'd" - and the objectifying use of the passive is meant to lend authority to the view -

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[9] A Relation of the Diabolical Practices of above Twenty Wizards and Witches Of the Sheriffdom of Renfrew in the Kingdom of Scotland, 1697.

[10] Sadducismus Debellatus: Or a True Narrative of the Sorceries and Witchcrafts Exercis'd by the Devil and his Instruments upon Mrs Christian Shaw, 1698, Preface.

"that through all the Successions of Men, there was never before any Society, or Collective Body of Atheists till these dreggs of time." The author takes his stand on sense, and attacks the critical literature which has been produced, in a passage which could have been penned by Robert Wylie:

> Seeing Devils take so much pains to contract for the Souls of Witches; the Saducees tho judicially blinded in their Reason, are hereby rendred inexcusable by very sense; ill Books, which corrupt and ensnare curious Fancies, who are seldom endow'd with accurate Judgment, ought to be restrain'd: As also such ridiculous Pamphlets, as no doubt by the Instigation of Satan, have lately been sent abroad, designedly to frustrat any good use which might be made of such extraordinary Providences as these contained in the ensueing narrative. The Authors of those Pamphlets having either forged other subjects or disguised this.[11]

The language used is that of a popular empiricism - <u>seeing</u>, <u>sense</u>, <u>fancies</u> without <u>judgment</u>. Like witches themselves, the critics are "judicially blinded", and act "by the Instigation of Satan".[12] These pamphlets "sent abroad" are pinned down later in the book:

> There is scarce any need to take notice of a late Scurrilous Pamphlet, that has been printed in England, <u>pretending</u> to give an account of those proceedings.

It contains "neither good Language, Sense, nor Truth" in it.

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[11] ibid. The theme of Providence is a well-worn one in Presbyterian and dissenting circles eg. Cotton Mather, Robert Wodrow (with whom Mather correponded) and Richard Baxter. For a particularly good example relating to witchcraft see:
Samuel Petto, <u>A Faithful Narrative of the Wonderful and Extraordinary Fits under which Mr Tho. Spatchet...was under by Witchcraft: Or, A Mysterious Providence in his even Unparallel'd Fits</u>, 1693.

[12] <u>Sadducismus Debellatus</u>, preface.

It is not extant, but the xenophobic response to English infidelity may well have led men to seize on the rumour of such a book, or the conviction that one must, surely, have been produced.[13]

Sadducismus Debellatus follows the pattern of Wylie's letter. It rejects foreign reports of the proceedings - they only "pretend" to give an account - and evinces a studied moderation. The trial was undertaken with "Tenderness and Moderation" and even the prosecution showed no "Byass of Partys" but rather "shewed an equal Concern to have the accused Persons absolved, if it could be found compatible with Justice". The latter part of the pamphlet is largely concerned with matters of law, and the proper procedure relative to the admission of evidence in this "Excepted Crime".[14] James VI is cited as a prime authority since

> as a Prince he is to be credited about the Law of His own Country; and as a King has determined any doubt that might have remained.[15]

Witchcraft is as much an excepted crime as "Treason and...Falshood".

This assertion of "our own Customs and Decisions", the

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[13] ibid. p46. My emphasis.

[14] ibid., pp46, 52. See Christina Larner's perceptive essay on witchcraft as a crimen exceptum, "The Crime of Witchcraft in Europe", in her Witchcraft and Religion, Oxford 1984, pp35-67.

[15] ibid. p53/4. See Larner on James and witchcraft in Witchcraft and Religion, pp3-22, "James VI and I and Witchcraft"; also Stuart Clark, "King James's Daemonologie: Witchcraft and kingship" in The Damned Art, ed. S. Anglo, 1977, pp156-181.

rejection of English meddling by both this anonymous writer and Robert Wylie, is curiously one-sided. If the "Scurrilous Pamphlet...Printed in England" might well not have existed, reports in the English newspapers hardly indicate a raging spirit of incredulity at large, nor any condemnation of Scottish barbarism. Of course, the reports were received from Scottish correspondents; but any editorial interpolations were in favour of the rooting-out of this devilish "crew", and abhorred the devilish practices described.[16] The Flying Post for January 23rd 1696/7 noted that the Scottish Privy Council had received certificates from Glasgow relating to the Renfrew case, and had ordered the sheriff of the county, and some others, to investigate.[17] The lead story in Lloyd's News for January 26th was much the same, referring to the evidence supplied by "divers Ministers and other Persons of Credit and Reputation", and reporting that the Privy Council had given "Orders for the Trying of several Witches".[18] The next issue of the Flying Post referred back to the Aikenhead affair which had been

> much exclaimed against and aggravated by the Deists, Socinians, Debauchees, and others who bear no goodwill to the Kingdom of Scotland.[19]

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[16] On the press in this period see: L. Hanson, Government and the Press 1695-1763, Oxford 1936.

[17] The Flying Post Numb.266, Jan 23-26, 1697.

[18] Lloyd's News No 64, Jan 26, 1697.

[19] The Flying Post, Numb. 267, Jan 26-28.

The Protestant Mercury mentioned the witchcraft case in late January and late February, noting the "plain proof" against the accused, and again in early March, announcing the adjournment of "the Trying of the Witches in the West".[20] Richard Baxter's The Certainty of the Worlds of Spirits was being advertised in a new edition in numbers of the Flying Post for March and April.[21] The interest continued into April and May in both Flying Post and Protestant Mercury. The Flying Post, expressed sympathy for the victims. It was an "Infernal Tragedy" and "a lamentable Instance of Satan's Fury and a Witches Malice". The paper made its own position clear:

> This passage will no doubt be flouted at by many Persons as incredible; to whom we shall only say, That they have it as it is Transmitted to us, and we doubt not in a little time, to give them an Account of the Particular Trials of the Witches concerned in this Affair, of their own Confessions, and the evidence against them.

Exaggerated accounts of the fates of the victims and the numbers of witches followed, but the Protestant Mercury's laconic report in its May 19th issue apparently signalled a tailing-off in interest:

> 7 of the Witches were Convicted and Sentenced to be Burned.[22]

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[20] The Protestant Mercury, Nos 130,131,134,137 and 141 for Mar 5-10.

[21] The Flying Post, Numbs 283, 297.

[22] The Flying Post, Numb. 297, 308. The Protestant Mercury Numb. 149,150,153,154,162. Also, The Flying Post in March, numbs. 283 and 285, and The Post Boy for Feb 6-9, No 275.

Another paper, the Foreign Post for June 2nd, showed no more sympathy for the condemned or incredulity as to the reports, than its fellows. The length of consideration by both judges and jury was noted; the evidence was "as convincing proved...as the Nature of the Crime would be imagined to allow"; and the criminals were referred to as "that Infernal Crew", a "gang". So far, we have no evidence of widespread English outrage or incredulity, only of Scottish defensiveness, and a threat which they perceived from the neighbouring kingdom.[23]

The statistics of Scottish witchcraft prosecution in this period make an interesting pendant to our case.[24] This is not a matter of tracing the ebb and flow of large-scale persecution, of "witch-craze", but rather of looking at the tiny number of prosecutions during periods of endemic witch prosecution.[25] Taking decennial figures, the 1680s saw 27

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[23] The Foreign Post Numb. 9. Though, see also Letters...to the Duke of Shrewsbury by James Vernon, Esq., Secretary of State, ed. G.P.R. James, 3 vols., 1841, ii, pp300-01, June 6th 1699:

> I have the honour of your Grace's letter of the 3rd. I think the noise of witches breaks out like a plague in several places at distant times. If these miserable creatures are in haste to die by other people's hands, and will confess they know not what, they will be served as they are in Scotland, where the judges tell them they don't believe them, and yet sentence them to be burnt.

[24] Figures from: Larner, Lee and McClachlan, Source-Book of Scottish Witchcraft, Glasgow 1977.

[25] This endemic/epidemic distinction is an important one. With widely-circulating newspapers and pamphlets, witchcraft could be an important, and socially functional phenomenon, without reaching the proportions of a craze.

prosecutions, the 1690s 25, while the decade of the Scots union could count 44. The initiation of some prosecutions within the soon-to-be-abolished Privy Council lends an added political significance to the trial of witches. It might be worth noting the execution of two male witches in July 1706, proceeded against in Privy Council in the year before Union.[26] This can be looked at in two lights. It is fairly clear that the discouragement given to Francis Hutchinson in 1706 was based on an objective concern. The Scottish elite still took witchcraft seriously. Furthermore, Wylie's behaviour suggests that the prosecution of witches was, at some level, an assertion of Scottish identity particularly suited to the years leading up to the Union.[27] The Pittenweem case of 1704 could be thought of in the same way.[28] Prosecutions, and what is more, executions, continued after 1707: one in 1707, two in 1715, and the last known Scottish execution in 1727.[29]

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[26] Lachland and George Rattray in Inverness.

[27] Larner does hint at witchcraft as a means of national assertion at an earlier date. See her Enemies of God, 1981, p198.

[28] For an account of this case see:A True and Full Relation of the Witches at Pittenweem, Edinburgh 1704.

[29] Janet Horne at Dornoch. This seems to have been the illegitimate action of a local jurisdiction, however. But see also Minutes of the Justices of the Peace for Lanarkshire 1707-1723, ed. C.A. Malcolm, Edinburgh 1931, p44, 26th October 1708. A new commission of the peace is issued and justices appointed "for enquireing conforme to the law and custoom of the law concerning all and whatsomever ffelonies or capital crymes, witchcrafts, inchantments, magicall arts, sorceries...[&c]".

With all this in mind, a few remarks in the sermon delivered by James Hutchisone before the commissioners of Justiciary appointed for the trial of the Renfrew witches, can be read afresh. First of all, the Scots are presented as a godly people, despite the "great evil" in "such a place as the west of Scotland where the gospell of christ hes been purely preacht". The Scots people are God's people:

> It is a precept of the Judicial Law Givine to the Judges of the people of Israel[,] that was a national Church as having the power of the sword committed to them and it not being committed to others we need not insist upon this To whom it is directed.

Surely these words were directed against the pretensions of the neighbouring kingdom. Hutchisone's reference to "our Scots language" adds to the impression of nationalistic sentiment at work. The concern that the laws against immoral acts and ill-discipline be implemented, voiced in this sermon, was a common one from 1689 on.[30] The career of Robert Wylie is itself symbolic of the anxieties touched on in Hutchisone's sermon. Originally a moderate in the early 1690s, he increasingly moved towards extreme anti-episcopal and anti-English sentiments, coming to see an intrinsic virtue in the Presbyterian church in general, particularly as against its episcopal rival, which he condemned as an English creature. Given its tone, it would not be too much to see Wylie's letter on witchcraft as a symptom and part of his move from moderation. The adjournment of the General

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[30] Printed in Scottish Historical Review, 1910.

Assembly of the Kirk in 1697, before the witch affair blew up, may have heightened his anxieties.[31]

We can tie all this together by considering the importance of the covenant to many within the Scottish church. Three types of covenant - the covenant of grace, the National and the Solemn League and Covenant[32], and the diabolical compact - were bound together and reinforced each other within the "Scottish Presbyterian Eloquence", as one anonymous contemporary called it. His book of 1692, a compilation of "the foolishness of their teaching discovered

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[31] Wylie's move from moderation was noted by Wodrow: "It is not a little surprizing to some to see these that wer not long since upon the extream of moderation, and if it hold quat some say [of R.W.] wer against removing any of the episcopall clergy from the north, no & not the non jurants, in a sudden, and at such a criticall juncture as this to appear soe much on the other side, that I may not [but] call it extream." Letter from Wodrow to James Wallace at London, March 8th 1701, Early letters of Robert Wodrow 1698-1709, Edinburgh 1937, p154 [Publications of the Scottish Historical Society, 3rd series, xxiv]. Wylie's moderation in his letter to Hamilton - see note 8 - contained, as has been said, the seeds of later discontents. In this letter of December 11th 1693, he writes that "Tho it is absolutely necessary for removing the jealousies of people and preserving the liberties of the church that our G.Assembly should once meet and not be adjourned again by proclamation, yet I am persuaded that their Meeting will either be to very little purpose or will have a bad effect unles matters be concerted befor by some Ministers, and particulat pains taken therein".

[32] It is not always clear which of these two is being referred to. For general background on this issue see: David Stevenson, "The Early Covenanters and the Federal Union of Britain" and Edward J.Cowan, "The Solemn League and Covenant" both in Roger A.Mason [ed.], Scotland and England 1286-1815, Edinburgh 1987. See also I.M.Smart, "The Political Ideas of the Scottish Covenanters 1638-88" in History of Political Thought, I, 1980. James VII was accused of "inverting all the ends of Government" in the 1689 claim of right.[p193] The covenantal metaphor drew much from witchcraft theory and vice versa.

from their books, sermons, and prayers", is a treasure-house of such rhetoric.[33] The sources are various, many of them anonymous, but they make a striking patchwork. One "arch-prelate" was accused by the Presbyterians of "Perfidy, Perjuries, Apostacies, Sorceries, Villanies, and Murders".[34] Indeed the episcopalians are said to "imitate the Devil himself" and,

> When their Hierarchy was restored, the Devil, who seemed to be bound sometime before, was let loose, the Flood-gates of all Impiety and Wickedness were set open; and Hell did triumph in its Conquests over the Nation.

The Scotch gentry and clergy who follow such "are Godless Miscreants, of the true Ægyptian brood, infamous parricides, Sorcerers, and incestuous Apostates...the Devil's Instruments..."[35] The compiler's ironic marginalium here takes a shot at the implied notion of a golden age when the Devil was securely bound:

> That was no doubt in the peaceful and godly days of the Holy Covenant: But how seem'd the Devil to be bound then? why, it was after the New Gospel way, he was bound in the Chains of Blood, Murther and Rebellion; being surfeited with those Sacrifices, he seemed to lay himself down to rest, leaving all his Drudgery upon Earth to be performed by his Covenanted Agents.[36]

The ambiguity of the final phrase is nice. Who, indeed,

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[33] The Scotch Presbyterian Eloquence, 1692, title-page.

[34] Namely, James Sharp, ibid. p50. He was murdered by the conventiclers in May 1679. For anecdotes about him see below

[35] ibid. p66, my emphasis.

[36] The holy covenant here must surely be that of 1643. ibid.p66, margin.

are these "Covenanted Agents" ? Witches ? Bishops ? Presbyters ? All the actions of the Presbyterians' enemies are subsumed, by them, into a covenantal and diabolical context. "The Scotch covenants" are compared to the "Covenant of Grace", while "the breaking of the Covenant is the most Heinous of all Sins". Paying taxes to the present régime is to supply "that Party of the Dragon's legions, in their War against Prince Michael and his Angels". This is a "sacrifice" to the Devil - again, the parallel with true religion - working towards his "absolute Dominion in the Nation". These "black Meals" are paid by his "Vassals" in recognition of his "Sovereignty". So, covenant-breaking is condemned and associated with the diabolical. But it is also seen, and explicitly, as a diabolical form of covenant-making:

> To engage in Bonds of living peaceably, is to engage in Bonds of Iniquity; they are Covenants of Peace with God's Enemies, whom we should count our Enemies.

This is undoubted witchcraft, and "What peace, so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezabel, and her witchcrafts are so many ? " As the compiler remarks, it was such considerations that led the "late Assembly" to refuse "to receive the Episcopal Party into any terms of Peace or Communion". Indeed, the episcopal party was for these men "the Mother of Harlots and Witchcrafts".[37]

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[37] ibid. pp45,46,59,58 and margin. The parallels between divine and diabolical practice are drawn out further. "That the Devil had his Kirk Government as well as God, and would ye ken what a Government it is, indeed it is

A more moderate voice, that of the Rev. Robert Wodrow, can be brought to bear here; we do not have to rely solely upon the words of Presbyterian extremists reported by a hostile polemicist. Wodrow, that prolific correspondent, was both a central and a healing figure within the Kirk. In a letter of 1711 to a Glasgow merchant, he commented on Edmond Archer's offensive sermon before the Lower House of Convocation in England, delivered in the midst of the "rage of party". Wodrow reports Archer as having said that "the old Spirit, that is, Satan, keeps the Dissenters in a slavish bondage, under the stubborn obligation of the odious League and Covenant". The imputation of satanism to the true covenant was an inversion which roused Wodrow to anger:

> To attribute that to the influence of Satan, which was so much owned from heaven, comes near...the Sin against the Ghost.[38]

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a Presbyterian Government, for he has his Minister and his Ruling Elder; his Minister is the Pope, and his Ruling-Elder is the King of France." [p107, citing one James Kirkton] "I come to preach a broken Covenant; Who brake it ? Even the Devils Lairds, his Bishops and his Curates." [p100, citing one John Welsh]

[38] The Correspondence of...Wodrow, Edinburgh 1842, Vol I, p203, Feb 19 1711. At the time, Archer was Archdeacon of Wells and a fellow of St John's College, Oxford. His sermon was, as was usual for the occasion, published: A Sermon preach'd...Before the Reverend Clergy of the Lower House of Convocation: Being the Anniversary of the Martyrdom of King Charles the 1st, 1711. He talks of the dissenters' "sullen Contempt of this solemn Fast...By this peevish morose Non-compliance with the Commands of their Superiors, one cannot help thinking, that the old Spirit still works in these Children of Disobedience, and that he still keeps them in a slavish Bondage, under the stubborn Obligation of the odious League and Covenant. Wherefore ye be witnesses to your selves, that ye are the children of them which killed the Prophets, Matt.xxiii.31." [p17]

And that sin is unforgiveable, above all others.[39] For Wodrow, Archer was playing with the language of covenant to a destabilizing extent. Such English raillery was highly wounding to Scots sensibilities.

To return to Francis Hutchinson's case, the association of scepticism about witchcraft with the problems of Anglo-Scottish union was not fortuitous. It was the issue of a covenant, after all, which formed a strong Scottish objection to union.[40] While the Scots were "obliged [by the Covenant] to endeavour that Justice be done upon such as oppose the Peace and Union between the kingdoms", Charles II and his successor had broken that covenant, and thus had "destroy'd and annull'd that which was the Bond of these Kingdoms Union; viz the Solemn League and Covenant". The breaking of such a holy covenant was itself an act of covenanting with the Devil. Who should be surprised if the English (despite evidence to the contrary) doubted the reality of witchcraft; if the Devil's agents, sagacious and nice conjurers themselves, looked after his own ?[41]

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[39] See material on Filmer above, and his treatise of this sin.

[40] See note 41. Also, [James Stewart of Goodtrees, future lord advocate], Jus Populi Vindicatum, 1669, p5: the covenants are binding "so long as Scotland is Scotland".

[41] Scotch Presbyterian Eloquence p55. On diabolical rule cf.: Alexander Shields, A Hind let loose, 1687 [no place of publication], pp324, 368; Edward Gee, The divine right and original of the civill magistrate from God, 1658, pp220-4.

II

James Johnstoun, former Scottish secretary of state, and the man who passed on the Aikenhead materials to Locke, also corresponded on the subject with his former colleague, Lord Polwarth. He sent him a letter from London, dated 1st April 1697.[42] It confirms and deepens our picture of an anxious Scottish conscience resisting English infidelity. The blushing tone of this letter shows an embarrassed Johnstoun caught between Scottish affiliation and his own more freethinking propensities. The letter opens with an expression of gratitude. Polwarth had graciously refused to believe some ill reports relating to Johnstoun's conduct out of office. The latter explains further:

> As to the government I absolutely abstain from medling, in so much that I have not written to nor heard from some of those with you in Scotland, whom you reckon my best friends, these six moneths, and its not verry credible that I who have been Secretary will be a litle agent.

Johnstoun's pride rebuts any accusation that, having lost power, he is scheming against the government. He also denies that any criticisms he may have made were the issue of pique:

> As to talking, I have said nothing since I was out but what I said when I was in.

His behaviour he vindicates as honourable. He has not plotted. He has not masqueraded. This is a man of integrity, of consistent principles:

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42 cited in HMC 14th report, appendix, pt. iii, p132, item 177.

> The truth is I have the same thoughts of men and things that I ever had.

These accusations were spread around because of what Johnstoun

> said in my speech to your friends against the businesse of Aikenhead, and your share in it.[presumably in privy council]

That is one thing, he claims, since "it was to your friends, and Scotch ones". With friends, with fellow-countrymen he could be openly critical. With those of the neighbouring kingdom, circumspection was necessary, and "To the English ones, I made the best defence I could".

This was all slightly disingenuous, of course, if not downright dishonest. John Locke was one Englishman to whom Johnstone did not scruple to complain.[43] The punctuation of the letter does make it a little ambiguous at this point. The "best defence" is given in more detail:

> In short, that man's life might be taken by all laws, both of God and man; but every thing that is lawfull is not expedient, and as the Presbiterians are stated here [ie. reported in England] they could not have given themselves a greater blow.

The sentence seems to run on beyond the best defence, and the semicolon equivocates on the question of whether the business about law and expediency was addressed to his English friends or to his Scottish correspondent.

The remainder of this section of the letter is concerned with the Presbyterian campaign against infidelity which Johnstoun notes, and judges to be ill-conceived. The

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[43] See note 4, above.

blow this has given the Presbyterians is not "in the opinion [merely] of libertins but [most generally] of the body of this [English] nation". Here Johnstoun makes a distinction, between English libertines and the English tout court, which some of our writers would barely have credited. He continues:

> A wyfe thats jealoused most shun even the most innocent appearances. They are accused by their enemies of a bitter persecuting spirit and suspected by their friends of it. The libells and clamour of the outed clergy [ie. the Episcopalians] have hightened those thoughts of them so the least appearances passe for a proofe even amongst their friends. Should I tell you matter of fact you could not believe it. The wisdom of the serpent is recommended as well as the innocency of the dove.[44]

Johnstoun is advising caution on purely pragmatic grounds, whatever his sentiments on this religious terror. Most relevant to our purpose is the fact that the prosecution of witches again forms part of this campaign; as in Wylie's letter, witchcraft and the Aikenhead case are brought together. And again, Johnstoun cloaks himself in ambiguity:

> So as to witches that there may be such I have no doubt, nor never had, it is a matter of fact that I was never judge of. But the parliaments of France and other judicatories who are perswaded of the being of witches never try them now because of the experience they have had that its impossible to distinguish possession from nature in disorder,

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[44] On the new Scottish settlement of religion in 1690, and its aftermath, see P.J. Riley, The Union of England and Scotland, Manchester 1978, p9-10. Zealots "purge[d] the church by devious and underhand means". The routine method of the opposition was

> to approach the English tory ministers to stigmatize the Scottish court as "presbyterian bigots" and "hot men" alienating the loyalty of the episcopalians.

> and they chuse rather to let the guilty escape than to punish the innocent. If indeed there be malifics, they punish those malifics according to the laws and the nature of them, without respect to the principalls whence they proceed...

Presbyterian campaigns against witchcraft, infidelity and the Episcopal church in Scotland, so recently disestablished, are all part of a single movement which is seen, south of the border, as the product of "a bitter persecuting spirit". On the peripheral issues, the letter speaks for itself, with its pragmatic scepticism and refusal to judge.[45] Johnstoun's letter is most valuable for showing us the pressures at work in Scotland of the 1690s: the recognition of English power, the desire of some to escape its influence and assert Scottish versions of godliness; the difficulties of a cosmopolitan figure like Johnstoun, faced by what he saw as presbyterian extremism liable to alienate his English friends. These were the same pressures which would be manifested in the later debate over union. They sprang from a blend of uncomfortable political and economic realities, and the union under one crown of two very different church establishments.

This concern of presbyterians for moral order was expressed in a series of acts during the period. In 1697, the General Assembly of the Kirk answered "His Majesty's

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[45] cf. Thomas's reading in Religion and the Decline of Magic, p686. On the work of the parlement see Mandrou, Magistrats et sorciers en France au XVIIe siècle, Paris 1968, esp. pp313-363. For a corrective view see Alfred Soman, "The Parlement of Paris and the Great Witch Hunt (1565-1640)", The Sixteenth Century Journal, ix, 2, July 1978.

gracious Letter":

> we cannot but lament the abounding of impiety and profanity in this land...

They went on to issue an "Act against Profaneness" which complained of "mocking of piety and religion, and the exercises thereof, fornication, adultery, drunkenness, excessive tippling, Deism, blasphemy, and other gross abominable sins". As we have seen, witchcraft was both a target, the grossest example of disobedience, and also a tool to use against the Deists and their debauched pupils. In 1699 and in 1708, at the time of this moral panic and in the immediate wake of union, the General Assembly made specific acts against witchcraft.[46]

The association between witchcraft persecution and moral renewal is further illustrated in a ballad produced during the notorious Simson case, and a play written by the Jacobite Newtonian, Dr Archibald Pitcairne. Here is the first:

> Lang may Laconick Logan live,
> And rise in Fame and Riches,
> To sift Simsonians in the Sieve
> Of creeds, - and prick the Witches.[47]

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[46] T.Pitcairn, et al, eds., Acts of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland 1638-1842, Edinburgh 1843, pp258, 261.

[47] John Brigs, "A Ballad", cited in Erskine, Lord Grange, Diary of a Senator..., Edinburgh 1843 [by editor]. John Simson was a Scottish theologian (1668?-1740).In the 18th century Simson, prosecuted in the General Assembly of the Kirk for teaching unsound doctrine, was "a byword as a disseminator of unsound doctrine [but]...he retracted expressions interpreted by others in an heretical sense, and was never convicted of heresy".[DNB] James Erskine, Lord Grange, the lone advocate of the 1604 statute on witchcraft

"Laconick Logan" was associated both with the persecution of Simsonian theological irregularity and of witchcraft.

Pitcairne's play, a satire concerning The Assembly (1722), gives these words to Visioner, a religious fanatic:

> ...shew me a Mathematician among 100, that cares for the Confession of Faith...Besides one must have a compact with the Devil ere he can understand them; for I try'd it, and upon my Honesty, I could not learn to speak a word of them.

And as the Jacobin, Novel, boxes Visioner's ears, the latter cries "I think you are the Messenger of satan sent to buffet me..." Pitcairne attacks his religious opponents for their absurd diabolical beliefs, and for their ignorant refusal to come to terms with science and mathematics. His satirical vision of a committee of the Kirk debating, also lends support to the notion of Scots godliness pitting itself against English irreligion:

> ...Of a Truth, Mod. I think ye shou'd first plant the Kirk of England, for there's no Minister there, and we have a Call to preach the whole Gospel throughout the whole World; That Place is all o'regrown with Briars and Thorns, and they'll o'rgang Scotland too, except we send able Men to tread them out. You know I wrote a Book proving That Kingdom guilty of Scandal, Errors, Ignorance, Superstition [48], and Will-worship [presumably fideistic voluntarism]...[49]

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during repeal in 1736, was involved in the Simson case, and acted as arbiter in a dispute between Archibald Pitcairne and the Rev. James Webster. Grange is discussed in the final chapter.

[48] cf. the complaints of a pre-union pamphlet, To the Loyal and Religious Hearts in Parliament, 1706.

[49] Archibald Pitcairne (1652-1713), The Assembly, A Comedy, By a Scots Gentleman, 1722, pp85,12,20. On his career and affiliations see Bruce Lenman, the Jacobite

So, from the establishment of the presbyterian Kirk in Scotland in the 1690s up to and beyond union in 1707, members of that kirk attacked a medley of loose morals, deistical opinions, Episcopal pretensions and English pollution which witchcraft could usefully embrace. I end this chapter with an anecdote recorded by Robert Wodrow in his Analecta in 1707, a tale which nicely illustrates one of these concerns:

> ...Archbishop Sharp, presiding in the Privy Counsell, was earnest to have Janet Douglass brought before that board, accusing her of sorcery [and] witchcraft. When she was brought, she vindicate herself of that alledged crime; declaring, though she knew very well who were witches, yet she was not one herself, for she was endeavouring to discover there secret hellish plots, and to countermine that kingdome of darkness. [The] Archbishop insisted she might be sent away to the King's Plantations in the West Indies. She only dropt one word to the Bishop: "My Lord," says shee, "who was yone with yow in your closet on Saturday night last, betwixt twelve and one a-cloak ? " Upon which the Bishop changed his countenance, and turned black and pale; and then no more was said. When the Counsel rose up, the Duke of Rothes called Janet into a room, and enquired at her privatly, Who that person was who was with the Bishop ? She refused at first; but he, promising upon his word of honour to warrand her at all hands, and that shee should not be sent to America, she says, "My Lord, it was the meekle

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Risings in Britain 1689-1746, 1980, pp223-5; idem, "Physicians and Politics in the Jacobite Era" in The Jacobite Challenge ed. Cruickshanks and Black, 1987; Anita Guerrini, "The Tory Newtonians: Gregory, Pitcairne and Their Circle", in Journal of British Studies, 25, 1986. COf. Clerk of Penicuik op.cit., p65, on the kirk and the union: "as the security of the church of England was to follow of consequence, many of the clergy of Scotland grew jealous of their neighbouring clergy, and endeavoured to instill notions in their Bretheren that such a security given to the church of England was contrary to the principles of their forefathers, who had strenuously supported the Solemn League and Covenant."

black Devil ! [50]

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[50] Robert Wodrow, Analecta or, Materials for a history of remarkable providences; mostly relating to Scotch ministers and Christians, ed. M.Leishman, 4 vols.,[Maitland Club], Glasgow 1842, Vol.1, p105. [an entry made in 1707] This is proceeded by another story about Sharp. His servant having been sent from his master's side in Edinburgh, on a mission to St Andrew's, found the bishop there well before him in suspiciously diabolical circumstances. The servant was sworn to secrecy. On Wodrow's views of the reality of the devil see eg.: p3, the Devil appears to a murderess "visibly"; p24, the Devil appears to James Lochheid as a black dog; p53/4, the Devil appears to one of his parishioners; p65, and to one accused of witchcraft. In 1701 he set down his own thoughts on Satan's power: "That Satan's mirabilia may stumble, gravel, yea lead people into errors, sayes not that they are of the same kind with God's miracles, but that we are not in case to reach the deepths of satan, being left to ourselves, and that, perhaps, in some cases, without God's clearing up of things to us we may be deceived if it wer possible, the elect should be led away by these. The way to difference them is both from the nature of the action, and all its circumstances, its end, effects, &c., which are not to be disjoined." [vol. 1, p4]

CHAPTER FOUR

DEFOE AND THE DEVIL'S POLITICS

A substantial portion of Defoe's later works written in the period after the great novels is wholly devoted to treatment of the supernatural. The Political History of the Devil (1726), its sequel, A System of Magick (1727), and the Essay on...Apparitions (1727) are all, more or less, demonological treatises. Critics have not been slow to notice this. Maximillian Novak has located Defoe's "remarks on the treatment of witches...in the best spirit of rationalism". Peter Earle is inclined to disagree:

> The rational and modern Daniel Defoe accepted the reality of witches, just as he did that of the Devil and angels. Here too his ideas run counter to the views of the educated men of his age who were to become increasingly sceptical of the existence of witches.

Novak thus claims Defoe for the anti-witchcraft belief camp. Earle highlights a more interesting thesis and shows us a nice paradox on the frontiers of modernity. The prime exponent of the modern fictional genre was in the thrall of ancient superstition. The reality of such a paradox is difficult to credit when we remember the categorical imprecision, the generic uncertainty of Defoe's literary generation.[1]

Rodney Baine's is the most extended study of this

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[1]Maximillian Novak, Defoe and the Nature of Man,Oxford 1963, p13. Peter Earle, The World of Defoe, 1976,p42. On this theme see: Michael McKeon, The Origins of the English Novel, Baltimore 1987, pp25-64.

topic. His work does recognize the importance of the occult in Defoe's writings throughout this period. It is the Devil who brings Roxana to sin and who tempts Moll Flanders to murder in a dark alley. Both H.F., the protagonist of the Journal of the Plague Year, and Robinson Crusoe himself, are sensitive to singular providences, while the latter experiences "A Vision of the Angelick World". Yet Baine gives too little attention to Defoe's shifting tone within the occult works themselves, and to the obvious changes in Defoe's treatment of witchcraft during the second and third decades of the eighteenth century. Instead he builds a system of rhetoric for Defoe, one which allows mockery of the non-existent, and cites mockery as evidence of non-belief. Sometimes Defoe is in earnest, Baine wants to say, while at other times he jokes, voicing his scepticism and a "wry condemnation". Unversed in the arcana of Defoe bibliography, I would not venture to question Baine's thorough demonstration of the inauthenticity of many occult books ascribed for too long to Defoe.[2] Nevertheless, a remark which Baine makes in this area is revealing. One must not, he asserts, "attribute to Defoe spurious books and pamphlets which employ the occult for meretricious or adventitious purposes". Yet how often do we catch Defoe, in his "serious" occult works, doing that very thing, and with

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[2]Over the years the number of works attributed to Defoe has irresistibly mounted. For a salutary antidote see: P.N. Furbank and W.R. Owens, The Canonisation of Daniel Defoe, Newhaven 1988.

a striking and unmistakeable self-awareness ? We must come to terms with this, and with Defoe's straightforward endorsement of witchcraft belief some fifteen years before the equivocations of the Political History and its successors.[3]

Defoe was educated under the supervision of Charles Morton, an ejected dissenting minister who opened an academy at Newington Green, and upon its closure sailed for New England. Morton was a competent natural philosopher and went on to become vice-president of Harvard College, co-signatory to the preface to Cotton Mather's Memorable providences relating to witchcraft of 1689, and author of a set of lectures, Compendium Physicae, which Defoe possessed and advertised as sufficient evidence of the worth of a dissenting education.[4] It was "natural Theology that men

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[3]Daniel Defoe, The Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, 1719
idem., The Fortunate Mistress..., 1724.
idem., The Fortunes and Misfortunes of the Famous Moll Flanders, 1722.
idem., A Journal of the Plague Year, 1722.
idem., A Political History of the Devil, As Well Ancient as Modern, 1726. [Henceforth Political History.]
idem., A System of Magick, 1727.
idem., Essay on the history and reality of apparitions, 1727.[Essay]
idem., "A Vision of the Angelick World" in Serious Reflections of Robinson Crusoe, Romances and Narratives by Daniel Defoe, ed.Aitken, 1899.
R.M.Baine, Daniel Defoe and the Supernatural, Georgia 1968, pp67,131.

[4]Daniel Defoe, More Short Ways with the Dissenters, 1704, pp5-6; Charles Morton, Compendium Physicae, ed. S.E.Morison, Boston 1940. Biographical information on Morton has been derived from this edition. Manuscript notes for Morton's lectures, and thus for the Compendium, exist in the Bodleian Library: MS Eng. misc. f4, written 1680, copy

should be industrious in Natural Phylosophy", thought Morton. While his involvement with Mather showed a commitment to the active dissemination of witchcraft beliefs, Morton was obviously concerned to place them within due bounds. Chapter 23 of the Compendium, "Of Seeing", casts doubt on the notion of the evil eye. Chapter 12, "Of the Species of Mixt Bodyes, and of firey Meteors", evinces one typical use of the diabolical, to define the limits of explanation:

> As for other effects such as balls of fire, flying like canon-bullets, or running up, and down an house, and doing Mischeif in an Extravigant manner; because no sufficient natural reason can be given them, they are ascribed to the power of the prince of the air, by divine permission.

Defoe's attitude to the supernatural interpretation of dreams is anticipated in one of Morton's didactic pieces of doggerel:

> Men's dreams have reasons mixtures; [Gods] infusions
> Or Satans tempting, troubling curst delusion.[5]

Morton's natural philosophy taught Defoe much. It gave him one of his many styles - the plain, homely, often prolix style of Boyle himself. He showed a fascination with the

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perhaps by B. Beale, "A Synopsis of Naturall Philosophy according to the Method of the Ancients, but improved & augmented with the Notions of later Philosophers". Cotton Mather, Memorable providences relating to witchcraft, 1689, preface.

[5]Morton op.cit. pp4, 161, 87, 195. McGonagall aside, Morton's treatise may be characterized as Aristotelian in form, Boylean in content - a scholastic enough distinction.

making of credit-worthy testimony on the Boylean model.[6] We see this most clearly in the account of the apparition of Mrs Veal, where Defoe "emphasizes the social status of his witnesses, sifts clashing accounts, preserves the key circumstantial details which guarantee assent, and omits those which would deprive his witnesses of credit".[7] From the experimentalists Defoe also derived his model of collective advance which permeates his writings on trade and technology, and makes Crusoe's slow and painful recovery on his island a study in contrast.

Defoe's attitude to supernaturalism and to providences doubtless had its origin at Newington Green too. The proper role of particular providences and of specific divine interventions, is discussed in Robinson Crusoe and A Journal of the Plague Year.[8] The former's protagonist remembers "a strange Concurrence of Days in the various Providences which befel me".[9] The latter shows the complex balance between H.F.'s pursuit of providential signs - including "the strong impressions which I had on my Mind for staying" in London

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[6]On the Boylean style and the literary technology of experiment, see: Schaffer and Shapin, Leviathan and the Air-Pump, Princeton 1985.

[7]Simon Schaffer, "Defoe's Natural Philosophy and the Worlds of Credit", in J. Christie and S. Shuttleworth (eds.), Nature Transfigured, Manchester 1989. See: M. Schonbaum, ed., Accounts of the Apparition of Mrs Veal, Los Angeles 1965.

[8]On providences in this period see: Keith Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic, Harmondsworth 1973, Chapter 4.

[9]Robinson Crusoe, Oxford 1981, p133.

during the Plague - and a "Turkish predestinarianism".

Meeting a Blackwall waterman, H.F. reproaches himself:

> ...how much better this poor man's foundation was on which he stayed in the danger than mine; that he had nowhere to fly; that he had a family to bind him to attendance, which I had not; and mine was mere presumption, his a true dependence and a courage resting on God.

H.F. survives, and to this extent is vindicated, but the problem is not simply dismissed. It is paralleled by the question of the Plague's own providential operation where Defoe seems to advocate what we might call a mitigated supernaturalism:

> ...we must consider it as it was really propagated by natural means; nor is it at all less a judgement for its being under the conduct of human causes and effects.

He continues, and makes the distinction between ordinary and extraordinary operations:

> [God] is pleased to act by those natural causes as the ordinary means, excepting and reserving to Himself nevertheless a power to act in a supernatural way when He sees occasion... in the case of an infection there is no apparent extraordinary occasion for supernatural operation.

Yet, as for the stopping of the Plague, "the circumstances ... were indeed very remarkable... Nothing but the immediate finger of God, nothing but omnipotent power, could have done it... In that very moment when we might say, <Vain was the help of man>,-I say, in that very moment it pleased God, with a most agreeable surprise, to cause the fury of it to abate, even of itself".[10] Defoe artfully manages to keep the

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[10] Journal, Penguin edition, Harmondsworth 1966, pp204,124,205,252.

way clear for miracles while allowing discussion of the disease itself as a natural phenomenon. The dividing line is that of intelligibility.

A much earlier work, The Storm, echoes Morton in more than one particular. It contains a collection of "Remarkable Providences and Deliverances". It also applies natural philosophy and the issue of its boundary conditions, to natural theology. Talking of "the natural causes and original of winds",

> 'Tis apparent, that God Almighty seems to have reserved this as one of those secrets in Nature, which should more directly guide them [natural philosophers] to himself.[11]

Defoe was clearly interested in the supernatural as an explanatory and religious category from an early date; the equivocation of the Journal reveals it to be a problematic field too, in which simple judgments cannot be made.[12] The scope allowed to divine intervention, and natural wonders "by Divine permission", opened up a space for the Devil, under licence. The providential and the diabolical were,

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[11]Quoted from "The Storm: or a Collection of the Most Remarkable Casualties and Disasters which Happened in the Late Dreadful Tempest, Both by Sea and Land", 1704, in L.A. Curtis (ed), The Versatile Defoe, 1979, p280. See also p294 on the cessation of witchcraft in the town of Butly, reported by a correspondent, and implicitly ascribed to the effects of the tempest. This is the inverse of the normal control exercised by witches over the weather, illustrated in The Tempest, Macbeth, and a host of treatises on witchcraft and demonology.

[12]On witchcraft and providence, see More to Glanvill in Joseph Glanvill, Praefaratory Answer to Mr Henry Stubbe, 1671, pp155-7: "...fresh examples of Apparitions and Witchcrafts" are "a special piece of Providence" directed towards "benummed and lethargick Mindes".

moreover, seen to exist in close and confusing proximity. As with dreams - "God's infusion" or "curst delusion" - they were difficult to disentangle.

Fairly early on in Robinson Crusoe, Crusoe makes a symbolic transition from superstition via indifferent naturalism to a properly grounded faith. This dialectical process is focused on a sudden growth of barley which the involuntary hermit notices a few months after his arrival on the island. Astonished, he initially concludes "that God had miraculously caus'd this Grain to grow without any Help of Seed sown". But, when he recalls that some time earlier he had shaken out a bag of apparently ruined chicken-meal in that very place, he "must confess, my religious Thankfulness to God's Providence began to abate...". Further consideration, recorded in his journal, leads him towards mitigated supernaturalism, the recognition of providential action within the natural sphere, which we have already noticed in the Journal:

> ...it was really the Work of Providence as to me, that should order or appoint, that 10 or 12 Grains of Corn should remain unspoil'd...as if it had been dropt from Heaven.[13]

Much later, however, Crusoe's confidence, built on the trust in Providence which follows his conversion, is shaken by the appearance of a single human footprint on the shore, some way from his habitation. Accustomed to the security of his solitude, "I stood like one Thunder-struck, or as if I

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[13]Robinson Crusoe, Oxford 1981, p78-9.

had seen an Apparition". The singularity of the occurrence - "For how should any other Thing in human Shape come into the Place? Where was the Vessel that brought them? What Marks was there of any other Footsteps? And how was it possible a Man should come there?" - leads him to conjecture it as an inverted providence, a diabolical intervention:

> Sometimes I fancy'd it must be the Devil; and Reason joyn'd in with me upon this Supposition.

And the Devil's purpose would be to terrify; a licensed attack on the sovereignty of Divine providence, undermining Crusoe's confidence in his protection. In the end this interpretation is rejected by Crusoe, but on grounds of probability - "he could not be sure I could see it...'twas Ten Thousand to one whether I should ever see it or not..." - with the conclusion that

> All this seem'd inconsistent with the Thing it self, and with all the Notions we usually entertain of the Subtilty of the Devil.[14]

Psychologically the Devil offers a destabilizing alternative to divine providence; he intervenes in the world as a real presence (he can take on human shape) but reason, having generated the fear of him, can deal with him; and, paradoxically, all is ultimately subsumed within the divine scheme. Defoe confronts this latter paradox in the fascinating section of Robinson Crusoe where the hero attempts to give his man, Friday, the benefit of a religious education. It is Friday who puts the query, unwittingly

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[14]ibid. p153-5.

lighting on the central issue of Christian demonology, in a passage which is also a piece of high comedy:

> After this, I had been telling him how the Devil was God's Enemy in the Hearts of Men, and used all his Malice and Skill to defeat the good Designs of Providence, and to ruine the Kingdom of Christ in the World; and the like. Well, says Friday, but you say, God is so strong, so great, is he not much strong, much might as the Devil ? Yes, yes, says I, Friday, God is stronger than the Devil, God is above the Devil, and therefore we pray to God to tread him down under our Feet, and enable us to resist his Temptations and quench his fiery Darts. But, says he again, if God much strong, much might as the Devil, why God no kill the Devil, so make him no more do wicked?

Crusoe is "strangely surprized" at this, and is led by Friday's importunate questioning to a despairing plea to God to help him in the instruction of this savage. His subsequent success in this missionary exercise does not involve a return to the paradox of the divine licensing of the diabolical.[15]

So, in Robinson Crusoe, the most consistently moralistic of Defoe's great fictions, the author lays out, and highlights, the hypothetical operation of the Devil in the world. He shows us the possible insinuation of the Devil into this fictional space as an inversion of the operation of divine providence which forms the central topos of the book. Beyond this, diabolical action has ambiguities bound up with it similar in form to those associated with divine providence in the Journal of the Plague Year and elsewhere. First of all, there is the whole question of

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[15]ibid. p218.

naturalism - does God's providence operate naturally, can the Devil work miracles ? Divine providence operates by both natural and supernatural propagation; for instance in the genesis and extinction of the plague respectively. To avoid the danger of superstition, one must avoid adopting the supernatural reading too hastily. Demonological orthodoxy maintained that, miracles being the prerogative of God, the Devil's works must be no more than mira, wonders, praeternatural operations effected by the Devil's superior knowledge of natural philosophy and of the probabilities associated with it. This is why Defoe uses probabilities in Crusoe's reasoning about the footprint; he is, as it were, reconstructing the Devil's own putative thought-processes.[16] Subtler ambiguities on the naturalist issue remain, however. The objection to Satan's taking human shape is not that such a transformation is impossible, but rather that there could be "no manner of Occasion for it", that is, no reason. The conception outlined to Friday, on the other hand, seems to contain the hint of a more metaphorical construction of demonology. The Devil is "God's Enemy in the Hearts of Men". Indeed, the comedy attaching to Friday's worries comes from two directions: the feeling that the savage has misunderstood the subtleties of the settler's metaphorical argument; and the sense that the primitive has

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[16]On an interesting reading of this passage and others in the light of probability theory see: Paul Alkon, "The odds against Friday: Defoe, Bayes and inverse probability" in Paula Backscheider ed., Probability, time and space in eighteenth century literature, New York 1979.

rumbled the flaws, or at least the paradoxes, in the sophisticate's arguments. Once again, however, I think we have to opt for coexistence, if a less satisfactory one than in the case of divine providence. God operates naturally and supernaturally; the Devil is both real and metaphorical, a moral and a physical threat. We find the same confusion in Moll Flanders when the Devil "appears" to Moll; and in the Fortunate Mistress. The boundaries between metaphor and reality are never sufficiently defined. When the Quaker woman finds Roxana's Dutchman for her, her response is difficult to place:

> "Then thou hast dealt with the Evil One, friend," said I very gravely. "No, no," says she, "I have no familiar; but I tell thee I have found him for thee."

Similarly, when worrying that her daughter has discovered her true identity, Roxana decides

> [that] I durst not ask her what was Roxana's real name, lest she had really dealt with the devil and had boldly given my own name in for answer.[17]

Sexual infatuation is frequently referred to as "possession" by a "spirit"; and now, in the realm of unmistakeable metaphor, Roxana's daughter "haunted...[her] like an evil spirit".[18] The language of witchcraft was always being used in a metaphorical sense, as a figurative embellishment and, what is more, a significant implication. Beyond this,

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[17]Robinson Crusoe, pp154-5,218. The Fortunate Mistress, Oxford 1981, pp220,289.

[18]See The Fortunate Mistress, p234 eg. and for the quoted passage, p310.

however, Defoe is prepared to accept that the word "Devil" has figurative and literal uses which are not sharply divided, perhaps in the same way as sinning itself formed a seamless continuum, from omission to commission, from idolatry and disobedience to actual witchcraft.[19] This same attitude is to be found in the Political History of the Devil and the other occult works, as well as earlier pieces of journalism to which I will later refer.

Another ambiguity we have noticed is worth underlining too. The fact that the Devil is under ultimate divine control does not prevent the occurrence of the psychological phenomenon in which diabolical action undermines security in divine providence. In other words, it is very difficult to reconcile the supremacy and goodness of God with His own toleration and even commissioning of evil. This is the message of the footprint passage and the lesson which Friday, the pupil, teaches Crusoe, the master.

Before continuing, we need to clear up one objection which might stand in the way of my use of Defoe's fictional works, his "novels", to show his immersion in, and the subtlety, the flexibility of his, demonology; and to demonstrate the occult and providential legacy of his dissenting upbringing.[20] What is the relation between the

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[19] See chapter on Scotland, discussion of pamphlets on the Renfrew case, for a similar perception.

[20] Defoe was not only brought up at a dissenting academy; he was also originally intended for the dissenting ministry.

author and the persona in Defoe's mature fiction ? Can we really use the opinions and language of his "characters" to chart his system of belief ? Two replies may be made to this. First, that such a line of questioning depends on conceiving of the fictional works as novels in a sense which makes no sense for a writer of Defoe's generation and interests. The novel only emerged fully with the work of Richardson and Fielding, achieving a new definition with the satirical anti-novels of Sterne and his progenitors. To conceive of a character as an independent force, a prime focus of interest, with views invented and moulded to serve the purposes of characterization, is to step, almost, into the nineteenth century. Defoe did not create Moll and Roxana and Crusoe as idiosyncratic types standing apart from their age and their creator. Here we move on to the second point: one of Defoe's major interests in the creation of his fictions was a fascination with the creation of testimony, testimony with all the marks of creditworthiness, which was, nevertheless, fiction.[21] Thus whatever Defoe himself thought - which is something we will never really and indubitably know, and which is barely worth asking - the fictional texts show us a narrative which was intended and accepted as creditworthy, and which we can use as evidence of a perceived discourse of the occult. Reading Defoe is not

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[21]For an account of this, see Schaffer's article, cited in note 7. Also see McKeon Origins on periodizing the emergence of the novel.

like reading Nathaniel Hawthorne or Edgar Allen Poe.[22]

Well before writing his fictions or his occult treatises, Defoe had discussed communication with spirits, in his government-sponsored paper, the Review. His concern was typically compatible with that of Robert Boyle, who had told the witchcraft investigator Joseph Glanvill that "to grant...that there are intelligent beings that are not ordinarily visible does much conduce to the reclaiming...of atheists".[23] So, in the supplement to the Review in November 1704, Defoe discusses evidence for the immortality of the human soul:

> Our Converse with the World of Spirits is a thing in our Opinion very certain, and if farther search'd into, might serve very much to illuminate this Affair; it demonstrates much of a future Existence, and perhaps might discover a great many niceties we are not yet Masters of-.

Mr Review goes on to put supernatural events to the service of an empirical natural philosophy, which eschews the dangers of Cartesian rationalism, and initially persuades the doubting without reference to revelation; an eminently Boylean or Lockean enterprise:

> ...since the Adversaries, I mean to the Doctrine of the Soul's Immortality, are for putting by all reveal'd Knowledge, and an absolute Demonstration is impossible, we would put it upon them to resolve what is the meaning of Visions, Foresight,

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[22]Though imaginative works - those of Hawthorne and James Hogg, for instance - can help us to appreciate the mentality of witchcraft and occult beliefs, the mental and social processes they involved.

[23]. Boyle to Glanvill, 18th September 1677 in his Works, new edition, 6 vols., ed. Birch, 1772, Vol.VI. p58. See also 10th February 1678, loc.cit. p59-60.

> Forebodings of Evil or Good, and whence such things come; if not from some Sympathetick Influence of Spirit unembodied, let them assign some Cause.[24]

Defoe is quite clear that "To bring the Scripture in as any proof here, would be to no purpose, because these Gentlemen are too fond of exploding all Matters of Faith, and flye to the Wilderness of Philosophy". His answer to that wilderness, which he illustrates with a series of sub-scholastic queries on being, substantiality, spirit, and matter, is essentially Lockean. The problem is the whole notion of matter. We "ought to have defin'd it" more rigorously. In the light of previous discussions of substantiality by Matthew Hale and an author who was surely familiar to Defoe, Richard Baxter, it is significant that the journal should go on to discuss the nature of fire, Baxter's paradigm and first order of spirit.[25]

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[24]. Cf. The Fortunate Mistress p222: "I was a little surprised even before I knew anything of who it was, my mind foreboding the thing as it happened (whence that arises, let the naturalists explain to us)..." Note the ambiguities of an "opinion" which is "very certain", of a fact which "demonstrates", but only "much". The reference to the "Adversaries" glances at a familiar name for the Devil, the adversary.

[25]Defoe's "Review", Reproduced from the Original Editions with an Introduction and Bibliographical Notes..., ed.Secord, New York 1938 [henceforth Review], I, Supplement 3, p69, Nov. 1704. See Baxter, Additional Notes of the Life and Death of Sir Matthew Hale, 1682, on Sir Matthew Hale and spirit. See also: Ian Bostridge, "Jurisprudence and Natural Philosophy: Matthew Hale and Thomas Hobbes", Cambridge M.Phil thesis [Dept.History and Philosophy of Science] 1987; John Henry, "A Cambridge Platonist's Materialism" in Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes, 1986. Compare the disavowal of scriptural proof with similar bantering statements in the Political History, eg. his cautions "against running to Scripture for shelter in cases of

An issue of the paper produced three days before Harley's resignation, in February 1708, confirmed Defoe's public commitment to the empiricist programme, allied to a careful concern for the precise use of language. "SEEING" he writes, "is in the Sence of our Speech a full Demonstration", and,

> ...allowing the Sences capable of sufficient Demonstration in Fact...what a Man certainly knows, he can be no more said to believe, for all Faith expires in Assurance, as Hope is swallowed up in Fruition.[26]

In 1713, Defoe made clear the corollary to this, that is, the existence of a minimal natural religion, not dependent on Revelation. For, reason "will carry...thus far, that he must Immediately conclude, that there is not a Power supreme only, but supremely Wise, and supremely Good, which Governs the World".[27]

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difficulty, Scripture weighing very little among the people I am directing my speech to..." [p72.] Also compare with the religious education of Friday in Robinson Crusoe [pp216-222] where natural religion is seen to be ultimately insufficient: "...it was a Testimony to me, how the meer Notions of Nature, though they will guide reasonable Creatures to the Knowledge of a God, and of a Worship or Homage due to the supreme Being, of God as the Consequence of our Nature; yet nothing but divine Revelation can form the Knowledge of Jesus Christ...the saving Knowledge of God, and the Means of Salvation."[p219]

[26]Review IV No 155. Feb.7, 1708, and cf Filmer above.

[27]I[IX] (the continuation of the Review.) No 54, Feb.3, 1713. This does not necessarily compel us to reckon Defoe as a "Latitudinarian" along with Francis Hutchinson. Reason is formally acknowledged - the vexed question is the content of reason. Witchcraft belief can be eminently reasonable or rational. See Paul Feyerabend's favourable review of Malleus Maleficarum in his Science in a Free Society, 1978. The "canons" of rationality are dissected in idem., Against Method, 1972.

At the same time, Defoe was anxious not to display credulity, giving credit to his own supernaturalism by denying its excesses. The reply to a letter of July 1705 moves from fairies, to spells, to the apparent inability of apes to speak; from the illegitimate supernatural, to the legitimate supernatural, to the operation of providence in the natural world:

> To the first, Certainly there never were such beings in any Place, but the empty Heads of old Women, and in Penny Story-books...To the second, 'Tis allow'd, that in Ancient Times, the Devil had frequent communication with Men, and as a subtile Spirit, has Power of doing things invisibly, which therefore seems to Spectators to be done by the Man himself, with whom such Correspondence was held...[28]

In the Political History, the "empty heads" and "Penny Story-books" were to be seen in the "Chimney-Corner Histories" of "our old Mothers and Nurses", but the bounds of credulity had apparently shifted.[29] Here diabolical operations acquire an ambiguity which diminishes their credit. Though Defoe never quite makes fairy-stories of them, his equivocation has a similar effect. We are talking about "Ancient Times" - the Devil had frequent communication - but then we move into the present tense - "he has Power of doing things invisibly" - but then this "seems to Spectators to be done by the Man himself" - it is a matter of seeming, and the male malefactor suggests distant tales of

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[28]Review, II, Little Review 55b, July 20th, 1705. On belief in fairies compare Spectator No.604,Oct.8th, 1714.

[29]Political History, 1726 edition, pp321,332.

necromancy rather than modern witchcraft as practised by old women in villages. And back to the past tense: "with whom such correspondence was held". From the past to the present and back again, but Defoe never quite arrives at a proper conclusion. Modernity is not addressed.

The bantering tone which later comes to the centre-stage of the occult works, which treat the Devil with due familiarity, is well represented in the Review, notably in this discussion of the shades of devilry, a return to the topic of the continuum of the diabolical, and of sin itself, which we have already discussed. The Devil is a "Camelion-like thing...The black Devil in the Conscience...the fair Devil in the Mistress". Indeed, the Devil "is of every Colour...to allure or affright". Then again, "the Devil's an Ass, a meer Fool".[30]

Yet it is a very serious issue of the Review, that published on Thursday October 4th, 1711, after Harley's return to power, which returns to the subject of the diabolical, and witchcraft in particular. The climate had, in some elusive way, changed, and was to change again before 1726. The continuity in the journalistic writings was interrupted at the height of the "rage of party".
First, we should treat the literary, or journalistic niche within which Defoe's article appeared. It is nicely sandwiched between Addison's famous Spectator article on

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[30]Review,III, No 131, Nov.2, 1706.ibid. VII,No 126, Jan.13, 1711.

witchcraft, number 117, published in July 1711, and three successive issues of Boyer's Protestant Post Boy on the same subject, published in April 1712. Addison's political leanings, and indeed his views of witchcraft, were well-known by 1711. Though Mr Spectator promised in his first issue "to observe an exact Neutrality between the Whigs and Tories, unless I shall be forc'd to declare my self by the Hostilities of Either side", the facts of Addison's and of Steele's careers promised Whiggish sentiments if nothing more. Not that the Spectator was the Tatler or a looking-glass Examiner; but the years of Harley's ascendancy were lean ones for the author of "The Campaign" and the Whig government's gazetteer.[31] In his Remarks on...Italy of 1705, Addison had already treated the subject of witchcraft with a whiggish disdain:

> Before I leave Switzerland I can't but observe, that the notion of Witchcraft reigns very much in this country. I have often been tired with accounts of this nature from very sensible men, that are most of 'em furnished with matters of fact which have happened, as they pretend, within the compass of their own knowledge.[32]

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[31]Addison and Steele respectively. "The Campaign" was a paean to Marlborough of 1704. On the origins of the Spectator see: The Spectator ed. Donald F. Bond, Oxford 1965 (5 vols.), vol.I, Introduction. Bond seems to swallow Addison's claims to neutrality with undue haste. We might note that Addison's trips abroad were government-sponsored [see below]. Degrees, and styles, of partisanship were manifold and various. Defoe's management of the Review demonstrates the extreme subtlety with which a "partisan" organ could be run. The issue of "Whiggish" or "court" sentiments is a thorny one.

[32]The Miscellaneous Works of Joseph Addison, ed. A.C. Guthkelch, 1914, Vol.II, p225.

Addison thus remarks the need for reputable evidence. His tone is that of a langorous bien-pensant - "I have often been tired", his use of spoken constructions - appealing to an audience of likeminded men. The use of the word sensible may be compared with a later remark in the Spectator:

> ...Sir ROGER told me, that he knew several sensible People who believ'd these Gypsies now and then foretold very strange things.[33]

While in Sir Roger's mouth the quality "sensible" may be used with a touch of Addisonian irony by, there is a concern in both passages to admit evidence, but then to dismiss it; to appear to see both sides of the question.

Addison goes on in his Remarks to dismiss witchcraft by throwing suspicion upon the useful coincidence of accusation and misfortune, and by drawing upon the topos of the morbus plebiae:

> The people are so universally infatuated with the notion, that if a Cow falls sick, 'tis ten to one but an old woman is clapt up in prison for it, and if the poor creature chance to think herself a witch, or has anything like a teat more than ordinary about her, the whole country is for hanging her up without mercy.[34]

He goes on to make an early attempt at a sociological analysis, not arguing against witchcraft beliefs, but explaining them away:

> One finds indeed the same humour prevail in most of the rocky barren parts of Europe. Whether it be that poverty and ignorance, which are generally the products of these countries, may really engage

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[33]The Spectator, Vol.II, No. 130, Mon. July 30th, 1711.

[34]The passage on the teat is tastefully omitted in later editions.

> a wretch in such dark practices, or whether or no the same principles may not render the people too credulous, and perhaps too willing to get rid of some of their unprofitable members.[35]

Only the barest suggestion remains of the putative reality of witch beliefs, with that reference to "dark practices".

Six years later, turning to England, and in the midst of the post-Sacheverell reaction, Addison pushed a more sophisticated line than that adopted for the "rocky barren" Swiss. It maintains a balance in argument which verges on self-contradiction. A radically sceptical motto out of Vergil - ipsi sibi somnia fingunt, they create their own dreams - collides with a prescription for a rational epoche, a suspension of belief or disbelief:

> When the Arguments press equally on both sides in matters that are indifferent to us, the safest Method is to give up our selves to neither.

A politic distortion, in the nonchalant tones of the Remarks, is involved, of course. The whole point is surely whether these matters are indifferent to "us". That very pronoun suggests right-thinking complicity, drawing the cognoscenti together as a coherent body. The overall thrust of Addison's discursive opening to the issue is to keep the trappings of orthodoxy, while undermining their contemporary

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[35]Addison op.cit.Such distancing is allied to the rise of what became anthropology, a form of expertise: Peter Burke has christened the whole process the "discovery of folklore". See his Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe, 1978, and the essay by Jacques Revel in ed. Kaplan, Understanding Popular Culture, Berlin 1984, "Forms of Expertise: Intellectuals and "Popular" Culture in France."

force.[36] So, hearing "Relations that are made from all parts of the World", Mr Spectator "cannot forbear thinking that there is such an Intercourse and Commerce with Evil Spirits, as that which we express by the name of Witchcraft". Yet those who believe such stories are usually "ignorant and credulous", the supposed witches "are People of a weak Understanding and crazed Imagination"; moreover, "many Impostures and Delusions of this Nature...have been detected in all Ages". The conclusion is mightily paradoxical, almost to the point of absurdity:

> ...I believe in general that there is and has been such a thing as Witch-craft; but at the same time can give no Credit to any Particular Instance of it.[37]

How can one legitimately assent to a general proposition, to none of whose constituent instances one is prepared to give credence ? Certainly this would run counter to the new experimental method. The inductive and deductive processes are severed by Addison's reasoning. The remainder of the issue is devoted to the tale of the old crone Moll White's encounters with Sir Roger de Coverley. She embodies the necessary qualities of Addison's witch. His tone, and his butt Sir Roger de Coverley's credulity, push the argument

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[36]Whatever people were thinking - which we cannot directly know - their writing certainly betrays signs of anxiety and wily argument on the witchcraft issue, whenever they sought to oppose the belief and its practical consequences.

[37]A formula Blackstone was to cite with approval. The Spectator, Vol. I, No. 117, Sat. July 14, 1711. Blackstone, Commentaries, Oxford 1769, Bk. IV, Ch. IV, p60.

away from that studied neutrality. Whatever the formal structure of the argument, the bulk of the issue is given over to ridiculing the belief in witchcraft. Addison draws the clergy into complicity. While Sir Roger reports "that the Country People would be tossing her into a Pond, and trying Experiments with her every Day, if it was not for him and his Chaplain", the Tory squire's alibi is subsequently exploded. Such a contradiction gives the condemnation double force, and creates, in absentia, the character of the rational chaplain. For the narrator reveals that Sir Roger "would frequently have bound her [Moll White] over to the County Sessions, had not his Chaplain with much ado persuaded him to the contrary".[38] Addison concludes with another passage explaining away witch beliefs, a passage of notable force and moral urgency, worth quoting in full:

> I have been the more particular in this account, because I hear there is scarce a Village in England that has not a Moll White in it. When an old Woman begins to doat and grow chargeable to a Parish, she is generally turned into a Witch, and fills the whole Country with extravagant Fancies, imaginary Distempers, and terrifying Dreams. In the mean time, the poor Wretch that is the innocent Occasion of so many Evils begins to be frighted at her self, and sometimes confesses secret Commerces and Familiarities that her Imagination forms in a delirious old Age. This frequently cuts off Charity from the greatest Objects of Compassion, and inspires People with a Malevolence towards those poor decrepid Parts of our Species, in whom Human Nature is defaced by Infirmity and Dotage.

Economic reasoning enters - "chargeable" - as does the

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[38] Spectator 117. Perhaps the villager's "experiments" are a sly dig at Boyle and his like.

medical and psychiatric discourse. What makes this passage so effective is the redeployment of witchcraft topoi. The old woman is transformed, one might almost say transpeciated, and she does indeed disturb the neighbourhood with seeming prodigies - but all this is a social and not a supernatural process.[39]

Defoe's Review issue on witchcraft was presaged by a letter published in the journal in the autumn of 1711. "This Question of Witchcraft is much Controverted", his correspondent concludes, having cited Glanvill, Webster, Scot and More, "and so intricate and abstruse, as perhaps you will think it no despicable Subject for the Exercise of your Pen in some of your Reviews, after you have done with the South-Seas, and the Stock Jobbers...". This correspondent - fictional or otherwise - is complaining of the Royal Society's imprimatur granted in 1676 to John Webster, for a work attacking the witchcraft beliefs of Joseph Glanvill "one of the same society". "To what purpose", he wonders, "is the Imprimatur of a Society to a Book;if it be not that such Books being approv'd by those Societies, as the best Judges of Matters relating to their own Professions, the Vulgar Readers may the better believe them...".[40]

The theme is a common one in the late seventeenth

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[39]ibid.

[40]The Review Vol.VIII,No.83, Thurs.Oct.4, 1711.

century, the atheistical tendencies of natural philosophy being impersonated here by scandalous abuse of a legitimately granted authority to license books. The letter is anomalous in many ways, of course. Apart from anything else, it refers to a book more than thirty years old. The specific association within one sentence of witchcraft and stockjobbery reminds us of Defoe's own conjunction of the two in the later occult works, in earlier issues of the Review, and in The Villainy of stock-jobbers detected where those shady operators are referred to as "this new Corporation of Hell".[41] One might suggest that the letter is a typical Defoe fiction, its dispute a pretended occasion for an issue on witchcraft, which must have appeared partly in response to Addison's piece. Defoe should at least have been aware of the Spectator essay; but other reasons for his contribution may be looked for and found.

II

At this point it seems apt to recall the political circumstances of 1711, and to elaborate on the political role of the Review itself.[42] The outcome of the Sacheverell

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[41][Daniel Defoe], The Villainy of stock-jobbers detected, 1701, p9.

[42]On what follows see: G.V.Bennett, The Tory Crisis in Church and State, Oxford 1975, chapters VI-VIII. Geoffrey Holmes, The Trial of Dr Sacheverell, 1973. J.A. Downie, Robert Harley and the Press, Cambridge 1979, chapters 3,5,6 and passim. Sheila Biddle, Bolingbroke and Harley, 1975.

trial and the surrounding disturbances had been to demonstrate the strength of traditionalism out-of-doors, and to ensure the return of a Tory house of commons in subsequent elections. The new ministry was presided over by Robert Harley, whose political beliefs appeared shifting while having, nevertheless, an underlying continuity. Having been a "country" Whig, he became a "country" Tory. He sought moderation and was resolutely anti-party.

> At the first Revolution [ie. the Restoration], if care had been taken, parties might have been prevented, and we should have had but one, and that for the good of England.[43]

After the débacle of the Shortest Way with the Dissenters, and a short spell in the pillory, Defoe, the dissenting Whig, boasting confidant of William III, covertly entered Harley's service and set up the Review. Inasmuch as one can say anything about the "real" Defoe, it seems that his views matched, or came to match Harley's closely, and on the latter's fall from grace in 1715, Defoe felt called to defend him. Earlier, in 1704, a letter to Harley recommended an eminently Harleyite programme, founded on moderation and the desire for unity:

> Tis Plain Those Gentlemen who Propose This Union by Establishing One Party and suppressing Another...Offer That which has been often essay'd, and has as often Miscarryed.

Despite his dissenting background, Defoe offered "Methods of Management of the Dissenters" which asserted that " 'Tis Not

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[43]Robert Harley in 1694 to the house of commons. See: Cobbett's Parliamentary History of England, 1806-20, v, p830.

Necessary in the present Conjuncture to Restore The Dissenters to Offices and Preferments" supporting only a toleration operated to the benefit of the ministry, a bare "Liberty of Conscience". Such management "by Faithfull Agents" might help "to Settle The Generall Temper of The Party". Defoe speaks of a "Generall Union of Affection" in the nation as opposed to a union "in principle" which could not be expected. Nevertheless he does glance at a more ambitious, a more comprehensive aim:

> I Premise Also by the Way That I am Persuaded Freedom and favour to The Dissenters is The Directest Method to Lessen Their Numbers and bring Them at last into the Church.[44]

All this is of much relevance to the behaviour of both Defoe and his erstwhile patron in the wake of the Sacheverell affair. That letter of 1704 had already complained of such as Mr Sacheverell who claimed "that whoever was a True Son of the Church or Wisht well to it, Was Oblig'd to hang Out the Bloody Flag of Defiance Against the Dissenters"[45]. That flag was much in evidence in 1710, of course, with a high church fever running, and looting mobs in London streets.[46] Since Harley's removal from the

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[44]Letters of Daniel Defoe, ed. G.H.Healey, Oxford 1955, No.15, August-September 1704 ?

[45]ibid.

[46]See Geoffrey Holmes, "The Sacheverell Riots..." in his Politics, Religion and Society in England, 1679-1742, 1986. W.A. Speck estimates that Sacheverell's printed sermon, The Perils of False Brethren sold around 100,000 copies in Great Britain, as well as translations into French, German and Dutch. See his introduction to the same, Exeter 1974.

governing triumvirate in February 1708, Defoe had been employed by his enemies in the whig-dominated ministry. In the course of the Sacheverell trial he took their part, both in the Review and in anonymous pamphlets. Among these, his Four Letters to a Friend in North Britain Upon the Publishing The Tryal of Dr Sacheverell highlighted Sacheverell's strenuousness, assimilating it to both enthusiasm and atheism, raising the spectre of the mob who "us'd to rise formerly against Popery, or some very great and publick Grievance, or open Violation of the Liberties and Properties of the Subject; but never till now against the Government it self, and those that were only defending the Constitution, and pleading for the Liberties of the People". Defoe cleverly manages to say one thing and imply another; Sacheverell did not pretend "to the Spirit of Prophecy (which I wonder too he did not pretend to)". He cites the most explosively eschatological passage in Sacheverell's sermon:

> Wo, said the Doctor, to the fearful Heart and faint Hand; and to all those that should sit still, and for want of Courage give up their Cause, which, he said, at present requir'd their bravest Resolution, for that they were to wrestle against Principalities and Powers, and the Rulers of the Darkness of this World, against Spiritual Wickedness in High-Places.

Yet, on the other hand, Defoe finds an even more pernicious reality underlying this enthusiastic flourish:

> ...how atheistical was his purpose, in wickedly perverting divers Texts of Scripture, instead of preaching the Truths of the Gospel, which are

plain, certain and unchangeable.[47]

A verse broadsheet published in 1710, High-Church Miracles, Or Modern Inconsistencies, gives us some idea of the abuse with which the contending parties assailed each other in this furious period. It has been attributed to Defoe.[48] The category of the supernatural is clearly associated with the "High-Gentlemen" :

> That high church have a right divine from Jove,
> By signs and wonders they pretend to prove.

The tone of the piece is manifestly ironic, making high-church doctrines themselves an occasion of wonder, or astonishment, almost miraculous in their capacity to resolve logical contradiction. Yet the manipulation of the holy and the demonic is associated with high-flying, in that first couplet directly, and at the end of the poem obliquely:

> Saints they can damn, and devils quickly make 'em
> Can devils absolve, and after consecrate 'em.
> But I defy themselves, and all their devils,
> To wash the Aethiop white, and purge high church from evils.[49]

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[47][Daniel Defoe], Four Letters to a Friend..., 1710. Attributed to Defoe by Moore, A Checklist..., Connecticut 1971. On the problem with Moore's attributions, see Furbank and Owens, Canonisation of...Defoe.

[48]See Somers' Tracts, 1814 p320.

[49]ibid. The references here are numerous. Exorcism is obviously hinted at; the literal meaning concerns the church's inherited power of loosing and binding, part of the catholic armoury of the Church of England. The earlier passage suggests the ius divinus is supported by claims to this sort of power. In the case of kingship, the semi-miraculous power of touching for the king's evil was certainly part of the high-flying case. See Clark op.cit. p160-67. On exorcism see Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic, p586, and A Full Confutation of Witch-craft, 1712, pp44-45.

Whatever the attitude of high churchmen themselves - and it was a broad category which could encompass Sacheverell, Atterbury, Swift and St John - their enemies clearly associated them with hocus-pocus, with priestcraft in perfection.[50] The controversy over the Wenham witchcraft prosecution in 1712 will provide plenty of confirmation of this polarization around the prodigious, miraculous and diabolical. Even a decade later, Sacheverell's enthusiasm was still associated with a renaissance of superstition.

The association made between the Tory reaction and the propagation of superstition, and witchcraft belief in particular, was long-lived. This is the freethinking Anthony Collins in provocative mood in 1713:

> ...since the Time of Dr SACHEVERELL, when the Clamours against Free-Thinking began to be loudest, the Devil has again resum'd his Empire, and appears in the shape of Cats, and enters into confederacy with old Women; and several have been try'd, and many are accus'd, thro all parts of the Kingdom for being Witches.[51]

In 1715, White Kennett preached a sermon on "The Witchcraft of the present Rebellion" which virtually renewed Collins's charge against the high-flyers:

> Nay Witchcraft in the Letter, with Prosecutions and Trials upon it, did begin to revive amidst the late Party-Zeal, and if the Judges would have countenanc'd the Superstition, GOD knows how far

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[50]Anthony Collins, Priestcraft in Perfection, 1709. See John Redwood, Reason, Ridicule and Religion, 1976, ch.6.

[51]Anthony Collins, A Discourse of Free-Thinking, 1713, p30.

those Feats of Popery might have grown upon us.[52]

A full ten years after Collins's initial accusation, we have A Seasonable Apology for Father Dominick, otherwise known as Francis Atterbury, at that time imprisoned for his supposed role in the Jacobite "Atterbury Plot".[53] The satirical tack of this anonymous pamphlet is somewhat wayward; the author seems unable to decide whether he should attack directly or by means of an ironical defence. He tell us of "Some grave Divines and deep Casuists" who "maintain, that the Father of Lies endeavours to ape the Father of Light in many things...lo, cry they, The Devil has his Deputies and Ministers too". While the author clearly cannot resist the temptation to mock prematurely, the voice, that of a non-juring or high-church defender of Atterbury, is meant to approve these "grave Divines and deep Casuists". He continues in this vein:

> They likewise hold, and bring Proofs for it; that he has numerous female Deputies in every Corner of the Universe: For what are Witches but the Devils Embassadresses, the zealous Pastoresses, who feed his Familiars and his daily Negotiatrixes to win People to him; and bring in his Harvest ?

The voice moves in to be more specific:

> For this end, he has an old wither'd Journey-woman or two in every District. The learned Jane Wenham was one of them; she was tried some Years ago at Hertford, for holding a Schismatical Conventicle of Cats and Gossips, who were great Hereticks, and

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[52]White Kennett, The Witchcraft of the present Rebellion, A Sermon preach'd...On Sunday 25th of September, 1715, 1715.

[53]See Bennett op.cit.

went a caterwauling from the Church.[54]

Thomas Gordon's article in his Humourist of 1725, makes the same connection between belief in witchcraft and high church principles. His essays were directed especially against what the dedication to the volume, "To the Man in the Moon", calls "the ardent Zeal of her orthodox Sons". The particular piece on witchcraft uses familiar language:

> This wretched gaping Spirit still haunts Mankind, and still subjects them to endless Impositions and shameful Delusions, of which one Party of Men have made a plentiful Harvest. [not my emphasis][55]

Defoe's Review article was preceded by Addison's in the Spectator. It was followed by a thoroughly sceptical performance in successive issues of the Protestant Post-boy between April 3rd and 12th 1712. These were published in

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[54]A Seasonable Apology for Father Dominick, Chaplain to Prince Prettyman the Catholick, But now lying in Durance under the Suspicion of secret Iniquity. In which are occasionally inserted some weighty Arguments for calling a General Council of the Nonjuring Doctors, for the further Propagation of Ceremonies, Unity, Dissention, and Anathemas; and for the better Improvement of Exorcism and March-Beer, 1723, pp7ff. See also p14, for an association between sacerdotalism and witch-belief: "My Client has got the Keys of both Worlds at his Girdle...My greatest Wonder is, that...[he] cannot with this Master-key of his, open the sublunary Lock that holds him fast in Durance, especially when they say, even Witches and Necromancers can do it." The way to rise is to be "a furious Broker of Ceremonies [and] a zealous maintainer of occult Qualities".[p28]

[55]Thomas Gordon, The Humourist, 1725, dedication, and p74. See also a remark which suggests that the battle for "rationality" and scepticism had not yet been convincingly won [compare with Francis Hutchinson's similar remarks in his Historical Essay of 1718, discussed in the following chapter]:

> It is... one of the most unthankful Offices in the World, to go about to expose the mistaken Notions of Witchcraft and Spirits.

book form as the Impossibility of Witchcraft, as part of the dispute over that notorious trial of the "witch of Walkern", Jane Wenham. This controversy spawned at least eight pamphlets and a broadsheet, some going into two editions, the major account into six. The trial was of major public concern:

> Thousands of People flock'd in from all Parts of the Country to see her in Goal; but when she came to her Tryal, so vast a Number of People have not been together at the Assizes in the memory of Man.[56]

The most prolific writer, Francis Bragge, wrote three pamphlets mounting a vigorous attack on Sadducism and what he saw as Whiggish scepticism. His opponents were berated for the "prejudices of their education", lambasted for their failure to be genuinely empirical:

> ...there were those who had beforehand resolved to believe nothing at all of it, let the Proof be what it would.[57]

Bragge was most concerned to associate the Church of England with certain forms of miracle-working, attacking those who behaved "as if detecting the most Abstruse, and Hidden Works of the devil, and his Spiteful and Malicious Vassals, were a Business wholly foreign to, and inconsistent with, the Duty

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[56] An Account of the Tryal, Examination and Condemnation of Jane Wenham, 1712, B.L. 515.1.6.(28).

[57] [Francis Bragge jr], An Account..., 1712, preface. On this controversy see P.J. Guskin, "The Context of Witchcraft" in Eighteenth Century Studies, 15, 1981.

of a Minister of Christ".[58]

The politicization of the debate is striking. It is not that we can call witchcraft a party issue in a positive sense[59], but rather that propagandists used it as a stick with which to beat opponents. Thus Bragge:

> As for Mother Wenham, I hear she has found out a Way to get plenty of Money while she is in Prison. She says she was prosecuted out of Spite, only because she went to the Dissenting Meetings: And by this Means, she gets Contributions from the Party: And of a wicked old Witch, is on a sudden become a precious Saint.[60]

That Wenham's charge might be true is worth consideration; the association between the practice of witchcraft and Quakerism was often made in the seventeenth century. Fox was accused of enchantment. The choice of language, notably the word Saint, is inflammatory; Puritan sects are evoked in the same breath as diabolism. Bragge continues with pointed irony:

> This Story put me upon enquiring of Mr Gardiner,

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[58]Bragge op.cit. Preface.cf. A Seasonable Apology, p30: "he braggs [!] of his great Power over the Devil; yet he is eternally frighting you with the Devil's great and invincible Power". See note 49 on exorcism, above. The author of A Full Confutation of Witchcraft talked of "the stale Artifice of Exorcisms". [p5]

[59]See the remarks of the Tory, Thomas Hearne, for instance:

> Notwithstanding Wenham's Condemnation, the Judge got her repriev'd. And justly too. For I am fully satisfy'd since that the poor Woman was abus'd & that she was far from being a Witch.

Nevertheless, "All the Circumstances are very strange and surprizing". Thomas Hearne, Remarks and Collections, iii, ed. C.E. Doble, Oxford 1889, p327, entry for March 30th 1712.

[60][Francis Bragge jr] Witchcraft farther displayed, 1712.

> whether she had ever been counted a Dissenter, and he declares, that he never before heard that she us'd to go to any Place of Divine Worship, and that he never took her to be of any Religion at all...[61]

Bragge will not grant Wenham any religion, but will not be denied his opportunity to diabolize the dissenters:

> ...however, we are very willing to part with her, and wish the Fanaticks much Joy of their new Convert.[62]

In a few lines, the young clergyman manages to place Dissent, "the Party", fanaticism and witchcraft in a disturbing complicity. Yet he never allows his rhetoric to settle too much. It remains dishonestly flexible. Jane Wenham is not religious, therefore she is a witch; and at the same time, she is a witch and a dissenter, and therefore dissent is tantamount to apostasy.

One of the replies to Bragge, A Full Confutation of Witchcraft has a subtitle which is in itself revealing:

> In which The Modern Notions of Witches are overthrown, and the Ill Consequences of such Doctrines are exposed by Arguments; proving that, Witchcraft is Priestcraft.

And priestcraft is Toryism. The tone then adopted is one of a Whiggish urbanity, which summons up visions of Mr Spectator on the one hand, and the backwoodsman Sir Roger de Coverley on the other:

> I am fully aware to what Hazards a Man of a Publick Character, expresses his Reputation to, in

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[61]Bragge op.cit. See Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic, p580-1, on Quakers, and The Journal of George Fox, ed. N.Penney, Cambridge 1911, i.pp3,38,104-5,149,203,340,411.

[62]ibid.

> talking freely, much more in writing on such a Topick, especially in the Country, where to make the least Doubt, is a Badge of Infidelity; and not to be superstitious, passes for a dull Neutrality in Religion, if not a direct Atheism. And here, Sir, I cannot but envy one Privilege you enjoy in Town, which is, a Freedom of Thought and Talk...[63]

The strain of anti-clericalism is really very strong, as in this passage in which the author asks why Jane's curse upon the clergyman who had failed to give justice in her suit for defamation - she had been accused of being a witch - had not fallen on the head of the cursed, but rather upon his servant:

> That Question, upon second Thoughts, may be too free: What ! Thunder-strike Oaks ? What ! a Clergy-man lie exposed to the Fury of the Devil ? No, no, they are all of the holy Seed, and cannot be reach'd by any infernal power.[64]

The repetition of a point Wagstaffe had made in his much earlier work, had a distinct Whiggish tinct in The Impossibility of Witchcraft Further Demonstrated:

> ...the absolute and unlimited Power with which the Eastern Nations were always Govern'd, did require not only the Force of Arms, but the Craft also and Tricks of Superstition to uphold it. Nor indeed were standing Armies of greater use unto the Oriental Monarchs, for keeping of their People in Awe, than Idols and Priests

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[63] A Full Confutation of Witchcraft: More particularly of the Depositions against Jane Wenham Lately Condemned..., 1712, p2. Note the rational disparagement of country beliefs, slurred as those of the ill-educated rustic. "[I] never yet came under the slavish Ties of popular Compliances, or ever suffer'd my Judgment to mingle with the Crowd." These beliefs derive from "the wild Testimonies of a parcel of Brain-sick People, who often stand in need of Dieting and Shaving themselves". [pp4-5]

[64] ibid. p8.

were, and the various Impostures used by them.[65]

The Impossibility of Witchcraft could come up with claims like this, which betrayed the Lockean sentiments of the writer, at least in his division of secular government from religious concerns:

> ...without Question, under this side of Heaven, there is nothing so sacred as the Life of Man, for the Preservation whereof, all Policies or Forms of Government , all Laws and Magistrates are most especially ordain'd.[66]

After her pardon, Jane Wenham was given refuge on the estate of a Whig landowner, where Francis Hutchinson visited her a few years later.[67] It is very important that we should not make the political polarization of witchcraft belief appear too crude a process. Those interested in witchcraft belief for itself could use a party label to appropriate party rhetoric and party support. Thus Bragge attacks the party that will shelter a witch, exalts the priestly function and its mother church; at the same time he will puff the witchcraft issue by tying it to party, assuring himself attention and support. Bragge's choice of Curll as his publisher ensured sales and furthered both aims. We should not identify Tories or high-churchmen with witchcraft belief, Whigs and low-churchmen with scepticism. There was a demonstrable tradition of Dissenting witchcraft belief which

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[65]The Impossibility of Witchcraft Further Demonstrated, p vi.

[66]The Impossibility of Witchcraft, preface.

[67]Francis Hutchinson, A Historical Essay Concerning Witchcraft, 1718, p130.

breaks such a pattern.[68] And an eminent high churchman, Henry Stebbing, wrote against Bragge in his The Case of the Hertfordshire Witch Considered, a work full of medical and psychological speculation on the subject.[69] A certain sort of urbane, progressive, and therefore whiggish, rhetoric was applied against belief in witchcraft; and the hottest high-church ideal of the confessional state could clearly find a place for the witch, both as symbol of traditionalism - nolumus leges Angliae mutari - and as the node where the enemy of God and the enemy of state and society coincided, the inversion of secular and religious values. Witchcraft was a religious crime arraigned in a civil court. In practice, the pamphlets on witchcraft cannot simply be lined up, for and against. Between Bragge's dogmatism and the Wagstaffian, and probably disreputable, disbelief of the physician who penned A Full Confutation, most works espoused varieties of Addisonian mitigated scepticism. Yet, whatever the technicalities of the arguments, the care taken to avoid Sadducism and irreligion, the force of the view peddled by these men was polite, urbane, whiggish, and very unTory.[70]

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[68]eg. Defoe himself, his teacher Morton, his leader Richard Baxter.

[69]Attribution by Francis Hutchinson op.cit. in his table of books published on the subject.

[70]See also Nicholas Rowe's play, The Tragedy of Jane Shore, 1713. A piece which is essentially about broken marriage vows, it could nevertheless hardly avoid topical relevance in choosing for its "heroine" Jane, the mistress of Edward IV, who had been accused of witchcraft by his misshapen brother upon his accession to the throne. The dedication intimates Rowe's leanings towards the whiggish

The paradoxes and confusions will not entirely disappear, nor will the exceptions and the special cases. In the same way, we have to come to terms with the hottest Tory being a closet deist and hell-raiser.[71] But it is important to our understanding of Defoe to realize that the rage of party and the Wenham case made witchcraft a touchy issue, if nothing more. We can clarify further by looking at another reaction to the dispute over witchcraft, a measured response, and one of many [72], to Collins's Discourse of Freethinking made by the eminent cleric and modern, Richard Bentley. His reply to Collins's book took him up on the

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ideology of politeness:

> the Foundation of all other Vertues, either Religious or Civil...[is] good Nature. Good Nature, which is Friendship between Man and Man, good Breeding in Courts, Charity in Religion, and the true Spring of all Beneficence in general.

Richard's "blasted, dry and wither'd arm" is attributed to Shore by the King, in what amounts to a diabolical piece of raison d'état. She has worked, he claims,

> By Force of potent Spells, of bloody Characters,
> And Conjurations horrible to hear.[p42]

This potent dramatic reminder that a false accusation of witchcraft could be used for heinous political ends, was compounded by an imaginative mise-en-scène which implicated priestcraft in this unjust proceeding:

> On either Side her march'd an ill look'd Priest,
> Who with severe, with horrid haggard Eyes,
> Did ever and anon by Turns upbraid her,
> And thunder in her trembling Ear Damnation.[p49]

[71]ie Bolingbroke.

[72]Other reactions to Collins's notorious book include Jonathan Swift's, Mr Collins's Discourse of Freethinking put into Plain English by way of Abstract for the use of the Poor, 1713; Hare's The Clergyman's Thanks to Phileleutherus, for his Remarks on the Late Discourse of Free-Thinking, 1713; and George Berkeley's essay in the Guardian, 39, for April 25th 1713, "THE PINEAL GLAND (continued)". See also his letter of January 26th 1713, reprinted in Works ed. A.A. Luce and T.E. Jessop, 1956, 9 vols., viii, p58.

issue, with a rebuttal of freethinking's claim to a victory, and a refusal to address the charge of renewed prosecution. Instead, he seeks to defend the progressive credentials of his own order:

> I do not think, any English priest will or need affirm in general, That there are now no real Instances of Sorcery or Witchcraft; especially while you have public Law (which They neither enacted nor procur'd,) declaring those practices to be Felony. But I must needs say, that while I sojourn'd among you, I observ'd fewer of the Clergy give in to particular Stories of that kind, than of the Commonalty or Gentry. In the dark times before the Reformation, not because they were Popish, but because Unlearn'd, any extraordinary Disease attended with odd Symptoms, Strange Ravings or Convulsions, absurd Eating or Egestion, was out of ignorance of Natural Powers ascribed to Diabolical. This Superstition was universal, from the Cottages to the very Courts; nor was it ingrafted by Priestcraft, but is implanted in Human Nature: no Nation is exempted from it; not our Author's Paradise of New Jersey, where no Priests have yet footing: and if the next Ages become unlearn'd, That Superstition will, I will not say return, but spring up anew. What then has lessen'd in England your stories of Sorceries? Not the growing Sect, but the Growth of Philosophy and Medicine. No thanks to Atheists, but to the Royal Society and College of Physicians; to the Boyles's and Newton's, the Sydenham's and Ratcliff's. When the People saw the Diseases, they had imputed to Witchcraft, quite cur'd by a course of Physic; they too were cur'd of their former Error: they learn'd Truth by the Event; not by a false position a priori, That there was neither Witch, Devil, nor God. And then as to the Frauds and Impostures in this way; they have most of them been detected by the Clergy; whom our Writer here wickedly libels as Complices and Parties in them. The two strongest Books I have read on this Subject were both written by Priests; the one by Dr Becker in Holland, and the other by a Dr. of your own, whose name I've forgot, that was afterwards Archbishop of York [ie. Samuel Harsnet].[73]

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[73]Phileleutherus Lipsiensis [Richard Bentley], Remarks upon a late Discourse of Free-Thinking, 1713, pp32-34.

This passage is notable in a number of respects. The theme of the triumph of natural philosophy over the superstitious belief in witchcraft is one taken up by Francis Hutchinson a few years later, and passed on into the historical tradition. The irony of the Boylean lecturer citing the hag-ridden Boyle as one reason for the decline in witchcraft belief may have been lost on Bentley. The passage starts out in a Hobbesian vein [74] - "you have public Law" and therefore no-one, least of all an English cleric, "will or need affirm in general, That there are now no real Instances of Sorcery or Witchcraft". Yet almost from the start, as with Addison, the belief in witches is undermined, at the same time as the clerical order are defended (something Addison also manages in his Spectator article.) Fewer of them "give in to these stories" - this has a hint of pressure applied, presumably by an ugly commonalty. There is also a typically Addisonian equivocation on the question of truth and evidence: "they learn'd Truth by the Event; not by a false position a priori." Here we are left not really knowing what the truth is, since one of the false a priori deductions is that "there was neither Witch, Devil, nor God". Does this mean that the inductive ascent has led us more justifiably towards such a conclusion ? And why does Bentley scorn witchcraft belief in its practical aspect, while appearing to associate beliefs in God, Devil and witch ? the ambiguity

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[74]Hobbes, A Dialogue of the Common Laws of England, 1681, p123. See the chapter on Hobbes above.

here is surely calculating. In his defence of the clergy, Bentley defends them against a radical writer who "wickedly libels [them] as Complices and Parties" in frauds and impostures. On either side, party divisions are polarizing opinion, and a body as studiedly impartial as Bentley's church is being made the tool of party dispute.

This is an interpretation which can be extended to the whole witchcraft issue in the period 1710-1714. By the time the "rage of party" came to an end, in 1714/15, with the advent of a more secure and stable party rule under the aegis of a new monarch, serious discourse about witchcraft had been tainted with its association with faction. The new era, or the attempts of its propagandists, are well set out by Addison in his play of 1715, The Drummer, which mocks witchcraft belief from a safely religious standpoint, and with all the old stereotypes. To start with, "these are Idle Stories to amuse the Country People". Addison reworks the analysis of his earlier work on witchcraft in a dramatic vein:

> Coachman: I have a poor Horse in the Stable that's bewitch'd - ...by Goody Crouch or Goody Flye ?
> Sir George [the master, impersonating a conjurer]: Neither
> Coachman: Then it must be Goody Gurton ! for she is the next oldest Woman in the Parish.

But Addison is careful to have my lady ask her foppish suitor, a theoretical sceptic and a practical coward, "Tho' you give no Credit to Stories of Apparitions, I hope you believe there such things as Spirits ! " Nevertheless the only real sorcery allowed in the play is that of the

beguiling Mrs Abigail who "has a bewitching Countenance".[75] It is in the prologue that Addison sums up the mood of the moment as regards party:

> If e'er you smile, 'tis at some Party Stroaks,
> Round-heads and Wooden-shooes are standing Jokes;
> The same Conceit gives Claps and Hisses Birth,
> You're grown such Politicians in your Mirth !
> For once we try (tho' 'tis, I own, unsafe)
> To please you All, and make both Parties laugh.

There is something a little teasing about this. It is obviously directed towards an audience which finds the excesses of party zeal absurd, if alarming, although Addison forces them to admit that all are implicated - save, of course, the author. It could only be by 1715 that witchcraft belief could be a safe target, one which could draw with humour the sting of party venom, and contribute to the civilizing process which eschews the legacies of civil war. Addison makes only one glancing reference to the former struggle over witchcraft, the knowing "we try (tho' 'tis, I own, unsafe)" which draws us all together against the barmy few who may still be lurking, or calls us to heed our better selves.[76] Defoe's contribution to the debate needs to be examined in the light of this process of transformation in which, as the balance of opinion swung with the realities of

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[75]cf Defoe Review Vol.III No 131, Nov 2 1706: "The black Devil in the Conscience...the fair Devil in the Mistress".

[76]Joseph Addison, The Drummer; Or, the Haunted House. A Comedy. As it is Acted at the Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane, by His Majesty's Servants. 1716. pp20,47,35,10 and prologue. Maybe one should point out that it was acted and advertised as by "His Majesty's Servants".

political power, witchcraft gained and lost relevance, was taken up and discarded in the arena of power.

III

Defoe's position in the 1720s was, as we shall see, Addisonian in appearance.[77] The early remarks on witchcraft in the Review, before those of 1711, seem open, in their avoidance of the contemporary issue, to Addisonian interpretation. Only one, oblique remark, seems to address the modern age, rather than the classical or biblical past:

> Poor Britain! How has thou been Hag-ridden, Priest-ridden, and Fool-ridden, till being quite jaded, and grown desperate, Nature taught thee to kick against Oppression, and throw off the Oppressors.

This is whiggish and progressive. It presents the history of the past century or so, seeing nature as the source of redemption through liberty and rights. This passage occurs in a thoroughly "Harleian" context, a Review issue of 1707 on party:

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[77]eg: "...as to the Real Black Art, or Dealing with the Devil by way of Compact, Intercourse, Witchcraft, and such like, we find so little of it left, that we have some reason to say 'tis quite out of Use, and we have heard very little of it in this Part of the World for many Years..." A System of Magick, p378. And, "That there have been such as these in the World,[ie. magicians] must be true, or History must be one universal Legend of Lies, and we must have been deluded and imposed upon by all the Writers and Register-keepers that ever have been, were, or are in Being...Now tho' I could bring many Examples among the Moderns...yet I must at present look a little higher, because I am resolved to bring such Evidence as cannot be denied." ibid. p54.

> O that we could have Justice done in every Complaint, without making it a Party-Quarrel !

Our original sentence had continued:

> ...and having obtain'd Liberty and the free Conduct of thy Self, now thou art to be Party-ridden, which in its Effect is worse than all of them.But this melancholy Subject runs me too far...

Poor Britain is as a horse reduced to the condition of a mere jade, ridden by hags, priests and fools, until it kicks, only to be remounted by party, dragging Defoe with it. Defoe wants to say that a true whiggism would eschew parties, as much as it has already eschewed the domination of priests, fools and hags. Here, then, "hag-ridden" can only mean haunted by visions of witches, by nightmares, by superstitions. Here is Butler in Hudibras:

> That makes them in the dark see visions,
> And hag themselves with apparitions,

and L'Estrange:

> How are superstitious men hagged out of their wits with the fancy of omens, tales, and visions !

both cited in Johnson's Dictionary. This interpretation seems to put the dissenter Defoe, pupil of the hag-ridden Morton, in the progressive Whig camp suggested by Professor Pocock and others; and to ally him with Mr Spectator and his sponsors.[78] This view is lent credence by Defoe's later remarks on the inverse relationship between superstition and politeness:

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[78]J.G.A. Pocock, "The Varieties of Whiggism from Exclusion to Reform" in his Virtue Commerce and History, Cambridge 1983. On Hudibras, see chapter 2. Review Sat. Nov. 1, 1707, IV Vol113, pp449-50.

> Has there not been a stranger Mixture of Magick and Witchcraft, not omitting Priestcraft, in all kinds of Religions ever since, and is it less among the Politer Religions now in Vogue, than it was in those Days ?[79]

Defoe seemed to endorse the Spectator, strangely enough, in an issue of the Review for October 1711, the very month of the unAddisonian witchcraft issue, some two and a half weeks before:

> There is not a Man in this Nation that pays a greater Veneration to the Writings of the inimitable Spectator, than the Author of the Review; and that not only for his Learning and Wit, but especially for his applying that Learning and Wit, to the true Ends for which they are given, viz The Establishing Vertue, in, and the Shameing Vice out of the World.

Perhaps this is a little too much. Whether it is or not, Defoe goes on to disagree with Addison's position in Spectator 181, touching "the Marriage of Children without the Consent of their Parents". Here the motto is typically polite, politely merciful:

> His lacrymis vitam damus, & miserescimus ultro.[80]

Mr Review "desire[s] the Favour of a Word on the other Side" and launches into a lesson on how to read the Bible, and how to reason from morality. The Bible may tell us to forgive, but uses the "Allegory of our Brother", implying that forgiveness is due only in relationships of equality and that

> ...the Disobedience of Children to Parents, like

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[79] System of Magick, p68.

[80] We give life with these tears, and feel pity of our own accord.

> that of Subjects to a Prince, remain[s] to be judicially Resented.

This is Defoe's, admittedly imperfect, judgment of "the Divinity of the Thing". As for the philosophy of it, reasoning is based on a consideration of the respective natures of God, an infinite, and man, a finite, being:

> ...there are Sins so great against Man, as may be out of his Power to forgive, because he is not Infinite.

Both Addison and Defoe place their remarks within a religious framework, but it is the latter who argues with closest attention to scripture. The Spectator article has a different notion of religious fundamentals, and stresses a closer analogy between the human and the divine:

> An obstinate, inflexible, unforgiving Temper, is odious upon all Occasions, but here it is unnatural...The Supreme Being, by the transcendent Excellency and Goodness of his Nature, extends his Mercy towards all his Works; and because his Creatures have not such a spontaneous Benevolence and Compassion towards those who are under their Care and Protection, he has implanted in them an Instinct, that supplies the Place of this inherent Goodness...more general and uncircumscribed than in Brutes.

It is "Hardness...of Heart" which Addison complains of; and he applied towards witches the same compassion, which overrode the demands of strict religion upon which Defoe insists. The Spectator was clearly on Defoe's mind when he wrote his witchcraft Review; the subsequent issue to that on parental consent contained the letter which elicited it.[81]

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[81]Spectator, No 181. Review Vol VIII, No 82 [329-331], Tues Oct 2, 1711. On the questions raised by the following paragraph see Furbank and Owens, Canonisation..., chapter 12, and J.A Downie's analysis of the ironic structure of

As a writer, Defoe was very much the ventriloquist, animating varied personae of his own invention - the Quaker addressing Benjamin Hoadly, the highflyer of the Shortest Way with the Dissenters, Moll, Roxana, among innumerable others - with no necessary authorial presence at the centre. Defoe stands very much outside the text. Conflicts in Defoe's writing cannot always be resolved; they are sometimes carefully manipulated to support a particular viewpoint. At other times, they spring from the exuberance of his pen, and the multivalency of his imagination (though this should never be mythologized into the topos of Defoe's "Protean" nature.) As a political pamphleteer, we may often feel that Defoe is the ventriloquist's dummy, paid to venture opinions which might or might not be his. He has been condemned as a mere hireling, despite recognition of his genius as compared to the other hacks of his generation. The evidence for this is there, of course, in Defoe's frequent changing of sides; but we should remember his fellow turncoats and their careers - Swift, Harley, St John and a host of others. He was no fair-weather friend, as The Secret History of the White Staff can demonstrate. We can be sure that Defoe shared his patron's aversion to the excesses of party. Having made his choice, however, Defoe had to follow his paymaster in the Review; he very deftly effected

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Defoe's most famous polemical work, which pays particular attention to the specific political occasions of the piece: "Defoe's Shortest Way with Dissenters: Irony, Intention and Reader-Response" in T.N. Corns (ed.), The Literature of Controversy, 1987.

the shift towards a peace policy between 1711 & 1713.[82] The function of the Review under Harleyite patronage was to harness the likes of Defoe, dissenting and other brands of Whig, to the Harleyite programme; to construct a coalition which could avoid excess:

> Tis my Opinion the Moderate Men of both Partyes are the Substantiall part of the Nation. They are its Refuge when the Men of Heat Carry Things too farr. These are the Men in whom alone the Govornment Can be Safely Lodg'd and when it is So No Men That are Lovers of Their Country Can be Uneasy.[83]

In seeking to appeal men of both parties and neither in 1711, to appropriate the middle ground, Defoe faced a different task from that he had in 1707. The years around 1707 were a time of increasing Whig ascendancy, culminating in the general election of 1708 which gave the party its largest majority since the 1688 revolution. Writing in 1711, Defoe saw a new equilibrium established by the Sacheverell trial, the reconstruction of the ministry, and a Tory landslide in the 1710 general election. The modish, progressive sentiments of 1707 are replaced by a sterner fundamentalism calculated to bridge the gap between Dissenter and traditionalist.

The chronology of the witchcraft piece in the Review is vital to this reading. It appeared after the Sacheverell trial, in the midst of the rage of party, a clear response to Addison's article; but before the furore surrounding the

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[82]See Downie, Robert Harley and the Press, chapter 6.

[83]See note 44 above.

Wenham trial - a very live subject in town, according to the Protestant Post-boy [84] - made witchcraft itself an uncomfortable issue. Before actually analyzing Defoe's essay, we should note the penumbra of interests that might have surrounded it. In October 1711, the witchcraft issue, such as it was, was considered safe, a means of constructing a community of opinion. The appeal was both to traditionalism and to a particular form of dissent, the tradition in which Defoe was educated. Witchcraft could establish the Review as a paper of a distinct character, to buttress its pro-government line. The Review could be seen as a plain-dealer which happened to back the ministry; the constellation of interests to which it appealed with such a stance is important. A belief in the ministry is compatible with Christian fundamentals, and therefore the ministry is religiously safe. Remarks in opposition newspapers make it clear that this was a necessary task. Thus the Medley in 1712:

> How long will ye be of Opinion that they can possibly intend to preserve your Religion, who have themselves none at all? Is not one half of their Hearts in the Conventicle, and the other over the Water, whilst the Poor Church of England has only what remains after this dividend.

A month or so later, the Flying-Post made the same point in a different way:

> ...one Thing the Examiner should not have forgot, which is, that no sooner a Tory dies than Abel

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[84] The Impossibility of Witchcraft, p1: "The Discourse of the Town having been very much taken up, for some Days past, with a trifling pamphlet..."

> [Roper] marks him down with all his good Qualities in his High-Church Calendar of Saints, as a Genuin Son of the Church; tho', perhaps, every Body else might think him as great an Atheist, as the Author of a Tale of a Tub.[85]

These gibes were made a few months after Defoe's article; but the very presence of St John in the ministry could feed suspicion of irreligion at the heart of government.

In the same month as the article, the transition towards peacemaking brought accusations of Defoe's being a tool of the ministry, a fact carefully concealed, up to then, by hack and patron. The former replied to his accuser, "I dismiss him with Dirt in his Face - Avoid Slanderer", and repeated the performance in the following number of the Review:

> ...I defie him to make it out, that I am under any Man's Direction.

To those who may have recognized the Review's true stable, despite its author's disavowals, the witchcraft essay could make a direct approach: the ministry countenances belief in witchcraft, and funds its propagandists. In seeking to understand what the government was doing, it is worth remembering Defoe's fleeting glimpse of a unified Christian community in the 1704 letter to Harley, and, some ten years later, Richard Boulton's conception of a broad church allying itself to witchcraft beliefs. "They that are not against us are on our Part...it is rather an additional

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[85] The Medley, Numb.XIV, Apr.14-18, 1712. The Flying=Post Numb. 3213, May 1-3, 1712. Obviously Tories had no monopoly on the church in danger theme.

confirmation of what we believe, since both we and they consent jointly to the same Sense of the Scriptures, which confirms both our Beliefs."[86] The shift postulated is one from witchcraft belief as political, but usefully so, low-key, not an issue in itself, bipartisan in potential; to witchcraft belief as a dangerous exemplar of religious fanaticism of the high-flying variety, an occasion for destabilizing, overheated political and religious debate, exactly the sort of thing Walpolean whigs wanted to avoid. The transformation was effected by the Wenham debate and is well illustrated by the Boulton-Hutchinson controversy. While Richard Boulton will "never blame any Party for their close Adherence to Scripture", the Francis Hutchinson complains that "these Doctrines have often been made Party-Causes". The Queen's open letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury in August 1711, had complained of the growth of heresy and profanity. Two months later, Defoe focused on a doctrine which could attain broader support than the often divisive calls for the defence of the Church made by Atterbury and the October Club.[87]

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[86] ...Vindication of a Compleat History of Magick..., 1722, pp117, 149. Boulton is referring to both dissenter and papists - see following chapter.

[87] Boulton, Vindication, pxii. Hutchinson, Historical Essay, p181.

IV

Defoe starts with two paragraphs strenuously denying the political relevance or, indeed, the importance of the subject he intends to deal with. A discussion of witchcraft is proposed as a "little interval...", "a Digression" from treatment "of the publick News, Treaties of Peace, Proposals, and Preliminaries" which have done and "are like to take me up a great deal of Time". This is somewhat disingenuous; but no doubt a pause from the peace issue was welcome both to reader and to an author taxed with the complexities of changing course while attempting to keep up the illusion of consistency. But he overplays his nonchalant tone:

> It is not so much for any Weight in the Question before me, that I enter upon a Decision of this kind of doubt...[88]

This claim sits uneasily with the discovery of the real opponent, namely,

> the Atheistical Use which many People make of this Difficulty, and which it is evident, they wish should be a Difficulty, by the Pains they take to make it so.

To the point:

> The Question is, whether there is any such Thing as a Witch?

The question is utterly direct, and in the present tense. Defoe goes on to make a series of standard claims. First,

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[88]For all the following, Review, Vol.VIII, Numb.90, Sat. Oct.20th,1711.

the argument from legal custom, in which he echoes Matthew Hale and countless others:

> ...it would be a very odd Thing that our Laws should Empower the Judges to Condemn, and the Civil Magistrates to put People to Death for Witchcraft, if there were no such Thing in the World.

Before continuing, he seeks to cut to the core of the debate by jettisoning what he had already castigated as "the Wilderness of Philosophy". He notes the interminable nature of the argument, the sallies and counter-sallies of "Glanvil, Webster, La Hontan[89], and others" and condemns their immersion in an over-sophisticated debate, "Reasoning against Foundations and Principles, confuting Demonstrations, and the like, which is a part of Logick I never was taught". His objections seem apt; he will escape the impasse by concentrating on definition, on Holy Writ, and on prescription:

1. What is understood by a WITCH?
2. What has the Scripture in it, towards the Proof of Witchcraft?
3. What Demonstrations are there of the Thing, in common Experience?

Defoe then cites the familiar texts from the Pentateuch and another from Chronicles. So, "the [very] Question must...set aside all Scripture Testimony; and this tends to abundant Atheism". Moving on from scriptural testimony, which can have no influence on those who "Ridicul[e]...all the Accounts of Things in the Holy Bible", the Review cites

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[89]See eg. Dialogues de monsieur le baron de Lahontan et d'un sauvage de l'Amerique, Paris 1704.

"Testimony, from the Mouths of those who have been Convicted of Witchcraft in all Ages, and have confess'd". The crimes of witches are the traditional ones:

> ...they have had a Familiar, or Personal Converse with the Devil, with whom they have enter'd into Hellish Compacts, Covenants, and Combinations, for the Hurt and Delusion of themselves and their Fellow-Creatures.[90]

Evidence is particularly to be found in the histories of England, New England and Scotland. All this, together with confessions from secondarily accused witches, and the belief of those who have heard the evidence, is considered demonstration accommodate to the fact, since no absolute demonstration is possible in "so dark a Marter [sic]".

Defoe's approach is utterly different here from that he followed in the occult works of the 1720s. "I am," he write, "only enquiring into the General," and therefore, he will not "fill this Paper full of a vast Variety of Stories...[which would] amuse and amaze the Reader". The occult works, in contrast, often allow a general argument to pass merely in order to permit the retelling of a good story. Defoe's final paragraph is absolutely firm, and thoroughly unambiguous:

> That there are, and ever have been such People in the World who converse Familiarly with the Devil, enter into Compact with him, both to hurt and deceive, and it is these that our Law and God's Law Condemn'd as such; and I think there can be no more Debate of the Matter.

The two poles of the argument, the two repositories of

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[90]Note the essential features - Devil, compact, and maleficium.

testimony, are Scripture and "the Records of Justice", a pairing redolent enough of some sort of confessional society, but far from the invocation of the sacerdotal and exclusive which Bragge's work represents. The essay represents a partial assimilation of what had happened since Sacheverell's conviction, but slanted in such a way as to appeal to the Review's typical reader. And if Bragge was later to dispute witchcraft in an alehouse with a dyer, Mr Review was "read most by cobblers and by porters", an indication, if from a hostile source, of how low in the social hierarchy the sheet penetrated.[91]

The central portion of the article focusses on scripture; this is vital to its appeal and purpose. Its citation of "common experience" is a broad reworking of the empiricism we see elsewhere in Defoe and in Morton. The term, Hobbesian in its philosophical reference, draws on the evidence of the senses and more - the common wisdom of mankind accumulated through the ages. If this cumulative process leads in some cases to technological and commercial advance, should we reject its conclusions on witchcraft? This may not be spelt out, but the hint is there, given Defoe's writings on progress in the Review and elsewhere.

The historian of Robert Harley's relations with the press has written that "it is true that at various times (in 1701,

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[91]The Impossibility of Witchcraft, pv: "The Dyer that confuted him at the Derby Alehouse in Ave Mary Lane, is the fittest Antagonist for him, as that is the most proper Place for such Whifflers, to hold disputes in." On the Review's audience, Ned Ward, Vulgus Britannicus, 1710, p120.

in 1708 and 1709, and from the end of 1710 onwards) it is difficult to distinguish tory propaganda from Harleyite propaganda".[92] Such a judgment can apply only in part to the Review. Certainly, a government-funded journal will in some ways propagate the government line. Yet, if the Review's role was "to state facts right", as Harley projected to Godolphin in 1702[93], its use of a quondam Whig to address a whiggish constituency - and as late as 1712, the Protestant Post-boy could include it among "we Protestants true blew" - called for all Defoe's resources of duplicity and impersonation.[94] On balance, this means acknowledging a shift in the balance of opinion towards reaction, away from whiggish secular progress, a shift which could be exploited in addressing the uncommitted fringe of Whig support, but which also recognized the eirenic purposes of witchcraft belief, the desire to appropriate it in the reconstruction of a viable cross-party coalition. In 1713, Defoe made manifest the political manoeuvring of a ministry which sought to remain above party:

> Nor...does it follow that because the ministry have employed, or joined with Jacobites in the publick affairs, that therefore they must have done it with a Jacobite principle.[95]

The ministry may have indirectly endorsed a belief, that in

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[92]Downie, Robert Harley and the Press, p4.

[93]BL Add MS 28055 f3, Harley to Godolphin, 9th August 1702

[94]Protestant Post-Boy, Numb. 101, Apr. 22-24 1712.

[95][Daniel Defoe], An Answer to a Question that Nobody Thinks of, viz. But what If the Queen Should Die ?, 1713, p1

witchcraft, but that does not necessarily mean they did so out of principle . And Defoe's own "beliefs" are not really the issue here. We have only the texts to go from. Given a pragmatic consideration of Defoe's own career, it seems to make more sense to try and find reasons for Defoe's change of course on this issue, rather than assuming that his volte face was an insincere piece of political skullduggery, the work of a paid agent. For, if someone was paying Defoe, we have to account for the beliefs the paymaster purchased, and if, in the end, we doubt the sincerity of those beliefs, we still have a basic problem to confront. Namely, why did a skilled journalist and propagandist like Defoe think that an endorsement of the belief in witchcraft would serve the interests of the government at such a juncture? The belief in witchcraft was obviously a live issue, open to manipulation, a political fact.[96]

None of this vitiated the satirical uses of the witchcraft theme which are given full rein in the Miscellanea appended to the issue in question:

> It cannot be amiss to hint a little to you, who are not Witches among us; and had I room here, I might be very merry with this Particular.

The merriness was let loose in the later occult works:

> What methods to take to know, who are Witches, I really know not; but on the other Side, I think there Variety of Methods to be used to know who are not...Gentlemen of this Age, who, by the Depth of their Politics, and the Height of their Elevations might be suspected...[but] none of

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[96]See once more the relevant chapters of Furbank and Owen, Canonisation...

> them are Conjurers...I expect they be no longer charg'd with, or so much suspect'd of having an unlawful Quantity of Wit.

Defoe's "non-witches" of 1711 are topical. "Parson Higgins is no Witch, in his new Conduct in Ireland, any more than he was in his Sermon at the Chappel Royal, that either he should think that Sermon would not be Resented by Her Majesty, at a Time when the Queen had just expres'd her Willingness, not to have those Points Debated among us - Or that the Bench of Justices would bear his bidding them have a care they did not provoke him so, as to make him forget he was a Clergy-Man, Anglicé, lay by his Gown and fight them." Higgins was the "Irish Sacheverell", notorious in London for his violent "church in danger" views, and his high-church extremism. In February 1707, he had preached at Whitehall Chapel, deploring the favour shown to heretics such as Toland, Asgill and Emlyn, and to Puritans and Presbyterians in general. He was arrested on a warrant from the secretary of state, and a Middlesex jury found a true bill against him for sedition. Nonetheless, the attorney-general decided not to proceed. Before his arrest, Archbishop Tenison had urged him to moderate his tone; in his obduracy, Higgins then published his sermon with a postscript giving a one-sided account of Tenison's intervention. In July, the Irish parliament directed the Dublin hangman to burn the offending text. His stubbornness continued, however, and in 1712 he was prosecuted as a "disloyal subject and disturber of the public peace". Defoe was firmly distancing himself, and his

support of the ministry and witchcraft belief, from the sort of high-church extremism which Higgins, "the son of pudding and eternal beef", represented.[97]

His other references include an ironic one to a mayor of Plymouth intruding "a Mad-Man into a vacant Church there, over the Bellies of the Corporation"[98], and one to the clergymen of Colchester who had refused a pulpit to a neighbouring cleric "a little more Moderate than they desired...".[99] These all seem to be condemnations of high-flying partisanship, a necessary balance to the witchcraft theme which sought to transcend such divisions. He ends by tying the satirical no witchcraft theme to his more usual concerns in the Review, the peace treaty, and faction:

> Our Modern Politicians too, who form Partition-Treaties, Clandestine Negotiations, and Articles of Peace for us, and talk of Things being Sign'd that were never thought of, make it appear that they are no Witches, and in the Case before them, know nothing at all of the Matter...

So much for those who had accused the ministry of backsliding and treachery. As for faction:

> We have abundance of People among the October-Men of this Age, who have given us full Proof of their not being at all Guilty of Witchcraft. Qua nunc prescribere longum est.

A rejection of the manoeuvrings of the hotter Tories, of the

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[97]See DNB under Higgins.

[98]Note that the prime attribute of the corporation is their bellies. The satire seems to be directed against secular interference in church affairs.

[99]This balances the previous example by attacking the vindictiveness of high-church clerics against their more moderate brethren.

criticisms of the Junto and their allies, and of high-church posturing, is neatly juxtaposed to the straightforward endorsement of belief in witchcraft. A balance is achieved, and the Harleian, old whig constituency for witchcraft belief is revealed. With his rhetoric, moreover, Defoe manages to have it both ways. For the tone of his Miscellanea is confusing; no witch seems to imply fool by the end, but at moments it is applied with greater irony. We can compare this with another passage in the later occult works, dealing again with the notion of no witch:

> It presently occurr'd to me that tho' Oracles were ceased, and we had now no more double Entendre in such a Degree as before, yet that ambiguous Answers were not at an End; and that whether those Negatives were meant so by the Writers, or not, [negatives such as "No Witch...No Conjurer] 'twas certain Custom led the Readers to conclude them to be Satyrs, that they were to be rung backward like the Bells when the Town's on fire; tho' in short, I durst not read them backward anywhere, but as speaking of foreign People, for fear of raising the Devil I am talking of.[100]

The Devil he talks of is party conflict in Anne's reign, party rule in the next. If "such an eminent Statesman and prime Minister" is "No Witch" he may be a fool. He may also be in league with the devil of party. We can apply the same sort of reading back to the Higginses and October men - deep in October ale and faction - in the Miscellanea.

The theme of magic was much employed in Tory and Harleian propaganda from 1708 on. In 1710 Swift's The Virtues of Sid Hamet the Magician's Rod compared Godolphin

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[100] Political History, p260.

to a conjurer. In a manuscript tract, Plain English to all who are Honest, or would be so if they knew how, Harley attacked the duumvirate, the Marlborough "family", and called on honest men to rouse themselves in the new Parliament:

> Be assured that as soon as they see you have purged out the opium you have taken, and begin to rouse yourselves, and act upon true principles, these heathen magicians will never stand before you.

This characterization of Marlborough and Godolphin was not chosen at random. The Harleyite pamphlet of 1708, An Account of a Dream at Harwich, took up the theme. The false alarm of invasion, symbolized by a fire, had

> ...recovered many from their blindness, and made them think of their danger...But presently I saw the old man of the hill [Godolphin] shake his stick, and these mounted up to him by several paths in a trice, kneeled down, received his blessing, and swore they would never see or hear again while he lived.

The atmosphere is diabolical, with the vision of the Duchess of Marlborough: "hair...frizzled[,]...garment...stained with tears and blood...She cast her eyes often with rage and fury on that bright appearance I have described, over whom having no force, she tossed her head with disdain, and glared about on her votaries, till we saw several possessed with her."(My emphasis). Quotation from the books of Revelation and Daniel lend the work an apocalyptic air which pushes it beyond the mere satirical. Political enchantment is assimilated to conjuring, to juggling and legerdemain, but also to supernatural enchantment, which becomes, in Defoe's Review,

a matter for both serious endorsement and elusive satire.[101]

The apocalyptic imagery of the Dream is highly charged; so too was the language of the Wenham dispute, Bragge pitting "frothy Libertines" against "the Grave, the Wise, and the Learned in all Ages".[102] Defoe's works after 1711 show a withdrawal from a belief in supernatural enchantment, from hard-line witchcraft belief, leaving behind the satirical uses stripped of their danger. The occult works of the 1720s also offer an interpretation of this process. The devil has no need for witches now - he sits in councils of state themselves, courtesy of the reign of party. The devil is "this great Manager". In 1726, Defoe saw "devilish politics" in the court Whig line against Dissent. The Political History of the Devil was advertised as a survey of "the influence the Devil had in the politics of mankind":

> t'would be hard to prove that there is or has been one Council of State...down to the year 1713 (we don't pretend to come nearer home) where the Devil by himself, or his agents in one shape or another, has not sat as a Member if not taken the Chair.

As before, ring the bells backward, invert the patent meaning, and we have the proper satirical sense. If we "don't find our Houses disturb'd as they used to be...that Children don't vomit crooked Pins and rusty stub nails" it

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[101]See Addison's remark in Spectator 131 in July 1711: "The Country People seem to suspect me for a Conjurer..." The quotations are cited from Downie, Robert Harley and the Press, chapter 5.

[102]A Defense of the Proceedings against Jane Wenham, 1712.

is because the Devil acts "immediately...by a magnificent Transformation". This method "is really very modern"[103]; the System of Magick, in offering us some consolation, reminds us where the deceiver has gone:

> It is impossible to close this Article of the Magicians Power being limited, without an agreeable Reflection upon the modern Furies of our Age, your Party Leaders, and Politick Scheme-Makers; what merry work they would make in the World, if the Devil, their Head Engineer, was not limited, and not in Condition to trust them with the Power of doing Mischief as they desire it.[104]

Under the party régime, the Devil had no need for witchcraft. The brief respite from party dominance 1710-1714 - for this is how Defoe, however implausibly and with partisan intent, interpreted those years - provided the last opportunity for witchcraft belief as an ideological expression of that régime. But instead, "having obtain'd Liberty and the free Conduct of thy Self", Britain is now to be "Party-ridden", a prey to new stratagems. It was to be William Hogarth who invented the new images of depravity.[105]

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[103]Political History, pp353,227,388,389.

[104]A System of Magick, p216.

[105]For Defoe's version of history, see [Daniel Defoe], The Secret History of the October Club, second edition, 1711. Here he is on the banding together of the old Whigs and the hotter Tories: "It might be ask'd, whether made the first Motion towards any Union between these Two ? And that Enquiry might be answer'd thus; that being mutually Male-content for the same Reasons, and at the same Persons, the nature of the thing, without the help of the Devil, tho' we shall not injure Satan so much, as to exclude him wholly from his just share in the work, seem'd naturally to bring them together." The October Club is "this black Divan". St John is depicted as a dangerous monster: "he seldom stirs from the HOUSE, but walks about much by Moon-light, talks to the Stars, calls frequently upon the Devil, and beats the

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Heels of his Shoes off against the ground: If he goes to the Coffee-House, they hide the Votes and Minutes from him immediately; for he never reads them, but he fastens his Teeth upon them, and gnaws them in pieces with the oddest Convulsions and Distortions in his face imaginable." The association with the diabolical is persistent. On Harley's management of government, and in particular of the Tories who brought him to power: "... the Managers who made meer Tools of those People, had no more mind to set them up with all their mad Principles in the Administration, than they had to continue the Whigs in the Ministry; nor had they any real View of Destroying the Whigs as a party; but having a necessity to put a High-Flying Face upon their first Management, to Ballance the Whigs who were as mad as other Men in their Turn, and who had gotten the Power in their hands."[pp 14,32,42,50]. By 1711, Defoe did not regard witchcraft as a "mad Principle". Subsequent to the Wenham case, it had become one.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE BOULTON-HUTCHINSON CONTROVERSY

As an embarrassingly late defender of both belief in witches and their prosecution, Richard Boulton has been marginalized. If mentioned at all, he is usually dismissed as an eccentric; his two books on witchcraft have been elided by one historian so as to give Francis Hutchinson's Historical Essay concerning Witchcraft the last real say. Sometimes he is forgotten all together, and Hutchinson's motivation is grounded solely in the Wenham controversy, the occasion for that flurry of pamphlets in 1712. Yet, the recovery of Boulton's "lost" texts, however tedious or repellent they may be, can help us to recover the polemical context of Hutchinson's work, and the intellectual background to the 1736 repeal of the Jacobean witchcraft legislation.[1]

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[1]For the marginalization of Boulton see, eg: Wallace Notestein, A History of Witchcraft in England from 1558 to 1718, Washington 1911:

> Richard Boulton...published...in 1715, A Compleat History of Magick. It was a book thrown together in a haphazard way from earlier authors, and was written rather to sell than to convince. Seven years later a second edition was brought out, in which the writer inserted an answer to Hutchinson.[p340].

R.H. Robbins, The Encyclopaedia of Witchcraft and Demonology, New York 1959 is similarly dismissive. Keith Thomas in Religion and the Decline of Magic notes the occasion of Hutchinson's book:

> Francis Hutchinson, the future Bishop of Down, whose Historical Essay concerning Witchcraft (1718) was precipitated by the condemnation and subsequent reprieve in 1712 of...Jane Wenham.[p689]

We know very little about Boulton. A physician, he studied at Brasenose College, Oxford, in the 1690s. Early in his career, he sought John Locke's patronage in connection with a college scholarship, which he failed to secure.[2] He also sent letters to Hans Sloane[3], complaining of hardship, looking for support. In an early publication, he disputed with Charles Leigh over the heat of the blood and action of the lungs. In 1698, he was employed by Charles Goodall of the College of Physicians to attack opponents of the college - John Colbatch, Johannes Groenvelt and the pseudonymous Lysiponius Celer. Goodall promised, in return, to advance Boulton's medical career in London. These promises were not fulfilled, and feeling betrayed by Goodall, the young graduate took his complaints to the public, in an open letter. The work on Colbatch, glances at matters which were later to confer a certain notoriety upon Boulton:

But it was publication, rather than composition, that was brought forward by the Wenham case, as we shall see. Notestein's coverage of the witchcraft issue ends, of course, in the very year in which Hutchinson published:

> Hutchinson's work was the last chapter in the witch controversy. There was nothing more to say. [p343]

This is Notestein's last sentence; history came to a full. Subsequent historians have taken him at his word.

[2]The scholarship in question was the Mordaunt scholarship. Boulton did subsequently obtain a Frankland scholarship on 25th May 1698.

[3]Physician, 1660-1753. Knew Boyle, John Ray and Thomas Sydenham. Secretary of Royal Society 1693-1712. Revived the Philosophical Transactions. Important work in natural history. President of Royal Society, 1727-41. Consulted as physician by Queen Anne; but a Whig, who in 1727 became first physician to George II.

> But the wonderful Discoveries of this Mr Colbatch are not a little to be Admired ! For he is the first Man that ever perceived the Devil to appear in the shape of the Gout; I heard indeed when I was a Boy, that the Devil was to be distinguished from a Man by a great Cloven Foot, but I could never have thought that Mr Colbatch would have compared his Gouty Patients, to so many Devils, except he Dream't he was a Physician to such, before he wrote this Page in his book.[4]

Boundaries between the natural and the supernatural are being defined, and Boulton wants to locate the physician, and the problem of gout, very firmly on one side of that frontier. Colbatch's problem, as far as Boulton is concerned, is that he gives up the search for natural explanation too soon.[5] Boulton's later work on witchcraft had a similar range of concern, religious and professional, to the define the limits of the supernatural. In 1714 he published further medical treatises, more sober in tone, on gout, scrofula, venereal disease, and fevers in general.

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[4]John Locke, Correspondence, ed. de Beer, Oxford 1976-, vi, pp375-6, 384-5, April 19 and May 3 respectively. In letter 2421, Boulton feels himself "Obliged to You for Your Last Favours...[who] with (Universal) Applause appeared in a Controversy, where the Name of Your Adversary, was enough to raise the Common Cry of some Men in Opposition to Truth". Richard Boulton, Treatise concerning the Heat of the Blood, 1698, and see [Charles Leigh], Remarks on Mr Richard Bolton's [sic] piece concerning the Heat of the Blood, Manchester 1698. BL Sloane MS 4058 ff. 47-49
Richard Boulton, A Letter to Dr Charles Goodall, 1698, and on this dispute see Harold J. Cook, The Decline of the Old Medical Regime in London, Cornell 1986, chapter 6. Richard Boulton, An Examination of Mr John Colbatch his Books, 1698, p159.

[5]On this central function of demonology,the defining of boundaries, see Stuart Clark, "The Scientific Status of Demonology", in ed. Brian Vickers, Occult and Scientific Mentalities in the Renaissance, Cambridge 1985.

These were dedicated to Sir Richard Blackmore.[6] Only a year later, his first work on witchraft appeared, in two volumes - A Compleat History of Magick, Sorcery, and Witchcraft. This was the work to which Francis Hutchinson largely addressed himself in his Historical Essay of 1718.[7]

Boulton's scientific affiliations were diverse. When in financial difficulties he wrote a potboiling epitome of Robert Boyle's philosophical writings.[8] Elsewhere he talked of "the Rules of Mechanical Operations in a Human Body", and of a desire to give a "Rational Account of...Distempers".[9] This progressive language, and the violent ridicule he directed against Leigh and Colbatch, seems to have

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[6]Richard Boulton, Physico-Chyrurgical Treatises..., 1714 [individual treatises with title-pages dated 1713]. Blackmore was physician-in-ordinary to William III and Anne. Publications include: Satyr against wit [1700], an attack on fashionable irreligion; Creation; a philosophical Poem demonstrating the Existence and Providence of God [1712]; Just Prejudices against the Arian Hypothesis [1721]; Discourses on the Gout, Rheumatism and King's Evil [1726]. See DNB.

[7]idem, A Compleat History of Magick, Sorcery, and Witchcraft, 1715; Francis Hutchinson, An Historical Essay Concerning Witchcraft. With Observations upon Matters of Fact; tending to clear the Texts of the Sacred Scriptures, and confute the vulgar Errors about that Point. And also two sermons: One in Proof of the Christian Religion; The other concerning the Good and Evil Angels, 1718.

[8]Richard Boulton, The Works of the Honourable Robert Boyle, Esq. Epitomiz'd, 4 vols., 1699. See also The Theological Works of the Honourable Robert Boyle, Esq; Epitomiz'd in Three Volumes, 1715, by "Richard Boulton...who Epitomiz'd his Philosophical Works".

[9]Physico-Chyrurgical Treatises..., preface

embellished an essentially humoral pathology.[10] Nevertheless, Boulton is a clear exemplar of the Boylean tradition, with his interest in mechanical philosophy, some version of the argument from design, and a belief in witchcraft. That belief had to be grounded in histories; Hutchinson's "historical essay" is something very different, an exercise in history as rational reconstruction.[11]

Boulton's political sympathies were almost certainly Whiggish.[12] The appeal to John Locke is one indication. The patronage of Sir Richard Blackmore, royal physician and poet, another. The timing of Boulton's Physico-Chyrurgical Treatises of the Gout, the King-Evil and the Lues Venera is striking. On the 29th August 1714, James Stuart had issued a protest from Lorraine upon the adoption of George of Hanover as king. On the 15th September, a reward was offered to anyone who might arrest James on British soil. On the 18th, George landed in England, ignoring Tories, and snubbing Scots nobles. On the 15th October, James

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[10]See, for instance, the sections on pp26-27: "Melancholy Constitutions most subject to this Distemper [gout]...How a Natural propensity confirms ill Humours accidentally acquired". In traditional Galenic physiology, natural diseases came from inside; witchcraft visited affliction from without the body. See Ronald C. Sawyer, " 'Strangely Handled In All Her Lyms': Witchcraft and Healing in Jacobean England", Journal of Social History, xxii, no.3, 1989.

[11]On this concept, see Imre Lakatos, The Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes, Cambridge 1978, pp102-138.

[12]Although Brasenose was in this period and subsequently a Tory hot-bed. See Richard Lodge, Brasenose Quatercentenary Monographs, 3 vols., Oxford 1909, ii, XII, p22.

complained:

> We have beheld a Foreign Family, Aliens to our Country, distant in Blood and strangers even to our Language, ascend the throne.

On 1st December, the first rumblings of overt Jacobite rebellion - James III was proclaimed in Devonshire. It was within the context of such a crisis, the battle between sacred legitimacy and what became providentially endorsed reality, that Boulton's book was published, with passages like this:

> Indeed in the GOUT and KINGS-EVIL several have pretended to mighty Secrets, and have boasted so much of their Arcana, that one would wonder how they should find out such Secrets; since they give so little Reason could be likely to discover what they pretend [my emphasis] to; And I am apt to think, that their design is to amuse and impos upon the World, rather than propose any advantage to the Publick; when they pretend [my emphasis] to do that which they are not willing to make Publick, and think it unable to stand the Test and Judgment of the Learned.[13]

The hints are irresistible: Boulton wants "to avoid the Censure and Scandal of Pretenders". It was, indeed, the Stuart kings who, maintaining the claim to thaumaturgic efficacy, "boasted so much of their Arcana". By publishing, at this delicate time, a work which sought a rational account of the origin, increase, progress, symptoms and "Methods of Cure, different from what hath been hitherto proposed" of the king's evil, Boulton was making a

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[13]J.C.M. Baynes, The Jacobite Rising, 1970, p18; Physico-Chyrurgical Treatises..., preface.

political statement.[14] Queen Anne had renewed touching for scrofula - the infant Samuel Johnson was one of the last "patients" - and Boulton's failure even to mention the royal road to recovery from this disfiguring disease is notable. As a defender of witch beliefs and a desire for vigorous prosecution and watchfulness, Boulton does not easily conform to the Tory stereotype represented by Francis Bragge, or the Whigs' notional backwoodsman.

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[14]ibid. On touching see Raymond Crawfurd, The King's Evil, Oxford 1911, esp. pp. 138-161. Whiggish opposition to the practice, and its association with high-sacral, and Stuart, monarchy is very clear. See, for example, Blackmore's preface to his Treatise on the King's Evil, 1735:

> It is a mark of great wisdom in King William of glorious memory and his present Majesty [George II], that conscious of the Vanity of this Power of healing the Evil pretended to be annex'd to the Crown, they never regarded or practised that superstitious and insignificant ceremony.

According to Crawfurd [p144], "At the instance of Harley, the Privy Council determined to issue proclamations, stating when the Queen would perform the miracle". Compare this manipulation of the supernatural by Harley with that other which we discuss in the chapter on Defoe. This is a matter on which Boulton clearly differed with his hero, Boyle, who had not abolished the royal power but, as it were, democratised it by extending it to an Irish "stroker", in his Brief Account of Mr Valentine Greatrak's, 1666. In William's reign, "with the reigning king showing open disdain...medical men began to publish their reasoned scepticism". [Crawfurd p140] James II touched for scrofula on his return to Scotland in the course of the '15.
On Jacobite physicians see Bruce Lenman, "Physicians and Politics in the Jacobite Era" in E. Cruickshanks and J. Black, eds., The Jacobite Challenge, Edinburgh 1988; idem, The Jacobite Risings in Britain 1689-1746, 1980, chapter 5.
The word pretender is usefully employed by Burnet in a passage cited in the OED, under pretender, c.[Burnet, Own Time, 1734, ii, p503; ante 1715 usage]:

> She [Queen Anne] also fixed a new Designation on the Pretended Prince of Wales, and called him the Pretender; he was so called in a new Set of Addresses...upon this occasion...made to the Queen.

The Compleat History follows Glanvill in relating histories, citing only authenticated accounts. Imposture is largely ignored, and the approach is reminiscent, both in prolixity and one-sided presentation, of the experimental reporting of Robert Boyle, as well as the work of Glanvill himself, Richard Baxter, Henry More, and Richard Bovet.[15] The prominent citation of Locke is tantalizing [see appendix to this chapter]. The title page promises "a Judgment concerning Spirits, by the late Learned Mr JOHN LOCKE", and provides it in the form of an excerpt from the Essay concerning Human Understanding, reproduced in the preface. Boulton's deployment of Locke's arguments on the unknowable nature of material and spiritual substance alike, is unusual. More Lockean influences are to be found in Boulton's reply to Hutchinson, his Vindication of 1722.[16]

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[15]Richard Baxter, The Certainty of the Worlds of Spirits, 1691; Richard Bovet, Pandaemonium, or The devil's cloyster, 1684; Joseph Glanvill, Saducismus Triumphatus: Or Full and Plain Evidence Concerning Witches and Apparitions. In Two Parts. The First treating of their Possibility; The Second of their Real Existence...The Advantages whereof above the former, the Reader may understand out of Dr H. More's Account prefixed thereunto, 1689. See Simon Schaffer and Steven Shapin, Leviathan and the Air-Pump, Princeton 1986, chapter 2.

[16]Eg. The Possibility and Reality of Magick, Sorcery, and Witchcraft, demonstrated. OR, A Vindication of a Compleat History of Magick..., 1722 [Vindication], part II, chapters I and II.Perhaps Boulton is seeking to rehabilitate Locke's dangerous epistemology, rather than endorse his own pneumatology. On the alternative dangers of materialism implicit in Locke's epistemology, see John Yolton, Thinking Matter, Oxford 1986, chapter 2. On the fear and forms of heterodoxy see: Clark, English Society, pp. 279-289. On Locke's reputation in particular, see Nicholas Jolly, Leibniz and Locke, Oxford 1984, chapter 2. Locke's text is ambiguous enough to provide resources for all. See appendix

Francis Hutchinson, a graduate of Catherine Hall, Cambridge and doctor of divinity, was vicar of St James's, Bury St Edmunds, site of the famous Hale witch trial, from 1692; chaplain to the king from 1715; and bishop of Down and Connor, in Ireland, from 1721. He was a correspondent of Hans Sloane's over a long period, and their letters provide vital clues about the origin and gestation period of Hutchinson's magnum opus, allowing us to correct the account given by Notestein, Thomas and others. In a letter of 1706, sent from St Edmundsbury, Hutchinson refers to certain papers which Sir Hans has read through. Dubourdieu - French minister at the Savoy - had expressed of these "his own good opinion, so he told me they had your [Sloane's] Approbation, & he believed the Publication would be of service to the World". Since others had expressed similarly encouraging opinions, Hutchinson had decided to send the work to Rogers, a bookseller:

> But I happened to send them up by one who went directly to ye Bishop of Norwich [John Moore] & being deep in the other Notions I am apt to think he represented it with no favourable Character.[17]

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to this chapter, and eg., John Locke, "An Essay Concerning Human Understanding" in Works, 1885, i p425 section 5, p436 section 18, p432 section 13. See also, Roland Hall, "The Concept of 'Spirit' in Locke's 'Essay'" in Locke Newsletter, no. 17, 1986. Locke was sometimes willing to engage in "angelology". We can compare this with Descartes's use of demonology - the "malin génie" in his first Meditation - or with Ockham, who had used angels to illustrate a problem in modal logic.

[17]Note the ambiguity - was the go-between, or John Moore, "deep in the other Notions" ? We have no other evidence of Moore's adherence to witchcraft beliefs, either from his sermons, published in large numbers, or his

> For the Effect was that by letter I was advised to stop the Press till the Archbishop[18] had had the perusal of them.

The archbishop's answer was a piece of studied evasion.[19]

Hutchinson sought a rationale for this piece of censorship:

> Perhaps when the Scotch union is settled the Season may be more proper. I am sure it will be most needfull to guard against those kind of notions that one [?] may have the benefit of their strength & assistance without the influence of their superst[it]ions. Our people are very apt to receive these strong impressions.

Hutchinson goes on to ask Sloane's advice as to "what must be done to prepare its way...For till that restraint be taken off I must by no means venture it, neither dare I do any thing towards the removing of it." [my emphasis][20]

The use of the word "superst[it]ions" already suggests that the papers related to Hutchinson's work on witchcraft, as does the notion of "Service to the World", which is something Hutchinson certainly saw himself as performing in the Historical Essay.[21] Also, of course, witchcraft was very

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biography. See DNB and John Moore, Sermons on several Subjects, [ed. S. Clarke], 2 vols., 1715,16.

[18]Thomas Tenison, 1636-1715. For his view on witchcraft see his The Creed of Mr Hobbes Examined, 1670, pp62-3:

> ...such, as publickly deny Witch-craft, are sawcy affronters of the Law... [p62]

Also see discussion of Hobbes above.

[19]"...the Answer that I had through his [the messenger's] hand was that the Archbishop was not for the printing of them or not for printing them yet [,] I could not well tell which he meant."

[20]BL Sloane MS 4040, f.302, Feb.4th 1706

[21]It is true that in 1708, he was to mount an attack on Dubourdieu's enemies, the French prophets, and upon enthusiasm in all its guises; but in this pamphlet

much a Scottish malady. This identification is clinched by a letter of 1712 to Sloane, in which Hutchinson mentions that he, Sloane, "had some time since the trouble of perusing some historical Collections & Observations I had made upon this Subject, & I have them by me with some little improvement since you last saw them". The subject was witchcraft, and the letter concerned the Wenham case.[22] Hutchinson had brushed up the papers he had sent in 1706, and wanted Sloane's views on the possibility of publication again. It is clear that as late as 1706, an attack upon witchcraft beliefs and prosecution was worrying for the church establishment, especially in view of the sensitive negotiations towards union with a patently hag-ridden Scotland seething with touchy Calvinists and anxious congregations.[23] Hutchinson cannot "dare", he "must by no means venture" publication. In 1712 he is still worried, remarking that he "would not be unwilling to venture any such censures as I should meet with from some", he will "submit all to your [Sloane's] prudence & judgment, & will either send my papers up or forbear according as you

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enthusiasm is not explicitly referred to as a superstition, and the work had a local and occasional purpose not consonant with the more ambitious aim of serving the world. It was nothing so grand, nor was it a work of notable scholarshi

[22]BL Sloane MS 4043 f38, April 3rd 1712.

[23]On the chronology of witchcraft in Scotland, and the relation of witchcraft theory to Anglo-Scottish relations, see the chapter above. The main threats of force against the 1707 act of union came from Jacobites and extreme presbyterians. The Pittenweem incident had occurred in 1704; seven witches of Renfrew were burnt in 1697 [see above].

advise". So much for fearless rationalism. And the possibility of "censures" can only confirm our conclusion that witchcraft theory was not dead in 1712.

Chaplain to the king a few years later, Hutchinson seems to have played his hand well. Hutchinson relieved the literary itch in other ways; the Union that had scuppered his book received a fulsome tribute from one of his sermons, published on the anniversary of that happy event.[24] A letter to Arthur Charlett, master of University College, Oxford, affords more evidence of Hutchinson's immersion in politics, while hinting at possible alienation, or at least, fears of it. Perhaps even as late as 1718, the Historical Essay remained something of an embarrassment to the powers that be, a perceived block to Hutchinson's advancement ? After discussing a projected second edition of the great work, Hutchinson adds:

> I shall be where the Court is the first part of the Month, but I doubt I shall prove such a Courtier as you was. For my Friends are turnd out to grass, & I am afraid I shall have reason to wish my self with them.[25]

Hutchinson's association with Dubourdieu and interest in the restraint of enthusiasm were probable motives for his intervention in the debate over the French prophets in 1708, in his Short View of the Pretended Spirit of Prophecy Taken

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[24]Francis Hutchinson, A Sermon preached...May 1st 1707, being the Day of thanksgiving for the Union of England and Scotland, 1708.

[25]Bodleian MS Ballard 38, f.27, July 17th 1718. Hutchinson nevertheless won promotion to his Irish bishopric.

from its First Rise in the Year 1688, to its Present State among us. Together with some Observations upon their Doctrines and pretended Miracles. And Examples of such like Delusions in the World".[26] Here he shows a clear concern to restrict and define the miraculous. The claims of the Camisards, he declared, "want...good proof". We have no "Credible Witnesses", only "very bad Men". The problem is one of public disturbance, of public order (and compare this to Chief Justice Holt's similar worries about order, as much in witchcraft trials, as in relation to the "sedition" of the Camisards). Authority is lacking. For "tho' God hath many times wrought even Supernatural Blessings and Judgments; yet I believe these Men themselves cannot name One Commissioned Prophet".[27] Hutchinson followed the practice of many of the anti-sectarians by redefining enthusiasm as madness:

> ...To me that Imagination of his appears as plain a touch of Madness as any of the Follies of Bedlam.

Or again,

> The way of Life and Worship that these People used, shewed plainly, that they were fallen into a religious Frenzy, which made the House like a Spiritual Bedlam.[28]

Hutchinson, fulminated against fundamentalism too, and

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[26]On the French Prophets and the Camisards, see Hillel Schwartz's The French Prophets, California 1981, p88 and note.

[27]Francis Hutchinson, A Short View of the Pretended Spirit of Prophecy..., 1708, pp14-15

[28]ibid., pp13,45

would "not suppose that God himself spake all the Parts of the Holy Scriptures...as much as he did the Ten Commandments from Mount Sinai". This is a significantly anti-puritan position.

All these aspects reemerge in Hutchinson's work on witchcraft, and, mentioning Dr Dee in this earlier work, he repeats Casaubon's trick, assimilating sorcery and enthusiasm.[29] The overriding concern is to contest dangerous doctrines via the notion of public hygiene, the bandying around of images of health and disease. In his concern for authority and order as the attendants of rationality, Hutchinson is a precursor of Lalande who, in the Encyclopédie defined superstition as "...un culte de religion, faux, mal dirigé, contraire à la raison & aux faines idées qu'on doit avoir de l'être suprème".[30] The desire was to replace superstition and its terrors with something akin to Kant's "sublime". Purpose and a place in the divine economy were the vaunted engines of this reformation of public manners. Although for Kant, the sublime was the prerogative of elite culture and its surest token, predecessors like Hutchinson sought to tame the vulgar by offering them a version of sublimity. Thus his

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[29]ibid., pp42, 39-40. Meric Casaubon, A True and Faithful Relation of what passed for many yeers between Dr John Dee...and some Spirits..., 1659, preface

[30]Encyclopédie, 17 vols., Paris 1751-77, xv, p669. Cf E.Chambers, Cyclopaedia: Or an Universal Dictionary of Arts and Sciences, 4 vols., iv, "superstition", 1783:

> extravagant devotion, or religion wrongly directed, or conducted. [my emphasis]

letter of 1723 to Sloane, written from Ireland, which shows a shrewd grasp of the social uses of natural philosophy, and of its religious functions:

> ...I have perswaded a Popish Priest [compare this with Hutchinson's theoretical objections to Popery] & a Curate of my own Diocese to translate an Almanak with the Common Names of Sts, Day & Months etc in both Languages [English and Gaelic] & at ye End there is examples of Receipts, General Discharges, Notes for Money carrying Interest, & a short Form of a Will. And to tempt [my emphasis] both them and our own People to buy & look into it & see how easily it may be learnt I have contracted into one folding Leaf Leadbeaters[31] Calculation of Eclipses for ye years ensuing till 1740. And as a farther curiosity I have a great Mind to add to it the Appearances which the great Eclipse of the Sun will make at Dublin and Lisburn on the next 11th of May.

Hutchinson wrote asking for astronomical data. He was anxious to "know the Certainty of that Point", to make, as it were, philosophical prophecies. "If one cou[l]d open their Minds a little in Civil things", he writes, "it might perhaps help them to judg better in Religious."[32] Another aim, as he put it in a later letter thanking Sloane, was to "bring the Roman Character into use by degrees, and that helping in Common knowledg will help them better in judging of Religion".[33]

In the work on enthusiasm, the bemoaning of "disorderly behaviour" and of the lack of a "Commissioned Prophet",

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[31]Charles Leadbeater, astronomer, flourished 1728, wrote eg.: Treatise of Eclipses, 1727. See DNB.

[32]BL Sloane MS 4047 f67, October 12th 1723. Cf. discussion below of Hutchinson's type of rational religion.

[33]ibid., f.110

ties in with the need for "a settled order of teachers...furnished with Learning and such degrees of Knowledge as we can attain to".[34] These should teach "Piety, Virtue, and humble Submission to Government". Going a stage further they can be thought of as forerunners of Lambert's "authorized prophets", the astronomers of his Cosmological Letters of 1761.[35]

Further insight into aspects of Hutchinson's religious and political views may be gathered from his biography of Archbishop Tillotson, published in 1717, and "compiled from the Minutes of the reverend Mr Young, late Dean of Salisbury".[36] A defence of Tillotson, which is the primary aim of the work, suggests a particular, if widespread, attitude to "revolution principles", for it was he who had agreed, albeit reluctantly, to replace the non-juring Sancroft after his suspension from the primacy. His writings

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[34]Hutchinson, A Short View, p39

[35]J.H. Lambert, Cosmological Letters, 1761, ed. S.L. Jaki, Edinburgh 1976, p63. On comets and prophecy see Simon Schaffer, "Newton's Comets and the Transformation of Astrology" in ed. P.Curry, Astrology, science and society, historical essays, Woodbridge 1987.
In Hutchinson's sermon on angels, appended to the Historical Essay, angelology is harnessed to authority in just the same way. A belief in spirits, purged of disruptive elements and Manichaean superstition, can safely be used in the interests of government:

> There is a farther Lesson to be learnt from what the holy Writers teach us concerning good and evil Spirits, and that is, Unity under Government...the Bonds of Order that are needful to preserve the State.

[36]F.H[utchinson], The Life of the Most Reverend Father in GOD, John Tillotson, 1717

and sermons, moreover, must have been a model for Hutchinson. The Rule of Faith of 1666 deployed arguments against transubstantiation echoed in Hume's dialectic of testimony and experience. A sermon before Queen Mary, in March 1690, raised a storm. While maintaining the reality of the doctrine of hell, and underlining the moral uses of deterrence, Tillotson nonetheless cast doubt upon the eternity of hell torments. He was accused of undermining the foundations of orthodoxy to ease the scruples of his conscience-stricken queen.[37] In that very sermon, we can detect a precarious balance, similar to that attempted in Hutchinson's Historical Essay, which denied the reality of witchcraft, while asserting the existence of spirits. Indeed, in the biography, Hutchinson directly addressed William Lupton's[38] attack on Tillotson's hell-fire teaching:

> ...he [Lupton] ought particularly to have shown that the Scripture was to be taken litterally here, tho' not in other Places, and given irrefragable Arguments to prove why it should be so. He should have shown, that for ever,

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[37]On Tillotson see the entry in DNB and E.G. Rupp, Religion in England, 1688-1791, Oxford 1986, pp245-248. On this controversy, see D.P. Walker, The Decline of Hell: Seventeenth-Century Discussions of Eternal Torment, 1964, pp6-7. God was not breaking his word if he failed to punish sinners, since failure to execute promised vengeance does not, unlike failure to deliver a promised reward, constitute a moral wrong. Tillotson nevertheless maintained that it was unwise to believe in the non-existence of an eternal hell-fire, and pernicious to preach it. The debate involved considering whether God can tell white lies, and whether he would deliberately use ambiguous terminology in order to influence human behaviour.

[38]1676-1726. Had upheld orthodox view in a sermon preached before the University of Oxford on 24th November 1706 [published 1708].

> Everlasting, &c in the Scripture sense, were always understood as we do now, or as he does, of something that never can or will have an End.[39]

This questioning of the rationale of fundamentalism was rehearsed again in 1718, as a means of denying the relevance of scriptural injunctions against witchcraft to the contemporary world.[40]

Tillotson had caused further offence upon the printing, in 1693, of his 1679/80 lectures at St Lawrence Jewry. These had dangerously offered courtesy to Socinians, recognizing the good temper of those dissidents "who want nothing but a good cause".[41] If the Archbishop was no Socinian, his supplementary sermon of 1693 on the Trinity seemed to hint at Arianism, and was an inspiration for Samuel Clarke.[42] Hutchinson, in the body of the biography, and Gilbert Burnet, in an appendix to it, defended their subject's orthodoxy, the former concluding that:

> ...with soft Words and strong Arguments he reasoned away the Superstitions of the Idolaters of Rome, and with the Warmth of his Charity melted the stubborn Hearts of several Non-Conformists of his own Country.

In support of Tillotson's moderate stance at the

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[39] Life of...Tillotson, p52. The argument had its nub in the definition of the Greek word, αiovios [Matthew XXV &c]; could it mean not eternal, but simply age-long. Hutchinson got into the same sort of dispute over the meaning of the words for witch in the Bible.

[40] Cf Hutchinson on the ten commandments and the French prophets, above, page 11, before note 24.

[41] DNB, "Tillotson, John"

[42] ibid.

Revolution, Hutchinson cited Burnet on "a reserve for Resistance in case of a Total Subversion".[43] A torch of principled moderation seems to have been passed from Tillotson's mentor Wilkins, via the likes of Burnet and Tillotson himself, to Francis Hutchinson. Circumstances, of course, changed. Comprehension in a legalistic sense, and thus any strict notion of a broad church, had failed in 1690. The notion of a "church in danger", the specific division between high and low church, emerged fully after Tillotson's death. Yet Hutchinson was certainly trying to construct or invent a tradition, one which embraced the values of Wilkins and Tillotson, embodying itself in a sort of low church voluntarism and, with particular relevance to John Wilkins, in the Royal Society propaganda of the Historical Essay. The literary link, at least, is clear: Tillotson published Wilkins's work on natural religion[44]; Hutchinson published Tillotson's biography. Hutchinson was for a broad church and a broad theology; a natural morality and natural philosophy; and a close attention to establishing proper boundaries between revelation and reason. Speculating a little more, one might see the years of Tillotson's primacy, with the failure of comprehension, as marking a watershed. For the successors of the Latitude

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[43] Life of...Tillotson, pp4

[44] See Life pp15f and 18 on moderation, and p44.

men, "toleration" was the watchword.[45] They considered that effective state monopoly of religion was broken. As far as they were concerned, the "confessional state", a brand of theocracy, had had its day. The high flyers of 1710-14, the avengers of the Sacheverell affair, tried to reverse this. We would expect, given the broad model sketched here, the fate of witchcraft prosecution to be bound up with this programme of "desacralization". Francis Hutchinson's career and affiliations constitute part of the evidence for such an

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[45]For Hutchinson's attitude to comprehension, see Life of Tillotson:

> Those Princes [William and Mary], who had so happily preserved our endanger'd Religion, sought out for the best Means, and fittest Instruments to secure and establish it against any future Relapse; and as soon, therefore, as the Civil Liberties were a little Settled, the Ecclesiastical came next under their Consideration. The powerful Interest of the Papists in the late Reign, had laid the poor Non-conformists under the Penalty of several severe Laws, which were accounted no small Dishonour to the Protestant Name. But now these being suspended by an Act of Toleration, and a Christian Liberty indulged to Dissenters; some who were not contented with this favourable Act alone, strove to back it with another, which was calculated to take them all into the Bosom of the Church of England. This scheme was well known by the Name of the COMPREHENSION, of which some were very fond, and others wholly averse to it; both Parties thinking themselves in the right, and actuated by the true Spirit of Christianity, fell into very indecent, and unchristian Treatment of each other; the common, but fatal Effects of Attempts in Alterations in Religion. [p. 30]

The striking features here are the premium placed on order, the chronological priority afforded civil liberties in the scheme of things, but above all the breathtaking dishonesty of Hutchinson's account of the religious manoeuvres preceding the Glorious Revolution.

association.[46]

A final element in the context of the 1718 Historical Essay is supplied by Hutchinson's letter of 1712 to Sloane, which discusses the notorious Jane Wenham case. The most salient feature is a concern for order in the face of the "great trouble & disturbance" caused by witch trials

> not only to the poor old Creatures, but to all timerous [sic] Persons, & the whole Neighbourhoods where they are...which [and here the language is clearly that of elite control over the vulgar] if it once gets head, our learned Judges will find hard to suppress, till its own Mischief hath convinced the World of the Guilt & Folly.

As already noted, Hutchinson is still anxious, six years after Canterbury's restraint on publication, to secure "official" approval for his work. He is, after all, asking the advice of the secretary, and future president, of the Royal Society. And, as ever, he defers to authority:

> The Judge who tryed her & hath the Life of the poor Woman upon his ? [illegible], & hath heard most of ye Arguments about it, is the likeliest Person to know what is proper in this Case.

Hutchinson does not wish to overreach himself or to cause offence:

> I am a perfect stranger to him, it would be a piece of Presum[p]tion for an obscure Country Parson to trouble him with his Papers.[47]

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[46]On the post-Revolution church: Rupp, op.cit.; G.V. Bennett, The Tory Crisis in Church and State, Oxford 1975; Geoffrey Holmes, The Trial of Dr Sacheverell, 1973, chapter 2. On Wilkins: Barbara Shapiro, John Wilkins, 1614-1672..., Berkeley 1969. On the model of desacralization: Christina Larner, Witchcraft and Religion, Oxford 1984; Douglas Hay, "Property, Authority and the Criminal Law" in Albion's Fatal Tree, ed.Hay et al., Harmondsworth 1975.

[47]BL Sloane MS 4043 f.38

He therefore seeks access to the judge, Sir John Powell, via Sloane.[48] If "he will give himself the trouble of reading them & shall afterword approve of them so far as to give leave to have them dedicated to him it will encourage the Reader to venture more freely in making his judgment of the case, & so be a security to me from such insulting Treatment as may chance otherwise to meet with". This confirms the notion that witchcraft was still a controversial issue in 1712. Hutchinson expected "insulting treatment"[49]; and while wanting others to be encouraged to "venture more freely", he himself looked for protection, for "security".[50]

Hutchinson wanted to secure a proper hearing for his ideas. He also, no doubt, wished to secure his own advancement. Only a careful appeal to authority could ensure both. It was the attitudes of those in authority, in church and state, that would determine whether and how witchcraft

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[48]Sir John Powell (1645-1713). Henning says he was probably a Tory, but he was also, apparently, a supporter of James II's tolerationist religious policies. Raised to Queen's bench three month's after Anne's accession. Swift: "the merriest old gentleman I ever saw, spoke pleasing things, and chuckled till he cried again". The Jane Wenham case gave him an opportunity to exercise his wit in the accused's favour; there was, he is said to have declared, no law against flying. See Basil Duke Henning, The House of Commons 1660-1690, 3 vols., 1983, under name.

[49]Cf. Thomas Gordon, The Humourist, 1725

[50]BL Sloane MS 4043 f.38. As Powell died in 1713, Hutchinson finally dedicated the Historical Essay to Lord Chief Justice Parker; Lord Chief Justice of Common Pleas, Sir Peter King; and the Lord Chief Baron of Exchequer, Sir Thomas Burt.

prosecution should be attacked. Hutchinson had already delayed publication in 1706 at the behest of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Six years later, it seems that delay was once more advised, for another half-dozen were to elapse before the publication of Hutchinson's Historical Essay concerning Witchcraft.

II

The very title-page of Hutchinson's work prepares the reader for much of his subsequent tone. In the first place, this is to be no vulgar collection of histories, but an historical essay, embellished with "Observations upon Matters of Fact". Matters of fact were Boylean territory; and Hutchinson was to speak the language of experimental philosophy, while nonetheless eschewing the simple historical approach of Robert Boyle. He weighs evidence before the reader, displaying imposture, in contrast to the truer disciple of Boyle, Richard Boulton, who maintains, with a wrongheaded conceit, that "Counterfeit Bonds, or forged Bills [do not] diminish the Value of those that are genuine".

Next, these observations are ones that "tend...to clear the Texts of the Sacred Scriptures"[my emphasis]. Such an approach is transparently parti pris. Boulton opposes Hutchinson with the authority of the King James Bible, which is to be preferred "before the Opinion of Two or Three private Men". Hutchinson's observations also promise to "confute...vulgar errors", an aim which locates this text, like his earlier works, and his letters to Sloane, firmly within an elite discourse which distanced itself from dangerous, and popular, superstitions. Once more assimilating witchcraft to enthusiasm - a task undertaken in images by William Hogarth forty-four years later, and

continually in need of reemphasis - Hutchinson cites the first epistle of Timothy, and its "Warning against Fanatical Men":

> But refuse profane and old Wives Fables, and exercise thy self rather with Godliness.

An even apter text is to be found at the beginning of the chapter, but perhaps it reeked a little too much of enthusiastic eschatology:

> Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils.

Hutchinson's other text is his own version of a verse from Psalm thirty-one:

> I have hated them that hold superstitious Vanities: but I trust in the Lord.

The "lying Vanities" of the authorized version have disappeared, no doubt to point the moral even more precisely.[51]

Three issues, then, are trumpeted by Hutchinson's title-page - natural philosophy, the status of scripture, and the errors of the vulgar. This long-awaited sally against the belief in witchcraft was finally provoked into print by Boulton's Compleat History. That Boylean collection, with a philosophical preface, was evidently considered dangerous enough to merit a response and overtop

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[51] Historical Essay, title page; Vindication, pp57, 135; William Hogarth, "Credulity, Superstition and Fanaticism" in Paulson plate 232, cat. no. 210, 1762 ; I Timothy IV vv1,7; Psalm XXI v6. For an eschatological dismemberment of witchcraft theory, see Nathaniel Homes, Daemonologie, or the character of the Crying Evils of the Present Times..., 1650.

any previous scruple about publishing these "papers". And, as described in the previous chapters, the whole climate as regards witchcraft belief changed in the wake of the rage of party and its resolution. It was much safer for Hutchinson to publish. We need to consider his Historical Essay together with the reply of his antagonist. In retrospect, the whole "controversy" seems rather leisurely. Boulton was out of England for some time in the late teens, so his Vindication appeared only in 1722. But Hutchinson himself waited more than two years to bring out his reply to Boulton's original work. When we consider that the Essay had been in cold storage since 1706 at least, this can only mean that Hutchinson was being cautious. And this suggests an outline for a chronology of the development of the witchcraft debate: non-partisan uses were still possible in 1711; the Wenham controversy factionalized the issue in 1712; one party rule started to emerge from 1715; and the "last word" on the subject, from a whiggish perspective, was spoken by Francis Hutchinson in 1718.

Passages of natural philosophy are scattered throughout the Essay. There is praise for the Royal Society midway through the book:

> ...as our Nation was perhaps the very first in modern Improvements of natural and experimental Philosophy, so I believe it was one of the first in gaining and spreading true Judgment in this Matter before us [witchcraft].[52]

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[52]Cf [Richard Bentley], Remarks upon a late Discourse of Free-Thinking..., 1713, pp32-34.

There follows a paean to the society itself, to the Académie Royale, and to the academy of sciences at Leipzig. At the very outset of the book, too, the new science is called in as a model:

> ...Rational Arguments without Facts can never decide this Case. A man may as well compose a true System of Natural Philosophy, without Experiments, as state the Case of Witchcraft, without a careful Enquiry into those Appearances of it, that have made so many Wise Men believe it.[53]

Hutchinson is concerned for a balance between reason and experience, between system and fact, and he implicitly appeals to the dominant philosophical text of the period, Newton's Principia in which mathematical, or rational, principles are mirrored in experience. An "Enquiry into Appearances" which have misled "so many Wise Men", no doubt through attempts to "save the appearances", will reveal the true basis of the phenomena in question. Just as Ptolemaic astronomy and Aristotelian dynamics have been superseded by Newton's system, so too will witchcraft theory be overtaken by a new interpretation of the facts. Later on, Hutchinson fills in this vision by opposing two sets of rules to reason by. One scheme operates in "those Times and Places that have been troubled with few Witches"; the other is "a Catalogue of the Principles of those Times and Men that have been troubled with and have hang'd great Numbers". The former, "some few, safe, negative Rules" can be profitably compared with some of Newton's rules of reasoning set out in Book

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[53] Historical Essay, pp133,12

Three of the Principia:

> 1. Do not intrude into Things that you have not seen, Col.2.18

Is this not the very substance of Newton's objections to Cartesian mechanism, which demand that we should "not... relinquish the evidence of experiments for the sake of dreams and vain fictions of our own devising" ? How much of this is mere rhetoric, for Newton as much as for Hutchinson, is another question entirely. Given Newton's theological and philosophical speculations, and Hutchinson's discourse on God and His angels, one might well ask. More of the divine's rules:

> 6. Things odd and unaccountable are to be respited till we understand them.
> 7. Where there is no known Rule to decide by, make no Judgment.

How does this compare to Newton's hypotheses non fingo ? And, Newton and Hutchinson agreed on the vitality of God's active providence in the world:

> 8. It becomes us to shew our Faith in God, by leaving doubtful Cases to his Providence, which is powerfully present and active in the World.[54]

It is notorious that Newton's work was all things to all manner of men, a piece of established knowledge to be fought over by opposing philosophical sects. Both sides in the debate over active principles, for instance, sought the

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[54]ibid., p54; Newton, Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica, 2nd edition, 1713, "Regulae Philosophandae III".

sanction of Newtonian ancestry.[55] The Newtonian style of reasoning, the rational-cum-empirical method, was similarly appropriated. Like so many others of his ilk, Hutchinson was some sort of Newtonian. He wanted an active, interventionist God, a strong current in Newton's work; his rules of reasoning can be construed as Newtonian; and compare this requirement,

> ...all real Truths are, and ever must be, uniform, and of a piece with one another,

with this:

> ..the analogy of nature...is wont to be simple, and always consonant to itself.

All this is what we have come to expect from a Latitudinarian divine of the early eighteenth century. [56]

The rhetorical uses of "science" and of natural philosophy are just as evident in Boulton's Vindication. We have already seen Boulton in action, just a year before the publication of the Compleat History, as a rationalist physician, writing an entirely physiological treatise on the King's Evil. He wrote that epitome of Boyle's scientific and theological writings. In his Vindication, he is particularly

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[55]P.M. Heimann, "Voluntarism and Immanence", Journal of the History of Ideas, 39, 1978.

[56]Historical Essay, p230; Principia, loc.cit.. See Also John Henry, "Occult Qualities and the Experimental Philosophy: Active Principles in Pre-Newtonian Matter Theory", History of Science, 24, 1986.; P.M.Heimann, "Voluntarism and Immanence", in JHI, 39, 1978; Margaret Jacob, The Newtonians and the English Revolution, Cornell 1976. For another sort of Newtonian, see Anita Guerrini, "The Tory Newtonians: Gregory, Pitcairne and Their Circle" in Journal of British Studies, 25, 1986.

anxious to establish the integrity of medical discourse, and makes some play of his own position as a medical man. "They must be mad themselves", he wrote, "or senseless, that cannot tell distracted Persons from such as are possessed with Devils". This is an interesting version of the old trick in which doubters are themselves accused of witchcraft.[57] The essential concern is the boundary between the natural (disease, the realm of the physician) and the supernatural (possession and witchcraft, realm of the priest and of the law). "Our Senses", he is assures the reader, "testify and distinguish them [acts of witchcraft] from what is natural, and acknowledges a supernatural Power". A consideration of the witches of Warbois[58] brings this medical strain to the fore:

> ...her Physicians would have distinguished betwixt the Symptoms of real and natural Distempers, and Accidents that proceeded from supernatural Causes.

At this point, professional competence is explicitly deployed against the notion that the phenomena of obsession and possession could be explained naturalistically as contagious fits:

> ...I have read most Physick Books worth reading,

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[57]Ie. doubters are being accused of distraction, which is the condition they themselves use to explain possession. Cf mediaeval heresy trials, or Freud's accusation that those who doubt the efficacy of psychoanalysis are themselves in need of it. It is a classic tactical move in apologetic literature. Cf also the Aikenhead and Renfrew cases in chapter on Scotland.

[58]On whom see, Compleat History, i, pp49-152, and C. L'Estrange Ewen, Witchcraft and Demonianism, 1933, pp169-173.

> but never heard of any such Thing before; nor have I, for above twenty Years, ever seen it; no Fits being catching, except Epilepsies; and when it seems to happen, it is rather imagined than real; besides Epilepsies are distempers that have a long Time been so well known, that they might easily have been discovered, and distinguished from extraordinary Fits of a supernatural Kind.[59]

Boulton sees Hutchinson as threatening the traditional categories not only of knowledge, but also of profession.[60] He undermined more than the distinction between doctors and non-doctors. Boyle had valued his secular status as a weapon in polemic - it would help his natural philosophy to seem value-free, despite its contribution to religious belief - and, refusing to take holy orders, he had nevertheless asserted the excellency of theology. His version of a religiously regulated natural philosophy did not utterly collapse the distinction between philosophy and theology.[61]

Hutchinson, according to Boulton, did exactly this. In the Essay, Hutchinson asks for "fix'd bounds of the Power of Spirits, that we might know when they pass'd the Degrees of Possibility. But here the wisest of Men have not been able

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[59]Vindication, pp9,31,89-90. Boulton's twisting is very like Hutchinson's elsewhere - such and such does not happen, when it does it is so and so, and anyway we could make a distinction quite easily... On the medical profession and witchcraft belief see G. Tourney, "The Physician and Witchcraft in Restoration England" in Medical History 16, 1972.

[60]Cf Hale's attack on Hobbes's Dialogue, printed in W. Holdsworth, A History of English Law 17 vols., 1903-72, v, p499ff. See also Hale's drafts, BL Add.MS 18,235.

[61]See Robert Boyle, "The Excellency of Theology..." in Works, ed. Birch, 1772, iv, pp1-66; Leviathan and the Air-Pump; Keith Hutchison, "Supernaturalism and the Mechanical Philosophy", in History of Science, 21, 1983.

to lay down any certain rule".[62] Boulton's Physico-Chyrurgical Treatises sought to vindicate a very different approach to medicine:

> ...the Art of practise chiefly lyes in the Judgment of the Physitian, who is to consider the present Circumstances of the Patient, and to time and vary Medicines accordingly, for one Physitian may cure a Distemper with the same Medicine that another cannot, as a Painter may draw a Picture with the same Colours with which another less skilled will come far short in his performance.

Physic is the quintessence of art, properly compared to painting. This image is used in defence of professional competence, and Boulton attacks any notion of the physician as mechanic, following book-learnt rules. For:

> ...it is impossible to give Judgment to any Body, though the Rules and Methods are laid before them; that being only to be obtained by Study and Observation and a Natural Genius.[63]

More specifically philosophical resources are brought to bear in part two of the Vindication, in which Boulton discourses "Of the Nature of Material and Immaterial Substances". In Boulton's cosmology, the first matter was homogeneous but, through the effects of motion, broke up into "Parts of different Sizes, Shapes and Magnitude". This process of fragmentation creates different qualities in the world, or in our perception of it. So Boulton is embracing the key hypothesis of the mechanical philosophy.[64] He goes

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[62]Historical Essay, p52

[63]Physico Chyrurgical Treatises, preface

[64]See eg.: John Locke, "Elements of Natural Philosophy", in Works ed. St John, 1885, ii; Robert Boyle, "The Origin of Forms and Qualities", in Works, iii, pp1-137;

on to apply these insights to physiology:

> "material Substances being always liable to these Alterations, are not only said to be corruptible...but as they compose human Bodies...these Bodies are liable to Decay, and to be put out of their Natural State".

This is especially so in the case of the liquid parts of bodies. These alterations, or corruptions, are effected not only by external causes, but also by "strong Impressions of Passions of the Mind". "The Temperature of the Body", he points out, "is to be discovered by the Influence of the Soul", while,

> if the Body be afflicted the Soul suffers, and the Spirits are depressed, and consequently the whole languishes and decays.

By introducing this composite mechanical and psychosomatic model, Boulton finds a fashionable rationale for witchcraft beliefs. Since our own souls can damage our bodies, how much more can the "Superior Orders", that is, spirits, good and evil. For, they can "move violently the small Minute Parts of Fluid Humours". The immaterial must act on the material, since

> when Matter was first created if immaterial Substance could not affect Matter, the Parts of Matter had never been put in Motion,

but it does so according to the limitations of the mechanical structure of matter. Thus Boulton defines the action of spirit via physic and mechanism, establishing a distinct realm of the preternatural lying between the

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René Descartes, Les Principes de la Philosophie, Paris 1647, part ii.

miraculous, prerogative of God, and nature in her ordinary course.[65]

The peculiar appeal of natural philosophical discourse to both protagonists in this dispute, can best be gathered from their peculiar treatment of what might be called the hydrostatics of witchcraft. Debates and experiments of the 1670s and 1680s, involving the likes of Boyle, Hale, More, Hooke and Mayow, draw attention to the interface between pneumatics, that branch of fluid mechanics, and pneumatology, the science of spirits.[66] Boulton and Hutchinson go a step further. The latter has a two-pronged approach to the swimming of witches.[67] He deconstructs the acceptability of the swimming-test as evidence, by tracing its history. He then attempts to remove any supernatural element in the interpretation of the practice, by pointing out that differences in specific gravity may suffice to explain variations in the buoyancy of victims. This is rounded off with an appeal to the authority of Chief Justice Parker, who had equated the fatal swimming of a suspect with murder, to be punished accordingly. Boulton's response is

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[65]Vindication, pp159,177,179

[66]In particular see Hale, An Essay touching... Gravitation...of Fluids, 1673; idem, Difficiles Nugae, 1675; idem, Observations..., 1677; Henry More, Remarks upon Two...Discourses, 1676; Leviathan and the Air-Pump; Simon Schaffer, "Godly Men and Mechanical Philosophers: Souls and Spirits in Restoration Natural Philosophy" in Science in Context, 1:1, 1987.

[67]On swimming see Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic, pp453,519,533,551.

telling. As a physician, he dismisses Hutchinson's account of differences in specific gravity, which relies on variation of body density according to age, and then addresses other possibilities:

> ...in other common Experiments we find, that nothing, whose Specifick gravity disposes it to sink, will swim above Water by being towed, except the motion be swift and violent...the Body hath the same Specifick Gravity, Quantity for Quantity, whether it be immerged Longitudinally, or Perpendicularly; so that the manner of immerging...can make no Difference, in respect of their swimming or sinking, except it alters the Rules of Staticks, and Hydrostaticks. Indeed, if a Body were to be thrown with Force...the Resistance must be greater...the Body, upon the first Contact, will be less apt to sink...but when that acquired Force...is lost...the Specifick gravity of the Body will accelerate...its sinking.[68]

Here, the application of the new philosophy and its scientific rhetoric to the problems of witchcraft, results in an inconclusive, and apparently ridiculous, debate between opponents bidding for the same sources of legitimacy.

The use and abuse of natural philosophy can also be detected in the context of the delineation of the vulgar, the separation of true from false belief. A foray into natural history provides Hutchinson with an excuse to sneer at popular custom.[69] Familiars are supposed to deposit traces of the butter which they bring to their witch, and this is identified popularly with the residue on plants

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[68] Essay, p39; Vindication, p122

[69] On vulgar belief in natural history see Keith Thomas, Man and the Natural World: Changing Attitudes in England 1500-1800, 1983, pp70-81 on vulgar errors.

known, therefore, as "Butter of Witches". Hutchinson:

> When I see Swedish Judges, and Dr Horneck[70] after them, learn from the Rabble to call it Witches Butter... I cannot but stand amazed.

The natural explanation offered by Hutchinson is that grasshoppers are responsible, not possessed cats or diabolical ravens. Boulton points out that the amount of "butter" carried by a cat or raven is clearly greater then the detritus of any plausible grasshopper: "tho' the latter might be called Witches Butter, from some Likeness with the former...this which comes from Grasshoppers is called so by the Rabble; the other Witches Butter, by those the Doctor is too timorous in ridiculing with a suppositious Oversight, which appears to be none." Hutchinson's equation of popular superstition and attested demonology is refused. Dismissal of the vulgar remains but, as far as Boulton is concerned, it changes its nature. Vulgar error is not the adoption of a false system of belief, but rather a category mistake within a system. It is a failure to make proper identification, and to draw the correct line between natural and supernatural. Boulton's response to Hutchinson's attempts to taint witchcraft theory with a dangerous vulgarity are robust, and he firmly corrects Hutchinson's distorted priorities, which put social status before truth:

> I shall be glad to be one of those People always, that fall in with such popular Pretences.

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[70]Anthony Horneck, 1641-1697, divine. He added accounts of Swedish witchcraft to Glanvill's 1689 Saducismus Triumphatus and wrote the preface to Glanvill's 1681 Remains.

His antagonist is just as forthright:

> ...as our common People are of themselves too forward in receiving such superstitious Notions [the same phrase as in the 1706 letter to Sloane], tho' they tend directly to the shedding Blood, I hope all good Men will agree with me, in thinking, that the more Infection is scatter'd abroad amongst the People by ill Authors and covetous Booksellers, the more need is there of proper Assistances to help weak Minds, in judging of such dark, yet strong and bloody Delusions.[71]

The emphasis is on the saving of life and the language once again that of public hygiene. These notions are an "infection", and there is a hint that "proper Assistances to help weak Minds" may involve their classification as insane, and some form of confinement or treatment. Men like Boulton are punningly "ill", their agents plain greedy.

Hutchinson's account of the notorious Elizabethan case of John Darrel further extends his notions of popular delinquency. Witchcraft beliefs are, again, in cahoots with enthusiasm of the worst sort. John Darrel, who claimed to cast out spirits, was a man full of "Enthusiastical ill-grounded Notions" who mightily abused the doctrine of Providence. Hutchinson wants to make it clear that "the Gift of discerning Spirits is ceased in the Church", and goes on to dispute the sufficiency of medical expertise:

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[71] Essay, p99; Vindication, pp85-6,155; Essay, p108. For discussions of the delineation of the vulgar in general, see: Peter Burke, Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe, 1978. His discussion of the "discovery of folklore" by an elite attempting to distance itself from the populace at large is highly influential. For a more nuanced model see: Jacques Revel, "Forms of Expertise: Intellectuals and 'Popular' Culture in France (1650-1800)" in S.Kaplan, ed., Understanding Popular Culture, Berlin 1984.

> ...it is a Matter of very great Difficulty to distinguish betwixt Possession and some Efforts of our own Souls in some Diseases.

Most interesting, however, is the appearance of the "rabble". Popular pressure on a mayor dissuades him from displaying the counterfeit nature of possession at a public meeting, as "Violence and Anger" are applied. Hutchinson's description of Darrel's style, and his effect, is striking in its use of the idea of entertainment:

> ...Mr Darrel was chose Preacher of St Mary's in Nottingham, and People flock'd [like sheep, of course] to hear him, where he entertained them with Sermons of Devils [calculated ambiguity], and Possessions, and Somer's Case, till the Maids were afraid to fetch Beer out of the Cellars, without Company with them.[72]

For certain groups in society - writers of fiction or the aristocratic scoffers - witchcraft beliefs were to pass into a tradition of entertainment. Collections of witch reports, like Joseph Glanvill's, which had served a substantial purpose in defining and buttressing religion, were transformed into books of witch stories, "mere" amusement, a genre with remarkable longevity and popularity. Hutchinson's implication is a trivializing one - maybe the beer is being brought out for Darrel and his friends ? - his tone is ironic, but other sorts of entertainment, more

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[72] Essay, pp195,197,204-5,201. See also D.P. Walker's account of the Darrel case in his Unclean Spirits, 1981, esp. pp61-73, and Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic, pp576-80. This episode reiterates the problems we have already discussed, of the use of the sublime (or the supernatural, in this case), and the need for the sanction of legitimate authority if one is to be allowed to manipulate it in such a way.

"edifying" and "useful" were to play a vital role in new forms of discourse which sought to capture popular attention. We have already looked at Hutchinson's concern with the eclipse of 1724 in this light. Old superstitious almanacs are to be replaced by accurate, natural philosophical ones which support true religion. As Newton made clear,

> ...arguments for the Deity, if not taken from Phaenomena are slippery and serve only for ostentation...Metaphysical arguments are intricate and understood by few.

The new phenomena were to be natural, however, and properly under control, far removed from the dangerous and frothy excesses of witchcraft and possession cases. Yet the language, and the appeal, remained remarkably similar:

> Electricity...What astonishing discoveries have been made within these four years; The polypus on the one hand, as incredible as a prodigy, and the electric fire, as surprising as a miracle.

In the course of the eighteenth century, an increasing number of natural philosophical lecturers toured the cities, accelerating the process of scientific popularization started in the later seventeenth century: Yeoman in Birmingham; Rackstrow and Neale in London; Symes in Bristol; Arden and Benjamin Martin in Bath. The latter's complaint sums it all up:

> ...there are many places I have been so barbarously ignorant that they have taken me for a magician, yea, some have threaten'd my life for raising storms and hurricanes.

In Hutchinson's world, entertainment was no longer to be afforded a place in religious rites themselves -

Hogarth's Sleeping Congregation are, bar one, hardly excited. The old forms of entertainment smacked of enthusiasm. The rants of such as Darrel were to be superseded by the secular sermons of experiment. Playing on similar fears, and the same sense of awe, even these could still appear dangerous to some. Thus Martin's need to distance and defend himself.[73]

III

For the Protestants of the Church of England, the status of scripture was, in an age of new methods of Biblical exegesis, a vexed question. The English church was self-consciously proud of its ability to blend a concern for legitimate authority with a proper valuation of Holy Writ. Customary values could be co-mingled with individual judgments. The church saw itself as a model of orthodoxy and depicted itself as the epitome of moderation and balance.

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[73]Joseph Glanvill, Sadducismus Triumphatus, 1689; Newton, draft query to the Latin Opticks, 1706, cited in Simon Schaffer's valuable "Natural Philosophy and Public Spectacle", History of Science, 21, 1983, p4. Gentleman's Magazine, XV, 1745, p197. Larry Stewart, "Public Lectures and Private Patronage in Newtonian England", Isis, 77, 1986. Benjamin Martin, Supplement containing remarks on a rhapsody of adventures of a modern knight-errant, Bath 1746, pp28-9 [though this passage may owe as much to memories of Cervantes as of what actually happened in the places Martin visited.] For Hogarth's print see Paulson, Complete Graphic Works, plate 151, cat. no. 140, 1736. Public lectures of this nature started well before the 1740s. On later, and politically dangerous performances elsewhere in Europe, see Robert Darnton's Mesmerism and the End of the Enlightenment in France, Harvard 1968, esp. pp82-125.

Hutchinson described Tillotson as exemplary in this sphere, and from the other English province, a similar position was defined:

> ...the Church of England is undoubtedly both as to doctrine and worship the purest church that is at this day in the world: the most orthodox in faith, the freest on the one hand from idolatry and superstition and on the other hand from freakishness and enthusiasm.[74]

Disagreements upon the meanings of words, and upon the authority of an established text could, of course, upset this balance, and lead to accusations of moral decay at one pole, or disabling scrupulosity at the other. This is reflected in the debate on witchcraft through much of the eighteenth century. John Wesley, in 1768, could declare that "giving up of witchcraft is in effect giving up the bible".[75] The conflict between Hutchinson and Boulton was

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[74]T.Sharp, The life of Archbishop John Sharp, ed.Newcome, 1825, i, p354.

[75]Henry Moore, The Life of the Reverend John Wesley, Leeds 1825, p323. See also, The Journal of Rev. John Wesley, Everyman edition, iii, p412, entry for July 4th 1770:

> When old Dr. A-r was asked what her disorder was, he answered, "It is what formerly they would have caled being bewitched." And why should they not call it so now ? Because the infidels have hooted witchcraft out of the world; and the complaisant Christians, in large numbers, have joined with them in the cry. I do not so much wonder at this, that many of these should herein talk like infidels; but I have sometimes been inclined to wonder at the pert, saucy, indecent manner wherein some of those trample uon men far wiser than themselves; at their speaking so dogmatically against what not only the world, Heathen and Christian, believed in all past ages, but thousands, learned as well as unlearned, firmly believe at this day. I instance Dr. Smollett and Mr Guthrie, whose manner of speaking concerning witchcraft must be extremely offensive to every

more complex, exploiting the possibilities of playing text against authority, seizing upon ambiguities in the relationship to forge a flexible dialectic. Hutchinson made two points against the scriptural foundation of the crime of witchcraft. First, he claimed that laws against witchcraft were part of the judicial law of the Old Testament, "not binding to us, farther than we find them useful, and agreeable to our own Times".[76] Punishments for theft, adultery, perjury and so on, have been moderated since the era of the prophets, and justifiably so. Secondly, these Old Testament laws "are mostly grounded upon Names, without Definitions along with them". The word villain, for instance, once signifying no more than a countryman or rustic, has taken on a new meaning, and a derogatory one at that. Should the naming of sorcerors in the ancient world as mathematici raise our opinion of those charlatans, since mathematicians are now respectable citizens ? One of the

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man who cannot give up his Bible.
Four points can be made about this passage. First, in relation to the ideological marginalization of witchcraft belief sketched in the chapter on Defoe, it must be remembered that Wesley came out of a high-church tradition which had its sympathies with non-juring clergy. Secondly, Wesley usefully points to the role of ridicule - witchcraft has been "hooted" out of the world. Thirdly, the chapter on repeal below highlights Wesley's association, personal and spiritual, with the only known parliamentary opponent of the repeal of the witchcraft legislation in 1736, James Erskine. Tangentially, and in relation to chapter 3, the Scotsmen Smollett and Guthrie, part of the "civilising" movement north of the border, were quite right to pick on witchcraft as part of their campaign.

[76]Cf his remarks on the ten commandments, above, and on Lupton's analysis of eternal damnation.

interlocutors in Hutchinson's dialogue raises a very proper objection, with which Boulton might agree, that "their [witches'] Names and Works together are often mentioned in the holy Scripture". Yet, by equating witchcraft with "Divinations and false Prophecies" in both the Old and New Testaments, Hutchinson denies any reference within the Bible to the modern notion of witch.[77] The interlocutor presses objections again - did the Devil, in the New Testament, somehow act through these "false Apostles and Seducers" ? This is the reply:

> As Tempters, no Question; and as Helpers as far as they could.

But, were they given supernatural aid "above the Power of Man and Matter" ? Hutchinson's refusal to rule this out is interesting, but his conclusion is clear:

> At some times when God, for some special Purposes, permitted him, no doubt but he did; but not so often as many are apt to imagine.[78]

The emphasis, as in the appended sermon on angels, is on the omnipotence and guiding purpose of God, rather than a thoroughgoing rejection of the supernatural. The core of the argument is linguistic, making hierarchies of truth within the Bible; it would "not suppose that God himself spake all the Parts of the Holy Scriptures...as much as he did the Ten Commandments".[79]Distinctions must be made between biblical

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[77]Essay, chapter 12, p147

[78]ibid.

[79]A Short View, p42

and modern language. Yet Hutchinson himself recognized a problem, and an intractable one for a divine concerned with authority, for judges, for the church establishment, for "commissioned prophets"; namely, "when Laws and Translations are fix'd, it is a difficult Thing to change them".[80] Hutchinson's apparent carelessness with the authorized version on his title page is one small indication that an attack on superstition in this instance ranked above the authority of the text. In the discussion of "witchcraft" itself, philology was to be preferred to the sovereign translation.[81] All of Hutchinson's worries about authority are revisited upon him, and his argument fragments.

In attacking Hutchinson on this issue, Boulton makes a general point:

> ...the Quality of the Body does not consist in its Name, but in the Nature of the Thing named.

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[80] Historical Essay, p180

[81] The King James Bible was the appointed translation - it was tradition that made it the "authorized version". See A.C. Partridge, English Biblical Translation, 1973 and the preface to the King James text:

> Translation it is that openeth the window, to let in the light; that breaketh the shell, that we may eat the kernel; that putteth aside the curtaine, that we may looke into the most Holy place...If you aske what they had before them, truely it was the Hebrew text of the Olde Testament, the Greeke of the Newe. These are the two golden pipes, or rather conduits, where through the olive branches emptie themselves into the gold.

The aim of the translators was to draw on tradition:

> to make a good one better, or out of many good ones, one principall good one.

The nit-picking of such as Hutchinson would have been anathema:

> ...is the kingdome of God become words or syllables ?

That "nature" is quite clear from the context, which is the action depicted in the Old Testament. Boulton concludes:

> that altering the names of Things, does not alter their Nature; for they retain that, let their **Names** be varied ever so much.

Hutchinson had accused the partisans of witchcraft belief of confounding a variety of biblical, Hebrew names, into one English word, "witch". Boulton's reply is a subtle one, hingeing on something like the arbitrariness of the sign:

> ...the Difference of Words alters not the Nature of things.

Hence, if a practiser of sorcery is, in Hebrew, designated by a variety of words, it may remain proper to translate those words indiscriminately as "witch", since "Sorcery and Witchcraft are in our Law synonomous Terms...well understood". This deals with Hutchinson from one angle. From the other, "distinction implies a difference". That is to say, while different Hebrew words strewn through a text may usefully and legitimately collapsed into one "well understood" English word or phrase, the presence within one text of several distinct words suggests a difference in reference on account of an implied opposition. Thus Deuteronomy 18, verses 10 and 11:

> There shall not be found among you <u>any one</u> that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, <u>or</u> that useth divination, <u>or</u> an observer of times, <u>or</u> an enchanter, <u>or</u> a witch. Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer.

Essentially, Boulton attacks Hutchinson for confounding, in his analysis of this passage, a variety of Hebrew words into

the English concept of false prophecy, pointing out his obvious ulterior motives.

More broadly, Boulton's approach to these linguistic disputes about witchcraft may strike the twentieth-century reader as a well-directed attack on the early-modern obsession with the putative origins of words:

> ...the Etymology of the Word is not concerned, if it is borrow'd to signify Witchcraft.

Moreover, his probabilistic attitude to testimony may seem more progressive than Hutchinson's. The latter rejects Popish beliefs, or rather, taints witchcraft belief with their Popish origin,assimilating them to transubstantiation. Boulton prefers a different approach:

> ...it is rather an additional confirmation of what we believe, since both we and they consent jointly to the same Sense of the Scriptures which confirms both our Beliefs.[82]

Hutchinson's broad church, indeed, extends only in one direction (despite his later, no doubt pragmatic, willingness in Ireland to ally with a popish priest). He embraces some varieties of mild dissent - as his enthusiastic approval of the Scotch union suggests - while excepting what he conceives of as enthusiasm, that is, certain forms of Protestantism, and Roman Catholicism tout court.[83] His views derive coherence less from theology than from the demands of politics and the social order. The good

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[82] Vindication, pp133,135,136,134,149

[83] So, he approves of Trinitarians, and probably finds learned "Deists" acceptable in a social sense - they were not dangerous plebeians.

parson must "imitate St Paul, in becoming all Things to the weak Part of his Parishioners; that He may keep them in Obedience to the Laws, and in Christian Communion with their neighbours". Hutchinson wants to use religion as the opium of the people[84]:

> ...the great End of Religion is to calm and soften the Roughness of Men's passions.

Hutchinson has "endeavour'd to...open the Door for Communion with us as wide as ever I was able", seeking to exemplify "an honest Latitude, or true Catholick Christian Largeness of Heart". He objects to Papists not for any theological views they might hold - his own church draws a discreet veil over the precise nature of the eucharist, and "does not require her common Communicants to make any Declarations about it"[85] - but for their social subversiveness and doubtful allegiance to the mortal God. Some of "our own [Protestant] Sects" are condemned for a "furious sermon", a "lying miracle", or a "French Prophet" that might

> have often great effect upon Mens Minds, and disturb them in their honest Labours, and dispose them to vent'rous Actions.

Papists and the wilder dissenters are firmly linked as threats to the state. And it was the Papists who had taught

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[84]Cf Life of Tillotson, p48, citing Burnet on Tillotson:

> ...the great Design of Christianity was the reforming Mens Natures, and governing their Actions, the restraining their Appetites and Passions, the softening their Tempers....

[85]Though elsewhere, Hutchinson does mock transubstantiation.

the dissenters in the first place, by setting up their own conventicles. Both papists and dissenters claim to cast out devils, and Hutchinson makes clear the danger to the state which this involves:

> Those Counterfeits in Casting out Devils...were contriv'd here at Home by the Managers of Babington's Conspiracy and the Spanish Invasion, to put the Minds of the People into such a Temper, that they might be fit to venture upon the hazardous Actions they had prepar'd for them.[86]

Boulton prefers a different sort of church, one founded on a core of necessary beliefs, including the belief in witchcraft. Dissenters who cast out devils are defended with Christ's very words:

> ...they that are not against us, are on our part.

Hard on Popery, mild to "old" dissent, against witch beliefs, for authority, for a "discriminating" reading of Holy Writ: Hutchinson's interests seem, to Boulton, an unprincipled mish-mash. They will not gell. They achieve no properly doctrinal equilibrium. Surely the authorized translation of the Bible is to be preferred "before the Opinion of Two or Three private Men". Hutchinson's individualism here is ironically given some Roman attributes:

> ...the Doctor hath as much Infallibility as the Pope.

Towards the end of the first part of the Vindication, Boulton sums up the basis of his faith:

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[86]Hutchinson, A Compassionate Address to those Papists, Who will be prevail'd with to examine the CAUSE for which they Suffer, 1716, pp20,19,22,61,15

> I take Scripture to be the Rule and Standard of my Belief, as it is translated and published by the consent of the Church, and with their Approbation, who are the Heads of the Church, and have most Right and Probability of leading me in the right Way.

This English middle way, founded on a notion of sensus catholicus, is firmly allied, by Boulton, to witchcraft beliefs. Priorities are not imposed. ecclesiology is not to be set in the mould of demonology. Yet clearly, support for the latter bolsters the church, as much as a proper conception of the former supports the belief in witchcraft. Speaking as a Protestant,

> if we disbelieve Sacred Writings, must not all Religion be slighted ?

Playing the true churchman Boulton can, at the same time, and with implicit irony, make his opponent out to be an enthusiast,

> opposing moral Proof, and the Testimony of Scripture, with his bare ipse dixit.[87]

Boulton refuses to see through Hutchinson's political spectacles and "will never blame any Party [my emphasis] for their close Adherence to Scripture". Hutchinson's complaint is in striking contrast:

> These Doctrines have often been made Party-Causes [my emphasis].[88]

The acceptance, and practical instantiation, of witch beliefs, is a vital component of Boulton's world-view, and

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[87] Vindication pp117,135,99,155,ix,v

[88] Cf witchcraft as a party issue, discussed in the chapter above, on Defoe.

this is because of their boundary-defining function. They define the limits of medical discourse, as we have seen, an understandable concern for Boulton as a physician. But they also define an authoritatively scriptural church, focussing on revelation rather than reason:

> Must every Thing that is monstrous be absurd in respect of Belief, that is so in regard to the common Rule of Reason ? [89]

Boulton and Hutchinson had their own versions of "latitude". The physician's broad category is one that accepts Papists and dissenters as Christian brothers if they accept the central core of Christian doctrine, "they that are not against us, are on our Part". Hutchinson's latitude is extended to those who behave, reason well, and do not commit offences of disorder. The allegory of the Devil is for him an allegory of anarchy, and hierarchies of angels point the need for government. Enthusiasts are anathematized. So too are the superstitious Papists, whose doctrine of transubstantiation is explicitly, in Hutchinson's less broad moments, equated with the absurd transformations of demonology. It is never quite clear which is undermining which. Hutchinson's rhetoric provides the topoi of enthusiasm, witchcraft and roman catholicism, and uses each one to discredit the other. The aim is to pitch religious doctrine at a lower level, in order to make it safe:

> A Man can hardly be a Sadducee, but he must be an

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[89] Vindication, ppxii, 82. Historical Essay, p181.

> Atheist also; but when Religion is clogg'd with such bloody and silly Superstitions, it tempts Men to be both.

One of the sermons appended to the Historical Essay, "The Christian Religion Demonstrated", is a typical latitudinarian exercise in its provision of a minimal natural religion, to which is superadded Christ's revelation.[90] "No piercing Eye", Hutchinson writes,"cou'd read those Doctrines in the face of the Sky." Nonetheless,

> the Contemplation of God and his Government may teach us, that the Children of such a Father have a Birth-Right and Title to hope for Good; and such a Title and Ground of Hope, as none but a Fool, or Profane Person like Esau, wou'd despise or sell by an unworthy Life, which made him uncapable of the Good of it.

Christ's position as "First-born of that Inheritance, and the Saviour of those that believ'd and follow'd him in the way of true Vertue" was demonstrated, or rather, confirmed, "by such Miracles, as cou'd be wrought by no Deceiver, nor by any but by God himself, or those that acted by his Power". Providence reins in the realm of the miraculous. The proof of revealed Christianity is in authenticated history and in simple continuity of institutions, not in any present-day miracle-working whether ecclesiastical or, proof by opposition, demonic. "The Natural History of our Saviour's Life", Hutchinson wrote, was "one miraculous Work

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[90]Cf Life of Tillotson citing Burnet on Tillotson:
...the best Way to put a stop to growing Impiety, was first to establish the Principles of Natural Religion, and from that to advance to the Proof of the Christian Religion, and of the Scriptures. [p48]

from one End of it to the other".[91] Christ's arguments themselves were "strong Evidence", to which "astonishing works" could only add. As for the truth of Gospel testimony, it is guaranteed by the continuity of Christ's church and the fulfilment of his promises. "These", we are assured, "are the common Marks that distinguish true Histories from Fables". Did not Jerusalem fall ? "A superstitious Belief of the Devil's Power", ascribing divine works to the diabolical adversary had been, and still was, a major obstacle to the acceptance of the miracle of Christ's life.[92] Belief in witchcraft is divorced from the true, broad religion, which founds itself on two books, the world and the Bible, on the works of God and of His Son, Jesus Christ. And Boulton, of course, is no part of this, wanting as he avowedly does to

> make People afraid of the Devil and all his works, and shew the Necessity of imploring Divine Assistance.[93]

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[91]Cf. Casaubon on Charles I:
> We need no counterfeit miracles; his death, and his book are sufficient miracles...[Of Credulity and Incredulity, 1672, p.293.]

[92]See Joseph Glanvill, Some Philosophical Considerations touching Witchcraft, xiv.70:
> For he that saith, That if there are WITCHES, there is no way to prove that Christ Jesus was not a Magician, and Diabolical Impostor, puts a deadly Weapon into the hands of the Infidel, and is himself next door to the SIN AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST [nb.]

[93]Vindication, pp117,35; Historical Essay, pp171,247 and Sermon I, passim. As regards witchcraft, a key issue must be the shift from an association between witch beliefs and the Latitude men of the 1660s and 1670s, to the outright opposition of the likes of Hutchinson in the early eighteenth century. John Spurr has usefully reminded us that latitude was initially a term of abuse, not a self-approving

IV

In the eighteenth century, from Addison to Blackstone, the witchcraft issue was generally divided in two. Do witches exist ? Is their persecution justified ? Addison's remark crystallizes the new orthodoxy:

> ...in general there is and has been such a thing as Witchcraft, [though one cannot give] credit to any Particular Instance of it.[94]

Hutchinson, of course, has it both ways, with a certain breathless opportunism. Witches do not exist. Or if they do, to a lesser extent than sometimes asserted. And, anyway, the prosecution of witches is judicially unsafe - rules of evidence flawed - guilty cannot be readily identified or distinguished from innocent. Boulton denies the possibility of any such separation between the realms of religious truth and human law, which shows a preference for human life above the saving of souls, for the mortal above the immortal, against the clear demands of religion. Like Sir Matthew Hale

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party-label. See his " 'Latitudinarianism' and the Restoration Church" in HJ 31, 1988. Here it suffices to say that a range of latitudes were available in the early eighteenth century; and to point to the discussion of toleration and comprehension in the appendix to this chapter. Rupp op.cit. is useful on parties within the Church. He, like Gerard Reedy, The Bible and Reason, Philadelphia 1985, stresses the underlying consensus. See also Norman Sykes, "From Comprehension to Indulgence" in his From Sheldon to Secker, Cambridge 1959, and the work of W.K.Jordan, The Development of Religious Toleration in England, iii, 1940.

[94]Spectator, 117, July 4th 1711. Blackstone in his Commentaries (12th ed., 1793-5, cited in OED under witchcraft) followed much the same line. See account of Addison in chapter on Defoe above.

at Bury St Edmunds, he is convinced that to set free the guilty is as heinous an error as to condemn the innocent.[95] Hutchinson simply asserts a new morality. Indeed in one passage, he converts witch trials into a different sort of divine test, one which sees defence of the innocent as the higher virtue.[96] Boulton argues, with some philosophical sophistication, that the existence of witches necessitates their prosecution. It is at least implied that the criminal category, witch, is defined by the actions taken against witches.[See appendix, below] If, in court, imaginary actions are mistaken for real ones, then either the judge is weak-minded, not a conclusion calculated to appeal to Hutchinson, or else the actions are sufficiently real to warrant moral certainty:

> the Characters of good and bad Men, as well as their Actions, easily distinguish them...If they are good, <u>their Light will so shine before Men...</u>

This fits well with Boulton's approach to good and evil spirits. He will not have a superfluous category of beings, but asserts, quite rightly, that such spirits "cannot be good or bad without good or bad actions...[and] consequently must have a Communication...not imaginary...but real".[97] Witches exist. We have confirmed instances of their action - cases of delusion are irrelevant here, as Boyle would have

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[95]See <u>A Tryal of Witches at the Assizes held at Bury St Edmunds</u>, 1682

[96]<u>Historical Essay</u>, p54

[97]<u>Vindication</u> pp9,6

recognized. Scripture and custom support this belief, as does the widely accepted metaphysical doctrine of spiritual substance.[98]

Hutchinson's ripostes are highly rhetorical in style, and his exact stance at any one moment is never easily grasped. He is much given to ad hominem arguments which Boulton either misunderstands or purposefully misconstrues, mistrusting their form. Hutchinson's attempt to direct the accusations of witchcraft made at the Hale trial back against the very accusers themselves, for instance, is mistaken by Boulton - but then Hutchinson does at times seem to be constructing alternative demonologies, driving out the Devil with the hand of Beelzebub. His clergyman (this being a dialogue) therefore admits at one point an active role for wicked spirits, outside the providential scheme:

> ...how do we not know but that some may fall also by the Craft of evil Spirits deluding Magistrates.

A page later, he will cite Lavater as an authority on "walking spirits". Hutchinson's maxim - "confessio rei impossibilis non est confessio sanae mentis" - is one that clearly cannot be applied to supernatural action, and begs the very question of the occurrence of such phenomena. His arguments on Providence are evidently central, Providence which restricts the range of the supernatural and ties up

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[98]See also: idem, The Works of the Honourable Robert Boyle, Esq. Epitomiz'd, 1699, dedication: "...our Author...has made it evident, that Efficients themselves, direct us to Final Causes." And what better spiritual efficient than the diabolical actions of witches ?

the Devil. Yet, in the interests of argument, he is prepared to extend diabolical efficacy; might not Satan appear in the shape of the innocent or pious ? All this is ad hominem, rhetorical, tactical, hardly clarifying the doctrine which the work is suppose to be expounding. Hutchinson's conclusion is, finally, extremely modest. He emphasizes the difficulties to be encountered in "proving Negatives", and, while he has "asserted and prov'd as much as we need to know, and that which will be of use", one is not quite sure whether he is making a bid for truth, or merely for utility. The full answer is left, in true pragmatic style, to the future:

> I doubt not, but Time and Experience will confirm farther.[99]

His letter to Arthur Charlett, master of University College, Oxford, stresses this sceptical approach:

> If ever experience doth shew the contrary, I have no Interest [my emphasis] to tempt me to shut my eyes against it, & I hope in such a case I shou[l]d have virtue enough to make me follow Mr Chillingworth['s] example & change notions as he did: but at present I am of the same mind with my Book.

If the burden of Hutchinson's argument is sceptical, as suggested by Hutchinson himself, founded on a fragile appeal to a two-faced realm of experience, it cannot really be conclusive. Scepticism is wielded by interests, as validly by a Glanvill as by a Hutchinson.

Hutchinson accepts all too much of Boulton's

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[99] Historical Essay, pp91,92,100,229

metaphysics and of his epistemology. In his work on the ancient historians of the northern nations, he makes much of the eternity of truth, one of his postulata:

> Truth is eternal; and what is once true will be true for ever. Veritas non accipit Magis et Minus.

A statement with which Boulton would agree, and which he would no doubt cite in favour of witch beliefs, this does not quite undermine Hutchinson's eulogy of progress. Yet prescription too is warranted:

> ...Time instead of weakning its Authority adds a Veneration; because in all that long Time nothing hath contradicted it.

Posthumous reinforcements for Boulton's armoury ? Later in this work, Hutchinson makes a point about miracles in the New Testament era which, again, ironically undermines his own case:

> ...if they were to be done over again, those that do not believe now upon this rational and sufficient Evidence, very likely would not believe them upon that second satisfaction.

Where, we are entitled to ask, would the Vicar of Bury have stood in the first century A.D. ? [100]

In the Historical Essay itself, Hutchinson accepts the entire foundation of the witchcraft theory. As an Anglican clergyman anxious to avoid heterodoxy, he believes in the Devil, and in good and bad angels. Yet the dialectic of grace and freewill is never satisfactorily resolved. At what

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[100]Bodleian MS Ballard 38 f.27, July 17th 1718. Francis Hutchinson, A defence of the Antient Historians: With a particular Application of it to the History of Ireland and Great-Britain, and other Northern Nations, Dublin 1734, pp11,12,172

point does the restraint of the Devil by Providence effectively dismantle the diabolical ? "Good men", writes Hutchinson, must "have...Defence against him". Yet, are such men good by election, or through works ? Is diabolical possession predestined as much as divine grace,or as little ? A century later, James Hogg, in his Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner, highlighted these paradoxes with art. Hutchinson's science falls short.[101]

One should not look for reasons for intellectual change within intellectual debate itself. Reading symmetrically the dogmas of empiricism must be foresworn. Men and women did not look, and looking see what they had not seen before. They saw with new eyes, and it is this we must explain, in terms of the religious, political and social interests here canvassed. Boulton may well have been isolated within elite culture, though neither this, nor the status of the latter entity, is clear. Nevertheless, given a belief in witches, still possible for many, his arguments are every bit as cogent as Hutchinson's, and overlap with the latter's discourse in matters we would shudder, now, to accept. Boulton was clearly regarded as a threat; neither was he allowed the last word. In 1723 appeared Daillon's Daemonologia...reflections on Mr Boulton's answer to Dr Hutchinson's "Historical Essay", a work directed against vulgar error, which views his opponent as beneath contempt:

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[101] Historical Essay, p90; James Hogg, The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner, (1824), Oxford 1969

> ...so weak are his Arguments, that he will find himself disappointed, if he expects an Answer. I shall only transcribe his Title Page, and I take that to be Answer enough.[102]

Most importantly, witchcraft beliefs themselves were considered dangerous. Without hindsight, a new view of the witchcraft era might emerge:

> These Doctrines have often been made Party-Causes both in our own and other Nations. One side lays hold of them as Arguments of greater Faith, and Orthodoxy, and closer Adherence to Scripture, and calls the other Atheists, Sadducees, and Infidels. The People easily fall in with such popular Pretences; and not only those that stand in the Prosecutor's way, and a few suspected Persons are sacrific'd, but sometimes Governments are shaken, if they oppose their Notions. Our present Freedom from these Evils are no security, that such a Time may not turn up in one Revolution or another...[103]

Hutchinson puts witchcraft into the political context we have found for it. This is a party matter, a factional dispute. Governments are shaken and lives put at risk. But he also suggests a new perspective: it could all so easily happen again. Waves of panic had been preceded and followed by isolated prosecutions. The last big scare in England was in the revolutionary 1640s. Isolated prosecutions trickled on throught the remainder of the century. From the viewpoint of 1718, it might seem that another wave could only too easily arrive. The Pittenweem incident had preceded the Scotch union by only three years, and 1712 saw the Wenham controversy in England, stoked by political partisanship.

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[102]Comte du Lude, DAIMONOLOGIA OR, A TREATISE OF SPIRITS..., 1723

[103]Historical Essay, p181

Perhaps only a precarious end to the scare had been achieved. Hutchinson's letters point to such a perception, and in the Essay itself it finds a place, amidst the urbane dismissals and faltering wit. The irony is that Hutchinson's book was indeed the last word. As we shall see in chapter seven, witchcraft occasionally returned to a dimmer political limelight. Nevertheless, the factionalization of witchcraft in 1712, and the comparative, precarious stabilization of political life which followed the defeat of the Jacobite rebellion, can be said to have successively initiated and completed the demise of witchcraft theory as a serious system of belief.

APPENDIX: JOHN LOCKE AND THE LOGIC OF WITCHCRAFT

Richard Boulton's appropriation of Locke, which has been briefly noted in the previous chapter, is surely intriguing. Boulton had corresponded with John Locke, in relation to a scholarship he had applied for at Brasenose, so some sort of personal link may have been at work.[1] More than this, however, we need to ask if Boulton could, in good faith, have coopted the philosopher of the new science par excellence to his defence of witchcraft belief. This issue can be examined under two headings. In the case of Casaubon, Defoe, and Boulton himself[2] - referred to as the traditionalists in this section - witchcraft theory was an effective focus for a comprehensive view of a Christian society which drew in all believers against an external, or externalized, enemy. How does this use of the notion of witch relate to Locke's views on the relationship between the religious and the secular ? Then again, Boulton evidently felt that his views on the reality of spiritual operation had some grounding in the new philosophy; he explicitly cites Locke's concept of spirit in support of his thesis. How did Locke's view on spirit relate to the witchcraft debate ?

There was a longstanding association between witchcraft and toleration dating from the Civil War. If Puritans in the

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[1]See footnote 4 to chapter 5.

[2]See chapters 2, 4, 5 above.

early seventeenth century had diabolized Popery, the sects were diabolized by their opponents in the 1640s. In the case of Thomas Edwards, author of the celebrated Gangraena, this meant more than simply accusing sectaries of being in league with the Devil. The very notion of toleration was a devilish invention, "a meanes to keep his [the Devil's] old possession or being cast out to enter in again". Edwards's position recalls that of authors of witchcraft tracts who placed a rhetorical emphasis on scepticism as a form of witchcraft. Defining Christian society in opposition to a diabolical outsider, as the traditionalists did, one did not require actual witches; sceptics would do just as well, as shown in the case of Robert Wylie [in chapter 3]. In what we might call a second-order phenomenon, sceptics are loaded with the attributes of witchery, defined as being outside society and as paradoxical evidence for the Devil's presence in the world.[3]

This is a development which Locke seems to have resisted. Over more than a year, he discussed with his Dutch remonstrant friend Philip van Limborch, both the forthcoming publication of Limborch's Historia Inquisitionis[4], and the well-known case of Balthasar Bekker, the Dutch Calvinist minister censured and prosecuted by his church for

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[3]Thomas Edwards, Gangraena: or a Catalogue and Discovery of many of the Errours, Heresies, Blasphemies and pernicious Practices of the Sectaries of this time..., 1646, p122; cf. William Prynne, The Quakers Unmask'd, 1655.

[4]Amsterdam, 1692.

publishing a work, De Betoverde Weereld, in which he denied spiritual agency in the world, and the operations of witches and devils. This case was a particularly striking one, if only because the Dutch had been one of the earliest societies to withdraw from the prosecution of witches. Indeed, the witch-craze never really reached the Netherlands. Bekker's treatment is therefore an apt and especially pure case of what we have called the second-order phenomenon, involving virulent attacks on those who deny the being of witches as well as, or, in Bekker's case, rather than witches themselves.[5]

Bekker's book applied Cartesian reasoning to the notion of spirit; and assessed the credit of supernatural relations in the light of a careful epistemological framework which balanced reason and revelation. Spirits cannot act in the material world without material bodies. As Limborch understood the argument:

> The one foundation for this opinion of his is a concept of spirit derived from Cartesian philosophy, which certainly identifies spirit with thought, but goes no further. As for thought, it cannot operate in any way outside itself; its operation is wholly immanent.

Limborch presents the case as one admirably suited to have applied to it the method outlined in Locke's Essay, which

> would be most profitable reading, especially for those people who build an entire system on some

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[5]Amsterdam. See also, Le Monde enchanté, Amsterdam 1694; The World Bewitched, 1695 [both include vol. I of Bekker's work, and a synopsis of vols. II-IV]; and The World Turn'd Upside Down, 1700 [a translation of Bekker's own abridgement].

> concept that is not sufficiently full and distinct.

For Limborch, Bekker has an impoverished and "inadequate concept of soul" which he is using as if it were adequate. He regrets the author's "imprudence" which "has provoked harsh judgments in the part of his fellows, some of whom do not hesitate to decry him as an atheist". But, despite his disagreements with Bekker, the force of the letter is to declare the virtues of tolerance. In the first place, Bekker and his ilk should

> be taught by reading your [Locke's] treatise not to flatter themselves lightly, or to suppose that they fully understand those things of which they consider they have a clear idea.

Rather, after examining the matter, and

> perceiv..[ing] that they cannot explain everything relating to the essence of that thing, they should acknowledge that something is lacking from the idea, and accordingly not reject hastily whatever cannot be explained by it.[6]

This open-mindedness is surely meant to be exercised on both sides. And, what is more, "not every error is associated with impiety". In a later letter, Limborch finds the reaction of the Dutch church to Bekker's work "a strange way of rooting out errors".[7] The initial letter moves on from Bekker to Limborch's "account of the Holy Office", a tolerationist work which in setting out the mechanism and horrors of the Inquisition, includes the persecution of

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[6]Correspondence of John Locke, iv, p295-298, 17/27 and 21/31 July 1691. Translations all by the editor.

[7]Correspondence, 27th July, 1691, p301.

supposed witches.[8] Locke clearly supports Limborch's efforts against "ecclesiastical tyranny". His reply is full of wry touches. He asks the fate of that man

> qui tam mira docuit de angelis in libro suo de Spirituum existentia. [my emphasis]

The use of the word mira gestures ironically towards the demonological distinction between mira and miracula. Bekker himself has performed a wonder, having "experienced his brethren's zeal...pro religione pro veritate pro Orthodoxia".[9] And, in another glance at wonders, "Mirum si impune evadat" - it would be a wonder if he escaped without punishment. The same phrase recurs in a later letter, "Si evasit mirum est".[10] Locke and Limborch shared an opposition to persecution as unchristian, wherever it occurred. Thus Locke:

> ...persecution is the same everywhere and plainly popish; for any church whatsoever lays claim in words to orthodoxy and in practice to infallibility.[11]

Or as Limborch puts it, with a differing emphasis:

> I detest persecution, not because it is Popish, but because it is contrary to the spirit of the Christian religion; so whether Rome or Geneva sets it up, for me it is alike condemned.[12]

Limborch and Locke's sarcasm at the expense of those

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[8]See P. van Limborch, ...Historia Inquisitionis... Amsterdam 1692, chapter 21 of book 3.

[9]Correspondence, p329, 14th November, 1691.

[10]Correspondence, 29th February 1692, p400.

[11]ibid., p402.

[12]Correspondence, p695, 16th June 1693.

who persecuted Bekker, their ridiculing of the Calvinists' zeal against those who denied witches and demons, can tell us something: witchcraft belief was not a creed they felt any need to defend. Moreover, Limborch, by including the prosecution of witches in his Historia Inquisitionis, had implicated it in the more general phenomenon of Popish persecution of innocence. But his assertion that not all errors are associated with impiety does suggest that some are. This makes it clear that we cannot explain this retreat from a recognition of the reality of the crime of witchcraft to an increased supply of the milk of human kindness, associated with a waning of the urge to persecute in the late seventeenth century.

Limborch believed in the possibility of impiety as well as mere error. Yet he believed that witches prosecuted in the past were innocent. Locke and Limborch did not believe in second-order persecution either. So already, we can see the witch being marginalized from the sort of discourse of toleration in which Locke and Limborch were involved. But there is more to it than this alone. The existence, within Christian society, of individuals who engaged in the sort of impiety - diabolical contract - punished by the laws against witchcraft, was something that fitted very well, as we have seen, within the "pan Christian" discourse of men like Casaubon [see above]. The concept of the witch coupled the secular and the religious together in a way which contributed to his arguments. The witch was an inversion of

godliness which could define acceptable society. The crime of witchcraft - and witches, like thieves, are a category invented by the crime which they commit - was a religious crime, an offence of impiety prosecuted in a civil court. Witchcraft was an activity which comingled absolute hostility to both society and religion, government and divinity. For traditionalists like Casaubon, and even for Hobbes, the monarch was a similarly mixed conception, persona mixta cum sacerdote, a mortal god. The royal theorist of witchcraft, James I, had encountered witchcraft as a particular threat to divine monarchy.[13] Locke's vision of society, and of the relationship between the religious and the secular was utterly different. As Richard Ashcraft puts it, Locke's defence of "liberty of conscience against the claims of all forms of political authority ... necessitated an absolute separation between the sphere of religion (which was defined by its concernment for the eternal salvation of the individual's soul) and the sphere of politics (whose province extended only to men's estates and civil interests)".[14] "I regard it as necessary above all", Locke wrote, "to distinguish between the business of civil government and that of religion, and to mark the true bounds between the church and the commonwealth." These bounds are, on both sides, fixed and immovable. The

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[13]See Stuart Clark, "King James's Daemonologie..." in Sydney Anglo, ed., The Damned Art, 1977.

[14]Richard Ashcraft, Revolutionary Politics and Locke's "Two Treatises of Government", Princeton 1986, pp496-7.

boundary which Locke established was very clear:

> The commonwealth seems to me to be a society of men constituted only for preserving and advancing their civil goods.

Or again:

> the whole jurisdiction of the magistrate is concerned only with these civil goods, and...all the right and dominion of the civil power is bounded and confined solely to the care and advancement of these goods...

Locke takes, as Ashcraft underlines, the high road of toleration; but his scheme is hedged by exceptions. For example:

> those who deny the existence of the Deity are not to be tolerated at all. Promises, covenants, and oaths, which are the bonds of human society, can have no hold upon or sanctity for an atheist; for the taking away of God, even only in thought, dissolves all.

Or again:

> ...no doctrines, incompatible with human society, and contrary to the good morals which are necessary for the preservation of civil society are to be tolerated by the magistrate.[15]

Neither of these exceptions, however, vitiates the division between the secular and the religious in Locke's radical treatise. The requirement for civility itself is fairly basic. Society is a matter of pacts between men; and pacts are only guaranteed if men hold to the belief in God. Only the God-fearing feel compelled to tell the truth. And God himself remains very firmly outside society. Contrast this with the mystical presence of God in the state advanced

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[15]John Locke, Epistola de Tolerantia, ed. Klibansky, Oxford 1968, pp65,67,134,130 [translations by editor].

by James I, or the representative model canvassed by Hobbes. We make no sort of contract with God in Locke's system. This in itself removes the rationale of inversion which lies behind so much witch theory, and even Hobbes's position on witchcraft relies on a witch who, despite her delusions of power and the deranged nature of her claims to real intercourse with the Devil, sets herself up against God and mortal god, the divinity and his representative.

Locke's point about doctrines contrary to the preservation of society relates to witchcraft much as does Limborch's belief in the possibility of impiety. It is self-evident that, if witches did exist, they would not be tolerable within civil society, since they actively spurn God and consort with the father of lies. Behaviour more likely to disrupt society could hardly be imagined. The thrust of our argument here, however, is that the symbolic appeal which the witch, as amphibian denizen of the secular and sacred juridictions, had for the likes of Casaubon, was necessarily dissipated by the Lockean conception of society and toleration. A measure of the difference between Locke and these apologists for witchcraft belief is his attitude towards Christian sects:

> the name of Christian may include different religions. Papists and Lutherans,...are not of the same religion...The Christians of St. John, as they are called, and the Christians of Geneva are of different religions, although both are called Christians, because these take Holy Scripture and those I know not what traditions for the rule of

> their religion.[16]

One need only compare this with Casaubon's attempts to bring all religious parties together to see the diferent conceptions at work.[17] To further underline this contrast between Locke and the likes of Casaubon, one need only look at the work concerning toleration which Locke produced during the years before 1688, as a contribution to what Ashcraft calls "Shaftesbury's revolutionary political movement".[18] This was a manuscript writen by Locke and his fellow-radical, James Tyrell, in reply to Edward Stillingfleet's notorious sermon of May 1680, "The Mischief of Separation". The emphasis on unity within an established church opened up the threat of Popish intrusion as far as Locke and Tyrell were concerned:

> I see not where it can end...for by this way of reasoning [we must]...for unity sake...be brought under one universal monarchy.[19]

The argument advanced here is, then, that we can explain Locke and Limborch's relaxed attitude to Bekker, and the lack of interest in the pursuit of witches or witch-advocates that it suggests, by looking at the social and religious theory of these advocates of toleration. If we were working from Locke's system outwards, we would not expect him to find the witch an appealing concept. So the

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[16] Epistola de Tolerantia, p151.

[17] See the end of the section on Casaubon.

[18] Ashcraft, p490.

[19] Cited by Ashcraft, p496.

binding together of toleration and witchcraft belief - suggested not only by the conjunction in Locke's correspondence, but also literally by the original arrangement of Locke's papers now in the Lovelace collection - is not a simple matter of the humanitarian toleration of difference, but something more fundamental, a wholly other notion of the very differences which separate the sacred from the profane.[20]

Given these distinctions, it is vital to recognize that Locke appropriates much of the rhetoric of the witchcraft discourse in his civil discourse of anti-popery. Roman Catholics are not objectionable as heretics, a religious and authoritarian category, but rather as "subjects to a Prince that has declared enmity and war to us...", owing their primary allegiance to "another prince..of a foreign jurisdiction".[21] As the Epistola de Tolerantia itself puts it:

> That church can have no right to be tolerated by the magistrate which is so constituted that all who enter it ipso facto pass into the allegiance and service of another prince.[22]

The notion of entering the allegiance of a spiritual enemy - the Devil - is replaced by that of allying with the Pope, a religious figurehead but, for Locke, an emphatically secular

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[20]Locke's copy of Wylie's letter about the Aikenhead and Renfrew cases was originaly "in a bundle of MSS. on the subject of Toleration", Francis Horner, Memoirs and Correspondence, ed. L. Horner, 1843, i, p487.

[21]Cited by Ashcraft, pp503, 496.

[22]Epistola de Tolerantia, p132.

power. Catholicism is not to be tolerated, and on political grounds. Catholicism and all its horrors (dominion by grace, absolutism, equivocation) replaces, as it were, the witch as the defining outsider, and this reflects a difference in the conception of what society is. Moreover, it is striking that besides the transfer of rhetoric, and the conceptual substitution which this implies, we can see the Pope as a figure defined by the same secular cum religious ambiguities which constitute the witch. Catholic allegiance to the Pope involves a dangerous elision of two categories, the civil and the religious. Drawing this out, we can identify Locke's use of Popery as a demonstration of the pernicious nature of such a confusion; and contrast it with the traditionalists' use of witchcraft to yoke together the civil and religious. Both concepts are vital focuses of the notion of difference, delimiting the boundary of the socially acceptable, the body of good citizens.

If the tolerationism of Locke and his associates, the separation of the civil and religious spheres removed the potency of the witch as symbol, much of the ontology of demonology remained unassailed by Locke's philosophy, as Richard Boulton realized. There is a hint of this from Locke himself, in a letter to Nicolas Toinard[23] of 14th October 1681:

Je vous prie aussi de saluer de ma part Monsieur

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[23]Biblical scholar and regular correspondent of Locke's, 1628?-1706.

> Bernier[24] et de vous informer de lui si il y a parmi les Orientaux tant Turcs que Paiens, quelque Sorcelerie. Spectre, Oracles, ett et si le Diable se fait vaire a ces gens la comme en lAmarique, la Lapponie et autre part parmi les paiens.[25]

His conception of Christian society may have denied a role for witchcraft in a Lockean system; but he saw no objection to the possibility of diabolical intervention in the pagan world, he did not rule it out. The possibility of spiritual operation was, as Boulton realized, left intact by Locke's

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[24]Abbé Bernier, travel writer. His Histoire de la revolution de l'empire du Mogol is included in Locke, Works, 1823, x, p529, "A Catalogue and Character of most Books of Voyages and Travels."

[25] Locke, Correspondence, ii, p454. Cf. Letters...to the Duke of Shrewsbury by James Vernon Esq., Secretary of State, ed. G.P.R. James, 3 vols., 1841, ii, pp 302-3, June 8th 1699:

> I told the Bishop of Worcester [probably Stillingfleet] that his diocese is infected with notions about witches; he intends his clergy shall rectify their mistakes in that particular...He don't much controvert the power of devils in the Gentile world, and their extraordinary operations may still take place among the Pagans. He is inclinable enought to believe what some authors have writ of the strange effects in such places; but he thinks the Gospel, as far as it reaches, has destroyed the works of the devil...a man may be so profligate as to give himself to the devil, but he can have no assistance from him to hurt any body else in a supernatural way...

And also Richard Burthogge, An Essay upon Reason, and the Nature of Spirits, 1694, p18, commenting on a passage from Locke's Essay [II, chapter xxvii, para. 8]:

> I confess, the story of Prince Maurice his Parrot is stupendious, and if no Illusion was in it, as none Appears; or that it was not an Effect of Witchcraft, which I most suspect, (the Country of Brasill in which it was Acted, (as all the Indies) having many Diabolical Agents, that work by Magick;)...considering it...only as an Effect of Diabolical power, I put it in the number of the Extraordinary Events...and then it may not be drawn into Argument.

highly non-committal ontology.[26] Locke was at pains to emphasize that we, as created beings unacquainted with the reality of substance, have "As clear an Idea of Spirit as Body", that "The Notion of Spirit involves no more Difficulty in it than that of Body".[27] Elsewhere he is concerned that the "consideration of spirits" should come before "the study of matter and body". Of neither will we be able to "make a science". The study of spirits is rather "an enlargement of our minds towards a truer and fuller comprehension of the intellectual world, to which we are led both by reason and revelation".[28] In the Essay itself, Locke constructs a traditional hierarchical chain of being which draws part of its rationale from the differing levels of epistemological insight among created beings:

> ...it be not to be doubted that spirits of a higher rank than those immersed in flesh may have as clear ideas of the radical constitution of substances as we have of a triangle...[29]

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[26]Cf. John Beaumont [geologist and FRS], ...Treatise of Spirits..., 1705, p337:

> our late Mr Lock, in his Elaborate Essay on Humane Understanding, has fairly made out, that Men have as clear a Notion of a Spiritual Substance, as they have of any Corporeal Substance, Matter, or Body; and that there is as much Reason for admitting the Existence of the one, as of the other; so that if they admit the latter, it is but Humour in them to deny the former.

[27]John Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, Bohn's edition (1885), i, p425, section 5; p443, section 31.

[28]"Some Thoughts Concerning Education" in Works, (1823), ix, pp6,205,182-3.

[29]Essay, ii, p124, section 23, "A Reflection on the Knowledge of Spirits".

He makes the same point in his Discourse of Miracles:

> We know good and bad angels have abilities and excellencies beyond all our poor performances or narrow comprehensions.[30]

Following orthodox practice, Locke makes sure to limit the power of all created spirits:

> wherever the Gospel comes, it prevails to the beating down the strong holds of Satan, and the dislodging the prince of the power of darkness, driving him away with all his lying wonders...

For sure,

> it cannot be supposed God should suffer his prerogative to be so far usurped by an inferior being, as to permit any creature, depending on him, to set his seals, the marks of his divine authority, to a mission coming from him.[31]

Locke differs from the apologists for demonology not least because he demotes it within the general run of religious discourse. Glanvill, More, Boyle, Hale and the rest, had seen witchcraft as an eminently concrete instance of spiritual operation which could point us towards God. Locke, as pedagogue, disagreed:

> Having by gentle degrees...settled such an idea of God in his mind, and taught him to pray to him, and praise him as the Author of his being, and of all the good he does or can enjoy, forbear any discourse of other spirits.

He is emphatic on this point:

> What is to be known more of God and good spirits, is to be deferred till the time we shall hereafter mention; and of evil spirits, it will be well if you can keep him from wrong fancies about them,

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[30] "A Discourse of Miracles" in Works (1823), ix, p264.

[31] Miracles, pp261-2.

till he is ripe...[32]

Locke is adamant as to the dangers of relying on evil spirits as an intellectual pointer towards God. Children oppressed by the threat of evil will end up wishing

> to ease themselves of a load, which has sat so heavy on them, [and] ...throw away the thoughts of all spirits together, and so run into the other, but worse extreme.[33]

So, all in all, Boulton's conscription of Locke to the cause of witchcraft belief seems disingenuous. Yet, it should be clear that, as far as spiritual agency in the world was concerned, Locke was no devotee of Sadducistic modernism.[34] His scepticism was far more permissive in

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[32]Education, section 137, p129; section 138, p131.

[33]ibid., p184.

[34]Compare the remarks of his close associate and friend, Jean le Clerc, in his review of Bekker's work, Bibliothèque Universelle et Historique, xxi, 1691, pp149-151:

> J'aprens avec plaisir, que quelques Savans se disposent à répondre a M. Becker, & cela paroit nécessaire: mais il est à souhaiter qu'on n'adopte point pour le refuter, tous les contes qu'on a faits & qu'on fait tous les jours des Sorciers & des Magiciens; ce seroit faire comme ceux, qui pour refuter les machines de Descartes, ont ramassé tous les contes qu'on fait des actions extraordinaires des bêtes. A coup sûr, on ne persuadera point nos Esprits forts, par cette voye. Il me semble que pour répondre solidement à M. Becker, il faut faire deux choses. 1. Il faut prouver, que la nature de l'Esprit est telle, qu'il a nécessairement une certaine puissance sur le corps, quoi que limiteé; ou que, du moins, Dieu a établi à l'egard des Esprits purs, par raport aux corps, une loi à peu près semblable à celle de l'Esprit humain, par raport au Corps auquel il est uni...2. La seconde chose qu'il faut prouver: c'est que, selon les regles de la Critique, & le genie des langues Ebraiques & Grecque, il est impossible de donner à l'Ecriture le sens que lui

relation to demonic agency than that of Francis Hutchinson. This interpretation supports one of the major theses of the preceding chapter: the disappearance of witchcraft belief cannot be plausibly explained by the supposed triumph of a mechanistic world view. The evacuation from diabolical territory seems less than ever a necessary or compelling process.

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donne nôtre Auteur. Cette dernière proposition est bien plus facile à démontrer que la premiere; du moins par des arguments qu'on apelle à priori. [I learn with pleasure that some thinkers are disposed to reply to Bekker, and it would seem to be necessary; but it is to be wished that to refute him, they will not adopt all the current and past tales about witches and magicians. That would be like those people who, to refute Descartes's machines, have collected all the tales about the extraordinary feats of animals. You can be sure that going about it that way, you would not convince any of the freethinkers. It seems to me that two things have to be done to make a solid reply to Bekker. 1. It must be proved, that the nature of spirit is such, that it necessarily has a certain power over body, however limited; or that, at least, God has established as far as the relationship between pure spirits and body is concerned, a law fairly similar to that which governs the relationship between body and soul in man...2. The second proof required is that, following the rules of criticism and the nature of the Hebrew and Greek tongues, it is impossible to give scriptural passages the sense offered by our author. This last proposition is easier to show than the first; at least by so-called a priori arguments...

CHAPTER SIX

IMAGES OF DEPRAVITY

A discussion of images of witchcraft should start with basic distinctions, both in method and iconography. First, and concretely, our treatment will be sandwiched between types of image: the witch of children's fiction, an old hag with cat, broomstick, and steeple hat, firmly established by the nineteenth century; and the variety of sexually provocative figures depicted in the work of, for instance, Hans Baldung.[1] [see illustrations 1 and 2] The emergence of a fixed iconography, with specifically defined attributes, seems to have reached its completion at the very time when witchcraft itself was being fictionalized. This process can be outlined and related to the whole debate about witchcraft. Secondly, the concept witchcraft is to be looked at in its widest acceptation. If the witch was a symbol of a perceived and particular threat to society, how can we use the mutations of the diabolical theme to trace shifts in the notion of evil ? In other words, the witch is the enemy of society; do other such enemies appear in prints or pictures whose depiction can be linked to that of witches ? Thirdly, images will be used in two distinct ways. They are a peculiar index of belief, with their own language and conventions. They are also a further source for evidence as

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[1] On Baldung see: Linda C. Hults, "Baldung and the Witches of Freiburg" in Journal of Interdisciplinary History, XVIII, 2, 1987.

to the persistence of witchcraft as a serious issue into the eighteenth century.

The concentration here will be upon prints. English print production achieved a domestic predominance only in the eighteenth century.[2] Our evidence here is therefore, to an extent, chronologically biassed. It is also important that prints were produced within a literary milieu, often as illustrations to books. These images, then, do not have the relative autonomy available within the painterly tradition. They often relate to the debate in a more obvious way, which can be an advantage. As a recent study emphasizes, the image of witchcraft in painting is necessarily subordinate as evidence to the existing account of changes in belief.[3] The fact that an artist painted a witch's scene can, in itself, tell us very little about belief. The possible enhancement of the element of fantasy discredits any deductions about

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[2] See Herbert Atherton, Political Prints in the Age of Hogarth, Oxford 1974. Well into the reign of Queen Anne, the British Museum's collection contains a large number of Dutch engravings, see Catalogue of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum, Division 1, Political and Personal Satires, Vols. 1-3 (1870-). Henceforth BM Sat.

[3] An otherwise disappointing book: Jane P.Davidson, The Witch in Northern European Art, Freren 1987. She notes that almost all seventeenth-century paintings in this field were Netherlandish - hardly a region notable for virulent witchcraft prosecution in this period - see, eg. Romeyn de Hooghe, Spiegel van Staat der Vereenigde Nederlanden, Amsterdam 1706, pp5-6:

> here there is...[distaste for superstition] so that in the Seven Lands, sorcerers and miracles; the apparitions of ghosts, spirits and goblins are merely held to be the prattle of women at the spinning wheel. [cited and translated by Simon Schama in his The Embarrassment of Riches, 1987, p53.]

the contents of beliefs about witches. Another feature of the print medium is its amphibious nature, between the élite and the popular, manipulating a shared repertoire of forms, but often playing on different sensibilities.[4] The multivalency of meaning within the picture must be taken into account. Finally, this is not a statistical or quasi-statistical account of images of witchcraft. It is an examination of how selected pictures function symbolically, how they relate to each other - very much a matter of nuance. If one wants a crude measure, based on an impression gained from examination of the British Museum collection, it might be worth noting that Devil seems as familiar a protagonist in 1760, or 1800, as in the 1650s. If the revisionists' new periodisation finishes off the confessional state in 1828, with Catholic emancipation, maybe we should look for major shifts in the content of prints around then, with due consideration for the persistence of artistic tradition.[5]

The development of the stereotypical image of the witch in England can plausibly be seen as the result of social and sexual specification developing out of a social and sexual bias, followed by fossilization. The vast majority of English witchcraft trials, with which a large number of pamphlets are associated, describe the witch as female, old,

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[4] See Ronald Paulson, Popular and polite art in the age of Hogarth and Fielding, Indiana 1979.

[5] See J.C.D. Clark, English Society 1688-1832, Cambridge 1985, and appendix on Antipas, below.

and of low social status; and, by and large, accusations were made within a village milieu. The concept of witchcraft itself had a much less restricted history. It had often been a political charge against the high-born in previous centuries, the most notorious examples being Eleanor Cobham and Anne Boleyn.[6] Norman Cohn has traced the coming together of disparate stereotypes that produced, by the late fifteenth century, the "modern" witch. These fantasies were absorbed by the Dutch and German masters in their paintings - Bosch, Brueghel, Baldung and Francken among others.[7] But, just as the pattern of English witch trials differed from the continental, with less emphasis on the more lurid aspects, so did the representations made to accompany the accounts of trials. The image of the witch in sixteenth-century prints is not specific; that is to say, we recognize a witch only because of a literary context.

This is the case for images of the Chelmsford witches, and of the swimming of Mary Sutton in 1612 [see illustrations 3 and 4]. For the mid-seventeenth century, the title page of a tract concerning the Witch of Newbury may stand as representative. [see illustration 5; compare also illustrations 6-12.] While the Sabbath of the continental painters and engravers is a recognizable, classifiable genre, pictures of witches in England seem to revolve around

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[6] Among men, Boniface VIII was perhaps the most notable.

[7] Norman Cohn, Europe's Inner Demons, Sussex 1975. On Francken see below.

simple representation of the typical indicted witch. Such definition as there is is social. Mother Damnable, the subject of a seventeenth-century print in the British Museum, is clearly a peasant woman or lowly fortune-teller.[8] In the woodcuts from the Wonderful Adventures in Fairyland, [c.1700], the witches, cavorting in fairly staid fashion with devils, are evidently peasants. They are both male and female, riding on goats, bodkins and broomsticks. They sport a variety of headgear, including the steeple hat of children's fiction, an important but ambiguous accessory.[9] [see illustrations 10-13 and compare 14] The necessary props and scenery are fairly well defined in an English "christmas book" from around 1700:

> A witch must be a hagged old woman, living in a little rotten cottage, under a hill, by a woodside, and must be frequently spinning at the door; she must have a black cat, two or three broomsticks, an imp or two, and two or three diabolical teats to suckle her imps.[10]

Nathaniel Crouch in 1693 was more pithy: "reputed Witches are generally poor miserable Creatures."[11]

The nineteenth- century and modern stereotype is

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[8] BM Sat 1051,[1676].

[9] Pictures and frontispiece (cut down, date missing) in Douce Collection, Bodl.,Douce 56/W.I.I.(109). Book not traced. Printed for Ebenezer Tracy, active 1695-1719. The prints may well have been lifted from another book; the redeployment of visual material was a common practice.

[10] Cited in Robbins, Encyclopaedia of Witchcraft and Demonology, 1960, p544, from a book called Round Our Coal Fire. Robbins gives no further reference, and I have been unable to find the book.

[11] Nathaniel Crouch, The Kingdom of Darkness, 1693.

largely composed of three elements, on top of age and inevitable ugliness. The broomstick is a well-known accessory, dating from the middle ages.[12] The cat is a stand-in for the multiplicity of familiars that were reported in the seventeenth century.[see illustrations 3,7-10] It also has a sexual resonance reflected in bawdy slang; and in Manet's Olympia, two centuries on. As for costume, we can take a hint from Addison, who later echoed Crouch's remark. If any old woman in her dotage, grown chargeable to the parish, is liable to be counted a witch, then the image of the witch is likely to be that of an old and impoverished woman. The witch dresses in the clothes of a bygone era - the point-lace apron and steeple hat of the period 1650 to 1680.[13] In the seventeenth century the hat is present [eg

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[12] eg "Le Champion des Dames" manuscript illumination, by Martin le France, around 1440. Reproduced in Robbins op.cit. Other domestic paraphernalia could be used - see eg. illustrations 15 and 16.

[13] It is not clear from Joseph Spence's mention of the steeple hat whether he is referring to a current or a past plebeian fashion; his remark is certainly consistent with our view of the steeple hat as an old-fashioned and plebeian piece of headgear. Writing to his mother from Lyons in May 1731:

> In a hundred places these roads were full of country people, dressed all in their best, and in their different fashions. I think all the women had hats, some like men's, some odd high crowns, some neat straw hats, very wide-brimmed and with little steeples upon them, like the black high-crowned hats in England.

[Joseph Spence, Letters from the Grand Tour, Montreal 1975, p48.]
Cf A.M.Gummere, The Quaker: A Study in Costume, Philadelphia, 1901, p194. This is much the same as her point, that the similarity of Quaker and witch costume is a chronological coincidence. The charges of witchcraft made against Quakers in the 1650s come too early to have

illustrations 14 and 15] without any sense of its being the peculiar attribute of a witch. Other forms of headgear abound. It is as both the steeple hat and witchcraft come to be seen as historical phenomena, as a matter of fancy dress, that the hat becomes more specifically tied to witchcraft, more legible.

We have a recognizably "modern" witch in Hogarth's Credulity, Superstition and Fanaticism in 1762, and this image must have emerged before, in order to have been recognizable to an audience in 1762 as it is to us now.[14]

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explanatory relevance. Hemskirck's picture The Quaker's Meeting, accessible in a print of 1710 [BM Sat 1554], is probably not a site of diabolical resonance, therefore. We may suggest that by 1704 (Hemskirck lived 1645-1704) the sort of costume he depicts (steeple hat, point-lace apron etc) was not exclusively associated with witchcraft. If any affinity did exist as early as 1710 (and it must have been a tenuous one) we could read the issue of the print as an appropriation of the image to a new purpose in an era hot against witchcraft and dissenting, which saw the two as somehow connected [see preceding chapter].

[14] This process is not really complicated by a new fashion reported in the early 1730s, in the Weekly Register for the 10th July, 1731:

> The High-Crown'd Hat, after having been confin'd to Cots and Villages for so long a Time, is become the favourite Mode of Quality, and is the politest Distinction of a fashionable Undress.-I quarrel with it only because it seems to be a Kind of Masquerade, it would insinuate an Idea of Innocence and Rusticity, tho' the Park is not the likeliest Place to be the Scene of either; in short, if a Woman is drest like a Wood-Nymph, I expect the Simplicity of Manners, and full Force of rural Nature, which is of a Piece with the Character, but I am most egregiously disappointed.-Some Lady was intimate with the Intreague of Romances, was certainly the Reviver of this Custom; she had read of lucky Adventures in that Disguise, and fancied an Amour was its inseparable Companion- On which Account I give public Notice that a High-Crown'd hat shall be

But it is vital to recognize that no precise chronology can be constructed - it cannot be said that before a certain date all steeple hats were indeterminate, while after that date steeple hat meant witch. The most viable approach is not via an exhaustive catalogue of as many images as possible - on their own they mean little - but rather the reconstruction of visual contexts, highly nuanced and thoroughly textual, necessarily tentative and subjective.

We do not find the threefold ensemble of hat, cat, and broomstick definitively applied to witches until the eighteenth century, particularly in the masquerade, as will be shown. Crouch's The Kingdom of Darkness of 1693, for example, is full of the usual motley assortment of devils and women. A peasant woman summons devils; in the background, women of no identifiable social status banquet and couple with devils. The woodcuts which follow show us peasant women in communication with devils. [see eg illustrations 17 and 18] The image of the witch had not, by 1700, it seems, become the immediately legible formula we

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> esteem'd as an Emblem of an amorous Heart, and a Signal for the first Assignation that falls in the Way.

This passage appears in a manifestly satirical "general Review of Female Fashions, address'd to the Ladies." The piece is hard on what it calls "affectation". The author is exploiting the comical possibilities of a confusion between the tall hat of the "Cots and Villages" and that of knightly romance, highlighting the absurdities of the cult of "Rusticity" by referring to these "Wood-Nymph[s]".

find in Hogarth.[15] [see illustration 19] The process of caricature must have been partly associated with the disappearance of witchcraft prosecutions. Without new input, the image of the real witch - as opposed to the pure fantasy - was fossilized. This is not a matter of belief, but rather of artistic convention following social practice. If witches were old women in old-fashioned garb in a rural setting, in 1760 as much as in 1710, this was because of the perceptions of metropolitan artisans who had never experienced a witch trial, or made an accusation of witchcraft.[16] New input had dried up; the stereotype was then narrowed and refined, crafted with bolder edges, made instantly recognizable. We can only increase the sophistication of this extremely crude model by examining alternative focuses of belief in witchcraft. The image of witchcraft could be used in contexts far removed from the village wise woman or demonological treatise. Hogarth supplies fertile ground, in the variety of his print-making, the promiscuity of his imagery and the intelligence with which he worked through the graphic medium. In Hogarth we encounter a body of visual material in which we can trace developments and identify ideological, political, social and religious conections.

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[15] Crouch op.cit. p128, 115 [repeat]. Ronald Paulson, Hogarth's Graphic Works, Yale 1970 [henceforth Paulson], plate 232, catalogue 210, 1762. William Hogarth lived 1697-1764

[16] On the manipulation of witchcraft imagery in a Parisian print works in the eighteenth century, see the eponymous chapter in Robert Darnton's The Great Cat Massacre, 1983, and criticisms by Roger Chartier in his Cultural History, Oxford 1988, p97ff.

With a heterogeneous collection of prints, this would not be possible.

Charles Gildon's 1724 reworking of Apuleius, The New Metamorphosis required Hogarth to illustrate, among other figures, a witch. Depicting the release of the hero, Fantasio, by the witch Invidiosa, he shows the latter as an old crone, with exaggerated chin and nose, a bowed back, and a stick. The scene takes place in a decaying hovel, with a broomstick in the foreground. The latter is a hint, but only the literary context makes the identity of Invidiosa, her "profession", plain. Stereotyping is present without being formulaic. This is to be associated with the genre, book illustration. Nevertheless, the proximity of the image presented to that laid down in the Christmas book we mentioned should be noted.[17]

Turning to an earlier work, not an illustration, but a satire, we can see Hogarth using the diabolical theme in relation to a political crisis. An Emblematical Print on the South Sea Scheme of 1719, was one of a large number of prints produced in response to the bubble scandal.[18] [see illustration 21] One of these portrayed the Devil as chief bubbler, seated on a cloud; another had the Devil as embodiment of suicidal despair, whispering into ruined

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[17] See Paulson, pl 41, cat 38, 1723/4.

[18] eg. "A Monument Dedicated to Posterity", BM Sat 1629. Version of French print. "The Bubblers Mirrour", BM Sat 1621.

ears.[19] Bar its title verses, The Bubblers Bubbl'd or the Devil take the Hindmost presented a secular interpretation of the theme. An interesting image is employed in the verses: "Here Fortune does her smiles dispense,/ Like other jilting witches." Here is the typical compound of witch and prostitute, alongside the old notion of fortune as a fickle woman. It is in Hogarth's vision that the diabolical implications of the Bubble, hinted at in these prints and elsewhere - John Grigsby, the accountant of the South Sea Company, was said to have studied the black arts - reaches a full expression, comparable with the devilish bubbler described by Defoe in his Political History of the Devil. The presiding genius of the picture, standing central and apart, is the goat, symbol of both Devil and lechery, surmounting the merry-go-round. The figures on the horses of the latter need to be read in conjunction with this pictorial motto. On the left, a Scotch nobleman appears disturbed by the stare of an old crone; is this a reference to the particular fear of witchcraft in Scotland ? On the right, a young woman with a broom, part whore, part witch, chucks a lawyer under the chin: legal complacency in the face of the diabolical threat ? The figure in the middle hardly knows which way to turn. We cannot read off a pat meaning from the merry-go-round, only note its dynamic structure - allurement on one side, fear on the other,

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[19] Perhaps the wind-buyers mentioned are a hint at wind-sellers, witches. BM Sat 1625.

indecision in between - and its possible associations with a purposefully confused medley of images, with a crowd receiving literally carnal inducements to the great gamble from the Devil himself, "Trapping their Souls with Lotts & Chances". The conclusion of the verse motto sums up the connecting thread, finance, but points to the possibility of other references jostling side by side within the picture:

> So much for Monys magick power
> Guess at the rest you find out more.[20]

Three years later, the cloven foot emerging from sacerdotal robes in Some of the Principal Inhabitants of ye Moon, also known as Royalty, Episcopacy and Law, reveals further sensitivity to diabolical nuances akin to that of Daniel Defoe.[21]

If the South Sea Bubble was a high political scandal given a diabolical twist, the masquerade was a social craze which also helped itself to the resources of demonology, and was in turn portrayed as akin to witchcraft. Whom do we find heading the crowd in Hogarth's Masquerades and Operas but the Devil himself ? [see illustration 22] The show playing at the Opera on the right of the print is Dr Faustus - presumably either Thurmond's or Rich's Harlequin Doctor Faustus - so that the print achieves a literal and allegorical meaning. The Devil is both the tempter, and a masquerader disguised as the Devil, a popular costume at the

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[20] See Paulson, pl 12, cat 10, 1721.

[21] See Paulson, pl 47, cat 44, 1724.

masquerade: "Dr Faustus is here" is true in more senses than one.[22] To many, masquerade represented more than mere bad taste.[23] The opportunities for sexual licence and social charade seemed dangerous to traditional mores and to hierarchy; the Devil's clutched money-bag makes plain the perceived motives of the masquerades' organizers. Bishop Gibson of London portrayed the danger in stark terms in his sermon to the Societies for Reformation of Manners in 1723. Masquerades were "Loose and Atheistical Assemblies" to be seen within a wider diabolical context:

> The Empire of Sin and Satan upon earth is enlarged, and the Cause of God and Religion loses ground.[24]

The Essay on Plays and Masquerades of 1724 spoke suggestively of masqueraders "entering into a League with the World, the Flesh and the Devil...against Reason and Religion".[25] John Gay, in an unpublished poem, rebuked the Swiss impresario Heidegger, for being "so wicked/to let in the Devil", another ambiguous play on a popular costume,

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[22] This is the sign above the opera.

[23] The contemporary title of Hogarth's print was "The Bad Taste of the Town". The idea of transformation pervades both masquerade and witch lore. On masquerades see: Pat Rogers, "Masquerades and Operas..." in his Literature and Popular Culture in 18th century England, Brighton 1985; David Blewett, "Roxana and the Masquerades" in Modern Language Review, 65, 1970; Terry Castle, Masquerade and Civilization, 1987.

[24] Edmund Gibson, A Sermon Preached to the Societies..., 1723.

[25] Cited in Terry Castle, "Eros and Liberty at the English Masquerade" in 18th Century Studies XVII, 1983.

perhaps.[26] Fielding's poem of 1728, "The Masquerade" is more obviously playful:

> So for his uglines more fell,
> Was H-d-g-r toss'd out of hell'
> And in return by Satan made
> First Minister of Masquerade.

A play by P.Aubin, The Humours of the Masqueraders, published in 1733, presents us with an extended metaphor of devilry and masquerading. Archpole and his friend Sprightly pose as spirits in order to frighten the husband of Archpole's lover, the justice, Mr Megrim. Mrs Megrim complains to her husband:

> you were very naughty to leave me so, to be haunted by the Devil or one of his Emissaries, as you fancied,

to which the cuckold retorts, "Women seldom fear the Devil, or his works". This sentiment is hardly applicable to his housekeeper, Mrs Frible, an old, puritanical hypocrite, who swallows the deception whole:

> Oh! Sir, the Devil has surely set his foot in the Chamber...every Thing is bewitch'd...the Evil one has surely took Possession of this Place.[27]

Slender, the cook, is similarly credulous, sensing a satanic presence since "the Fires burn blue", a well-recognized symptom.[28] Megrim, even he has seen through the charade, continues to speak of it in diabolical terms:

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[26] In P.J.Crofts, Autograph Poetry in the English Language, 1973, I, p64-67.

[27] The play is subtitled, The Merry MASQUERADERS: OR THE Humorous CUCKOLD. pp10, 14/16.

[28] ibid. p17.

> Cuckoldom, the worst of devils [cf. the diabolical cum sexual symbolism in both Hogarth's bubble print and his counterfeit masquerade ticket discussed below], waits me there [in London]...There's Magick in her Lips; she's all Delusion.

At the dénouement, he addresses his wife as a witch:

> You Sorceres, Syren, Crocodile, tell me who is that Devil that makes me and you Monsters.[29]

Throughout the play there is satirical use of the perception, dating from the 1720s and earlier, that the masquerade is somehow diabolical.[30] This notion informs the central conceit of the work, the impersonation of devils by masqueraders, and their virtual equation. Megrim's view of events is transformed from a supernatural to a naturalistic or secular one, retaining nevertheless the diabolical connotations surrounding women and their supposed sexual misdemeanours.

The paraphernalia of demonic evil were present at masquerades in a more concrete sense too. Dress could be inspired by turquerie, the inversion of gender and social position, or historical romance. We have noted the popularity of the devil as disguise, dating back to the festivals of the Middle Ages. More topical was the witch costume which is often prominent in representations of the masquerade. Indeed, it is within the milieu of the masquerade that we can detect the stereotype of the witch

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[29] ibid.pp15,60.

[30] In Guardian 142, 1713, Steele remarks "that the devil first addressed himself to Eve in a mask, and that we owe the loss of our first happy state to a masquerade".

achieving the formula we recognize today.[31] [see illustration 23 for a late example] We can cite a number of eighteenth-century representations. A drawing at Windsor, attributed to Egbert van Heemskerk, depicts a masquerade in the Long Room of the Opera House in 1724. A number of the men wear tall harlequin hats, but one figure is clearly distinguished as a witch, with steeple hat and apron. A painting at Helmingham shows us a masquerade scene at the Haymarket theatre. In the left foreground a figure is dressed in steeple hat, black dress and cape. The disguise was still current in 1773, in C.White's print in the Guildhall library, A Masquerade Scene in the Pantheon. In the centre foreground, a witch with crone-like features wears hat, cape and buckled shoes, and carries a stick, as she dances with a horned animal grotesque. Indeed the whole scene is a grotesque and distorted one, apparently commenting with the same disapprobation as Hogarth had felt in the 1720s.[32]

The function of the masquerade as an arena in which the witch stereotype was deployed is confirmed by a consideration of the witches in Macbeth. The illustrations for Rowe's editions, in 1709 and 1714, show women with cowls

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[31] Aileen Ribeiro, The Dress Worn at Masquerades in England 1730-1790, dissertation, Courtauld Institute, 1975, p327. Also private communication. She notes the possibility of confusion with the gipsy costume, but see remarks on the Elizabeth Canning case below.

[32] All three to be found reproduced in ibid.

and torches or wands.[33] But, in the masquerade procession put on for Garrick's Shakespeare Jubilee at Stratford-upon-Avon in 1769, the three witches are in masquerade witch costume, with steeple hats, brooms and aprons.[34]

Hogarth's version of the masquerade proper is to be found in a print of 1727, the counterfeit Masquerade Ticket.[35] [see illustration 24] Here we see a confused crowd of masked and costumed revellers, their inclinations measured by a pair of "lecherometers", some of them clustering around a sacrifice to Priapus. The best defined, most easily read, figure in the foreground, slightly left of centre, is a witch. Within the whole structure of the picture she is more than an incidental detail, one charade among others. For, above the door at the end of the chamber in the picture, hangs a painting of what is no mere Bacchanalian scene, but a diabolical Sabbath. Horned figures on the periphery, a mounted goat in the centre, a vomiting

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[33] The Works of Mr William Shakespear, ed. Rowe, 1709, vol V, p2299 and 1714, vol VI, p233; Lud. Du Guernier inv. et sculp. Later paintings [eg Sir Joshua Reynolds and Henry Fuseli], follow the same sort of pattern. Walpole describes them, fairly unhelpfully, as dressed in "black hats and blue aprons, like basket women and soldiers' trulls..." Notes by Horace Walpole on Several Characters of Shakespeare, ed.W.S. Lewis, 1940 [cited by A. Ribeiro in private communication to the author]. This narrows the range down to definitely plebeian costume. Note, incidentally, another of Rowe's 1714 illustrations which shows the steeple hat as plebeian wear: vol IV p7 [Henry IV Part II. Also 1709, p88; see illustration 23a].

[34] See illustration in the Oxford Magazine for 1769 [illustration 23b], very similar in style to White's print of the Pantheon masquerade.

[35] Paulson, pl 113, cat 109, 1727.

figure on the far left; these are all forms associated with the sabbath as shown in paintings of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Absolutely central is a figure with arms uplifted, whose significance is hard to gauge. Unless, that is, we compare it with a similar figure in a drawing of a witches' sabbath, attributed to Frans Francken the younger.[36] [illustration 25] The mounted goat in the foreground could be related to that in the Hogarth print; or we can even compare goat, rider, and swaying figure as a composite group in both pictures. We need not go so far as to assert a copy relation, direct quotation, or even common source, however. It is clear, most importantly, that Hogarth's print uses images drawn from a repertoire of forms associated with pictures of witches' sabbaths. [compare also illustrations 26-29] Another drawing, attributed again to Francken, seems to relate.[37] Towards the left, a naked woman is being anointed by a kneeling, clothed witch, and she holds her arms in the air in a fashion reminiscent of the Hogarth and the Ashmolean drawing (although the resemblance is less well-defined than in the previous comparison.) Within the eighteenth-century discourse of the masquerade which we have outlined, The Masquerade Ticket is a particularly structured and dense example. The allegory is worked through. We are reminded of the similar standing of

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[36] Ashm.PT 131.

[37] Dutch and Flemish drawings in the British Museum, ed. Popham, 1932, no.S155.

Hogarth's Bubble print within its genre. The witches' sabbath, picture within a picture, is a microcosm of, and gives a diabolical twist to, the masquerade. The prominence of the witch within the assembly itself is a singular embodiment of its diabolical nature.

We can compare Hogarth's satirical vision of masquerade, bacchanal and sabbath with that of Thomas Gordon in his essay "Of Masquerades" in The Humourist:

> [Livy gives] a large Account of some Nocturnal Assemblies lately set up at Rome; I think he calls 'em Bacchanals, and describes their Ceremonies, Rites of Initiation, and Religious Practices... 'Tis to this very Relation of my Author, I'm now well assur'd, all our dreadful Accounts of Witches are owing; their riding thro' the Air on Broom-sticks, their meeting at Midnight, and dancing in gloomy Groves, together with the other very credible Pranks they play there. It does not at present occur to my Mind, whether we have any other Custom among us that takes its Rise from hence...Masque originally denotes an old Hag, a Witch; from thence it came to mean a whore...

He goes on to give a description of a masquerade scene:

> I saw, at a little Distance, a lusty Figure all in black, with a Pair of Ram's Horns upon his Head, and a little Creature in his Hand, in Appearance, a young Woman, dress'd in a Quaker's Habit; they were soon out of Sight; he hurry'd her into a little Room just by, she having neither Force nor Power to resist him.[38]

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[38][Thomas Gordon], The Humourist, ii, 1725, p187ff. And cf. Meric Casaubon, A Treatise concerning Enthusiasme..., 1656, p8:

> But Livie the Roman Historian...who although he speak onely of the Dionysiaca, or Bacchanalia, as they were clancularly kept at Rome; yet what he writes of them, is for the most part generally true of all those hidden mysteries...in point of brutishnesse and licentiousnesse..[they were] so like, that though we distinguish the founders by names, yet we must needs acknowledge them all guided by one Spirit, stiled in the Gospel an

None of this is meant to impose an authoritarian reading of these pictorial texts - and surely Hogarth's pictures can be regarded as texts[39] - but rather to suggest an aspect which has been neglected up to now and which moreover, is worked upon in a systematic way, worthy of notice. We can only follow the mottoist's advice, "Guess at the Rest/You find out more". What we have noticed can have no bearing on the slippery question of Hogarth's place in the debates about witchcraft. All that can be pointed out is the deployment of the rhetoric of witchcraft within a variety of social critiques. The argument set out in the previous two chapters and amplified in the next, that witchcraft debate on a literal level was expelled from the public arena for political reasons, and that witchcraft was a matter for serious concern into the eighteenth century, can obviously find a place for these pictures. They show us how witches could be found in places other than the village, and how the repertoire of witchcraft beliefs could be used in the political and social worlds.

A longstanding affinity existed between witchcraft and diabolism, and sexual misdemeanour or promiscuity. This is manifested in the sixteenth-century visual arts, Baldung for instance, and we can find it in Hogarth too. We have already noticed the conjunction of witchcraft and the

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unclean Spirit: not as unclean by nature, which we know he is not; but as an enemy, since his fall, both to God and man...

[39] See note 5, Paulson, passim.

"lecherometer". Plate three of the Rake's Progress can be analysed to similar effect.[40] [see illustration 30] Here the artist represents the hero in his cups, sprawling on a harlot's lap. In the foreground on the right is the "posture woman", another prostitute, who will perform on the table with the candle being brought in by the crazy-looking attendant on the right. [see detail, illustration 31] Beside him a woman holding a ballad sheet, The Black Joke, sings. Its name apart, this ballad can be shown to have diabolical associations by noting its later use in a print of 1760. In this, the Empress-Queen of Austria, exposing her legs as she falls, sings the Black Joke, the music outspread. The Devil whispers to her from behind, as she cries, "The Duce take his Joke I have Crackt my Crown by it".[41] In itself, of course, this is fairly paltry evidence - the mixture of black joke, bawdy and diabolical leads us on. Much more striking is the comparison between the undressing posture woman, and a similar figure in Frans Francken's Hexenkuche, which exists in a number of versions and was much copied.[42] The most famous version is that currently in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna.[43] [illustration 32] That in Berkeley Castle is evidently a copy, [illustration 33]

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[40] Paulson, pl 142, cat 134, 1735.

[41] BM Sat 3745.

[42] See U.A. Härting, Studien zu Kabinettbildmalerei des Frans Francken II, Holz 1983.

[43] Around 1610, Inv.Nr.1074.

while the Hexensabbath in the Victoria and Albert Museum is more distantly, but still visibly, related.[44] Michiel Coxie II or III made a copy which I have failed to locate.[45] [illustration 34] The existence of this version by another artist surely points to the currency of Francken's picture in the seventeenth century. So too does a print by Iaspar Isac, a Dutchman active as merchant and engraver in Paris from around 1610, dying in the same city in 1654.[46] [illustration 35] In the centre is the witch of the Francken picture, and similar débris lies around her: skull, charms and so on. the print is called Abomination des sorciers. The witch in the centre wears a similar costume to, and is engaged in the characteristic action of, the witch in the Francken picture. This gesture, pulling a boot or stocking from the leg, is repeated less characteristically in the picture at the V & A. It is the gesture of the posture woman in the Rake's Progress.[47] The diabolical débris Hogarth

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[44] V & A Dyce collection 3. See Catalogue of Foreign Paintings before 1800, 1973, no.128 (with reproduction).

[45] A reproduction can be found in the Warburg Institute's photographic collection, under witch.

[46] Bodl. Douce collection 13/WI.I.(88). See also the exhibition catalogue, les Sorcières, Paris 1973 [Bibliothéque Nationale], catalogue number 247. Here the print is attributed to Isac's workshop and dated around 1610. As a whole the catalogue is disappointing, claiming without any evidence beyond the visual, that "les artistes gardent une attitude raisonnable". An assumption is made that Isac's print shows witchcraft belief "traitée sur le mode comique". I have already pointed out that the comic mode never precludes belief.

[47] As a nineteenth-century custodian of the Douce collection noted.

replaces with discarded clothing and utensils. The composition remains much the same; and some of the objects hint back to the Francken and the Isac print. A chicken carcass makes a nice satire on the skull and crossbones of the Isac, or the nasty baby corpse in the original painting. The prostitute is drawn from the witch; this part of the picture is itself a visual black joke. The combination of whore and witch is present in the Francken too, as the woman on the witch's left in the Vienna and Berkeley Castle versions, as well as the Coxie copy, is engaged in the stereotypical gesture of the early-modern prostitute - unlacing her bodice, her hand on her bosom.

And so to another Hogarthian reference, which brings us back to the themes of the last chapter. In the Harlot's Progress, plate three, Moll Hackabout has a steeple hat and birch (which in conjunction with the former we all too easily mistake for a broomstick) hanging on her wall.[48] [illustration 36] Hogarth's moral and satirical use of the witchcraft theme is now established. His ambiguous juggling of stereotypes - is the devil masquerading, is the witch a charade ? - should be recalled.[49] The masquerade was a diabolical and sexual arena, attended by individuals disguised as witches. Individually the hat and birch on Moll's wall have a diabolical and a sexual resonance. Read

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[48] Paulson, pl 129, cat 123, 1732.

[49] Incidentally, the devil in masquerade is a popular title and theme in English satirical prints eg. BM Sat 1567, a fold-up devil in skirts.

together, hat and broom-resembling birch mean witch. Read separately, the hat means masquerade, scene of sexual licence; the birch points to prostitution and the sado-masochistic.[50] The cycle was published in 1732, and I do not think it too implausible to tie this pair of images together with that of Dr Sacheverell, hanging adjacent, to form a new cluster. The evidence for the perceived association between high church and belief in witchcraft is copious. Nearly twenty years after the Wenham controversy, William Hogarth was still making the connection between these sets of belief; his memory and that of his public was a long one. Anachronism was his métier; the excise bill of 1733 was still fomenting riots in a print of 1754, plate two of his election series, Canvassing for Votes.[51]

Other references to witchcraft, hidden and overt, can be found in Hogarth's works. "Credulity, Superstition and Fanaticism" is an obvious example. [illustrations 37 and detail, illustration 19] A preacher brandishes a marionnette witch as part of his enthusiastic tour de force.[52] "The Sleeping Congregation" is a more difficult case. [illustration 38] Lechery is clearly present in the face of clerical neglect. The women in the congregation, with their hooked noses, steeple hats and sinister air, are distinctly

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[50] Cf illustration 25, of flagellation, in L.Stone, The Family, Sex, and Marriage, 1977.

[51] Paulson, pl 218, cat 199, 1757.

[52] Paulson, see note 14 above.

unsettling, even threatening. As compared to their male companions, they seem upright and secretly watchful. The biblical text inscribed on the pulpit is from Paul's letter to the Galatians, chapter four, verse eleven:

> I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.

The preceding verses which give that anxiety its context, point towards the worship of other gods, to apostasy, idolatry and witchcraft:

> Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods. But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage ?

By this date, 1736, the very year of the repeal of the witchcraft act, one could see them as witches left unharried in the face of clerical neglect, the enemy within. These two prints are already pendants in one sense via their contrasting views of congregation and churchmanship, their highlighting of two diametrically opposed dangers for the church. In witchcraft we might have another connection.[53]

To conclude our look at Hogarth, let us consider a plate which he designed but did not execute, the execrably punning "Frontis-Piss" of 1763, engraved by LaCave.[54] [illustration 39] According to Samuel Ireland, this was produced for a work by Dr Gregory Sharpe, Master of the Temple, and chaplain to the Prince of Wales and future

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[53] Paulson, pl 151, cat 140, October 1736.

[54] Paulson, Cat.250, Plate 294.

George III. It was a work never published, which attacked the Hutchinsonians, those high-church opponents of the Newtonian philosophy.[55] The plate shows a witch with hat and broomstick sitting on a crescent moon, while pissing on the rocks below. Strewn about these rocks we can see two books, "HUTCHIN" and "NEWTON", and a telescope which lies by the latter. The Hutchin in question is evidently John Hutchinson, the natural philosopher whose objections to Newtonian physics, which he saw in conflict with divine revelation, won him disciples into the nineteenth century. Born in 1674, he died in 1737. His popularity with high-church divines explains the inclusion of a witch on the frontispiece. Newtonianism had been given a lasting association with scepticism about witchcraft through Newton's biographer and nephew Conduitt's sponsorship of the 1736 repeal of the Jacobean witchcraft legislation. The exact meaning is, perhaps, irrecoverable. Mice run from the stream of urine - are they engendered by it, or fleeing from it ? Some mice feed on the volume of Newton; a similar mouse (or is it a cat?) lies dead on the volume of Hutchinson. Obviously, it is a noxious substance. Further speculation is welcome. As for Sharpe himself, we know that he wrote a pamphlet contributing to the debate over demoniacs in the New Testament, taking a naturalistic stance.[56] The

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[55] Samuel Ireland, Graphic Illustrations of Hogarth, 1794-99, 2 vols., vol.I,p175-6. On Hutchinson see C.B.Wilde, "Hutchinsonianism..." in History of Science, xviii, 1980.

[56] Gregory Sharpe, A Review, 1739.

Hutchinsonians can be objectively identified with a hard line against apostasy which might relate to beliefs in witchcraft, but the high church bias is enough.[57] The association made between high-flyers and belief in witchcraft, made during the Wenham case and after, was still being made in a polemical context more than fifty years later.

In the era of large-scale prosecution, notions of witchcraft in England were fairly limited, certainly as compared with earlier centuries. The witch was, by and large, identified with an old and malicious peasant woman. Carlo Ginzburg's recent work on the witches' sabbat - admittedly not a common English stereotype, but one we have seen depicted in the popular print - suggests an interesting interpretation of the genesis of a threatening conception of a witchcraft conspiracy:

> In an age of crisis [around 1321] (demographic, economic, political, and religious) marginal groups such as lepers and Jews, who had been associated in many ways in the public's perception, were physically segregated or ejected. For the first time in European history, the chain provided by the conspiracy myth (devil-Moslem kings-Jews-lepers) connected internal and

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[57] eg. William Jones in his Full Answer to the Essay on Spirit of 1753:

> "their heresies are termed doctrines of devils, invented by the adversary, and set up as rivals to the pure and saving doctrines of Christ; and those who set forth and propagate such doctrines, are declared to be ministers of Satan, artfully substituting and diligently preaching his word of death, instead of the word of life. "

Surely this is very close to the language which Atterbury's mock apologist had, earlier in the century, satirized, A Seasonable Apology For Father Dominick, 1723.

> external enemies, giving political and religious authorities the opportunity to purge society on a mass scale. In that chain, witches were still absent - but not for long.[58]

Much of this is, as yet, broad speculation, and it is not clear how, or indeed to what extent, this essentially continental version of witchcraft belief was transmitted to a juridically, and in many ways culturally peculiar England. But it cannot be denied that by the early seventeenth century, the notion of conspiracy had entered witchcraft discourse in England.[59] It has already been suggested that the figure of the witch functioned as a focus of notions of deviancy; the witch is without doubt conceived of as the enemy of society. It was a mass threat bringing together the fear of an enemy within and without, both of and not of society, as distinct from the alternative image of an elite practised means of securing largely political ends. Ginzburg's virtue is in his refusal to surrender to linear chronology, and we can see these two images running concurrently, although in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the former came to overwhelm the latter. Whatever happened in trials, where maleficium seems to have remained central, in the literature conspiracy abounded, and in images, the sabbath was both glanced at and thoroughly

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[58]Carlo Ginzburg, "The Witches' Sabbat: Popular Cult or Inquisitorial Stereotype" in ed. S. Kaplan, Understanding Popular Culture, Berlin 1984, p41.

[59] Thus Lord Chief Justice Anderson in 1602: "The land is full of witches. They abound in all places...in [a] short time [they will] overrun the whole land." BL Sloane MS 831, f38.

depicted. [see illustrations 13-18]

It is noticeable in Defoe's work, how the recession of the early modern witch theme is succeeded by a return, however satirical, to witchcraft as political accusation. And this is reflected in the popular print, not only through the persistent presence of the Devil, but also in more specific references. Defoe's accusations against Walpole find their way into the print. Bob the Political Ballance Master addresses the Devil. In The Treasury or his Honour Bit, a devil flies off with Walpole, declaring "He's D---d Weighty". Mr Sandys detects a political stink coming from Walpole, "a Lapland witch...[who] has a great support by ye sale of wind". In The Night Visit, Or the Relapse, the Devil peeps in while Bob makes off on a broomstick.[60] Other aspects of the witchcraft discourse are redeployed too, and notably the Scottish connection. The Oxford Magazine reproduced a print in 1772, entitled "A View of the Deluge of Scotch paper Currency for English Gold", an assault on Scots financial rectitude.[61] [illustration 40] A becapped Scotsman rides away on a broomstick, bearing sacks of money, and tossing paper currency in exchange. The diabolical significance of paper money and credit has already been noted as regards Hogarth and Defoe. This theme persisted into the nineteenth century in American prints and

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[60] BM Sat 2576, 2560, 2495 [THE MOTLEY TEAM OF STATE], 2559.

[61] BM Sat 4961.

publications.[62] A Scotsman on a broomstick is a subtle hint of diabolism, made more pointed by the known Scottish predilection for absurd and superstitious beliefs. The theme is there in the 1760s too, and in more profusion, illustrating the campaign against Lord Bute and his Scottish hangers on. The Magical Installation has Bute as Macbeth redivivus, hailed by three witches.[63] The Scotch Broomstick and the Female Beesan, a print by the Marquis of Townshend speaks for itself. But perhaps the best example is to be found in another plate of 1762, The Flying Machine from Edinburgh in one Day, perform'd by Moggy Mackensie at the Thistle and Crown, produced by Hogarth's satirist, Paul Sandby.[illustration 41] In this etching a witch conveys two Scotsmen on a broomstick, which she urges on the journey by means of a second broom. A rhyme is attached:

> On Broomstick by old Moggy's Aid
> Full royally they rode;
> And on the Wing of Northern Winds
> Came flying all abroad.[64]

A sense of conspiracy remained, over and above a more purely satirical use of demonological themes. The Devil

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[62] See also BM Sat 1654, De Eklips der Zuider Zon [The Eclipse of the Sun] which refers to "De drommel in specie", the devil in specie. Also cf Luther, Tischreden, 6 vols, Weimar 1912-21, Vol 1, no 391. Gellt (gold qua money) is equated with verbum diaboli, the word of the Devil.

[63] Dressed, we note, in masquerade witch garb. In a masquerade, where no continuous context was available, and in the political satire, where the image had to be easily identifiable, legibility of the ensemble of witchly attributes was essential.

[64] Bm Sat 3896, 3859, 3852.

seemed to be everywhere. He bribed electors[65]; urged foreign powers to evil schemes[66]; encouraged the Pretender[67].Witch imagery inevitably played a part, as has already been noted.[68]

This use of imagery reached its apogee, its most patent expression, however, in the midst of a political crisis which explicitly resurrected the rhetoric of the Sacheverell debate four decades earlier, and embodied the sort of prejudices which Ginzburg associates with the birth of the ideology of witchcraft in the middle ages. This was the crisis over Jewish naturalization in 1753, which provoked a multiplicity of pamphlets, and a flood of prints. Of thirteen prints in the British Museum collection directed towards the issue[69], seven, or over half, have diabolical associations, while four, or more than a third, include figures of devils or witches. Thus, this incident can show us both the conviction that the Devil was at work in new areas, vitiating the need for the old witchcraft; and the redeployment of witch and devil as ideological markers, despite their increasingly fictional status. The Jewish

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[65] BM Sat 2498, A Satire on Election Proceedings.

[66] BM Sat 2449, The European State Jockies.

[67] Bm Sat 2636, The Invasion, or Perkins Triumph; 2659, The Plagues of England.

[68] See, eg, BM Sat 2661, Briton's Association against the Pope's Bulls, in which the devil, booted and spurred, rides upon a broom.

[69] BM Sat 3202-10,3265-6,3268,3270.

Naturalization Bill was itself a fairly slight measure which would have made possible the naturalization of Jewish denizens by Act of Parliament. It did not itself constitute an act of naturalization.[70] The furore which the issue raised, bringing together anti-semitism, xenophobia and high church extremism, led the government to repeal the Act, and the whole matter became a subject for vigorous propaganda during the elections of 1754. The incident demonstrates the possibilities for a renewal of faction over religious and affiliated issues in the 1750s. It shows us the dormant vitality of the old high-flying themes. The defence of what remained of the sacramental test formed a major objection in principle to what was, practically speaking, an almost inconsequential bill. For our purpose here, it is striking that this explicit revival of the "rage of party" brought witchcraft, or the image of it, back into the political arena.

At the same time, hysteria was being generated over the even more marginal case of Elizabeth Canning, who had claimed to have been abducted by an old gipsy woman, Mary Squires, and her accomplices, to be tortured in an Enfield bawdy-house. Henry Fielding in his capacity as a justice was gullible enough to fall for Canning's story, but it subsequently emerged that Squires, who had won the confidence of another justice, Sir Crisp Gascoyne (a

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[70] T.W.Perry provides a thorough survey of the controversy in Public Opinion, Propaganda and Politics in Eighteenth-Century England, Cambridge, Mass., 1962.

supporter of the so-called Jew Bill), had an unimpeachable alibi. Elizabeth Canning was transported for perjury, but Mary Squires remained the focus of much hostility. She and her associates continued to be described as "Street-Robbers and Gypsies, who have scarce even the Appearance of Humanity".[71]

A print published in 1754 brought the two sets of social outcasts together in a commentary on the parliamentary elections in London and Oxford. [see illustration 42] In a procession, Crisp Gascoyne, a candidate for Oxford who withdrew, inquires for Mary Squires, "Why where are you Mother Sq-r-s wth your infernal Troop". A friend directs his gaze upwards to the lady in question, accompanied by three witches on broomsticks:

> Infernal ! Sr C-pe why they are up in the Air yonder.

The witches themselves are in conversation:

> "I am afraid we are too late Sisters."
> "Where have you been Sister Canidia."
> "I have been in N-rf-lk making a Parson's wife miscarry."
> "I live in N-rf-lk too sometimes, did you never Hear of the Old Woman at Saul."

Gascoyne's party is then followed by a party of Jews, including the leading financier, Sir Sampson Gideon (actually a pragmatic opponent of the Jew Bill.)[72] However

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[71] A Full and Authentic Account of the Strange and Mysterious Affair Between Mary Squires a Gypsy, and Elizabeth Canning, second edition, 1754, p74.

[72] BM Sat 3270, All the World in a Hurry, or the Road from London to Oxford.

irreverent and satirical the intent of the printmaker, his effective conjunction of gipsy, Jew and witch indicates the function of the latter as the definitive outcast, the socially defining deviant in a religious conception of society, as well as the image of depravity. Faint echoes of witchcraft's role in the period 1710-14 therefore remained in the 1750s as the witch herself became increasingly a subject for fiction or a costume from the dressing-up box.

The connection with gipsies is to be seen earlier. There is the Gypsy's Triumph of 1753, another commentary on Gascoyne's activities.[73] [illustration 43] The man trusted Jews. He trusted gipsies. Can we trust him not to join with all the enemies of society ? These are the sentiments the caption satirizes:

> Behold the Man who thought it no Disgrace,
> To save the Sovereign of the Lapland Race.
> His power by Magic joind may still the Rage
> Of Lyes, But who can Envious Wrath Asuage.

This tag is accompanied by extracts from Macbeth, and a picture which shows Gascoyne and Squires supported by gipsy witches. An even earlier print, A True Draught of Eliz: Canning of 1753 [see illustration 44] brings together the heroic portrait of the martyred Canning and views of her Enfield prison, - both previously published - a picture of Squires in conversation with Sir John Hill, and the satirical key which makes the ensemble a "true draught", a picture which pours scorn on the popular credulity which

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[73] BM Sat 3214.

would rather credit the flight of witches than Mary Squires' alibi. This last plate is subtitled "E. Canning vindicated, or M. S-s ye Gypsies Flight to Enfield Wash". It shows the gipsy on a broomstick, the top of her steeple hat buried in the clouds, declaring, "I can be at Abbotsbury and Enfield Wash, both at one Time". Below her, a spectator cries out, "There she goes" while another opines, "The Witches Act must be put in force again".[74] Again the satirical connection - referring at some level to a perceived real connection - is made between attitudes to witches and attitudes to gipsies.[75] Or, to put it another way, witchcraft has ceased to be the threat to society; instead it is witchcraft belief that is to be driven out, by laughter rather than by hanging. From another perspective still, the satirical accusation of witchcraft we saw deployed against political enemies by the likes of Defoe has turned into a satirical accusation of credulity.

So, we have examined the indeterminacy of the image of the witch in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and tried to explain why, in the eighteenth century a fixed iconography developed, originating in an old, plebeian woman. The conventional image, largely shedding its social connotations, still figures in children's fiction [see

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[74] BM Sat 3211.

[75] On these issues see also BM Sat 3210, The Commite[e] of Ald-m-n in which Gascoyne declares "The Prince of Darkness gave me pelf/to serve the Gipsey and my self". The general implication is that bribery motivates him, and all those who support the Jew Bill.

illustration 45]. It was recognizably there in 1762. Also, it was probably largely a post-1714 development. We have ass ociated the development of this specific imagery with the witch costume seen at masquerades from the 1720s at least. This process was no doubt a gradual one, and it does not exclude the appearance of witch figures in alternative garb, or the use of the typical witch costume for other purposes after this decade. It is simply that the identification becomes more and more reliable.[76] It is in Hogarth's work that we can see most clearly this process at work. And it is in Hogarth's prints that we can observe witchcraft as a theme finding new uses, notably in the moral discourse which criticised the excesses of the masquerade. In the political arena too, witchcraft imagery becomes more prominent after 1714, as the old uses of witchcraft are banished. The political charge of witchcraft was an old one, its use in the popular print not so much an innovation as a revival. It may even be that these uses do not actually increase, but simply achieve greater prominence as the persecution of witches in a strict sense comes to be illegitimate. In some senses these other uses may be described as metaphorical, but in an era of discursive change in which the new boundaries are as yet unclear, it is difficult properly to distinguish between the "real" and the

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[76] I have also mentioned that the witch costume may have been in use peripherally in the reissued Heemskirck picture of 1710. But this is not essential to my argument, and is no more than a conjecture.

"symbolic". Events of the 1750s show how a revival of the old politics could reinvigorate the old themes and deploy the newly developed imagery. It is notable that, when the witchcraft issue again enters the political fray, it is at a similar time of politico-religious uproar, the 1820s. The author of the pamphlet Antipas [1821], which opposed the repeal of the Irish witchcraft legislation, perceived the same framework binding together anti-Dissenter and anti-Catholic legislation, and the laws against witches. After the events of 1828-32, that framework no longer existed to be appealed to. From the 1830s on, the Devil, however satirical his uses in the preceding century, seems to retreat. Peel, Disraeli and Gladstone were not often seen as front-men for the Devil, in the popular print, at least.[77]

ILLUSTRATIONS

1. Early nineteenth-century woodcut, Bodl.Douce 58/W.1.1.(108).
2. Drawing by Hans Baldung Grün.
3. Title page from pamphlet on Chelmsford trial of 1589, Lambeth palace Library.
4. From Witches Apprehended, Examined, And Executed, 1613.
5. As shown.
6. From The Examination and Confession of Certain Witches at Chelmsford, 1566, Lambeth Palace Library.

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[77]On Antipas see appendix to the chapter on repeal, below.

7. From The Wonderful Discovery of the Witchcrafts of Margaret and Philip Flower, 1619. This shows Anne Baker, Joan Willimot and Ellen Greene whose confessions also appear in this pamphlet.

8. From Matthew Hopkins, Discovery of Witches, 1647.

9. From BL Add.MS 32496, "A Discourse of Witchcraft as it was Acted in the Family of Mr Edward Fairfax..."

10. ibid.

11. Picture of Anne Bodenham from Crouch's Kingdom of Darkness, 1693.

12. Mrs Samuel depicted in Boulton's Compleat History of Magick, 1715.

13-16. Wonderful Adventures in Fairyland.

17 & 18. Crouch op.cit.

19. Detail of Hogarth's Credulity, Superstition and Fanaticism, 1762.

21. Hogarth, An Emblematical Print on the South Sea Scheme, 1719.

22. Hogarth, Masquerades and Operas, 1724.

23. From Courtauld Picture Collection - c1770, Lady Diana Beauclerk?

23a. From Rowe's Complete...Shakespear, Henry IV Part II.

23b. The Shakespeare Jubilee from the Oxford Magazine, 1769.

24. Hogarth, Masquerade Ticket, 1727.

25. Hexensabbat, attributed to Frans Francken the younger, Ashm.PT 131.

26. Witches' sabbat at Treves c1600 [from Robbins,

Encyclopaedia.]

27. A sabbat, print from Douce collection.

28. Witches' sabbat on the Brocken, from Douce collection.

29. Frontispiece to Laurent Bordelon, Les Extravagances de M. Oufle, Paris 1710.

30. Hogarth, Rake's Progress, plate three, 1735.

31. Detail.

32. Vienna version of Francken's Hexensabbath.

33. Berkeley Castle version.

34. Michiel Coxie's copy.

35. Iaspar Isac, Abomination des Sorciers, c1610.

36. Hogarth, Harlot's Progress, plate three, 1732.

37. Hogarth, Credulity, Superstition and Fanaticism, 1762.

38. Hogarth, The Sleeping Congregation, 1736.

39. Hogarth inventor, La Cave sculptor, Frontis-Piss, 1763.

40. As shown, Oxford Magazine, 1772.

41. The Flying Machine.

42. All the World in a Hurry, 1754.

43. The Gypsy's Triumph, 1753.

44. A True Draught of Eliz: Canning, 1753.

45. Illustration by Jan Pienkowski from the Meg and Mog series,1984.


C





3



4

5

A MOST
Certain, Strange, and true Discovery of a

VVITCH.

Being taken by some of the Parliament Forces, as she was standing on a small planck-board and saying on it over the River of *Newbury*:

Together with the strange and true manner of her death, with the prophetical words and speeches she vied at the same time.



Printed by John Hammond, 1643.

¶ The ende and last confession of mother Waterhouse at her death, whiche was the xxix. daye of July.

Anno. 1566.



IF ytte (beinge redi prepared to receiue her death) she confessed earnestly that shee had bene a wytche and vsed suche execrable sorserye the space of. xv. yeres, and had don many abhominable dede, the which she repẽted earnestely & vnfaynedly, and desyred almyghty God forgeuenes in that she had abused hys most holy name by

7




Matthew Hopkins Witch Finder Generall
My Imps names are
1 Ilomauzar
2 Byewackett
3 Pecke in the Crowne
4 Griezzdl Greedigutt
Holt
Jarmara
Sacke & Sugar
Newt
Vineaar
tom

8



9



10



11



12



13



14



15



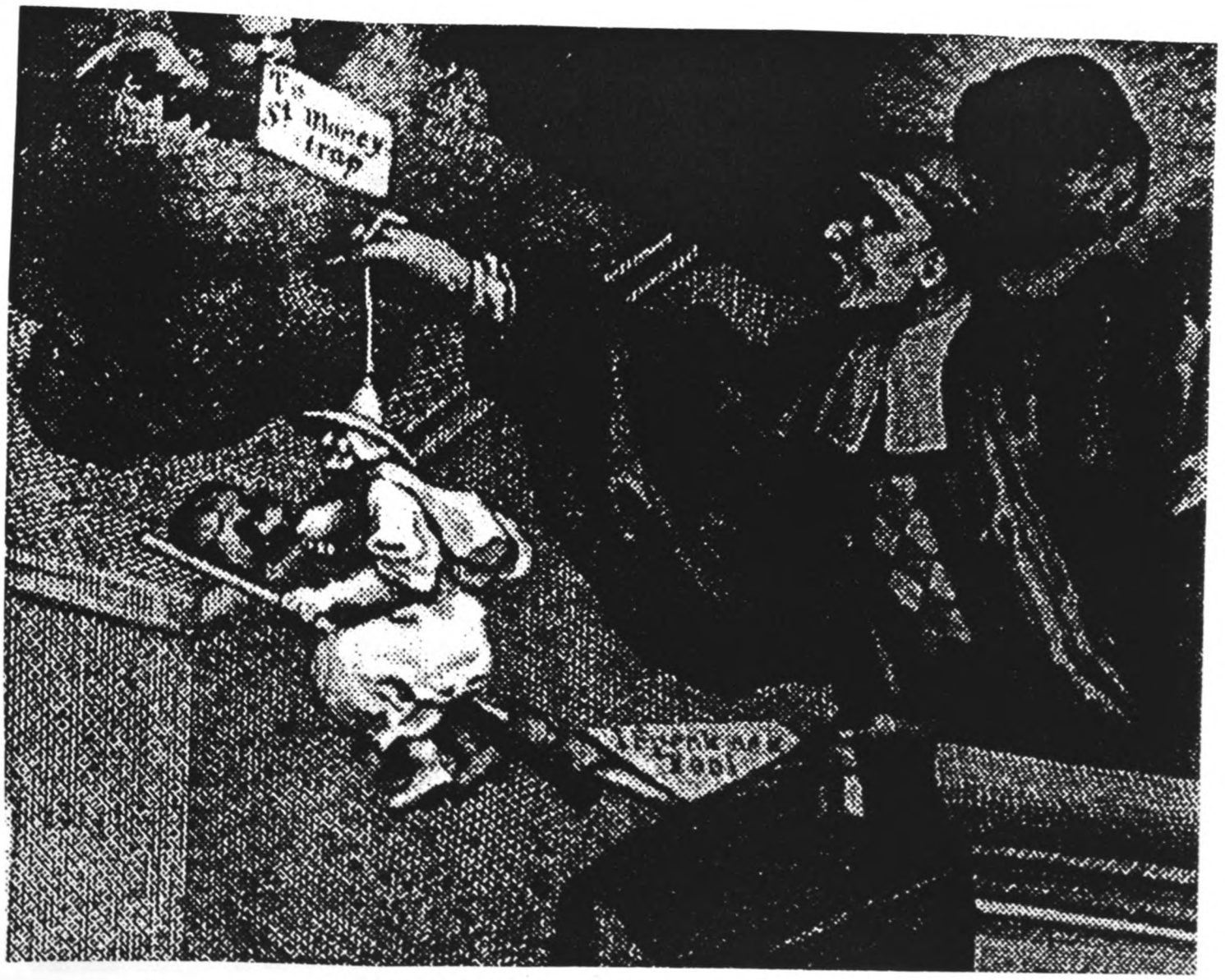
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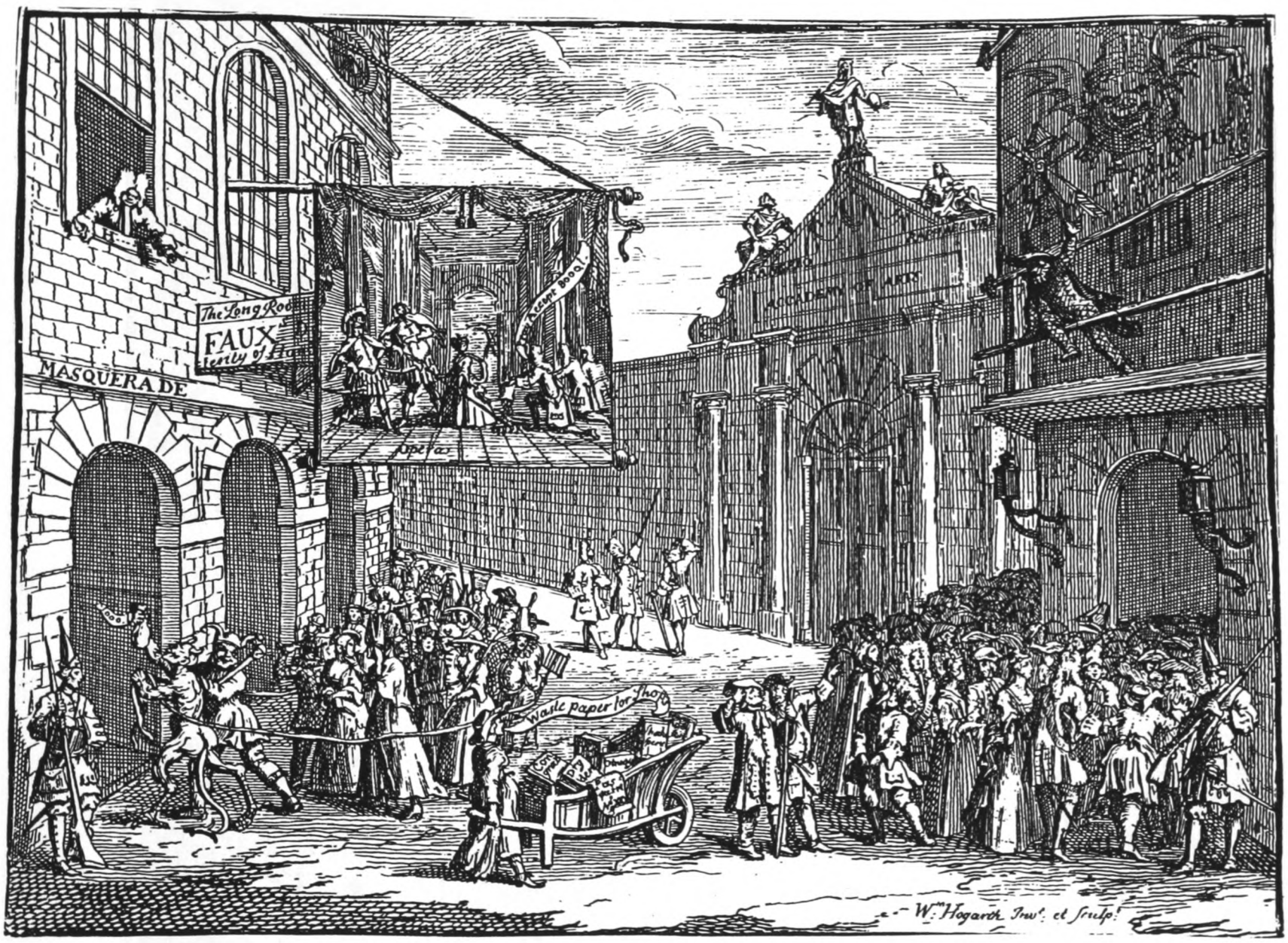


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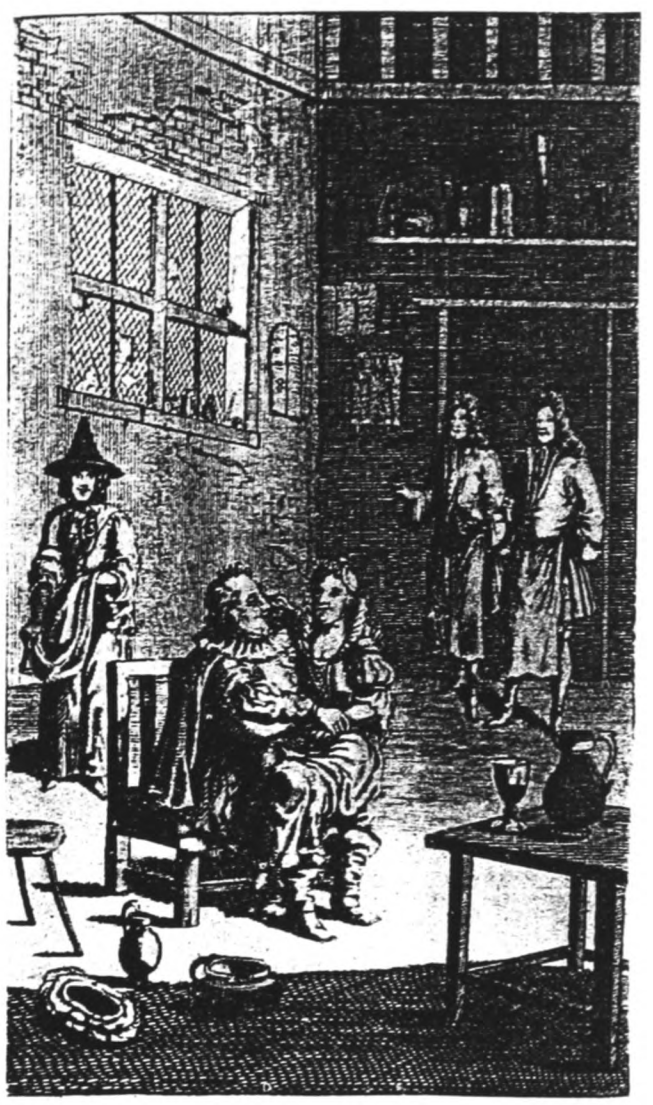
19


Whol Ride
THE MONUMENT
WAS ERECTED IN
MEMORY OF THE
DESTRUCTION OF
THIS CITY BY THE
SOUTH SEA
IN
1720


The Long Room
FAUX
MASQUERADE
Accept Bond
ACADEMY OF ARTS
Waste paper for Shops
W.m Hogarth Inv.t et Sculp.t

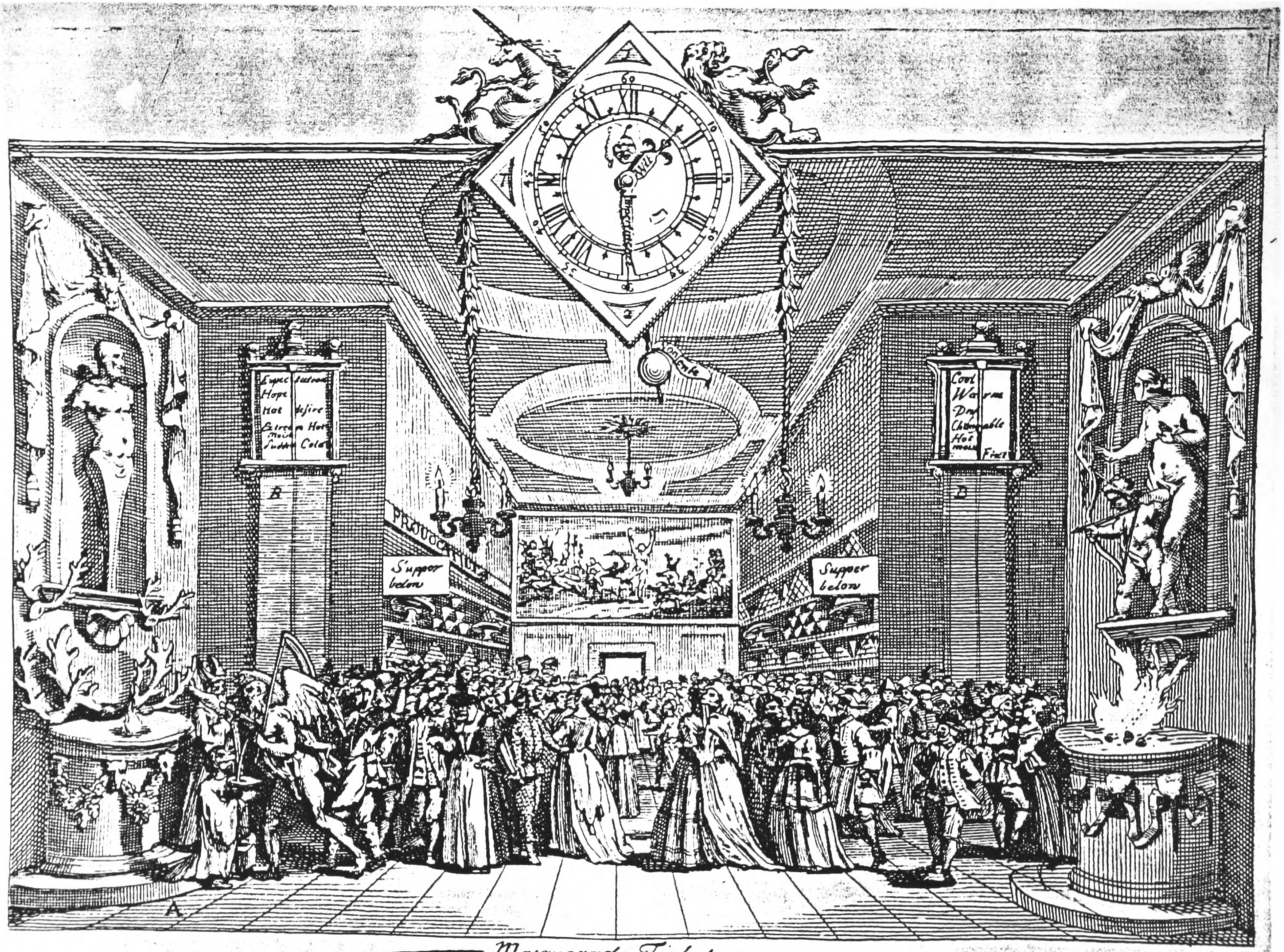
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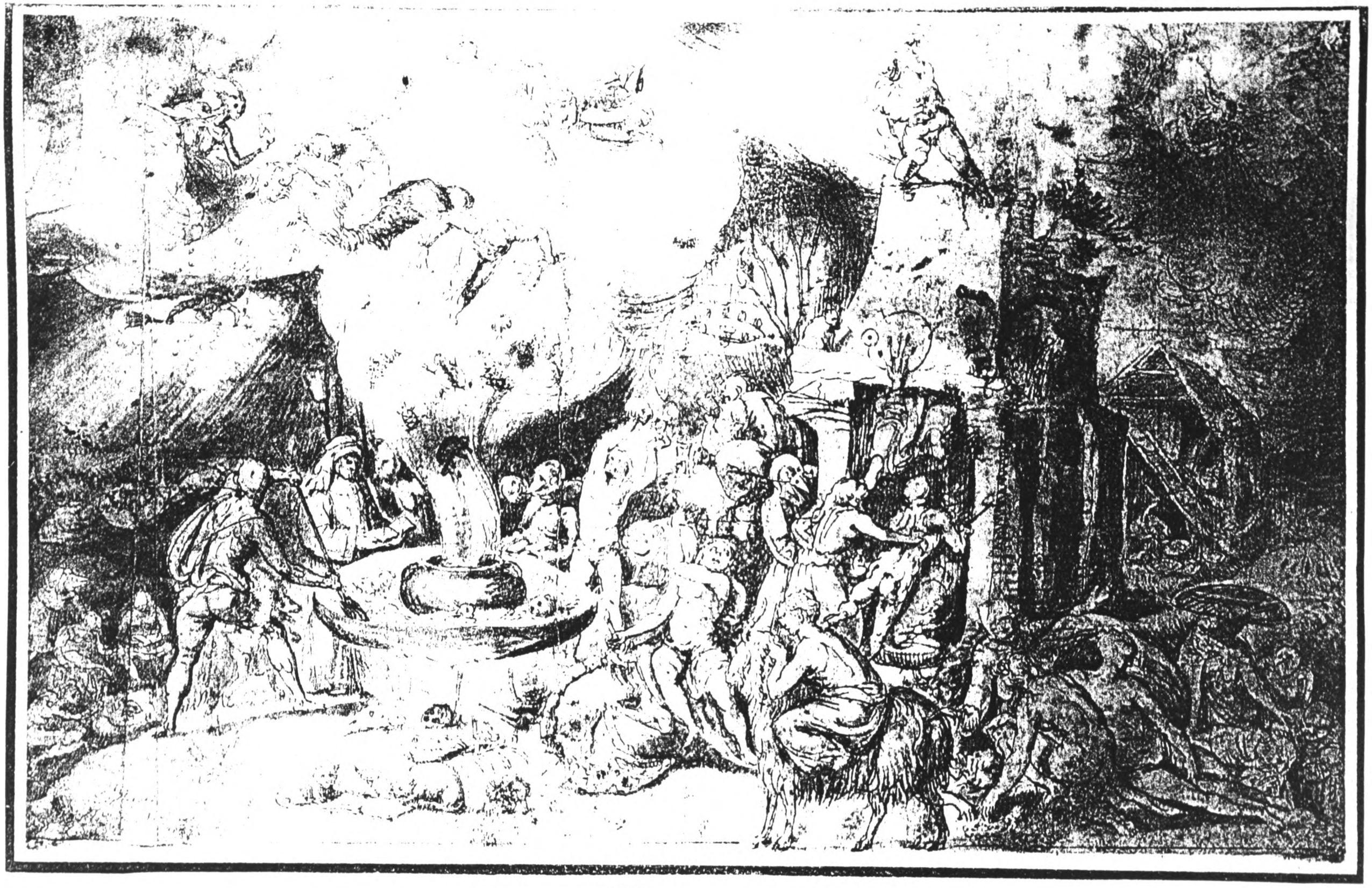
23a


The Procession at the Jubilee at Stratford upon Avon?
Sir John, art thou there, my Deer, or a Male Deer?
Give me a Cup of Sack – a plague of Sighing & Grief it blows a Man up like a Bladder
Peace! the Charm's wound up
When shall we three meet again?
I will Marry her, that I am freely dispos'd.
A plague upon y' Tympany that Tame my Kingdom, for a Horse, my Kingdom for a Horse!
Revenge his foul & most unnatural Murder.
Somerset
Somerset
Somerset



Masquerade Ticket

A. a Sacrifice to Priapus. B. a pair of Lecheromaters shewing y^e Companys Inclinations as they approach 'em. Invented for the use of Ladys & Gentlemen by y^e Ingenious M^r. H..... r price one Shilling





26



27

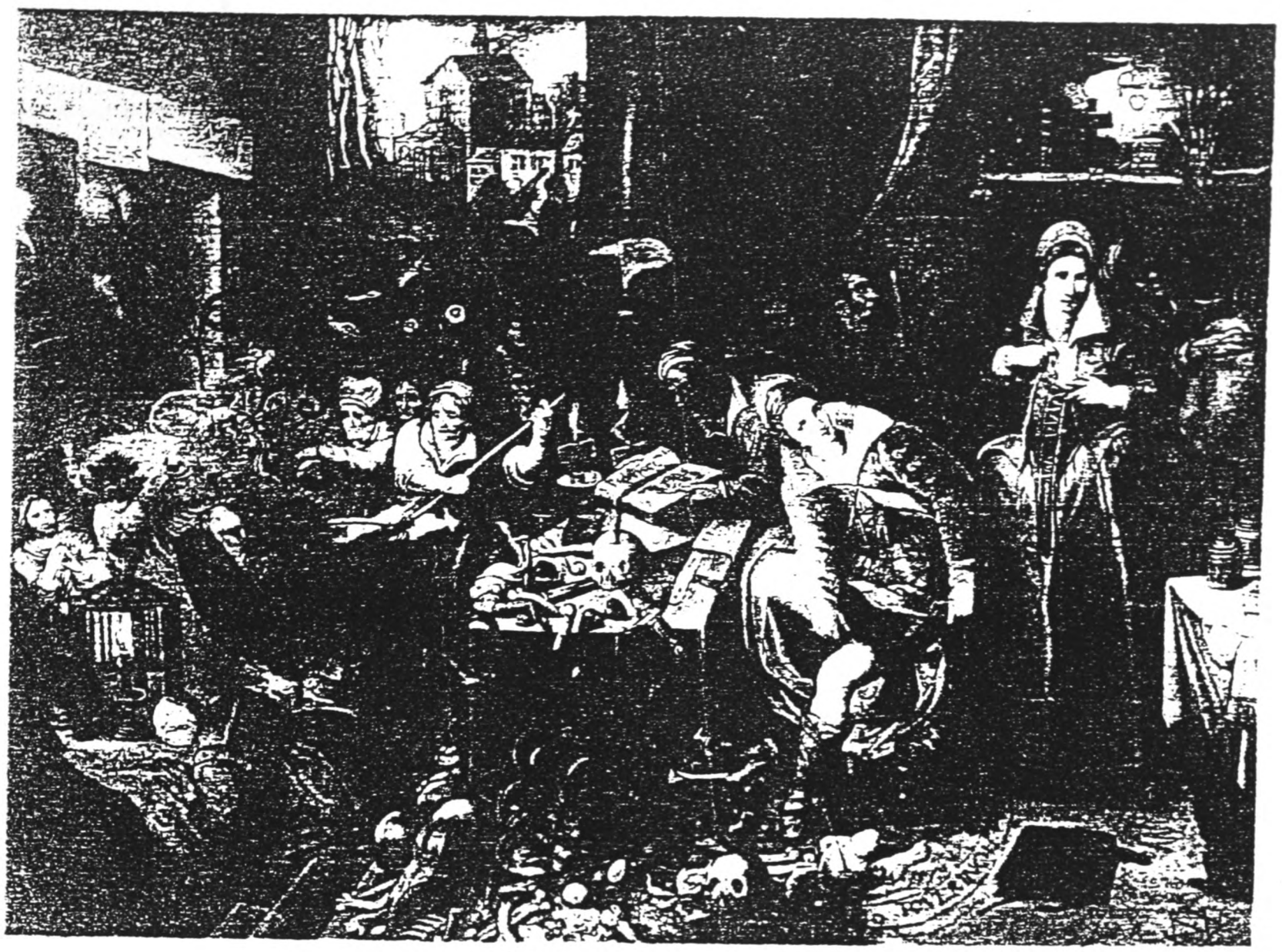


The witches' sabbat on the Brocken. From the Douce Collection, Bodleian Library, Oxford.







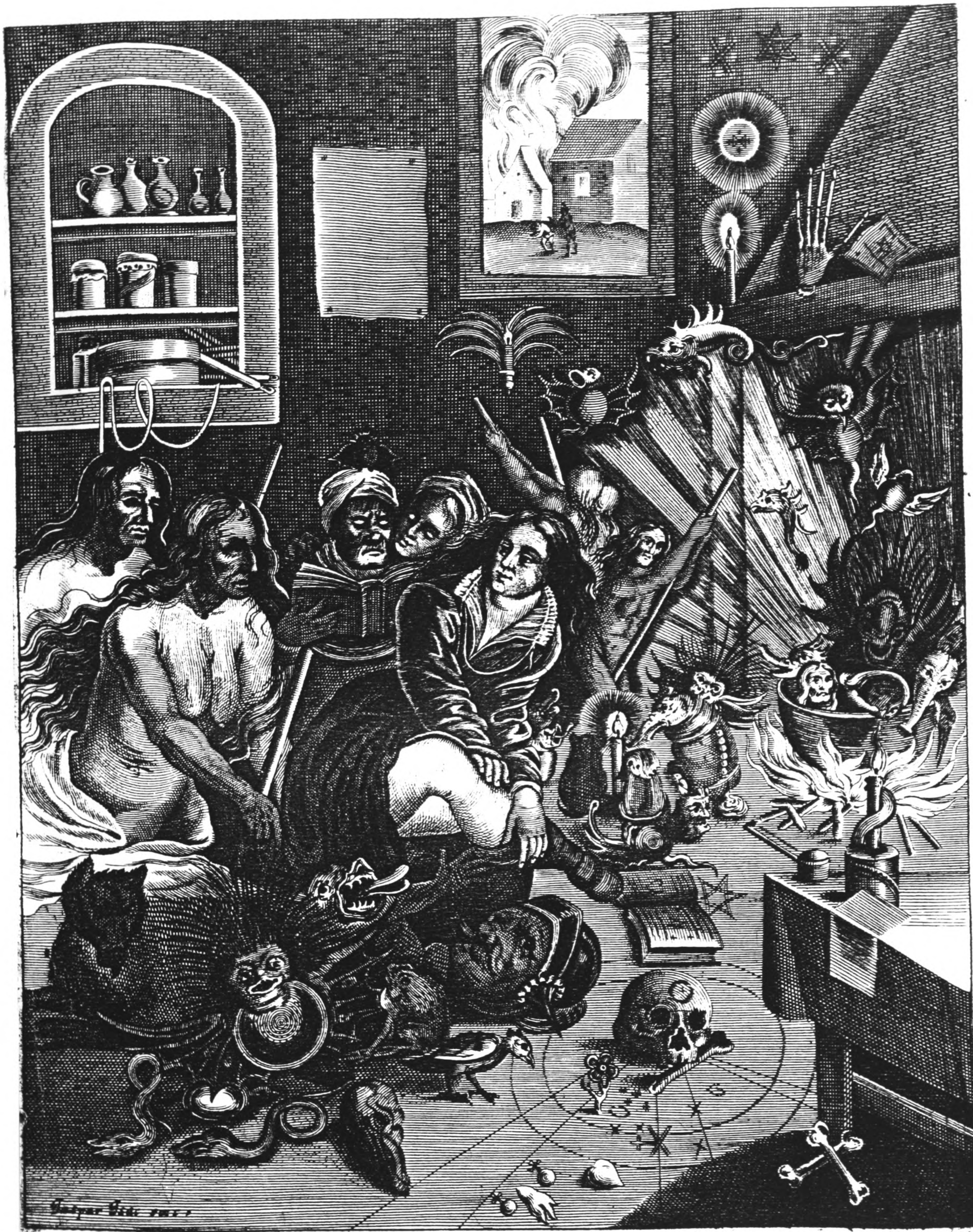


34



32





ABOMINATION DES SORCIERS

Est il rien qui soit plus damnable,
Ny plus digne du feu d'enfer,
Que cette engeance abominable
Des ministres de Lucifer:

Ils tirent de leurs noirs mysteres
L'horreur, la hayne le debat,
Et font de sanglans caracteres
Dans leur execrable Sabat,

C'est la que ces maudites ames
Se vont preparer leur tourment;
Et quelles attisent les flammes,
Qui bruslent eternellement.


Capt Macheath
D Catharine

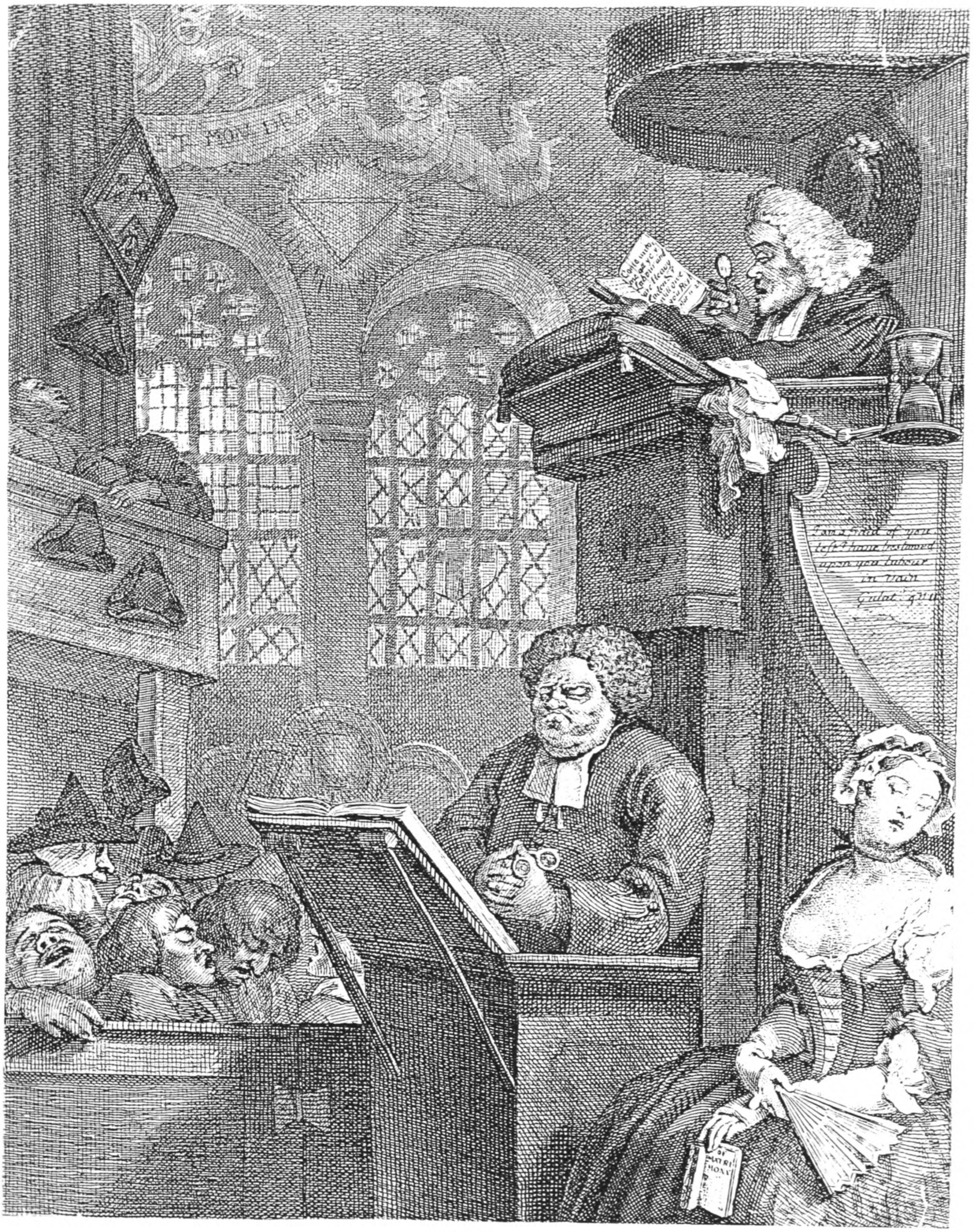


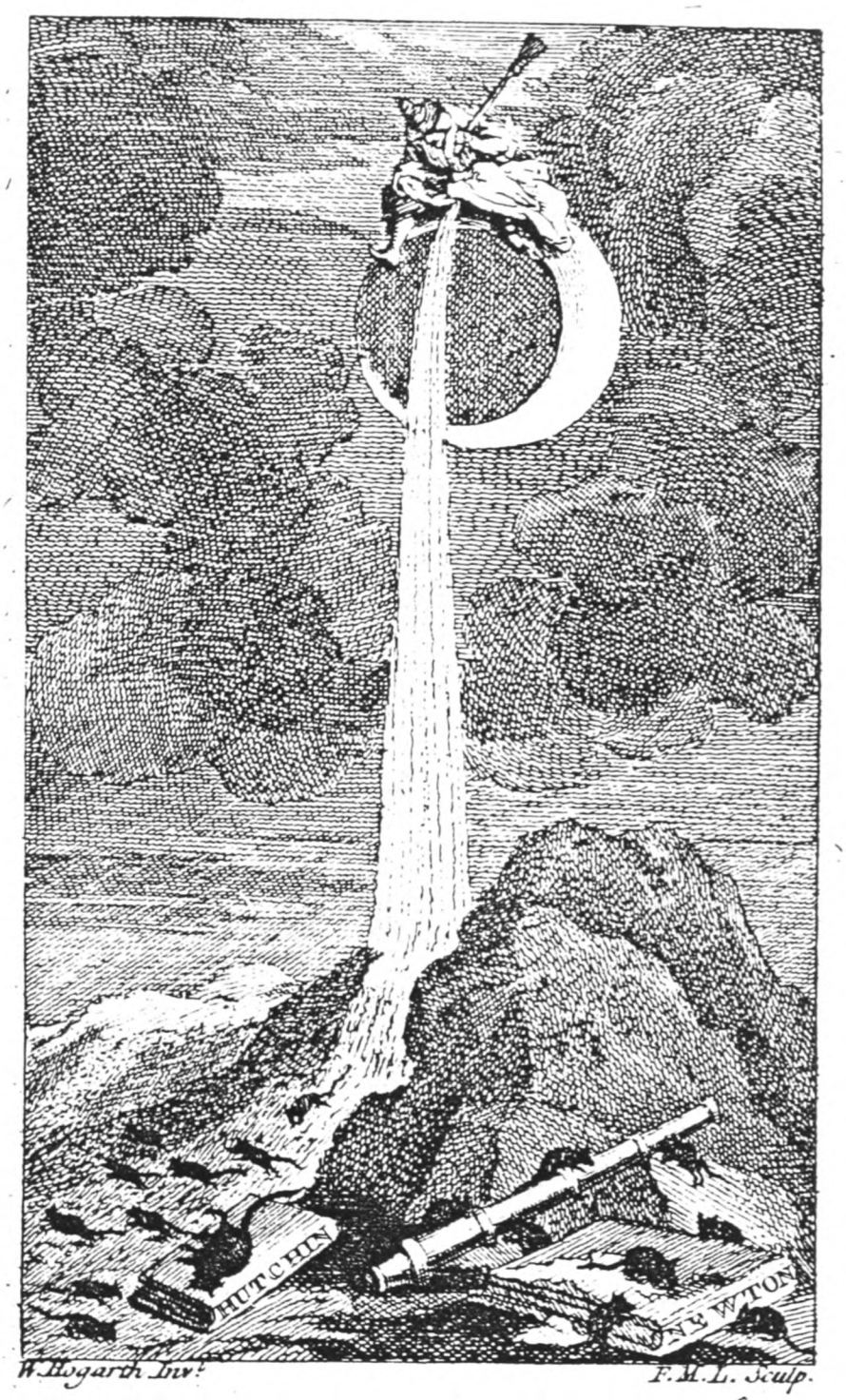
CREDULITY, SUPERSTITION, and *FANATICISM.*

A MEDLEY.

Believe not every Spirit but try the Spirits whether they are of God: because many false Prophets are gone out into the World.

Designid and Engravid by Wm Hogarth. *Publishid as the Act directs March 25th 1762.*



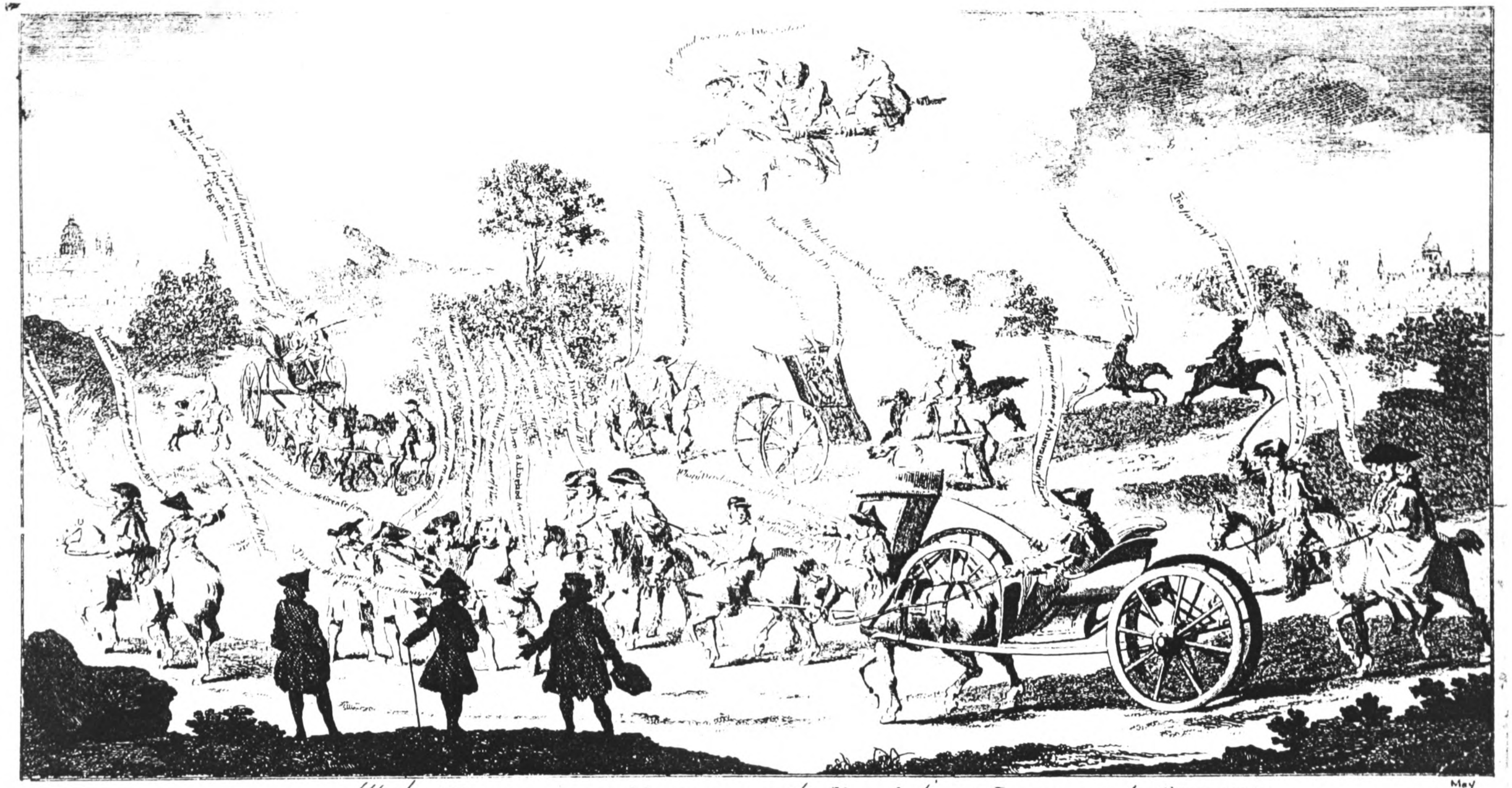


FRONTIS-PISS.



A View of the Deluge of Scotch Paper Currency for English Gold.


Fuseli



All the World in a Hurry, or the Road from LONDON to OXFORD.

May 1754

Published & Sold by Jn° Smith at Hogarths Head in Cheapside Price 6d



Behold the Man who thought it no Disgrace, { The Gypsy's } *His power by Magic, pointed may's all the Race*
To save the Sovereign of the Lapland Race. { Triumph. } *Of Lyes, But who can Envious Wrath Damage.*

43



View of the Front and Back of N. Wells's House at Enfield Wash, where E. Canning was confined from y^e 1st to y^e 30th of January, 1753. R. R. the great Road to Ware. L. a Lane. O. the Window thro' which she said she escaped. W. W. the Ditch, her pretended Way out.

E. Canning vindicated, or Mrs S–s's Gypsies Flight to Enfield Wash.



Gypsey conversing with y^e Inspector General of Great Britain

Elizabeth Canning from the Life.

MEG and MOG



by Helen Nicoll
and Jan Pieńkowski

PUFFIN BOOKS

45

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE REPEAL OF THE WITCHCRAFT ACT,1736

Religious controversy broke out with renewed vigour in the 1730s after a decade of relative stability presided over by Walpole's "Pope", Edmund Gibson, Bishop of London. Gibson himself sensed in Parliament "an evil spirit...working against Churchmen and Church matters".[1] In 1730 the Tithe Bill and a bill against the translation of bishops were brought forward; the first was dropped, while a majority against the second was attained. In 1733 came a bill for the better regulating of proceedings in the ecclesiastical courts, which represented a thoroughgoing attack on their jurisdiction; this was dropped. Another measure, for settling the rates for the repair of churches, directed again against the remnants of ecclesiastical courts and episcopal jurisdiction, was lost at the final vote. Gibson, who had wished to revive the jurisdiction of ecclesiastical courts, and commit the execution of the laws against vice and irreligion to the ecclesiastical hierarchy, spoke in a letter to Walpole of being "tossed about and insulted by people of almost all denominations, many of whom were known to stand very well with the Court". In an exemplary fit of contrary piety, Queen Caroline managed to favour both Tories

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[1] My emphasis: Gibson to Townshend, W. Coxe, Memoirs of the Life and Administration of Sir Robert Walpole, 3 vols., 1798, ii p.646. Cited in N.Sykes, Edmund Gibson, Oxford 1926, pp148-149.

- earnestly pressing an English see upon Sodor and Man, Thomas Wilson, her "Christian bishop" - and, more scandalously, the extremer Latitudinarians. According to Hervey, in his Memoirs the 1735-6 session of the new Parliament devoted its chief discussions to "Church matters."[2] An attempt to repeal the Test and Corporation Acts was followed, most disastrously for Gibson, by the furore over the Mortmain and Quakers' Tithe Bills, which led to his final break with Robert Walpole.[3]

This anticlerical temper was not a mere whim of elements within the House of Commons. There was the hubbub surrounding the nomination of the supposedly deistical Dr Rundle to the see of Gloucester, which ended up as a contest between the piety of the Bishop of London, and the looser principles of the court-ministerial axis. Gibson's magnum opus, the Codex Juris Ecclesiae Anglicanae, published in 1713, was subjected to abuse and sharp criticism in this same decade.[4] Attacks on ecclesiastical jurisdiction, which was the subject of Gibson's work, were given theoretical form. A debate on the nature of heresy between James Foster,

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[2]Hervey, Memoirs of the Reign of George II, 2 vols., 1849, ii p87.

[3]On which see Stephen Taylor's article, "Sir Robert Walpole, the Church of England, and the Quakers' Tithe Bill of 1736" in Historical Journal, 28, 1985. For the events in this paragraph, see Sykes, Gibson, pp122-182.

[4]M. Foster, Examination of the Scheme of Church Power laid down in the Codex, 1735.

a dissenting lecturer, and Henry Stebbing[5], added to the sense of religious ferment. It ended, after the debacle of Gibson's withdrawal from governing circles, with the success of William Warburton's Alliance between Church and State (1736). This treatise responded to Gibson's fall by preaching an Erastianism which abandoned an independent ecclesiastical jurisdiction, while recommending a recognition of the common interest existing between church and state.[6]

Given what has been said above about the disappearance of witchcraft from serious discourse in the period following the extinction of the rage of party, it is not surprising that we should find the issue revived, in attenuated form, in this period of intense religious controversy. The arguments just outlined were of the sort which Walpole had sought to avoid through Gibson's management of the Church, in order to move away from the sectarianism of the last years of Anne. The repeal of the witchcraft act in early 1736 can be seen as an indication that high-church extremism was being expelled from the body politic in its most absurd form. What purpose did such a measure serve

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[5]See, eg., H. Stebbing, A letter to mr Foster on the subject of heresy, 1735; J. Foster, An answer to dr Stebbing's Letter on the subject of heresy, a letter, 1735. Stebbing possibly contributed The Case of the Hertfordshire Witchcraft Considered to the Wenham debate, but see Wallace Notestein, A History of Witchcraft, Washington 1911, p374.

[6]See Sykes, Gibson, passim.; J.C.D. Clark, English Society 1688-1832, Cambridge 1985, pp137-141; and Paul Langford, A Polite and Commercial People, Oxford 1989, pp38-44.

within political manoeuvre ? It has already been suggested, in our chapter on images, that the eruption of religious cum secular issues - Jewish naturalization in 1753, the reforms of the 1820s[7] - could reinvigorate the imagery of witchcraft, both as a stimulant to prejudice, and as a satirical whip on the backs of Tory reactionaries.[8] The problem with the 1736 repeal is that it seems to emerge out of nowhere. The ideology of witchcraft lost credibility in the wake of 1714, it has been suggested. The process by which this ideological transformation became a thoroughgoing change in mentality is more difficult to chart. By 1753 we can be fairly sure that belief in witchcraft was utterly eccentric, the use of witchcraft imagery merely a redeployment of the rhetorical deposits of the generations. 1736 is a different matter. What is more, the precise purpose of the bill is clouded by the paucity of surviving parliamentary evidence. There are no official records of any parliamentary debate beyond the bare outline provided by the journals of the houses. Government involvement in the initiation of the bill is difficult to fathom. Any account must be tentative, and rely on the accumulation of anecdote and the filling-in of motive. But it certainly seems worth asking why the witchcraft act was repealed in 1736, whether there was opposition, and from whom.

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[7]On the 1820s, see appendix.

[8]On the repeal of the Irish witchcraft act in 1821, and its relation to the constitutional and religious reforms of that decade, see appendix below.

We have first to ask who brought in the motion.[9] Least interesting of all is the sponsorship of John Crosse of Millbank, brought in by the ministry for Lostwithiel in 1735, after his 1734 defeat in the ministerial interest at Wootton Bassett. In the parliament preceding that in question, Crosse seems to have voted consistently for the government, and subsequently he stuck by Walpole to the last. Described by Horace as "a very good friend to my brother Walpole", he was a fairly representative Old Whig. His role in repeal shows us the ministerial connection at work. Similarly in the case of John Conduitt, who served as master of the mint from 1727 until his death in 1737. Conduitt was a fairly frequent speaker for the government in the house, opposing the repeal of the septennial act, that foundation of whig stability, in the 1735/36 session. What makes Conduitt's sponsorship of repeal more interesting is that he was Sir Isaac Newton's nephew by marriage, his chosen successor at the mint, and the guardian of the authorized Newtonian tradition. He wrote a memorial sketch of his uncle, and collected copious materials for a biography. Conduitt's involvement may have been calculated to enhance the identification of Newtonianism as the ideology of a sound and rational whig settlement which purged the nation of antique superstition. This may go some way to explain the centring of the conflict between

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[9]See Romney Sedgwick, The House of Commons 1715-1754, 2 vols., 1970, under name of member. All information cited here, unless otherwise stated.

Newtonianism and Hutchinsonianism upon the figure of a witch, much later, in Hogarth's Frontispiss [see above].[10] The third sponsor was Alderman George Heathcote, member for Southwark in this period, initially admitted to the commons with government support (for Hinton in 1727) but subsequently "one of the most frequent and violent speakers for the opposition". He opposed the retention of Hessian troops and Walpole's universally execrated excise bill. So, the witchcraft act repeal cannot be seen as a virtual government initiative, proposed solely by ministerial partisans. What is important in Heathcote's case is that he was, according to Lord Egmont, "a republican Whig", who in March 1731 participated in the anticlerical assault by moving the motion to prevent the translation of bishops. Even more significantly, in the year of the repeal of the

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[10]Conduitt was one of a supposed faction of "Old Whigs" whom T.F.J. Kendrick saw Walpole conciliating in the 1736 session with his "new religious policy": trying to strengthen his parliamentary majority, despite the risks of alienating Gibson. See his article, "Sir Robert Walpole, the old whigs and the bishops, 1733-6: a study in eighteenth-century parliamentary politics," Historical Journal, XI (1968), 421-45. Stephen Taylor, loc.cit., disagrees with this analysis. The Old Whigs were not a coherent or self-conscious group. The loyalty of the ministerialists among them was not in doubt; while a few mminor concessions to dissent would not plausibly have won over the oppositionists in their ranks. One of the five Old Whigs named by Kendrick actually voted against the tithe bill, despite close ties with the ministry. Despite all these valuable observations, Taylor's article does not render implausible the idea of nods towards an "old whig", or more broadly, "progressive" whiggish ideology or sentiment [which I discuss below, in relation to the repeal of the witchcraft act]; though it is quite clear that the subsequent Quaker's tithe bill did not represent a concession designed to win over a well-defined group.

witchcraft act, he spoke in favour of the repeal of the Test Act. He did not oppose the government out of pure spite, and on several occasions voted with the ministry (for instance, he supported Walpole's financial measures in March 1737). It was Walpole's fall which drove him to Jacobitism.

So the sponsors of repeal can be seen as representative of an emerging "coalition" between some ministerial and opposition whigs in reaction to the revived highflying favoured by Gibson, and his attempts to advance ecclesiastical influence. The same groups formulated and supported the schemes concerning Quaker tithes and mortmain which drove Gibson from influence. According to Stephen Taylor, at this stage in his career "Walpole probably hoped that debate on religious issues, by appealing to ideology, would emphasize the differences between opposition whigs [who supported some measure of relief for the Quakers] and tories [who did not]".[11] Repeal of the witchcraft legislation may have played a symbolic role in indicating the increasingly, though not definitively secular nature of the state, less liable to offend or outrage than the repeal of the test and corporation acts. When those latter measures were under threat again, in the 1820s, witchcraft reemerged as an issue.[12] But while repeal of the witchcraft legislation may have formed a fairly uncontentious part of the response to feelings that the state was in danger - we

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[11]Taylor, loc.cit.

[12]See Antipas, 1821 and appendix to this chapter.

can hardly suggest that Gibson was a proselytizing believer in witchcraft - there was some opposition, and it is important to analyze its motivation.

Two journals covering this period mention the repeal, neither indicating that the bill aroused the slightest controversy. This is Thomas Wilson, the son of Queen Caroline's Christian bishop, in February 1736:

> Thursday 26. At the House of Lords. Bill for Repeal of Act against Witchcraft passed with some Amendments.[13]

And this is Edward Harley, third Earl of Oxford:

> Jan 22. Mr Conduit moved to repeal the Statute of K. James the first. Instituted an Act agst Conjuration & Witchcraft which was ordered, & He accordingly brought in a Bill, which passed few or none giving themselves any Concern about it.[14]

There is something emphatically urbane in the conclusion of Harley's account; we can see the passing of the generations at work in both these reports. As bishop of Sodor and Man, Wilson's father had seen fit to promulgate ecclesiastical

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[13]C.L.S. Linnell (ed.), The diaries of Thomas Wilson, D.D., 1731-7 and 1750, son of Bishop Wilson of Sodor and Man (London, 1964).

[14]Edward Harley, Cambridge University Library MS Add. 6851, [Parliamentary Journal for 1734-51], f30. The Lords amendments to the Witchcraft Bill clarified the repeal of the Scotch acts, set out the punishments for pretended witchcraft, and added the following interesting clause:

> ...no Prosecution, Suit or Proceeding shall be commenced or carried on against any Person or Persons for Witchcraft, Sorcery, Inchantment or Conjuration, or for charging another with any such Offence, in any Court whatsoever...[my emphasis]

Witchcraft was to be utterly removed from the public arena, in the sense that not only the offence of witchcraft itself, but also the associated offence of defamation, were to be removed from statute and common law. See Journal of the House of Lords, 9 Geo 2. (1735/6), January-March.

constitutions of his own in 1704 - his see being unbound by English act of parliament - and within his jurisdiction witchcraft continued to be punished into the eighteenth century (though not capitally).[15] Another Harley had, it has been suggested, seen Defoe's support of witchcraft belief as part of a campaign of national renewal. The sons and grandsons, it seems, took little interest.

The only opposition that can be traced came from a Scottish quarter, which is hardly surprising. The source is, unfortunately, anecdotal. However, the teller, Dr Alexander Carlyle of Inveresk, a presbyterian minister, was a near contemporary (he lived from 1722 to 1805), and the story , which regards the brother of the rebellious Earl of Mar, James Erskine of Grange, seems to fit with what we know of Erskine:

> [Grange] contracted such a violent aversion at Sir Robert Walpole, that having, by intrigue and hypocrisy, secured a majority of the district of burghs of which Stirling is the chief, he threw up his seat as a Judge in the Court of Session, was elected member for that district, and went to London to attend Parliament, and to overturn Sir Robert Walpole, not merely in his own opinion, but in the opinion of many who were dupes to his cunning, and his pretensions to abilities that he had not. But his first appearance in the House of Commons undeceived his sanguine friends, and silenced him for ever. He chose to make his maiden speech on the Witches Bill, as it was called; and being learned in daemonologia, with books on which subject his library was filled, he made a long canting speech that set the House in a titter of laughter, and convinced Sir Robert that he had no need of any extraordinary armour against this champion of the house of Mar. The truth was, that the man had neither learning nor ability. He was

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[15]See Linnell Diaries of Thomas Wilson, introduction.

> no lawyer, and he was a bad speaker. He had been raised on the shoulders of his brother, the Earl of Mar, in the end of the Queen's reign, but had never distinguished himself. In the General Assembly, which many gentlemen afterwards made a school of popular eloquence, and where he took the high-flying side that he might annoy Government, his appearances were but rare and unimpressive; but as he was understood to be a great plotter, he was supposed to reserve himself for some greater occasions.[16]

As a summary of Erskine's career and character this is inadequate. The central accusation needs to be placed within the context of a more balanced account of Lord Grange's rather complex life. Erskine himself left a copious and often longwinded correspondence, and portions of his diary are also extant. Robert Wodrow was a friend of his, and his Analecta contain much information relating to James Erskine of Grange.

Dr Carlyle's editor calls Erskine the lay head of the Ultra-Presbyterian party, but his religious convictions need further elaboration. His diary, recalling an illness suffered in Utrecht after a storm in 1699, indicates that in his youth he was far from being a convinced Presbyterian:

> I could not think of taking the assistance of any of the Divines at Utrecht: for being all Calvinists, like our Scots Presbyterians, I had no confidence in them, but supposed they were narrow spirited, and prejudiced creatures.[17]

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[16]The Autobiography of Dr Alexander Carlyle of Inveresk, 1722-1805, ed. John Hill Burton, 1910 [written 1800], p10.

[17]James Erskine, Lord Grange, Extracts from the Diary of a Senator of the College of Justice, Edinburgh, 1843, p83. This is the MS mentioned in Historical Manuscripts Commission, Report on the Manuscripts of the Earl of Mar and Kellie, 1904 [HMC Mar and Kellie], p517, marked "Memmoirs

At this time in his life, his allegiances can hardly have brought him to any especial belief in witchcraft, for as he continues,

> I had then a great esteem for John le Clerc at Amsterdam, and reckon'd him one who had shook off these prejudices and thought freely.[18]

Le Clerc had, after all, written a review of Balthasar Bekker's work, neither credulous nor Sadducistic, in his Bibliothèque Universelle.[19] Yet Erskine's record of these youthful sentiments is clearly meant in part as a self-reproach, his religious wavering condemned as much as his immersion in the lewd poetry of Rochester. A few pages before this recollection, he cites with approval a sermon he had heard in 1718:

> ...it is not common ordinary seriousness will do our business; and if there be not something supernatural in our being religious, certainly it is not right with us.[20]

It is hardly surprising that Erskine was later to be a friend of George Whitefield's.[21] The Analecta of Robert Wodrow confirm this aspect of Grange's religiosity. Thus, in

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VI". Most of it relates to Erskine's religious experiences.

[18]ibid.

[19]Notice of vols. i and ii appeared in vol.xxi, p122-5. "On ne pretend pas en aprouver par tout la doctrine", Le Clerc wrote, p123. See also note 34 in appendix to chapter 5.

[20]ibid. p58.

[21]See Whitefield's letter to him, Report on the Laing Manuscripts, Historical Manuscripts Commission, 72, 2 vols., 1914, 1925 [HMC Laing MSS], i, p379, miscellaneous letters 1670-1803 [the letter is preserved in Edinburgh University.]

1725, he was complaining much

> of preaching up of mere morality, and very litle of Christ and grace.[22]

We can add to this numerous stories which Wodrow had from his friend concerning witchcraft, possession and apparitions, an aspect of that supernatural religiosity which he found so important:

> ...there was a woman in Edinburgh under deep distress and melancholy; in short, her circumstances looked as like a possession as any thing of that nature well could.[23]

There was evidently a transformation in Erskine's religious affiliations at some point, and it should not be hastily dismissed as no more than the transition from rebellious youth to a serene and responsible maturity. Here, for instance is his view on the Kirk in 1708:

> It is a good thing that now both Church and high Kirk join in their principles as to screwing up the power of the clergy; which I hope will teach people that that Church and Kirk are at the bottom of the same kidney, and that neither ought to be too much indulged or trusted to.[24]

In this letter, Grange is full of scorn for the "fury and impertinence of biggots [sic] on either side." Yet, by 1721, John Wylie was writing to him "beseech[ing] your Lordship to go on as ye have don in strengthening the hands of the zealous orthodox ministers in opposing noveltie in doctrine

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[22]Robert Wodrow, Analecta, ed. M. Leishman, 4 vols., Glasgow 1842, iii p207.

[23]Analecta iii p410 [1727]. See also ii pp47, 86-7, 171, 255, 323, 379.

[24]Letter to his brother Mar, Jan. 29, 1708, in HMC Mar and Kellie, p426.

and discipline..."[25] Grange had indeed opposed a perfect piece of Erastianism, insisting that heritors had a vote in the calling of ministers only as members of the congregation, not as feofees. Again, in 1724, Erskine was addressed in the most complimentary terms as a luminary of the Kirk and a pillar of orthodoxy:

> It verie much refreshes me to find any, especially of your high station, that often live at the greatest distance from God, fill'd with just and clear apprehensions of true religion, and the decayed and languishing state thereof in this dead and withered time.[26]

In his maturity, Erskine was certainly an important member of the kirk, deeply involved in many of its affairs and deliberations. Most notable, perhaps, was his conduct during the Simson trial [for which, see above, chapter on Scotland]. The parallels between this action against a supposed heretic, and the earlier condemnation of Aikenhead should be noted. Both involved assertions of the moral rectitude of the Kirk, and suspicions of undue English interference. Grange was a vital participant, according to Wodrow:

> He was extremly usefull in the whole of this process, from the beginning unto this day...had not my Lord been providentially keept in Scotland, I do not see hou, probably speaking, Mr Simson's freinds could have missed to carry their point.[27]

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[25]Letter of May 8th 1721, HMC Mar and Kellie, p521.

[26]Andrew Darling, minister at Kintoul, to Lord Grange, Feb. 3, 1724, HMC Mar and Kellie, p525. A letter concerning the oath of abjuration.

[27]op. cit. p498 [1728]

But as with his general religious sentiments, we can see a transformation in Erskine's attitude to Simson. In 1708, the very year of Simson's appointment, and six years before charges were made against him, Erskine seemed quite affectionate towards John Simson, and unworried by the disputes of the theologians: "Sim is a poor silly body, tho' I do think that Haddo has been much in the wrong to him."[28] Erskine's later role in the affair brought him much unpopularity[29], but one key to his attitude here and in other church matters can be found in the events of the year 1715, and ensuing vexatious negotiations with the government at London.

Erskine's brother, the Earl of Mar, was the exiled leader of the Jacobite rebellion, and as a consequence, his estates had been sequestered. In the subsequent decades, Erskine did his best, in his own words, "to preserve from ruine the forfeited famillys of my friends and relations".[30] He was to be disappointed in this, and increasingly resorted to measures which smacked of opposition, rather than continuing his initial attempts to curry favour with the ministry. Erskine had been a student companion of Walpole's

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[28]HMC Mar and Kellie, p477, letter of December 4th 1708, to the Earl of Mar.

[29]Thus Wodrow: "the calumnies cast on him are very groundles; but they are exceedingly fostered and spread by such as dislike him for his zealouse appearances for this Church, and against Mr Simson." Analecta, p166.

[30]"Letters of Lord Grange" in The Miscellany of the Spalding Club, vol.iii, pp1-71, Aberdeen 1846, p27.

Scottish agent, the Earl of Islay, at Utrecht, and approached the "great man" and the King through this promising intermediary. Islay disappointed, seemed treacherous, and in a letter of 1733 which told the whole story, Erskine gave vent to his intense bitterness:

> Such has long been their way, to profess great friendship to me and the familly...and much readyness to do us good, and seemingly to propose better for us than we do for ourselves; but when it came to the execution, to prevent the doing of it by shifts, tricks, and lies, and when beat from them all, to give a refuseal...Why should we any longer be used so and submit to those who have treated us so unworthily, and shewed no ground to expect better ? Why should we sit still and let them trick us into poverty, contempt, and insignificancy ?[31]

Erskine's moves towards opposition were no mere personal matter however. They were bound up with issues of national well-being and Scottish identity. Walpole and his crew were both "these oppressors of the familly we belong to, and enemys of Britain".[my emphasis][32] He complained of the minister's "openly rediculing all vertue and uprightness"; of "the geddyness and corruption of our age"; and told Wodrow how the Queen was continually "bantering and scolding the narrou principles of the Church of Scotland".[33]

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[31]ibid. p37

[32]ibid. p47

[33]ibid. pp56, 57; Wodrow ,Analecta, Vol.iv, p146. In Parliament, he complained of the proliferation of playhouses, and of an addiction to "lewd and idle Diversions". [March 5, 1735]. Recorded in, The History and Proceedings of the House of Commons..., 1742, vol.ix, p93.

Wodrow mooted one analysis of the likely political effect of Erskine's stance, regardless of the latter's actual political purposes:

> ...the Commissioner threatned, my L[ord] G[range,] and told him he had much at stake, and was lossing his friends at London; and wondered why he would with such keenness urge measures that they wer not for. Houever, that person hath made a bold appearance for the truth; and if any suspect him as forming a designe to manage a party among the Ministry, and to affect leading and dictating to them, such, in my opinion, have acted a very imprudent part at this time in supporting Mr Simson so much, since by this method they have given that eminent person a handle (wer he seeking one) to recommend himself to the affections of all in Scotland, who have a concern for the purity of doctrine, and preventing error in this Church; and by his proceeding this year he has win more room, did he affect to set up to lead them, than he is like to lose for a long time.[34]

We may forget Wodrow's naivety here ("wer he seeking one") and suggest that Erskine was building himself some sort of party and using religious grievances, religious divisions, to that end. The question of his own sincerity is, probably, unanswerable. He was widely suspected of hypocrisy. In 1728, a paper was nailed to his door:

> Queries to my Lord Grange. 1. Whither he be a Jesuit or not ? 2. Whither he be a pensioner to the Pope ? 3. Whither my Lord Grange can answer the former Queries ? 4. Whither if he answer them he ought to be believed ?

According to Wodrow he was "represented as a hypocrite, and pretender to religion...as divisive and factious".[35] Grange himself, naturally, represented his actions as the result of

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[34]ibid. iii, p511

[35]ibid. pp510, 306

principle, as for instance, in the case of Simson:

> Without regard to either party, and little noticed by either, and quite unengaged to both (for this was before the disputes about the forfeited [Mar] estates), I, as a member of the Church courts, was against Simson.[36]

Whatever the state of Grange's conscience, he certainly moved increasingly, from 1715 on, towards a defence of Scots rights and Scots particularity, in both politics and religion. In fact, we have no need to make a distinction between self and national interest, as the ill-treatment of a family as prominent as Erskine's was, no doubt, a slur on Scottish honour.

Religious and political issues were bound up together in Erskine's conception of Scots interest; his political views changed, or matured, just as much as his religious sentiments. We can see this first of all in Erskine's view of how the English ministry could manipulate the Simson affair to the disadvantage of the Scots nation. And he reminisced about Townshend's qualities after his fall from power in terms of a potent amalgam of the religious and the political. Townshend

> was the only one at Court that had any real concern about the interests of Religion, and might be depended on as to our Scots affairs, and was firmly for menteaning our present constitution and settlement.[37]

As for the shift in Erskine's position, which has already been traced in the religious field, it is evident from his

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[36]Grange letters, p27

[37]Wodrow Analecta, iv, p141.

correspondence that before 1715 Erskine was as keen on the union as anyone, although he expressed some doubts about the anglicisation of Scottish legal procedure, and some worries about popular reaction to some of the effects of the 1707 decision. He reported consternation at the Squadrone's "taking away of the Council" in that year, and noted that the people were "wild and desperate". But his own attitude had an optimism singularly lacking in his remarks of the 1730s:

> I still think that if people in this country find their rights and priviledges maintained and their trade encouraged that they will be fond of the Union; but if otherways, and if any occasion of disturbance or reeling times happen, I'm much affraid that there may still be a great deall of uneasyness about it. I'm sure it is in the power of the Government and Parliament of Brittain to make the Union not only durable, but most acceptable and advantagious to this country, as I expect it shall [my emphasis][38]

By the 1730s, Erskine was still a supporter of the union. He referred to Scotland as North Britain, and espoused the complaints of England as well as his own nation. But he perceived Scottish liberties and rights as under threat, and sought to use similar English grievances against the ministry to effect common relief:

> He [Walpole] makes bold schemes against our libertys, as was most certainly his excyse scheme which he pushed like a mad man after England.[39]

But he did have a particular concern for English invasion

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[38]HMC Mar and Kellie, letter to Mar, Jan 29 1708, pp421, 426

[39]Grange letters p44

of Scottish prerogatives, complaining "that, in England, nothing is made of our Act of Settlment, and all pouer is undoubtedly in the hands of the Supream Court".[40] He also had a notion that the Simson affair would be used by the ministry for their own political purposes and the depredation of Scots integrity. Walpole and Islay seek "our breaking in pieces", and will "make Mr S[imson] an instrument to tear and rent us".[41] The plot is to destroy the power of the general assembly of the kirk, exactly the issue which troubled Wylie in the 1690s and subsequently:

> ther seems to be a designe, at some Assembly, to throu up him [Simson], or some other bone of contention, to break and divide us: That when our Assemblys break upon this or other points, they will be prohibited by the King, and either Commissions, or some other select meetings, called by the King's writt, will have the management of Church affairs."[42]

So, for Erskine, the religious and state affairs of Scotland were of a piece, and seemed increasingly under threat from English interference. This supporter of union came to believe that the balance of the 1707 settlement was being unsettled by the actions of a corrupt and irreligious ministry. How did Erskine, "among the greatest men in this time",according to Wodrow,proceed in these circumstances?[43]

The attack on Scottish rights reached a crisis in 1734

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[40] Analecta iv, p144

[41] ibid

[42] ibid.

[43] Analecta iv, p166

during the election of the representative Scottish peers.[44] A list was drawn up by the ministry and a regiment of troops stationed outside Holyrood House during the election, with the intention of overawing any of the goverment's opponents. The government's sixteen were, of course, chosen. Previously, Lord Chesterfield's dismissal from office because of his opposition to the Excise scheme, had been followed by a similar assault on Scots political sensibilities, with the dismissal of the Scottish peers Montrose, Stair and Marchmont. Members of the Whig opposition - Chesterfield and Carteret - approached the dismissed peers in the wake of the election, and proposed that steps should be taken to force the ministry to account for the apparent malpractice. The peers engaged two men as their chief advisers, Dundas and the lawyer, James Erskine of Grange.[45] Grange was already involved in opposition manoeuvres, and the government had started to move against him, introducing a bill to prevent Scottish lords of session like himself from being elected to the House of Commons. William Pulteney wrote to Erskine from Arlington Street:

> I take it for granted that you despise the maliciousness of this intention, and will render it of no effect by quitting the employment if it shall be necessary. I hope you will not; I flatter myself you cannot fail in your election,

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[44]See Arniston Memoirs: Three centuries of a Scottish House 1571-1838, ed. G.W.T. Omond, Edinburgh 1887, pp82-3.

[45]See Erskine's speech against the manipulated election, and his linking it with the opposition to standing armies, in The History and Proceedings of the House of Commons, vol. ix, pp69-71.

> but since no means will be left unattempted by some folks to keep you out of Parliament, I am clearly of opinion no means should be left unattempted by others to bring you into it.[46]

Erskine did quit.

In the period of political crisis which followed the failure of Walpole's excise scheme, Erskine was very much at the centre of things.[47] And this was a period of threatening instability for the ministry, particularly in its relations with Scotland. In 1735 Dundas, Erskine's colleague, informed his son that "there are a far greater number of opposers in the House of Commons than hath been seen at any time before; and to be sure, the generality of the whole nation quite dissatisfied both with our M-r and his measures". Dundas's analysis was quite apocalyptic. He saw no chance of relief through the action of Parliament. The Commons would be controlled by "corruption and oppression", while "For the other House, nothing can be expected from them; such a sixteen as we have". He saw no prospect other than the "struggle for the sinking liberty of our country

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[46]HMC Mar and Kellie, p531, Feb.24 1734. See also his letter to Erskine of March 22nd, and the Earl of Stair's report to Grange on the peerage election issue of March 20th [ibid. pp532-4].

[47]See, in relation to the events recounted below, his book, The Fatal Consequences of Ministerial Influence: Or, The Difference between Royal Power and Ministerial Power Truly Stated. A Political Essay Occasioned by The Petition presented last Session of Parliament by Six Noble Peers of Scotland. And Addressed to the Noble, the Ancient, and the Rich Families of Graet Britain, 1736.

till God in his providence interpose to save us".[48] Erskine had made similar noises two years earlier, declaring that "the opposition to Sir Robert Wallpole and Ilay is stronger and more rooted than, perhaps, it was to any ministry since the Revolution; and greater numbers of peers, and considerable commoners engadged in it, and most of the noticeable burrows, and the town of London to a man, and high church, whig and dissenter, closely united in it, and all their own disputes buryed in this common pressure".[49] By late 1736, the Porteous affair had built on this promising beginning, with Thomas Wilson worrying that "Scotland and England are ripe for Rebellion".[50] In the following year, Erskine was speaking in the debate on the Porteous riots, still pursuing Scottish interests and opposing the bill of pains and penalties against the city of Edinburgh.

We can catch Erskine at work again after the '45, and see how the climate had changed, how Scottish allegiances had rearranged themselves. Erskine was brought into the drafting of a bill "for abrogating the private Jurisdictions in Scotland" and sent his observations on the measure to Lord Hardwicke:

> The Aim & Intent of this Bill, is what I have much approved & wished for, ever since the Union; and every year's Experience has confirmed me more & more in these sentiments. And I think it

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[48] Arniston Memoirs, p81, letter from Dundas to his son at Utrecht, Feb. 6th 1735.

[49] Grange letters, p44

[50] Linnell op.cit. p178, entry for Oct. 24 1736.

> impossible for England and Scotland to be on a Right Foot, till they be on one and the same Foot in all Matters of Civil Government; whereof Law & Courts & the Administration of justice, are among the great & most essential. Gentem unam faciam eos, is my ultimate View & Aim in all such things, as being fundamentally necessary for the Government & People." [51]

Within this set of circumstances, within this career, how are we then to understand the anecdote which Carlyle records ? In the first place, Carlyle's denigration of Erskine can be discounted. Wodrow praised him, Pulteney and other members of the opposition valued him, Walpole feared him enough to frame legislation to exclude him from Parliament. Ramsay of Ochtertyre, in his Scotland and Scotsmen in the 18th Century, described him as "A good lawyer, a ready and forcible speaker." Erskine's decision to speak against the "Witches Bill" may have been a miscalculation, given the whiggish complexion of the house of commons, and the shift in English discourse about witchcraft which followed 1714. That "titter of laughter" may indeed have ended Erskine's career as a serious politician, but it cannot be denied that Erskine had his reasons for responding to the repeal. The development of his political and religious stance pushed him closer to the position which Wylie had adopted, and belief in witchcraft became for Erskine, as it had been for Wylie, a matter of national pride, a symbol of independence, and an act of resistance to a deistical and irreligious English ministry.

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[51] BL add.MS 35446 f148

It may well be that repeal, calculated from one angle to define a common whiggish rationalism, was also intended to split the opposition, or to expose the likes of Erskine, drawing upon them a salutary dose of ridicule. The paucity of opposition to repeal within the house of commons does not tell us much about the beliefs of individual members, the residual prejudices and sentiments of Tory or Scottish members. But the fact that only Erskine was brave enough, or stupid enough, to bring upon himself the giggling and scorn of the house, tells us something about the triumph of polite and "rational" discourse, and the rising blushes which must have stifled any budding proponents of a belief in the power of witches.

Erskine's opposition to witchcraft repeal in 1736 had political roots in Scottish politics and his own relations with the ministry. The belief in witchcraft persisted, with declining political relevance, in the very intellectual crannies which Erskine inhabited. His relations with the people called methodists were close. We have already noted his association with George Whitefield. He also corresponded on friendly terms with the Wesley brothers. Thus Charles in 1745, writing from Bristol:

> Many here salute you in the love of Jesus Christ, particularly the brethren met in conference, who are much disappointed by your not coming. We should be glad if you would favour us with any questions which you shall think necessary to be considered.[52]

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[52]HMC Laing MSS, Vol II, Aug. 1, p348. See also, John Wesley to Erskine, loc.cit., July 6 1745.

John Wesley's endorsement of the belief in witchcraft is well-known. It was a part of biblical testimony he and Erskine alike were unwilling to reject.

As for Scottish belief, as noted above, it continued to be a serious matter well after the triumph of ridicule in England. This is the associate presbytery in 1743:

> The penal statutes against witches have been repealed by the Parliament, contrary to the express law of God; by which a holy God may be provoked, in a way of righteous judgment to leave those who are already ensnared to be hardened more and more, and to permit Satan to tempt and seduce others to the same wicked and dangerous snares.[53]

David Hume, writing to his "oldest and best friend", the MP for Renfrewshire, William Mure, in November 1742, made a heavily ironic gesture towards what he conceived of as the bigotry and superstition rife amongst their fellow-countrymen:

> Besides, as you are my Disciple in Religion & Morals, why shou'd you not be so in Politics ? I entreat you to get the Bill about Witches repeal'd, & to move for some new Bill to secure the Christian Religion, by burning Deists, Socinians, Moralists, & Hutchinsonians.

Hume's words are an ironic instruction to one who should be representing the interests of a constituency noted for the persecution of witches; and it is striking that these issues of "Religion & Morals" should be seen as a live matter of "Politics". [54]

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[53]Cited in introduction to Alexander Carlyle, op.cit.

[54]David Hume, Letters, ed. J.Y.T. Greig, Oxford 1932, vol.i, p44, Nov.14th, [1742].

II

Erskine evidently saw the repeal of the witchcraft act as part of a more general assault upon the citadels of fidelity. He worried about the credentials of English bishops, "none of them being firm to any set of doctrinall principles, they are much despised". One of his particular betes noirs was Benjamin Hoadly. "Bangor" he told Wodrow, "nou Sarum, is sunk into a hackney writer".[55] The work referred to here is undoubtedly Hoadly's reputedly deistical Plain Account of the Nature and End of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper [1735]. The only extant pamphlet opposing the repeal of the witchcraft act, written in the form of an address to the sponsoring members, and attached to a reprinting of Titus Oates's Witch of Endor, started from this very point, and manifested many of the same concerns as Erskine.

This Address, while recapitulating many of the old arguments about witchcraft[56], focusses on the threat of

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[55] Analecta iv, p146

[56] eg. Boulton's arguments about the usage of words, and the denominations of Deuteronomy, ppxxxvii and xxxix; the comparison between the soul-body relationship and the nature of human communication with the spiritual or demonic worlds; the reliance on the authority of the likes of Hale. There is a rather eccentric argument which falls outside the common run:

> Be pleased to consider, if your Zeal has not carried you too far, whether there has not been (and how soon it may be again, the wisest cannot tell) as unquestionable Evidence for Familiarity held by human Kind with Spirits, tho' invisible, as there has been for that between Man and Beast ?

freethinking represented by the repeal of the witchcraft legislation:

> the Design being to secure some of the Outworks of Religion, and to regain a Parcel of Ground, which bold Infidelity hath invaded.[57]

The author uses heavy sarcasm and ironic imputation. In addressing the House of Commons, he declares,

> I dare not entertain the least Thought, Gentlemen, that you have any of the Freethinking Qualities, that are so prevalent, at this Time of Day...[58]

While implying that the arguments against a proper belief in witchcraft are irredeemably vulgar, the product of ignorance and raillery, the author cannily exempts his distinguished audience:

> It would be inexcusable to trouble you any longer, Gentlemen, with this Way and Manner of decrying Witchcraft; and I'll venture to Prophesy [!], such sort of Arguing will not be made use of in your own Learned Debates upon the same subject.[59]

> Whether it be reasonable (even as to the Punishment) to repeal the one Statute rather than the other ? [Titus Oates, The Witch of Endor, 1736, pxxxii]

[57] pxlv

[58] pxliii

[59] cf the footnote on p v, which mocks the Commons' contempt for the authority of Coke's Pleas of the Crown, "which I don't doubt, but your Worships have consulted, and pity'd his Understanding and Knowledge too as well as the other's", namely, Sir Matthew Hale, who once again stands as a paragon of legal judgment, and a potential embarrassment for the repealers. At one point the mockery verges on the insulting:

> When the Gospel of Christ was Preaching, (which ever condemns Witchcraft, and Sorcery...however you, our Representatives, shall please to determine the Affair within Doors)...[pxi]

It is Francis Hutchinson whom he seeks to discredit as a vulgarian, with that reverend gentleman's fantastical stories about the contortions and wonders which may be achieved by nature alone. Hutchinson has tales about showmen and charlatans, so many indeed that his opponent, occasionally smirking - "doucement mon cher Eveque" - can "profess...[that] I am perfectly Ignorant whence our Right Reverend, got all this KNOWLEDGE, or where his SOBER AUTHORS [which he had laid claim to] are to be met with".[60] Thus Pisteuo-Daimon's strategy is to construct the opposition as dangerously vulgar, and outrageously freethinking, a plebeian threat to traditional orthodoxy. It is in the service of this scheme that he consistently uses this urbane and witty tone. He puns:

> You may convey your Reasons [for repealing the act] to us in any obscure Manner, you shall condescend to do it in - We shall not much mind the Canal or Conduit [!], by which they come to us; and it will be no small Satisfaction to know them , should they happen (as very likely they will) to cross [!] our own private Judgment.[61]

And he makes the same cracks about gin which we can find elsewhere in the contemporary press. The Gin Act passed throught the commons during the same session as the witchcraft repeal, and the two measures were connected via a pun on the word spirit.[62] This sort of jokiness is to be contrasted with the "low Wit and Raillery" of the likes of

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[60] pxxv-vi

[61] pxlix

[62] cf The Hyp-Doctor, Numb. 285, March 23 1736

John Webster.[63]

The intellectual and theological argument pursued in tandem with this drollery is one which uncovers the contradictions in Hutchinson's discourse, those between the denial of witchcraft on the one hand, and the assertion, on the other, that "the sober Belief of good and bad Spirits is an Essential Part of every good Christian's Faith".[64] As the author has it:

> [it is] inconsistent with such a Belief, that all Communications should be reckoned Imaginary, and that the Intellectual World should not serve the Purposes of an Almighty Being, in rewarding or punishing according to the Divine Appointment.[65]

The author is keen in associating the "Fundamental Part of the Statute" with the "Protestant Religion and Interest", which "as 'tis grounded on the Holy Scriptures, so it stands, and I hope, will ever stand, supported by the Legislature". His definition of witchcraft is a broad one:

> any Sort of Communications with, or Operations upon the Intellectual, and Corporeal World,

and having cited the Bible, and Hutchinson himself, on the necessity of spiritual ministration and depredation, he asks how the legislature can possibly be considering what he calls an "absolute Repeal".[66] Moreover, as "an Offence capital immediately against the Divine Majesty", surely

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[63] pxxxiii

[64] Quoted on p viii.

[65] ibid.

[66] pviii, xxviii

witchcraft deserves to be punished.[67]

The whole tendency of the work culminates in this passage:

> [I] must believe, that, in the Preamble of your Bill (which I have not seen)[68] you have taken all possible Care to guard against the Suggestions of a censorious Age; by supporting the Christian Doctrine, and declaring to the World, (as Bishop Hutchinson does to his Right Honourable Chiefs [his dedicatees]) That the sober Belief of Good and Bad Spirits is an essential Part of every good Christian's Faith.

But now comes the description of the threat that lurks behind this legislation:

> However, it must be said, the contrary Temper is too obvious amongst us without Doors; and this has induc'd me to trouble you in such a Manner...[69]

The author is posing as a hardnosed realist who can tell the honourable members about affairs in the outside world, "however merry you may have made yourselves about SPIRITS [does the capitalization indicate another chummy pun ?] in St Stephen's Chapel".[70] He goes on in the postscript to mention "your Electors...[and] Thousands besides" who require an answer to Pisteuo-Daemon's objections.[71] There is a tension here, between the manipulation of public opinion,

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[67] pv. There is something more Tory than Whig in the spirit of this.

[68] I must believe that which I have not seen; this what believing in spirits amounts to.

[69] pxliii

[70] cf text of Hyp-Doctor below: "They [the editors of the Craftsman, the opposition] find St Stephen's Chapel too sacred a Place for the D-l to shew his Pranks in."

[71] pxlix-l

and the author's almost paranoid fear of the licentious mob:

> I now hear what I have to offer, comes too late, and there seems no other Reason possibly to be assign'd for it, but, that my unknown Printer sides with the Majority, in procrastinating the Birth of this little Pamphlet.[72]

The very fact that this charge reached the light of day hardly indicates particular interest on the part of the threateningly unknown artisan; but the morbus plebiae is in evidence, in both mysterious particularity (the printer) and threatening mass (the "Majority").

Earlier, however, the author makes a very different assessment of the balance of opinion:

> ...[witchcraft can be considered as] an Affair purely of a Religious Nature, abstracted from the Civil Punishment; and, if I might ask; what, if the Concurrence of an English Convocation had been had, in making such a General Repeal ?[73]

Witchcraft is evidently a Tory issue, and the cherished belief of a silent majority of the English clergy. The author even manages to bind up witchcraft with a much more significant Tory grievance, the disappearance of a sitting convocation. This involved the entrusting of a greater proportion of the nation's spiritual interest to Parliament. In the pamphlet as a whole, the author asks the legislators to exercise their spiritual responsibilities with gravamen. In this particular passage, he asserts that were the clergy to have a say, as would be proper in a consideration "abstracted from the Civil Punishment", the matter would

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[72] pxliii

[73] pxxvii

stand very differently.[74]

So, we can identify this address as thoroughly Tory in ideology, siding with the ordinary clergy, but fearing the mob; crying out that the Church is in danger, and condemning the licence of the modern majority. Our reading of the text allows us to define the sense in which those who supported the old witchcraft legislation felt embattled; and to catch the silent meaning of the constituency - marginalized, embarrassed, ridiculed, - from which Pisteuo-Daemon emerged. He can have had little hope that his address to the members of the Commons would actually sway them. Much of the wrongfootedness in the manipulation of tone comes out of this, as the author swerves from light-hearted joking to a darker sarcasm at the expense of his declared audience. But it is interesting that the author lays claim to the bon ton, the urbanity, the rejection of the vulgar and of enthusiasm [see the reference to zeal in note 56 above] which opponents of the persecution of witches had so often claimed for themselves.

The clergy whom this author claimed for his own evidently were embarrassed into silence. Of the two sermons printed on the occasion of the repeal, both come down in favour of change. The Witchcraft of the Scriptures by Ph.S. LL.D., sets out to assimilate the old law to the new:

> Witches and Wisards there certainly is now a-days,

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[74]cf Bishop Wilson above,text at note 15, and his continued punishment of the crime, and apparent moderation of the punishment.

> as heretofore; but they are not Every person, that Ignorance or Malice may raise a Clamor against, or a foolish Nurse or wanton Servant may affright Children with: But they are such as the Scriptures, and our Laws, represent them [and here he refers to 5 Eliz.c.16. on treasure hunting, rather than the Jacobean statute]; who make a Trade, a Profession, a Livelihood, of deceiving and imposing upon others.[75]

We have all the usual references to God's overriding general providence and the Law of Nature as well as the language of political hygiene - the "reigning Infection..among the Vulgar".[76] The body of the sermon deals with the witch of Endor and the Israelite laws against witchcraft. These latter were conceived "upon this foot of Imposture", and the story of Saul and Samuel's ghost is interpreted with an explicit bias:

> Methinks any rational Account, so it does not contradict the very Words of Scripture, is better than disturbing the Soul of Samuel, or giving the Devil a Power to bring his Body from the Grave.[77]

In a striking and typical piece of rhetorical inversion, the author concludes that the imputation of witchcraft to "poor despicable ignorant Creatures" is itself a piece of diabolical malice, contrived by the Enemy "to set Enmity and Illwill among People, and to bring some to Damnation". This is an elegant and economical argument, setting popular fears against each other. The real witchcraft is the working of counterfeit miracles, and it is not surprising that Popery

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[75] The Witchcraft of the Scriptures: A sermon preach'd on a Special Occasion. By Ph.S. LL.D., 1736, p22.

[76] ibid. p24

[77] p19

should be introduced at this point as the main disseminator of the belief in praeternatural witchcraft. This sermon is exemplary of its type, opposed to vulgar belief and credulity, and seeking to conduct all discussion rationally and with "Candor and Good-manners".[78] The author turns the tables on his opponents, and claims that witchcraft accusations are themselves diabolical, and that credulity threatens the "purity" of the Christian religion. As noted before, high-flyers had no monopoly of the church in danger theme.[79]

III

Press coverage was more interesting in its ambiguities. The repeal was fairly widely reported. The Craftsman and its opponent The Hyp-Doctor discussed it in February in satirical excursions which I will deal with below. The "Monthly Chronologer" of the London Magazine recorded the repeal in its summary for March, and appended a passage from Bernard's book on the subject, to illustrate "the odd Notions which prevail'd upon this Head, when the Act now repeal'd had its full Operation".[80] The Hyp-Doctor for March 23rd also raised the issue again, with an intriguing piece

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[78]Advertisement.

[79]See also Joseph Juxon, A Sermon upon Witchcraft. Occasion'd by a Late Illegal Attempt to Discover Witches by Swimming. Preach'd at Twyford, In the County of Leicester, July 11, 1736, 1736.

[80]The London Magazine, March 1736.

of syntax:

> I conclude with one sober Meditation on the Bill against Spirits, I do not mean that against Witchcraft: But the other, perhaps, in Queen ANN's Days, must have waited for the Royal Assent.[81]

The punning makes this a fairly lighthearted piece. The implication is that a Tory ministry would have been soft on drinking - maybe they were drinkers themselves - but the ghost of an "also" between the words "must" and "have" in the third line could suggest that comparison is being made with a similar reluctance on the part of Anne's ministers to rubbish belief in witchcraft.

In April, the Old Whig reported the repeal of witchcraft curtly, and in a subsequent issue on the Test Act resurrected "the Fear of Danger from the Clergy ... Sacheverel's Mob...the terrible Images of Noise and Broomsticks ... Priestcraft...[one] could not think it prudent to do any thing that might possibly offend [such] an Order of men".[82] The Political State for April had a "very ridiculous Story" from Vienna concerning the supposed diabolical possession of a condemned Bohemian baroness, a sly Papistical ruse to escape or delay the due process of law.[83]

The Hyp-Doctor for June 8th brought gin and the devil

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[81]The Hyp Doctor by Sir Isaac Ratcliffe, of Elbow-Lane, Numb. 285, March 23rd 1736

[82]The Old Whig: Or The Consistent Protestant, Numb.57, Apr.8th, 1736.

[83]The Political State, April 1736, Vol.LI, p388.

together again, as well as making a further tilt at the Craftsman:

> As the Clergy have been oblig'd in the Tythe-Bill, the Strength and Well-Being of the Nation have been consulted in the Act laying a restraint on the Sale of Spirituous Liquors, and the terrible Effects of Enthusiasm and Superstition have been cut off by the Repeal of the Act of King James I concerning Witch-Craft. Wise and beneficial Laws are the Happiness and the Demonstration of a good Government. The Craftsman is for Geneva against Monarchy which is very natural.[84]

The implications fly in this passage with impetuous promiscuity. There is the endorsement of a proper concern on the part of the government for a balance between different legislative initiatives - the spiritual interest, the "Strength and Well-being of the Nation", and, presumably balancing the first, the restraint upon "Enthusiasm and Superstition". Whatever the reality within the House of Commons itself, the repeal of the witchcraft act is seen as the act of a wise and benign government. The final sentence is awash with double meanings. The opposition and their paper ally are for the excess of gin (geneva) against the better judgment of the government. Or, they support Genevan style republicanism against the Crown. Or again, they wax enthusiastically Calvinist in their (supposed) opposition to the rooting out of witchcraft persecution. Most tenuously of all, they decry divine providence and divine monarchy by setting up the Devil as a rival power in their fantastical federal theology.

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[84]Numb. 297, June 8th 1736

In August and September, the same enterprise was reporting a disputation held at the Oratory (presumably under John "Orator" Henley's auspices) "concerning Witchcraft" and specifically whether it could "influence the Passions, as Philtres are said to cause Love, &c".[85] A year later Common Sense returned to the theme, but its satirical piece needs to be seen in the context of earlier efforts in the Hyp-Doctor and the Craftsman.

The Craftsman for February 21st 1736 printed a letter from the fictitious Rachel Foresight to the equally imaginary proprietor of the paper, Caleb D'Anvers. According to Henry Fielding's latest biographer, Martin Battestin, the successful playwright was a frequent contributor to the Craftsman in these years. This issue is one he attributes to Fielding.[86] It starts as a satirical paean to the feminine spirit of prophecy in response to the Craftsman's previous willingness to "do...the fair sex justice". Foresight pays particular attention to the virtues of Mother Shipton the legendary English prophetess,

> and I humbly propose it to the ladies of Great Britain, who have the honour of their sex and the interest of necromancy at heart, that a magnificent statue be erected to her memory in some place of publick resort, with Mother Bunch on one side, as her Prime Minister, and Mother Osborne, as her Secretary, on the other.

Here again, the pun on spirits is being made as the

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[85]Numbs. 309 & 310, Aug.31 and Sept. 7 1736.

[86]See M.C. Battestin and M.G. Farringdon, New Essays by Henry Fielding: His Contributions to "The Craftsman" (1734-9) and Other early Journalism, Charlottesville, Virginia, 1989.

necromancer and the ale-wife are together commemorated. The author goes on to express approval of the repeal, which will secure "the honour of female magick" and prevent a "terrible discouragement to the gifts of prophecying". But after an apparently poignant and Addisonian reference to the sufferings of old women under this legislation[87], the letter continues:

> Neither do I suppose that the repeal of this Act is intended purely as a matter of favour to us; for as we have some great men amongst us, who have justly acquir'd the reputation of being wizards, or conjurors, their enemies might take an opportunity of putting this law in force against them, for want of other means to gratify their bloodyminded vows and resentments.

This is more in the tradition of Defoe, and Fielding revels in the possibilities for anti-Walpolean satire afforded by the new legislation, asking

> whether several things, both at home and abroad, could have been lately brought to pass, if a certain gentleman, who shall be nameless, had not had some dealing with another gentleman in black.

Financial corruption is equated with the diabolical transaction, and the successful conclusion of negotiations with the Emperor is attributed to actions which are "certainly within the statute". This section ends with a self-serving compliment to the editor's success in predicting the future within his own pages.

The last two paragraphs of the letter give some useful

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[87]"for it was come to that pass at last that a woman could hardly grow poor, old and ugly (which are curses enough, in all conscience, of themselves) without danger of being hang'd for a witch."

hints as to the polemical brief of this satire. The intended repeal will not only protect the politicians "from any indictment, or articles of impeachment, as conjurors; but, perhaps, give them grace, for the future, to defy the devil and all his works". If we leave out the qualification, "as sorcerors", this suggests that the repeal had a clear political purpose, via its appeal to "no inconsiderable party, in this kingdom", namely, those "who think themselves a little wiser than their neighbours". While on one level this is no more than a little joke - of course, most people think they are wiser than the next man - it could also refer to the irritating claims to a preeminent rationality of the more whiggishly inclined. Rachel Foresight does us two other services. She confirms a connection between the Test and Corporation Acts and the Witchcraft Act[88], and hints at the moral danger perceived in the diabolical fashion for masquerade, something already noted in Hogarth, Gibson and elsewhere:

> I was sorry to hear that three or four persons should be so indiscreet as to appear, at the last Masquerade, in their proper characters, and perform several magical operations, before we have actually gain'd our point; for I am very apprehensive that this may be esteem'd an insult upon authority, as the law stands at present, and perhaps induce some persons to oppose the repeal of it...

Rachel Foresight's letter is not easy to interpret.

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[88]"...I think it is incumbent upon all persons, who think themselves a little wiser than their neighbours...to promote the repeal of this law, as the Dissenters do to sollicit that of the Test."

Evidently it functions in one way as a jeu d'esprit, a jokey dig at the ministry in relation to a possibly bizarre piece of legislation. But the Craftsman was a political journal, the main mouthpiece of the opposition. The letter gives a turn of the screw to Defoe's satire by not only diabolizing the government, but also simultaneously pointing out their repeal of anti-diabolical laws. The passage referring to masquerade hints that opposition to repeal could come from those opposed to moral laxity. And the ironies at work in the reference to those who "think themselves a little wiser" include one which contemns such self-serving rationality. Finally, the description of Walpole's enemies taking an opportunity of "putting this law in force against ...[him], for want of other means to gratify their bloodyminded vows and resentments" may express, in a round about and satirical fashion, the position taken by Erskine. Deprived of the actual means of attack - that is, unable to attack Walpole for being a witch - Erskine takes surrogate action, and opposes repeal.

Common Sense, over a year later, gives more body to this impression, and a newspaper reference, rare in its lack of ambiguity, to opposition to the repeal of the witchcraft act:

> The Enemies of our present most excellent M-s, did not fail to reproach them, as if the repealing of this Act was calculated only for their private Security, being conscious to themselves that they were Conjurers. But suppose they were sensible that all the World took them for Conjurers, as their Enemies are vigilant and active, who can blame them for providing for their own Safety, by

> repealing a law, which might, one time or other, have put it in the Power of their Enemies to have destroyed them.[89]

This article in Common Sense is embroidered upon the basis of Rachel Foresight's letter, and uses many of the same tricks and jokes. The difference comes in the praise that is loaded upon Walpole, whose feats are seen as so magnificent that it is no wonder that ignorant opponents ascribe them to magic. But then his bubble is pricked:

> In fine, how shall I paint that Air, that Mien, that Address, or that fine Hand, which is this Minute employ'd in pulling up the Breeches.

Fielding's essay provoked a quicker riposte from The Hyp-Doctor, who wrote an essay in February 1736 under the heading "The D-l incarnate turn'd Craftsman: Or, Evil Spirits not all Conjurors, a repartee to the last Craftsman's Mother Shipton". This lets loose the magical metaphor throughout, as Fog and Caleb are accused of running "a Couple of Legerdemain Papers, which might have been entituled Hocus Pocus". But now they have sunk to "the lowest stale Jests" and become intolerably vulgar, a prey to chap-books, the "-Refuse of Fairs, and Gleanings of Duck-Lane". The doctor sets out on an outraged catalogue of the vulgarism of the opposition, their ironic sinking below the standards set by their comrade, Pope:

> One would imagine, that the Allies and Confederates of that Prodigy, or rather Monster of Wit, Mr Pope, would never have practised the Art of Sinking beyond any of his WORTHIES, or his Dunciad Heroes ! One would have thought that his

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[89] Common Sense, Aug.6 1737, No 27.

> dear Friends and sparkling Comrades who belong to a Party, that always pretends to the Superiority of Talents, would never have descended so deep into their own Bathos, as to have pillaged all the Chapmen's Books and Ballads from Mother Shipton to Jane Wenham: We are now to expect nothing from this Quarter but the First, Second, and Third Parts of Tom Tram and Tom Hickathrift... and the Witch of the Woodlands.

The author now rounds on the accusations of diabolism made against the ministry, taking up and upturning the allegory with enthusiasm:

> Such is the miserable refuge of poor exhausted Caleb, in his last Meditation on Mother Shipton: Whereas we know of no Evil Spirits, that either the Court or the Country ever had to deal with but himself and his Followers: They are the Malignant Daemons that have met with a Wand powerful enough to expel them the Circle of the Court; and now they chatter and snarl on the Outside of it, because incapable of entering it. They find St Stephen's Chapel too Sacred a Place for the D-l to shew his Pranks in: And are now shrunk into meer Country Fairies, that employ all their power, and place all their Delight, in souring the Milk, and pinching the Dairy-Maids. As the Calebites are plainly Malignant Spirits, so they who are led by this inverted Inspiration are certainly possess'd: The cure of Daemoniacks must be the Work of Grace, to which I refer him, if he be not past it; but as Second Causes may sometimes operate under the First, I shall now and then offer an Attempt to dispossess those who are already seiz'd by the Daemon of the Craftsman. It is pity that the late Act repealing the Statute of King James I against Witchcraft, will not extend to these Daemoniacks, because they are already in the Clutches of bad Spirits...[90]

This is the most unambiguously satirical piece of the three, because its comedy leaves no room for the sort of ambiguities which Fielding, for one, exploits. No historian would claim, on the basis of his article, that Fielding was

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[90]Numb.280

a believer in witchcraft; but his piece leaves his precise position open to a rhetorically effective variety of contemporary interpretations. It could have appealed to the cynical oppositionist, or the enraged high-flyer. The Hyp-Doctor's essay is much more obvious. It accuses the opposition of falling in with vulgar belief, thus misrepresenting the ambiguous force of the Craftsman. It then proceeds, in its inversion of the charge of possession or diabolism ["inverted Inspiration"], to mock both the panoply of witchcraft belief and the ludicrous "Craftsmen"; hence the malignant spirits, the pinching the dairy-maids, the souring the milk. Walpole is transmuted, with his wand, into a sort of political Prospero. The reference to the repeal itself interprets it as a casting out of evil spirits from the body of the nation, an exorcism of the imagination to which the Craftsman is, unfortunately, immune.

IV

It is misleading, therefore, to relegate the repeal of the English (and, moreover, Scottish) legislation against witchcraft to a mere footnote in the history of rationalism. Repeal did not emerge from nowhere as an afterthought, a process of mopping-up in a struggle against superstition that had been won some time "between the Restoration and the Revolution".[91] It had a context and a meaning, both

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[91]Henry Thomas Buckle, The History of Civilisation in England, 1871 [new edition], iii, p363: "the destruction of the old notions respecting witchcraft...was effected, so far

recoverable to some extent.

It is also noteworthy that repeal was not an undifferentiated and simple process. The parliamentary procedure of discussion and amendment resulted in a new witchcraft act, which punished imposture; and the extension of the new legislation to Scotland, where some of its provisions made little sense.[92] The repeal and replacement of the Scottish legislation was obviously, in this sense, an afterthought, a rush job which issued in confusion. But this only confirms that the new law was never intended seriously; it was never widely implemented.[93] The measures against imposture only served to underline the new reading of the biblical injunction which those who wished to ditch the prosecution of witches imposed; a reading which sought continuity with the old Elizabethan, English legislation against witchcraft.[94]

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as the educated classes are concerned, between the Restoration and the Revolution." Buckle is useful both in hinting, perhaps unwittingly, at the political relevance of witchcraft belief; and in making the "destruction" of the old notions a business which was, and had to be, "effected." [incidentally, his footnotes are a rich source for the student of the intellectual history of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. I must thank Dr Roy Park for pointing them out to me.]

[92]The punishment for the crime of "pretended witchcraft" was one year's imprisonment, with a spell in the pillory on Quarter Days. In Scotland, of course, Quarter Days were unknown.

[93]Though see the conclusion here on the 1951 Fraudulent Mediums Act.

[94]See Ph.S.'s sermon, above. There may have been some confusion as to what the new "Witch Act" actually entailed; see Giles Jacob, New Law-Dictionary, 1739, sub Conjuration.

Analysis of these texts suggests that witchcraft as a generic category was still undergoing transformation in 1736. The early modern theory of witchcraft had set up discursive boundaries, defining the limits of legitimate learned conversation. After the crisis of 1712, witchcraft was pushed further towards the vital frontier which divides the sensible from the silly.[95] Nevertheless, much of the old structure was still there in 1736. Ridicule was encroaching upon it, fictionalization was proceeding apace, but this was still undoubtedly a period of transition in which ambiguities could be exploited to rhetorical effect by skilled satirists like Fielding. And the deployment of political material in the texts, and by James Erskine, demonstrates again the political charge which witchcraft theory carried, and the role which politics had to play in its demise. This is a consistent pattern found in all the stories we have told; belief in witchcraft is <u>used</u> politically, and it is exhausted by a process of exclusion - factionalization, party realignment, ideological ridicule - whose far-reaching political dimensions have been hitherto largely ignored.

Two pieces of high spirits from the 1750s can conclude this part of the story, and symbolize the process in which harmless satire was increasingly taking the place of seriousness as far as witchcraft was concerned. Witchcraft

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[95]As opposed to the more rigid and impermeable boundary between sense and nonsense.

was a running joke with Pope's erstwhile friend, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. Complaining of the air of scandal which surrounded her, she wrote her to her daughter from Venice:

> I thank God Witches are out of Fashion, or I should expect to have it depos'd by several credible wittnesses that I had been seen flying through the Air on a broomstick etc.[96]

A few days later, in a letter to Sir James Steuart she pushed the joke a little further. Promising an account of portentous prodigies, she is

> convinced of the necessity of the repeal of the Witch-act (as it is commonly called), I mean, to speak correctly, the tacit permission given to Witches, so scandalous to all good Christians, tho' I tremble to think of it for my own interests.

Since "public encouragement" has been given, "The Devil rages more powerfully than ever". She herself has

> been seen flying in the air in the figure of Julian Cox, whose history is related with so much candour and truth by the pious pen of Joseph Glanville...

The letter ends with a delicious tease (Sir James was interested in the supernatural) which follows on the heels of a splendidly absurd piece of syllogistic reasoning:

> Now observe this comment: who are the most despicable creatures? Certainly, Old women. What pleasure can an old woman take? - Only Witchcraft. I think this argument as clear as any of the devout Bishop of Cloyne's metaphysics[97]; this

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[96]ed. Robert Halsband, The Complete Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, (Oxford, 1967), vol.III, p. 187-8, To Lady Bute, 8th Nov.[1758].

[97]Bishop Berkeley, who wrote a letter approving of the 1711 Irish witch trial; and whose metaphysics might be seen as an aprioristic substitute for the empirical proof of the existence of spiritual substance which witchcraft narratives

> being decided in a full congregation of saints, only such atheists as you and Lady Fanny can deny it. I own all the facts, as many witches have done before me, and go every night in a public manner astride upon a black cat to a meeting where you are suspected to appear. This last article is not sworn to, it being doubtfull in what manner our clandestine midnight correpondance is carried on. Some think it treasonable, others lewd (don't tell lady Fanny), but all agree there was something very odd and unaccountable in such sudden likings. I confess, as I said before, it is witchcraft. You won't wonder I do not sign (notwithstanding all my impudence) such dangerous truths. Who knows the consequence ? The Devil is said to desert his votaries.

This banter is, nonetheless, demonstration of the fate of witchcraft belief. Steuart was an impeached, exiled Jacobite; in this letter, withcraft has its sexual connotations, but also political ones. It is a matter of treason and intrigue; and who but a renegade Tory would be accused of witchcraft or belief in its power, even in jest ?[98]

Similarly suggestive fragments are contained in The World, five years earlier. The author satirizes the Tories and their crew of Jacobites and high-flyers by ascribing the sins of the age, including those of the Tories themselves, to witchcraft, belief in which is attached to Tory ideology:

> ...it is the repeal of an act of parliament, and not the act itself, that I am now about to complain of. The act I mean is the WITCH ACT. I am not considering the repeal of this act as affecting our religious belief, according to the Scotch proverb, "Tauk awaw the deel, and good bwee

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were supposed to provide. See George Berkeley, Works, ed. A.A. Luce and T.E. Jessop, 9 vols., 1956, viii, p46, Berkeley to Percival, April 14th, 1711.

[98]ibid., p188-9, 14th Nov. 1758

> to the Lord." I think of it only in a moral light, as it has given such encouragement to WITCHCRAFT in this kingdom, that one hardly meets with a grown person either in public or private, who is not more or less under its influence.

He proceeds to ascribe to witchcraft all the wickedness of the age which, he notes, so many perceive: "that universal and uncontroulable rage of PLAY"; "that spirit of pride and passion for expence"; all the "folly and absurdity, [which] must be obvious to the common sense of all mankind"; "the spirit of Jacobitism, which is so well known to possess many of his Majesty's protestant subjects in this kingdom". Now,

> FROM all these considerations it is much to be wished that a new WITCH-ACT may take place next session of parliament. Vox populi est vox dei, is a wise and true saying; and that the vox populi is in favour of such an act, let the late proceedings at Tring[99], and some similar occurrences in other parts of England, bear testimony.

This is high satire, directed against murmuring Tory and riotous plebeian alike. But, as with Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, the political reasons for the demise of witchcraft theory lurk, and in this case emerge, quite clearly, in a passage which takes us back to images of the Jew Bill[100]:

> THAT the legislature may be farther induced to take this matter into consideration, I am clearly of opinion, that the passing such an act will go a great way towards silencing the clamours which have gone forth so grievously against the Jew bill; for it is shrewdly suspected that the same people who imagined their religion to be at stake by the repeal of the one, are at present under the most terrible consternation at the passing of the

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[99]On this case see W.B. Carnochan, "Witch-hunting and belief in 1751: the case of Thomas Colley and Ruth Osborne" Journal of Social History, 4, 1971.

[100]See chapter 6.

> other: and besides, it will be a convincing proof to all sorts of persons, that the administration is as well inclined to discourage the devil, as it is to favour the Jews...[101]

The archaeology of these texts continues to reveal the deposits of the struggles of the past.

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[101] The World [Adam Fitz-Adam], Numb.34, Aug.23rd, 1753. This article was later adapted by Oliver Goldsmith, The Bee, viii, Nov. 24th 1759, "On Deceit and Falshood" in Works, ed. A. Friedman, 5 vols., Oxford 1966, i pp494-7.

APPENDIX: ANTIPAS

The contingencies of British constitutional arrangements allowed for a brief, but significant, recrudescence of the witchcraft debate at the very moment when the more general political and religious inheritance of the 1689 settlement came to be seriously debated for the last time. The years following the French Revolution had seem a substantial easing of pressure for measures of religious and constitutional reform. In 1787, Beaufoy's motion for the repeal of the Test and Corporation acts was defeated in the Commons; in 1790, a similar motion was withdrawn from Parliament without a division. Nevertheless, the principle of religious toleration - though not full emancipation - continued to extend its sway. In 1780 the Gordon riots had failed to put paid to the Catholic relief act of 1778; in 1777, dissenting ministers and schoolmasters had been relieved from the necessity of subscribing to the thirty-nine articles. This cautious retreat from the legacy of the Glorious Revolution and its 1715 confirmation continued after 1789. Considerations of national security led to the proposals which in 1793 extended the franchise to Irish Catholics, within an unreformed Parliament. In 1812, the Unitarian Relief Act was passed, and those Caroline measures, the conventicle and five-mile acts, repealed.

The years from 1815 to 1829 were to see the final struggle for the preservation of the old ecclesiastical and

constitutional dispensation. As Twiss put it in his biography of a leading participant in the resistance, Eldon,

> the dangerous dispositions which had for a time been absorbed or overlaid by foreign hostility, were again let loose upon the constitution of England.[1]

In 1816, a motion for Catholic relief was defeated in the House of Lords. The watershed came in the 1820s, and one opponent of change, whether in the political or the religious sphere, the Revd. Hyde Casson, was quite clear about the diabolical inspiration behind the soon-to-be-effected repeals of the Test and Corporation Acts:

> The very "principium et fons" of all dissent, where the communion that is left is not sinful (and no one could ever assert that ours is sinful) is nothing else than a satanic impatience of Godly discipline - a hatred of, and rebellion against, constituted authorities...[2]

Another author, writing some years earlier in that heated decade, agreed with this refusal of "any Concession to Dissenters or Papists" alike. He was writing ostensibly against the repeal of the witchcraft legislation. Not the English legislation, dispatched in 1736, but the Irish statute which had stood outside Westminster's jurisdiction until 1801 and the Act of Union. In 1821, the witchcraft issue came again to Westminster.

The young member for Limerick, Thomas Spring-Rice,

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[1]Cited in Clark, English Society, p384.

[2]S. Hyde Casson, Considerations on the Danger of any Legislative Alteration Respecting the Corporation and Test Acts; and of any Concession to Dissenters or Papists, 1828, pp28-9.

elected in the Whig interest in 1820, a man who won an early reputation as an expert on Irish affairs, suggested some reforms to the criminal law in Ireland, some tidying-up:

> [He] moved for leave to bring in a bill for the repeal of the capital punishments attached to the commission of certain offences in Ireland. The crimes from which he proposed to remove capital punishment were, stealing privately in a shop; the forcible abduction of women; and the concealment of effects by bankrupts. He also proposed to repeal certain laws against witchcraft. It was right, he observed, that the punishment of crimes should, in every instance, be as conformable as possible to public opinion; and in Ireland this was particularly necessary, where there existed such a disposition to prosecute for many capital offences, and such a horror of informers.[3]

Leave was granted for a bill to be brought in, and what resulted as far as witchcraft was concerned was

> 1 & 2 Geo IV c.18 (6 April). An Act to Repeal an Act, made in the Parliament of Ireland in the Twenty eighth Year of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth, against Witchcraft and Sorcery;

and a book called Antipas.

Who was Antipas ? The author himself is unknown, but his chosen model can be found in the book of Revelation:

> I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is : and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.[4]

The writer sees himself as a lone defender of the faith against the depredations of the Devil.

The work sets out as an attack on the dilution of the

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[3]The Parliamentary Debates [Hansard], iv, 1821, column 1167 for March 7, 1821.

[4]Revelation 2.13.

Revolution settlement, with complaints against anti-trinitarianism at large, and, more topically, against the new Roman Catholic Disability Removal Bill. This received its third reading on April 2nd, and was subsequently lost in the Lords. All this is couched in the form of "an earnest and solemn appeal" to the Lords ecclesiastical of the upper house:

> Had such an appeal been made to your Lordships in a respectful but forcible manner, before the fatal removal of those outworks which the piety and wisdom of our ancestors had raised against the most daring enemies of Religion, the torrent of infidelity would have been stemmed, or diverted from its course; it could not have inundated, as it has done, every street in our cities, and every village in our land.[5]

The author is one against the crowd, and perhaps one of the "meanest" of the Church "establishment". The "outworks" referred to are the measures against dissenters and unbelievers which had been repealed or moderated in recent times. The key to the first part of the argument is the link made between Popery and dissent:

> The revival of Popery was for centuries the dread of England: to prevent this our reformers laboured - our patriots bled. The progress of infidelity has, of late, formed a new and equally just ground of apprehension for her safety: the learned have fought against its abettors with the pen, the brave with the sword.

At the very moment when the Papacy is falling from influence, and when the scourge of atheistical Jacobinism

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[5] Antipas; A Solemn Appeal to the Right Reverend the Archbishops and Bishops of the United Churches of England and Ireland; with reference to several bills passed, or passing through the Imperial Parliament; especially that concerning Witchcraft and Sorcery, 1821, pp 6, 7.

has been driven from the face of Europe,

> ...on a sudden this warfare ceases - an armistice is demanded and allowed to both - restrictions are done away - laws are repealed - concessions are granted - every avenue is to be cleared - and every door, even that of the "bottomless pit !" is to be opened at once.[6]

These developments are seen in prophetic terms ("come, let him that standeth on the watch-tower, report what he seeth"[7]); and in terms of social hygiene. The author is an Elijah standing against the infatuation of the people, against emancipation, against the repeal of the test, against democracy, against reform:

> The nature of a cause will never be changed by the number of its advocates. A disease would not assume the character of health by becoming epidemic; nor does a confederacy cease to be formidable in proportion to the increase of its partisans.[8]

Diabolism is brought in as a further sign of the times, and as a overarching category embracing the twin threats of popery and infidelity:

> another and a more desperate enemy still, the parent and instigator of the other two.

The "Ruler of the darkness of this world" has "another instrument of assault". In these days of supposed enlightenment, this weapon is all the more dangerous "because the least expected"; its reality is asserted in

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[6]ibid. p16

[7]The epigraph on the title-page, Isaiah 21.6.

[8]ibid. p13. For another image of morbidity, see p39: "...what Chiron can arrest the process of dissolution in that BODY POLITIC, which should exhibit the morbid anatomy of a Protestant king and a Papal council ? "

despite of all the efforts of "modern philosophy, or modern policy". Denial and scepticism are not the proper means of resistance; rather one should resist "by putting on the whole armour of God". "This instrument...is", of course, "SORCERY or WITCHCRAFT".[9]

Antipas offers a wide definition of this diabolical crime, partly, no doubt, to confirm the association between sorcery, Popery and infidelity which is the pamphlet's primary concern:

> Under the term is comprehended "all kind of influence produced by collusion with Satan; all persons who have dealings with Satan, if not actually entered into formal compact with him.[10]

The emphasis throughout the rest of the tract is firmly upon the explication of passages from scripture. Not only are the usual injunctions against witchcraft cited in support of legislation against witchcraft. Antipas also fulfils its role as a prophetic work by citing extensive passages from Bishop Horsley on the meaning of passages from Isaiah, and by adopting a vigorously eschatological tone. "INDIFFERENCE TO THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES IS CRIMINAL", Horsley had declared, and Antipas views the prophecies of Isaiah, as explicated by the Bishop, as "remarkable" anticipations of the crisis of the 1820s. Here is Isaiah on the Egyptians:

> ...I will destroy the counsel thereof; and they shall seek to the idols, and to the charmers, and

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[9]ibid. p16.

[10]ibid.

> <u>to them that have familiar spirits</u>, and to the wizards.

And here is Horsley on Isaiah:

> The rulers of the Egyptians misled the people by erroneous politics. Ignorant of the designs of Providence, they formed false conjectures of the effect of their alliances, of the event of their wars, and their treaties; and misinterpreted what Providence brought to pass, at every step. This is a declaration of the dulness of the Egyptians to perceive the hand of God in their affairs, and foresee the impending judgment.[11]

<u>Antipas</u> is sure of the conclusion to be made from scriptural exegesis:

> This sin has ever been marked by the most signal vengeance of Almighty God in the case of individuals; and the permission or encouragement thereof, on the part of governments, has been uniformly followede by national judgments.

Or again:

> ...the practice of Witchcraft is the certain mark of a people abandoned to confusion, and popular tumult; and <u>the permission of it in a government, the positive mark of infatuation</u>.

The onset of the millennium is clearly at hand:

> This abominable delusion of Satan, practised in the first age of the Christian era, will be prevalent in the last.[12]

The author has an acute sense that his views are marginal. We have already noted his aversion to accepting sheer weight of numbers as an argument in favour of emancipation and reform. He evidently feels embattled, as both the choice of a Christian martyr for pseudonym, and

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[11] ibid., p23, citing Horsley's <u>Biblical Criticism</u>, ii, p189.

[12] <u>Antipas</u> pp18,21,25.

numerous passages, testify. "I am aware", he writes,

> ...that these opinions or any others concerning Antichrist, are become very unfashionable...

He feels the power of urbane ridicule at work, as he cites a report from the New Times concerning parliamentary debate on the Irish witchcraft act's repeal:

> This bill was read the third time, and passed. Lord - observed, that midnight was a most appropriate time to pass such a measure. - (laughter)

Such a solemn measure, he feels, is "no matter of MIDNIGHT MERRIMENT in a Christian senate".[13]

What strikes us now is how well Antipas fits into the stream of reactionary literature produced in the final years of the old dispensation. The Rev. Stephen Hyde Casson's words have been quoted already.[14] We can also note works like Edmund Greenfield's The Glorious Exaltation of the Holy Lamb of God, Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, over all the Powers of Darkness of 1820; or from a Catholic source, The Confessed Intimacy of Luther with Satan, at whose suggestion he abolished the Mass...[with an] introduction by Rev. John Lingard, which came out in the following year.[15]

The last flowering of the old politico-religious debate was thus accompanied by a revival of the witchcraft issue.

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[13]ibid., pp31,34,36. The author is also touchily defensive: "I am neither bigot nor enthusiast..." [p35].

[14]At note 2, above.

[15]For a survey of this sort of literature see Robert Hole's Pulpits, Politics and Public Order in England 1760-1832, Cambridge 1989.

This should hardly be surprising. It has already been seen that the discourse of witchcraft could return to the political arena even after its repeal, as during the Jew Bill crisis,[16] when the issues that had accompanied its last major outbreak, 1710-14, and assisted in its marginalization, were themselves revived. This late incarnation had its own distinct features, of course. Around 1700, the apologetic for witchcraft belief was associated with a view of the church which favoured comprehension, in a non-technical, broad sense,[17] while the sceptics, like Hutchinson, seem to have expanded on Lockean hints in order to replace one diabolical enemy, the witch, by another, the Pope. In Antipas these distinctions disappear: witch, Pope, infidel and dissenter are all part of the same diabolical continuum. As the author puts it,

> Conciliation of Dissenters has opened the mouth of blasphemers - concession to Catholics may yet "give place to the devil".

Or, more tersely,

> A Papal relapse may terminate in a Pagan crisis.[18]

The author cites Bishop Jewel for historical confirmation that the power of popery and the incidence of witchcraft go hand in hand.[19]

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[16]See chapter 6.

[17]See chapters 2, 4 and 5.

[18]Antipas pp39,40.

[19]p43, citing Jewel's sermon before Elizabeth in 1558: "...[he was] not indifferent as to the subject of Witchcraft and Sorcery. - He could discern its connexion

At the same time, however, Antipas exhibits all the marks of the backward-looking witchcraft discourse of the years around 1700. It has already been suggested earlier in the thesis that witchcraft theory was an intellectual entity with particular affinity for sacralized versions of the state. The witch was a focal point for a quasi-religious conception of political authority, a mixture of the anti-sacerdotal and anti-regal qualities analogous to and a diabolical inversion of that paramount exemplum of the mixed person, the king himself.[20] The author of Antipas certainly held the state to be a mystical body, as we may see in his final call to the legislature:

> Your Lordships are called, as Christians, and called as legislators, to "wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.[21]

Witchcraft and Jacobinism were akin in their efforts

> to throw off all the restraints of religion, morality and custom, and undo the bands of civil society...[22]

The author of Antipas viewed the settlement of 1689 as

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with Popery...he lamented the increase of the evil [during Mary's reign,] at the time when England was emerging from the darkness and emancipated from the bondage of the Papal See."

[20]"Rex Angliae est persona mixta cum sacerdote". See J.C.D. Clark, English Society, p135. Also see Stuart Clark, "King James's Daemonologie" in ed. S. Anglo, The Damned Art, 1977.

[21]ibid., p42.

[22]ibid.,p28

a creature continuous even to his own day, the "long eighteenth century" from the Glorious Revolution to his own day a seamless whole as far as religious legitimacy was concerned. And so, in his final lines, he could reprint without embarrassment William Jane's traditionalist cry of 1689, itself a reference back to the thirteenth century: "NOLUMUS LEGES ANGLIAE MUTARI".[23]

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[23]ibid., p43.

CONCLUSION

We come full circle by looking at the repeal of the 1736 legislation itself, and its measures against imposture. This occurred in the 1950-51 session of Parliament, and was designed to prevent possible prosecutions directed against well-meaning spiritualists. Chuter Ede, secretary of state for the Home Department, exhibited his Whiggism, both political and historical, by asserting that

> this Measure is a considerable advance in the direction of religious Toleration.

Another member, Lieutenant-Commander Thompson saw it in a more engagingly eccentric light, in a speech which embodies many of the false conceptions which beset the historian of witchcraft belief:

> If, as I hope, the House gives a Second Reading to this Bill today we shall be doing rather a remarkable thing. I do not speak as a Spiritualist, but in my view we shall be reaffirming an outlook and a point of view very necessary in an increasingly material age. In 1735[sic] the Witchcraft Act brought to an end officially what had, in fact, been at an end for some years -the belief in the reality of witchcraft. Witchcraft had been practised from the very beginning of time; during the 16th and 17th centuries there was tremendous activity in England and on the Continent, but with the dawn of the "age of reason", so called, belief in the reality of witchcraft faded...By 1735 the official view was that these powers no longer existed, whether they were good or evil, and we have been committed to a sort of official scepticism ever since that day...[this bill] will]...reaffirm that we honestly admit that there are powers given to some people in the community which enable them to do things which, for 215 years, we have not believed

were physically possible.[1]

This passage is quoted at such length because, despite its misconceived view of the 1951 act, it sums up many historical misconceptions, unwittingly hints at a truer perspective, and suggests unexpected continuities in the history of witchcraft legislation.

This thesis set out by questioning the cogency of vague notions according to which belief in the reality of witchcraft "faded" in the wake of some nebulous "age of reason", some time around 1700. As an intellectual assumption about the chronology of belief, this position runs very deep, as Thompson's remarks unwittingly show. Once the assumption has been removed, and we ask whether witchcraft belief might not have been a serious issue in 1700, our whole perspective on this issue shifts radically.

The 1735/6 act did not commit everyone to scepticism as regards the existence of these powers "good or evil". Even after 1736, apologists for witchcraft continued to speak out. But their fate was increasingly to be marginalized and ridiculed. The repeal of the witchcraft act set the seal on an elite consensus that convictions of witches for real sorcery were unsafe. This was, then, a confirmation of an "official" view in force since the end of the rage of party. It is here that Thompson's remarks point towards the

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[1] Hansard, Vth series, vol.481, session 1950-51, cols. 1486, 1467 [I Dec. 1950]. On 20th June 1950, Charles Botham had been convicted on three counts of false pretences. He had also been charged with two counts of conjuration under the 1735/6 act, but these were not considered by the court.

perspective offered in this thesis - the history of the fate of the elite discourse of witchcraft is the history of an official point of view and its transformations, transformations effected both by specific, and contingent, political events, and by longer-term shifts in the political structure of ideology.

Finally, of course, two hundred and fifteen years on, witchcraft legislation is once again being used to fight bigger battles to defend spiritual values "in an increasingly material age". The witchcraft issue had its various uses in the seventeenth, the eighteenth, the nineteenth, and even the twentieth centuries.[2]

In this sense, the witchcraft theme was less affected by the 1736 repeal than even the existence of marginal apologists suggests. It has been shown how Thomas Hobbes reworked the crime of witchcraft, denying its metaphysical aspects, and remoulding it to fit his Erastian and materialist system. In more attenuated form, much of the language and rhetoric of witchcraft survived the marginalization of witchcraft as crime and political ideology in the eighteenth century. The satirical uses of witchcraft after 1714 are an interesting reminder of the

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[2]14 & 15 Geo. 6. Ch.33. Fraudulent Mediums Act, 1951. [An Act to repeal the Witchcraft Act, 1735, and to make in substitution for certain provisions of section four of the Vagrancy Act, 1824, express provision for the punishment of persons who fraudulently purport to act as spiritualistic mediums or to exercise powers of telepathy, clairvoyance, or other similar powers. 22nd June 1951]. Cf. also current debates over devil-worship and ritual child abuse.

pertinacity of linguistic forms and the fossilization of ideological constructs. But Francis Hutchinson's example shows us also how an inchoate and low-key belief in the operation of good and evil spirits could survive the demise of witchcraft theory. Certainly, in this period new evidences of spiritual operation were being brought to bear, including Bishop Berkeley's metaphysical necessitation of a singular "immaterial" substance.

Inasmuch as witchcraft belief, despite the ideological polyvalency set out here, had a bias in its construction, a leading thread setting it in the groove of particular social formations, we can think of its decline as part of the chronology of secularization around 1700. This is not merely as convenient replacement for the old "dawn of reason". In the period 1650-1760, the European elites as a whole did withdraw from belief in witchcraft, and ceased to support its prosecution. This fact has to be recognized in any more particular account such as this. Such a very generalized process could be associated with a change in the nature of government, a modest restriction of the state's pretensions, in Reformation and Counter-Reformation, to religious competence. This might be called a retreat, though by no means a rout, of the confessional ideal. This general model can only really secure general assent, however. The details are all too messy, the global process riven with contradictions. As for witchcraft belief, if it was, as it seems to have been in England, an expression of the boundary

between the secular and the religious within an emergent state, its fate as an ideology was bound to follow the contours of the history of such states, their relations, and their expansion, conceptual and jurisdictional.

The resistance to the argument set out here, the conception which underlies the assumptions about the victory of reason and the insufficiency of political debate as an an explanation for a change in beliefs, stem from a confusion of ideology and mentality. The first few chapters of the thesis set out the political relevance of witchcraft theory before 1700.On the basis of this political classification a political account of the demise of witchcraft theory is offered, pivoting on the example of Daniel Defoe. Defoe used witchcraft as a bipartisan tool; the Wenham case made it dangerously partisan; under the new regime it found new, satirical uses. But only time transformed the precarious, anxious satire of a Hutchinson, still caught in the ideological battle, into the easier wit of later generations. The longer witchcraft remained in the ideological wilderness, the less likely it was to return, the more marginalization of the issue became a matter of mentality.

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