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WITCH PAMPHLETS

By

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Thesis

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## Abstract

The witch hysteria that overtook Christian Europe during the Early Modern era inspired a mass paranoia over the conspiratorial belief that the Abrahamic religion's personification of the world's evils, also known as Satan, the Devil, demons, or Lucifer interchangeably, was attempting to rise up and cause harm to Christian communities during this time period. It was believed that in order to achieve this goal the Christian version of the Devil had been recruiting humans within Christian communities and turning these chosen humans into witches by granting them the ability to wield magical powers to spread their destruction, murder, and terror amongst their own neighbors and families. Over the course of the late sixteenth and seventeenth century in England, the impact of the witch hysteria resulted in the publication of illustrated witchcraft pamphlets through London's printing houses, where news of witch trials would be recounted in detail. When compared against illustrations from other English pamphlets published during this same time period, the witchcraft pamphlets stand out as distinctly different through their portrayal of female witches as caricatures with the heavy visual symbolism representing the believed malicious capabilities that witches possessed against society. A comparison of witchcraft pamphlets against other pamphlets printed in different genres and countries also showcases the hypocrisies in which the witchcraft illustrations that are supposed to be presenting the sins of witches has been tamed down, with the witches always being portrayed as fully clothed despite the text going into detail on the accused sexual perversions of the witches, which indicates the printing houses had taken marketing into account. Likewise depictions of female witches versus male witches in illustrations show the female witches as ugly caricatures wearing lower-class clothing, while male witches are shown wearing garments of a higher class, and holding higher positions in society. These items point to witchcraft hysteria being partly fueled through the lucrative marketability of people's fear, with the knowledge that an illustration should aim toward a balance of subtle symbolism of the maliciousness of witches so as to not put English readers off from buying the printer's pamphlets.

## Introduction

For my thesis I will be analyzing illustrations from examples of English witchcraft pamphlets dating from the time period 1579 to 1658. I will then analyze examples of other non-witch related wood block printed illustrations from England, that come from around the same time frame. The second group of wood block print illustrations that I have chosen to analyze will have been available to the same target demographic who would have had access to the witchcraft pamphlets. After analyzing the two sets of examples, I will then compare the example groups against one another to prove that there is a discernable difference in the art style used to portray witches, and the art style used to portray illustrated characters that do not mention of witches.

The witchcraft pamphlets I will be studying are a genre of historic printed media which perpetuated witch hysteria in England, reported on witch trials happening around the country, and educated the increasingly literate populace of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries on defining what a witch was. The pamphlets were important in that they were able to be printed in large quantities, which accelerated the spread of people fearing that an infestation of witches lived in their midst. The artistic styles used in the witchcraft pamphlets were different than the artistic styles utilized in other printed illustrations. Beasts and demons were depicted differently in the pamphlets in comparison to other contemporary printed media. In this thesis, I will be focusing on the usage of animals and demons in the pamphlet illustrations in relation to how the witches in these illustrations were depicted in order to make the concept of witchcraft appear all the more frightening to the English public. I will also discuss how this style

of artistic representation would have influenced the collective mental image people at the time had developed when the witch hysteria came to England.

In order to properly analyze the English witchcraft pamphlets for this thesis, we must first establish a frame of historical context, to better make sense of the meanings that would have been interpreted by the contemporary audience of the illustrated artworks in the pamphlets. Citing the beliefs, historical events, and political landscape that the artists drew from when carving the woodblock prints for the pamphlets will create a history that the intended English audience been all too aware of in some form or another.

## **Chapter 1. Summarized Overview of time period for historical context**

### **Bible Passages**

The Christian Bible vaguely defines what a witch (*mekhashepha* in Hebrew) is through several key verses and stories. Much of the original context surrounding the exact details which had defined the Hebrew concept of witchcraft, have been lost to time. However, from translated Bible passages we can extrapolate a basic understanding of where the concept of witchcraft came from. It is important to keep in mind that the original Hebrew Old Testament has been retranslated, and sometimes carefully rewritten, with certain passages reinterpreted to match the values of the current ruling political faction of a certain point in time, in the specific region in which the Bible copy had been commissioned to be remade. It is also a fact that the original definitions for certain ancient Hebrew words have been lost over the centuries, either mistranslated, or replaced with relevant definitions of words that the monks creating the

Bibles would be familiar with in their own time period. Over the centuries, in the history of Christianity especially, the Bible had been a source of heated theological debate, and as a result no two copies of it were ever exactly, word for word, the same, depending on where and when in Europe the copy was created.<sup>1</sup> For this paper, I want to clarify that I will be referencing the general agreed context in which witchcraft existed within the Bible around the time Europe's witch hysteria had taken hold. Once we have established the basic concept of witchcraft as defined by Bible passages that existed in more or less a consistent form of canon concept within this timeframe, we can then move forward to the major historical events that would help shape the rise of witch hysteria in England. In this section I will reference, and then analyze, a sample of Bible quotes relating to where the witch hysteria era's concepts of witchcraft originated from the Christian Holy Book itself.

Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live.<sup>2</sup>

In this passage there is little to no explanation as to what a witch is, assuming that the reader would already have known. This establishes that witches are unwelcome for practitioners of the Bible's religion.

Ye shall not eat *any thing* with the blood: neither shall ye use enchantment, nor observe times.<sup>3</sup>

This passage accompanies a larger list of do's and don'ts on how a practitioner of the religion is to live a virtuous life, which includes instructions to not get tattoos, and to never sell

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<sup>1</sup> Bragard. *When God Spoke English: The Making of the King James Bible*. BBC Four.

<sup>2</sup> Bible. Ex. 22:18. King James version.

<sup>3</sup> Lv. 19:26.

one's own daughters into prostitution. Interestingly, the instruction to not consume food with the blood in it shares the same verse as the instruction to not observe times- which is another term for the practice of augury- or use enchantments. There is no textual explanation as to whether the two sentences are related to one another, or two separate concepts entirely. As for the second instruction it is established that a practitioner of the religion should not practice augury, which is a Roman concept of divination that involves observing the natural world, as well as interpreting the entrails of sacrifices, in order to divine omens from what they see. This was used particularly in the observation of birds.<sup>4</sup>

The passage also instructs that one should not practice enchantment, though the term is again, not defined in further detail. Whether the three instructions, to not consume anything with its blood in it, to not practice augury, and to not use enchantment, are related to one another is not stated outright, though it could be interpreted as such. However, with its clear association to the practice of augury within the same sentence, it can be inferred that enchantment does involve some form of occult mysticism in its practice.

Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them: I *am* the LORD your God.<sup>5</sup>

This verse expands upon terms that would later be used interchangeably with words like witchcraft by introducing the concept of a wizard, associating wizards with those who have familiar spirits, or demonic servants in the guise of animals familiar to earth-bound humans,

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<sup>4</sup> *Augury*. Britannica, June 7, 2017. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/augury>.

<sup>5</sup> Lv. 19:31.

and should not be sought out for their services.<sup>6</sup> The definition of what a wizard was is not expanded upon, however, the passage can be interpreted that there is a link between mediums and wizards.

A man also or woman that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death: they shall stone them with stones: their blood *shall be* upon them.<sup>7</sup>

This verse reestablishes the sentiment made in Exodus 22:18, yet attributes the words ‘wizard’ or ‘familiar spirit’ in association with the advice to kill anyone who practices certain forms of mysticism.

For without *are* dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.<sup>8</sup>

This verse establishes that all forms of sorcery are comparable to the sexually immoral, paganism, and dangerous forces that prey on the faithful using sins.

Based on Bible references that were often cited as justification for Christian witch trials, we can establish that witchcraft was defined as, more or less, an umbrella term used to describe some form of pagan sorcerer, or mystic, that practiced non-Biblically sanctioned occult acts, such as divination, necromancy, and the like; something that the Christian God did not approve of, and took offense to those who either practiced some form of witchcraft, or were offended by those who sought out the aid of these sorcerers instead of remaining faithful to trusting in the Christian God’s divine plans for them.

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<sup>6</sup> *Familiar*. Britannica, October 5, 2016. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/familiar>.

<sup>7</sup> Lv. 20:27.

<sup>8</sup> Rev. 22:15.



Given that the institution of the church was seen as an extension of the Christian God's power, anything that did not involve the influence of the church was alarming. During the height of Catholic power in Western Europe, the church had woven its way into all aspects of everyday life; from diet, where there were certain days of the week people were not permitted to eat meat, to every day of the year that was devoted to paying respects to certain saints in order to ensure outcomes such as plentiful harvests, and even to cutting small crosses onto loaves of bread. The Catholic church was the largest land owner in Europe during the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, making the institution of the religion a core economic pillar that was more powerful than the ruling kings of European countries.<sup>9</sup>

As is evidenced in the Old Testament, the concept of witchcraft has been ever-present in Christian lore from the very beginning, having been inherited from stories passed down in some form or another from ancient sources. However, as is the case with most trends in popular culture that are based on ancient concepts, the historical context for what defined what a witch was in the ancient past had changed to suit the contemporary narrative that reflected a completely different culture's beliefs. Based on existing accounts that I have read in my research, the rise of witch trials in Europe was not headed by any one institution, or were even consistent in when or where they would be utilized. The rise and fall of the trials that took place between the late fifteenth and early nineteenth centuries, were dependent on whether or not the idea of persecuting people as witches happened to be a popular idea amongst those in power at the time. So the ebb and flow of witch hysteria erupted as something that was more akin to an infectious disease outbreak than a mass organized effort. Witch trials were

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<sup>9</sup> *Tudor Monastery Farm*. BBC Two.

more of a symptom that stemmed from other factors that lead to a rise in anxiety within a given community's population.<sup>10</sup>

There were rising tensions between an ever-increasing corrupt Catholic church institution, who seemed more concerned with selling indulgences than providing to the spiritual needs of their followers, and a resentful disenfranchised populace, a large portion of whom were tenants on the lands the church owned, making them even more vulnerable towards lasting effects of corruption. Not even kings could have the power of disobeying the Church directly lest they be excommunicated. Not to mention that the church controlled large swaths of real estate in the countries these kings ruled, making inter-European politics difficult as decisions for the self-interest of individual country's international affairs, and even decisions made in the private lives of royalty, became a matter in which the Vatican often interfered, including the outcome of whether the church would allow for certain actions to be taken depending on which Pope candidate, loyal to certain top societal families, got the job. To complicate matters the Vatican regularly employed the use of scare tactics to keep the Christian populace from revolting. Those who dared to stand up against the spiritual authority were mercilessly persecuted as heretics. Added to the mounting issues, the discovery of the existence of the Americas by Europeans in 1492 marked a radical shift in how the economies of

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<sup>10</sup> Hutton. *The Witch*. Pg. 180-184.

countries would be run.<sup>11</sup> To many it must have felt as though the devil himself had infiltrated Christendom from within the church itself.

### **Malleus Malificarum 1486**

Heinrich Kramer was a Catholic Friar whose original job as an established inquisitor had been to seek out heretics amongst the general population of Catholic territories. The problem with Kramer had been his obsession with women, sex, and witches. He was given a license to persecute any witches if they were found, but even by the standards of the time, he was excessive in his cruelty. On many occasions he was forced to leave an area because his obsession with the torture of women, specifically those considered quite favorably reputable in the communities he worked within. Out of frustration in 1486 Kramer published an illustrated manual about the evils of witchcraft titled *Malleus Maleficarum (Witches Hammer)*, in which he established a canon for what became the basis of how Europe defined witchcraft being directly linked with the devil in the coming decades. He pushed his own ideas that witches weren't just heretics but women who were recruited by the devil to become minions of hell, who sought to destroy good faithful Christians. Because he had included his license to prosecute witches, along with other heretics, in the first page of his book, and the fact that had been authorized by the Pope himself some time before the book had been written, it was assumed that Kramer had the backing of the whole church itself.<sup>12</sup> This included the belief that the highest of religious authorities concurred that witches weren't just heretics believing in falsehoods, but

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<sup>11</sup> Weinstein et al. "History of Europe." Encyclopedia Britannica, November, 26, 2020. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/history-of-Europe>.

<sup>12</sup> *Witches: A Century of Murder*. Netflix. Channel 5 Television, 2015.

worshipped the devil. As ordinary humans-turned-agents of hell, the traitors of the Christian god were believed to be able to hide amongst communities undetected, as the seemingly ordinary neighbors, and even close relatives, of good Christian men.<sup>13</sup>

The outcome of his writing down a whole book instructing on how to identify, then capture, and execute witches was the ignition of widespread fear with the only offered solutions offered to counteract the conspiracy being brutality and violence. At the time, Europe as a whole was coping from the fallout of dramatic upheavals in everyday life. No one societal class was left unaffected by the dramatic shifts in the social, political, and economic landscapes that had transpired throughout the end of the fifteenth century. People were living in an era of complex changes and fears. Kramer's publication emphasized the importance of societal conformity. In order to maintain a prosperous stable existence one must adhere to societal norms as approved of by the church. He argued that the villains who cause trouble for good Christians were mostly female, mostly societal outliers, and those that did not fit into the narrow definition of what was seen as an ideal obedient servant to husband, father, and the church.<sup>14</sup>

Kramer's book detailing instructions on the identification, persecution, and extermination of accused witches struck a chord with influential people who subscribed to the common belief that since women carried the original sin of Eve, then they were more at risk of being tempted by the devil. As time wore on Kramer's book sold well enough to have had

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<sup>13</sup> Hutton. *The Witch*. Pg. 181.

<sup>14</sup> *Witches: A Century of Murder*. Netflix. Channel 5 Television, 2015.

twenty-eight editions<sup>15</sup> in the coming centuries the books could be found in the private collections of anyone wealthy enough to have bought a copy of the tome, from kings to village lawyers.<sup>16</sup> The book already spoke to societal biases that sought to justify systemic inequality, sexism, and an excuse for the temptation to try to get rid of certain community members for reasons based largely in pettiness.<sup>17</sup> For a populace that lived short, often hard lives plagued by illness, wars, famine, inequality, and fearful superstitions, the printing of Kramer's handbook came at an opportune time, when society was on the cusp of Revolution which would pit itself in competition against the Catholic church of old.

### **Protestant Reformation 1517**

The Protestant Reformation began in 1517 when a monk named Martin Luther publicly called for the church to stop the sale of indulgences. He had been outraged by the blatant corrupt misconduct he had witnessed from church authority, and despite the risk to his own personal safety, he had decided to put his energies into doing something about it. As time passed onward, he became increasingly bolder about speaking out over the multitude of issues involving church scandals, calling for his fellows in the church to reform in order to stop church corruption altogether. He even translated the Bible from Latin to the German language, using the printing press technology to distribute the books, in the hopes that if the general populace could bypass the priests for their access to the Christian Holy Book, then the common people

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<sup>15</sup> *Malleus Maleficarum*. Britannica, August 13, 2010.  
<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Malleus-maleficarum>.

<sup>16</sup> *Witches: A Century of Murder*. Netflix. Channel 5 Television, 2015.

<sup>17</sup> Roper. *Witch Craze*. Pg. 200.

wouldn't have to be nearly as dependent on corrupt church authorities for their spiritual wellbeing. His plan had been to force the church to be on more equal ground with the humble peasant classes. Unfortunately for Martin Luther, the German people were inspired to come up with vastly different interpretations of the Bible and splintered off into a multitude of Christian Protestant religions that not only took their worship of the Christian god into their own hands, but broke away from the Catholic church entirely. This led to an arms race of a sort between the Catholics and the various Protestant splinter groups, for which one was the true version of faith ordained by the Christian god.<sup>18</sup>

One of the ways that they attempted to provide evidence to the legitimacy of their claims was to prove that they alone could dispel evil influences (Hutton, pg. 180)<sup>19</sup>. Persecuting witches, who were said to be in league with the devil himself, became one of the methods of proof of the authority's right to rule, for they argued that they were performing a service to root out evil in the community. They used Kramer's *Malleus Malificarum*, and other publications similar to it, as references from which to draw from when going about rooting out perceived evils. Often Protestants would persecute Catholics as witches, and vice versa, depending on whether a ruler of a country was Catholic or Protestant.

### **King James VI Scotland, James I England 1590**

King James VI of Scotland is credited with importing the witch hysteria from Europe to Scotland and then later into England when he inherited the throne from Queen Elizabeth I. This

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<sup>18</sup> Granlund. *Reformation: Europe's Holy War*. BBC Two, 2017.

<sup>19</sup> Hutton. *The Witch*. Pg. 180.

is partly a falsehood, seeing as how witch trials had occurred in the British Isles, most notably England, during the reigns of his Tudor predecessors as is evidenced by the influential witchcraft pamphlet *A Rehearsall both straung and true* (see image 2), which was published in 1579 when King James would have been about thirteen years of age. However, it should be noted that King James VI of Scotland brought in a concept of witchcraft that was distinctly different to the mostly anti-Catholic, extremely politically motivated concept of witchcraft that occurred during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I of England.

King James VI introduced the notion of conspiracy, in which a coven of witches could be strong enough to assassinate the Christian God-chosen King by controlling the weather itself. This introduced an evil so powerful that what was once considered the sole domain of the Christian God, then shifted into a realm of influence in which the Devil himself could manipulate the weather with the aid of human minions.

In 1589, the ship carrying his new Danish bride, Anne, to Scotland in order to be crowned as his queen, almost capsized in a British storm. The ship was forced to go back to Denmark. King James VI's Danish in-laws blamed witches for the storm, and in 1590, when King James endured turbulent seas to fetch his new bride himself, he witnessed the trial of the women accused of being the witches responsible for conjuring up the storms, in an attempt, the prosecutors claimed, to assassinate the Scottish monarchy. This was where the concept of witches being in league with the devil was introduced to a paranoid King James, who had already survived multiple assassination attempts from Catholics for his Protestant religion. Within months of returning to Scotland, accusations of witches in the countryside began popping up in his kingdom. The details of one such account was printed in the pamphlet *Newes*

*From Scotland* in 1591 (see image 3), in which the accused witch was tortured into admitting that she was part of a coven who worked with the witches in Denmark in an attempt to assassinate the Scottish Royals. The victim was coerced into naming other witches, who were hunted down by authorities and tortured into confessing the names of more supposed witches, until over a hundred people were named as being part of a massive conspiracy led by the Devil against the King of Scotland. This became known as the North Berwick Witch Trials, and marked the beginning of King James spending the next few years studying everything he could on the subject, while accusations of witchcraft spread like a plague throughout Scotland. The more people found to be witches the more the hysteria grew.<sup>20</sup>

England had mostly been able to avoid the worst of the intensity of the witch hysteria up until this point. The government had been more concerned with their problem regarding the issue of the ruling Protestant authority wanting to stamp out Catholicism by means of associating Catholic rituals with witchcraft. Witch trials had taken place, but not with the same level of hysteria and consuming fear as had been prevalent on the Continent. However this changed in 1603 when Queen Elizabeth I died, and King James VI of Scotland inherited the throne, becoming King James I of England. He was the one who brought the hysteria aspect into the witch-hunts by showing that he was giving credence to the conspiracy of witches wielding terrifying god-like powers, where even Christian God-chosen kings were threatened by the epidemic of the Devil's minions conspiring against the Crown. The new monarch stood out when compared to his predecessors, for this particular King was obsessed by the subject of witchcraft as a concept of fact. The possibility of there being a threat on his life through magical

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<sup>20</sup> *Witches: A Century of Murder*. Netflix. Channel 5 Television, 2015.



means drove him to learn all that he could from witch hunting manuals, to self-proclaimed experts until he became a self-proclaimed scholar on the subject himself. With his new reign he informed his English subjects precisely what they were supposed to believe about witchcraft through a book that he wrote and published himself about his own beliefs on the witchcraft conspiracy. This gave people within the justice system an incentive to push out convictions on accusations of witchcraft in order to appease the king and be granted money, lands, and promotions through the number of witches that they were able to sentence while following the legal rules set by the witch hunting book that the King himself had written. This book was titled the *Daemonologie* (Demonology), and it would be used as an instruction manual for this new chapter of English witch trials that spread through the country like a disease for the next century. For the first decade of his reign, this created a never ending toxic cycle of the King attempting to educate his kingdom on the importance of finding real witches in order to protect Christendom. Communities were stirred up into an hysteria because someone as powerful as the King was not invulnerable to the power of witches. Judges sought to prosecute accused witches in order to gain recognition for the sake of their own careers, and a frightened King gave many of these trials his personal devoted attention so that he could study the confessions tortured from the accused and the alleged accusations from communities in order to learn more about these alleged witches.<sup>21</sup>

### **Changes in definition**

Within the lifetime of King James himself, the very definition of what constituted a witch changed. A notable example of this is a comparison of the Pendle Witch Trial of 1612 versus

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<sup>21</sup> *Witches: A Century of Murder*. Netflix. Channel 5 Television, 2015.

another trial years later in 1634. In King James I's book *Daemonologie* (Demonology), upon advising who should be counted as witnesses in witchcraft trials he wrote:

*"Children, women and liars can be witnesses over high treason against God."*<sup>22</sup>

The prosecutors of the Pendle Witch Trial of 1612 made use of a child coerced into accusing her own mother of witchcraft as viable evidence for conviction. Using children as witnesses was a practice that King James's *Daemonologie* (Demonology) outlined as an approved method for rooting out witches.<sup>23</sup> This contrasted with another witch trial in Pendle, Lancashire twenty-two years later in 1634, where the use of fanciful child testimony was thrown out as viable evidence. Instead King James at this time favored employing the use of more scientific methods to determine if the accused were witches. Chiefly this involved a more observation-based approach to examining the accused by the King's physician William Harvey, rather than relying on witness testimony. The rational being that if prosecutors could find evidence of unnatural abnormalities of the body, or see the accused performing magic for themselves, then there would be no question that they had caught a true witch. This more methodical scientific method of determining guilt contradicted the instructions King James had written in his own book *Daemonologie* (Demonology). Like it had done with changing the meaning behind the context of witchcraft from ancient Old Testament origins, to the as time

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<sup>22</sup> *Pendle Witch Trials*. Absolute History. BBC 2016. Documentary.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LRfmpGdaSeA>.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*.

wore on, the beliefs in the mythology of what witchcraft was, once again, shifted to adapt to popular cultural fashions.<sup>24</sup>

### **Cost and the English Civil War 1642-51**

Despite the royal family taking personal interest in witchcraft, Britain's ruling government soon discovered that they had been quickly losing control of the situation. For despite King James I having emphasized the importance of due process and proper investigation in order to avoid the execution of innocent individuals, the counties and villages often took matters into their own hands. It did not help matters that the witch pamphlets soon evolved into full-on stage productions put on by theater groups, and nobility such as the Earl of Essex commissioning pamphlets to advertise his army's ability to take down something as powerful as one of the devil's handmaidens. Witchcraft hysteria had become a lucrative industry that fed directly into innocent people getting accused and killed. Thus by the time James I's son, King Charles I, became king, there had to be a fierce crackdown. Laws were created preventing torture of the accused and made prosecuting without overwhelming evidence, not impossible, but much harder than before. For a few years the witch hysteria managed to be somewhat contained, until the English Civil War starting in 1642 left many areas unsupervised.<sup>25</sup>

This resulted in the infamous reign of terror of Matthew Hopkins and his associates from 1644-1646 who drew off of information passed along from printed materials such as the witch pamphlets as guides to aid them in prosecuting the accused, profiting greatly from

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<sup>24</sup> *Pendle Witch Trials*. Absolute History. 2016. Documentary.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LRfmpGdaSeA>.

<sup>25</sup> *Witches: A Century of Murder* | Netflix. 2015.

feeding off of the fears local villages had at the time. Hopkins had begun witch hunting when he assisted in the legal investigation of one accused witch in Essex where he had managed to convince the court to execute fifteen women in total by the time of the investigation's conclusion, an extremely unusually high number of executions at the time. Afterward without any form of legal permission or higher authority to answer to Hopkins and his associates named themselves freelance Witchfinder Generals and went from village to town to torture confessions out of people who were accused of witchcraft by the locals. He and his associates executed over 300 people between the years of 1645 and 1646. During the chaos of the English Civil War, it is believed he had personally killed 100 of the 300 people. However, the expense for his services could be devastating to the local communities in its own way. There were 240 pence for 1 English pound<sup>26</sup> during this time period meaning that a month's wages would have been around 180 pence, which would add up to 9 pounds per year to go towards things such as food, beer, firewood, clothes, tools, rent, and other expenses. In the span of one year Hopkins is believed to have collected fees in the ballpark of at least a 1,000 pounds, over a hundred and eleven times more money made than the average peasant from the villages who paid for his services.<sup>27</sup> To put this into perspective 1,000 pounds equaled 240,000 pence, which would convert to around 111 years' worth of a single farmer's wages. Even without a witchfinder expenses for a witch trial did still add up. Accounts from Attenborough<sup>28</sup> at the time of

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<sup>26</sup> *Understanding Old British Money*. Barrow, 2013. Accessed March 16, 2021.  
<http://projectbritain.com/moneyold.htm>.

<sup>27</sup> *Witches: A Century of Murder*. Netflix. Channel 5 Television, 2015.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

Hopkins's career show that the process of actually executing their accused witches had amounted to around 40 pounds, which would equal 1/7<sup>th</sup> of the yearly income for the town. Naturally, it took a lot of money to accuse, put on trial, feed, guard, and execute witches on top of paying the fee of the illegal Witchfinder General, money that would put many areas at a disadvantage during the English Civil War where the costs to maintain the war effort came from village taxes. At the time the villages who requested the aid of a Witchfinder did not appear to consider the financial burden until after the job had been completed. The rationale was fueled instead by the knowledge of witch trials which had been promoted in English printed media since the sixteenth century, and for their part, the Witchfinder Generals both sounded as well as looked like legitimate government officials of a reasonable high standing. The witch hunts of Hopkins's career had been an act of social cleansing during a time of great stress, villages felt that they were allowed through these lawful appearing Witchfinders to dispose of the disliked members of their communities who were suspected of spreading devilish woes upon them.

To add onto his long list of crimes Hopkins had also tortured and executed a Christian priest. This, despite the allure of social cleansing and the normalization of the concept of witch hunts through printed media, had prompted harsh backlash, which Hopkins tried to counter in 1647 by commissioning his own pamphlet *The Discovery of Witches in answer to several queries lately* in order to defend his self-entitled position. Thankfully, his attempt did not work out for him and his business dried up. However unfortunately, much like the *Malleus Maleficarum* (*Witches Hammer*), his easily accessed printed words lived on to be used as a guide in future

witch trials, such as the infamous tragic massacre that occurred in Salem Massachusetts in 1692.<sup>29</sup>

### **Beginning of the end 1735-1951**

The practice of executing witches was formally put to an end thanks to *The Witchcraft Act* that passed in 1735 which repealed all laws regarding how witches were to be persecuted. Yet as recently as 1944 witches were still occasionally prosecuted under The Witchcraft Act of 1735 and fined by the British authorities citing that any form of spiritualism, if found guilty, was defrauding the populace with scams. This act was not repealed until 1951.<sup>30</sup> Despite the falling out of the fashionable practice of executing the accused, due to the witch hysteria being largely put to an end in an official capacity by the government, the damage wrought from the century-long era of fear the hysteria inspired had already been done. Hundreds of innocent people, most of whom were women, had unjustly lost their lives.

## **Chapter 2. What these pamphlets are and their use in history**

The earliest examples known of the witch pamphlets themselves began in England in 1566,<sup>31</sup> several decades after Heinrich Kramer's publication of his book *Malleus Maleficarum* as

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Chambers. *The Witchcraft Act Wasn't about Women on Brooms*. The Guardian, January 24, 2007.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2007/jan/24/comment.comment3>.

<sup>31</sup> *Witchcraft Pamphlet: 1579*. British Library. Accessed October 3, 2021.

<https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/witchcraft-pamphlet-a-rehearsal-both-strange-and-true-1579>.

the ideas he had proposed exploded from the academic world of learned men's personal studies into the beginnings of the witch hysteria. News of events transpiring on the Continent filtered into the British Isles through the maritime ports, stirring up enough interest for English printing houses to begin selling accounts of witches making pacts with the devil, and then being discovered and stopped by heroic Christian authorities. The interest in witchcraft would not peak until the reign of James I of England took the throne, inspiring an absolute fanaticism over everything witchcraft.

A key element that helped spread Europe's witch hysteria through England to such a devastating degree had been in thanks to advances in printing press technology. Commissioning works printed by printing houses was an effective means of getting information out both quickly and inexpensively. With far less labor than it would take to transcribe a book by hand, and far fewer difficulties to produce multiple copies of the same document, the printing press could produce hundreds of copies of books, pamphlets, and art that could then be sold to a broader audience than ever before. In fact it was because of the printing press that other contributing factors that created the witch hysteria, such as Heinrich Kramer's *Malleus Maleficarum*, and the works published by Martin Luther, were able to spread as quickly as they had. People became fascinated by Kramer's witchcraft lore and not long after the book's publication, artists, seeing a golden opportunity to pad their incomes in order to help pay the rent, began profiting from the horrified fascination of the populace by mass producing grotesque print illustrations on witch lore narratives to sell to collectors and in markets. Due to the accessibility of the printing presses witchcraft pamphlets became the go to education for those who could not afford to buy the *Malleus Maleficarum (Witches Hammer)*. These tended

to be sensationalized fantastic narratives of alleged trials and executions of accused witches and their crimes, framing what a witch was, how they were to be identified, and how to capture one without getting cursed, providing the readership with a sense of security and an education based on a mixture of popular narratives amongst self-identified demonology experts and local folkloric beliefs. At the same time, these pamphlets still made it clear that the epidemic of witches spreading the power of the Devil over Christendom was a forever-looming threat. Keeping the readership fearful, and therefore in order to keep up to date on the crisis people had to buy more pamphlets from the printing houses.

It is important to note that England's witchcraft pamphlets were written in the English language. The language of not only the common people, but also the ethnic language of England itself. These pamphlets were geared directly toward as wide an audience as possible in order for sales to be as high as possible. Prices for the pamphlets themselves could remain decently affordable for even the peasant classes to scrape together enough funds to buy a copy. The more sensationalized the story, the more gritty the details of the accounts describing the horrifying acts committed by witches, the more people wanted to read the pamphlets. It may have contributed to more people desiring to learn how to read, so that they too would be able to keep up to date on the latest salacious accounts of the witch trials.<sup>32</sup> It is logical to assume that during the seventeenth century most rural areas tended to have at least one literate neighbor living in the village, however, learning how to read wasn't a big priority for the common peasant unless there was something in it for him worth going to the trouble of learning how to read. Pamphlets, spinning fantastical stories, would indeed provide sufficient

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<sup>32</sup> Roper. *Witch Craze*. Pg. 65.



incentive for going to the trouble to becoming proficiently literate, thus essentially doubling the profit margins of the printing houses as a result of increased readership in the process of an increasing need for literacy. As it is part of the human condition to be fascinated by a good story, the result of the concept of the devil invading Christendom through his witch servants had created an entire cottage industry around the fearful, yet highly entertaining scandal of the witch hysteria gripping the nation. Aiding in the business of printing pamphlets even further, the authors commissioning the sale of their written works were sometimes witnesses to the trials themselves. Such was the case for Thomas Potts who was the man tasked with recording the Pendle Witch Trial in Lancaster in 1612. Several months after the trial in 1613, Potts had published *The Wonderfull Discoverie of Witches in the Countie of Lancaster*, boosting his own reputation for his career, and helping to advertise his services in London<sup>33</sup> (see image 1.). Claiming to have bested a witch was one of the best means of self-promotion propaganda, such as with the cases of the Earl of Essex whose fanciful claim in a 1643 pamphlet titled *A Most Certain, Strange, and True Discovery of a Witch* (see image 6.), was that his personal army was so skilled that they were able to best one of the devil's witch servants with the might of their guns and brute force. In fact many self-proclaimed witch-hunting guides go to great lengths to sound as entertaining as possible.

Using narrative techniques, such as King James I writing his book *Daemonologie* as a conversation taking place between two people, in the *Demonolatry* written by Nicolas Rémy in 1598 he includes poetic verses in his descriptions of the witch's sabbath. All of the witch

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<sup>33</sup> *Pendle Witch Trials*. Absolute History. 2016. Documentary. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LRfmpGdaSeA>.

pamphlets included in this thesis, save for the one written by Matthew Hopkins, employ the use of clever literary narrative tools in order to weave a compelling story to hook readership's full attention to fantastical gripping accounts of the horrors committed by the devil's servants, salacious sexual exploits of the accused, the sometimes hilarious ways attempted bewitchments go horribly awry, sometimes sobering human failings that tempted the witches to turn to the devil in the first place, and the heroic acts of the witch hunters who destroyed the threat of witchcraft from threatening good Christians.<sup>34</sup>

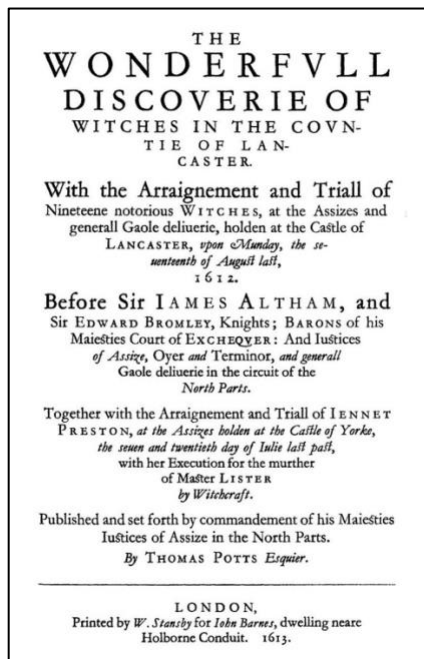


Image 1.

*The Wonderfull Discoverie of Witches in the Countie of Lancaster.* By Thomas Potts 1613. Published in London by W. Stansby for John Barnes, dwelling neare Holborne Conduit.

Source: Lancaster University

Other types of printed witch-related media, aside from pamphlets reporting on the trials, were also prevalent, diversifying the market as the public's fascination with this advertised great enemy of the spiritual Christian faith became an obsession. As there were more trials, there rose a genre of literary storytelling in the form of moral tales, which often took the form of plays performed in theaters or in the streets of cities such as London. Such

<sup>34</sup> Roper. *Witch Craze*. Pg. 119-121.

plays include *The Witch of Edmonton* (see image 8), which was a witch trial turned into a tragic comedy script for a play performed in London in 1658.

The witch made an excellent subject for Christian moral storytelling, due to the lore surrounding witchcraft being described as a dark reflection, or a parody to Christian life. Christians worship their God during the day, witches worship the Devil at night, Christian children are baptized by the priest and given their names, new witches get their own dark version of a baptism and a diabolical name to be referred to at witches' Sabbaths.<sup>35</sup> However, in moral tales, like that of *The Witch of Edmonton*, it is emphasized that despite the temptation to commit the greatest sins in order to gain power bestowed unto the witch by the Devil, it is the good pure Christian god who has the greater power. Therefore, the witch in these moral tales will always find their downfall, serving as a contrast to the devout, as well as a cautionary example of what awaits those who refuse to conform to the accepted societal norms of the time. Moral tales served as an education on how to be a good Christian, and many pamphlets had an element to the Christian moral narrative in their accounts. The end of the story always vanquishes the witch, and the Christian god always punishes her for turning her back on him.

Most importantly of all, the written texts of these pamphlets were often accompanied by one or more woodblock print illustrations to decorate the pages of the pamphlets. These provided the readership with a visual guide to cement the grave implications of the horror stories into their minds, haunting their nightmares, compelling them to purchase more from the printing houses in order to satiate their appalled curiosity.<sup>36</sup> As much as they were designed

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<sup>35</sup> Roper. *Witch Craze*. Pg.116-117.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.* Pg. 120.

for the purpose of reporting on the conspiracy of the Devil invading Christendom, the combination between memorable artworks and compelling narratives, perpetuated, even justified, the hatred towards those who refused to conform to the societal expectations of early modern European standards as a legitimate danger to the spiritual and physical safety of the population by way of witches causing physical harm to the community, as well as damning those weakened to the allure of temptation into hell. Women were particularly vulnerable to being accused as witches in certain European countries, such as England and Germany, due in part with their association to the first woman, the biblical Eve who was the first woman and female counterpart to the first man Adam. She who the Christian bible portrays as the first to fall for the Devil's temptations and the first to give into sin.<sup>37</sup> In another part, the years following the Protestant Reformation saw gendered roles became stricter than they ever had been before, with the woman's role being limited marriage, procreation, and looking after the household, young women were also expected to be virtuous, obedient, and virginal with any deviation being seen as immoral. There was no place in society to accommodate old women who outlived their husbands, or women who could not bear children.<sup>38</sup> These narrowed limitations placed upon women in society, along with the belief that women were more susceptible to being led astray by the Devil due to their connection to the belief that women held the legacy of the Biblical Eve who was the first to succumb to the Devil's temptations,<sup>39</sup> made women vulnerable to being outcasted as not conforming to cultural expectations and

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid. Pg. 136.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid. Pg. 157.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid. Pg. 136.

therefore more likely to being accused of witchcraft.<sup>40</sup> It is due to the pamphlets being so addictively entertaining, and for there to be a market in promoting the ideas of witchcraft lore that the conspiracy had gained so much ground. The hysteria bubbling up to wreak havoc whenever the fear became too much to bear in the public consciousness, left devastation in the form of trials and executions in its influential wake.

### **Chapter 3. The importance of animal imagery in witch folklore and why they were often depicted in popular pamphlets**

During the age of witch hysteria, people adopted the belief that acts of witchcraft mirrored a dark parody of Christian life. Being both the inverse to everything Christians held dear, and a frightening parallel to Christian customs, the English fixation on the witch's animal familiars in witchcraft pamphlets was only a natural adaption to the witchcraft mythos. Due to the role animals played in the everyday lives of people in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when witch hysteria was at its most devastating in the British Isles, the creatures became folded into the canon of witchcraft mythos in distinctly unique ways. A witch being in possession of a helper spirit, or familiar, in the guise of an animal wasn't an unusual concept during the witch hysteria period. Common descriptions of these familiars were that they worked as a sort of extension of the witch's power doing her bidding to cause mischief and do harm unto her enemies. Depending in which region that the witch trials were being conducted,

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid. Pg. 170-177.

local lore often dictated that the witch's familiar was some kind of demon, or even the Devil himself manifesting to the witch in order to consort with her. On the European Continent it was believed in many early modern trials that demonic familiars would fly witches to the Satanic Sabbat meetings on their backs while in some form of animal with black coloration.<sup>41</sup>

However, in England the relationship between witch and familiar tended to be described as more of a mutually supportive domestic relationship that took place primarily within the witch's place of residence, rather than a purely formal business transaction. In this relationship, the demonic familiar would lend aid to the witch and in return the witch would feed her familiar with her own blood, and house it as a pet,<sup>42</sup> as is described in the 1579 pamphlet, *A rehearsall both straung and true, of hainous and horrible actes committed by Elizabeth Stile* (See image 3). This take on the English witch's familiar differed from witch lore from the continent in there being less of an emphasis on witches conducting most magical deeds at dark Sabbaths, and more emphasis on witches having the power to conduct magical acts in mundane everyday settings, independent of other witches. In these, they would not always require the presence of the Devil, or need to attend a Satanic Sabbath in order to cast their magic spells through rituals. It can be argued that this interpretation pushed the beliefs of the hysteria further into the notion that witches were a true evil threat because they, and their demonic agents, could easily disguise themselves practically anywhere they pleased without rousing suspicion until it was too late to stop them.

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<sup>41</sup> Hutton. *The Witch*. Pg. 270.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.* Pg. 272-278.

That is not to say that witch lore on the European continent did not also portray witches as independent agents of the Devil who could also just as easily hide within plain sight. However, to sell the believability of the concept that a witch was capable of blending into communities, witch lore had to adapt around the uniquely English habits of the time period. This resulted in English descriptions of the Satanic familiar being more that of a partner in crime, as opposed to a disguised hellish messenger, or of the Devil himself in disguise, as was depicted in many German witch trials. Melding local culture into the basic premise of witchcraft lore was part of the reason why witch hysteria had been able to be adopted into so many regions of Europe, the Nordic countries, and the British Isles.<sup>43</sup> With there already existing a fear of the uncivilized wilds and the beasts that lurked in the land itself, a witch keeping a demon in the guise of an ordinary earthly creature would have been a terrifying concept; the community literally being invaded by hellish entities to spy, ferry orders from the Devil, and cause havoc wherever they went. The idea of the witch already preyed upon the worst nightmares of Christian citizens: a person from the community, namely a woman, who had turned against the Christian God in order to create an alliance with hell to wreak harm upon their neighbors and family. A betrayal so severe in concept that if pushed just right, the very fear of it being true could lead to periods of hysteria, where communities felt that in order to be cleansed of the perceived infestation of witches they must resort to executions of anyone who had been accused. Forcing a confession from the prisoners by any means necessary to justify to them that they were doing what was right for the community, even if it included the use of torture. The inclusion of the belief that the Devil could disguise himself, or send a

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<sup>43</sup> Roper. *Witch Craze*. Pg. 92.

disguised subordinate, to carry out his whims undetected by being able to blend in amongst the creatures that were common sight, even a necessity to the continued survival of the community in the form of milk, eggs, transportation, and meat, had only made the already heightened paranoia all the worse.

The exact reasons why there existed such an intimate emphasis on animal familiars in English witchcraft lore is not completely known. Modern day theories suggest that it could derive from the native British folklore of fairies, or half-remembered ancient pagan Celtic beliefs, or even older vestiges of animist folk traditions brought in from immigrants, or some combination of all of these factors. There is simply very little surviving evidence as of yet that has pointed to a specific conclusion. All we have is the fact that animal familiars were an incredibly important fixture in English witchcraft lore during the late sixteenth and throughout the seventeenth centuries<sup>44</sup>. So much so that most witchcraft pamphlets that I have encountered in my research contain at least a depiction, or a reference, to an account of an animal or demonic helper spirit residing in the accused's home to do witch's bidding.

It is important to take note of how animals are portrayed in witchcraft pamphlets because of how important the concept of the familiar was to the overall canon of English witchcraft lore during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The witch's familiar, or the presence of animals in general, are often present in pamphlet illustrations. In order to properly analyze the contents of the illustrations one must take into account the placement and artistic style depicting the animals, just as much as one would go about analyzing the depictions of

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<sup>44</sup> Hutton. *The Witch*. Pg. 262-263.



witches or demons. How the animals are portrayed is interlinked with the symbolism of the visual narratives as a whole and thus should be given an equal amount of attention.

## Chapter 4. **Analysis of pamphlet examples**

In this section I will be conducting an visual analysis of a sample size of English witchcraft pamphlets, making particular note of how the individuals in the print illustrations are portrayed, the symbolism used to convey meaning, and any use of animals or demonic figures depicted. For this I have selected my sample size to span the timeframe from the late sixteenth century to the middle of the seventeenth century that make use of both witch and animal or demonic imagery.

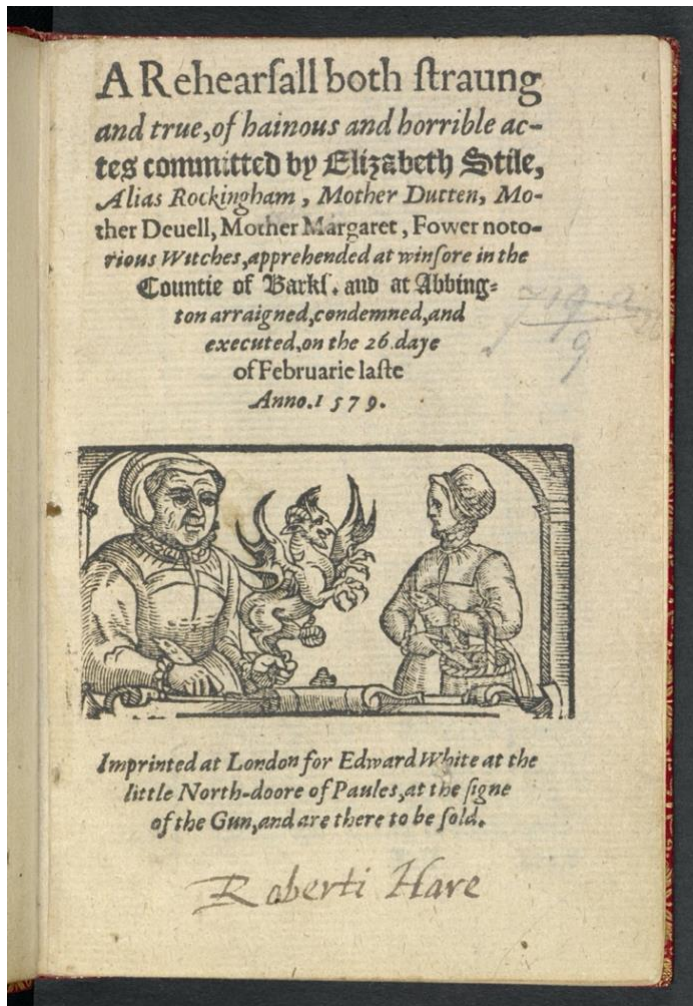
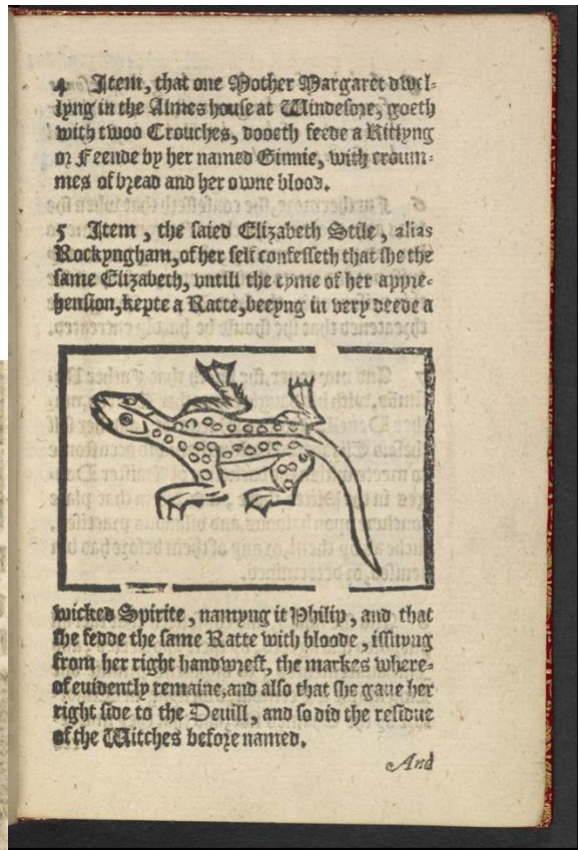


Image 2a. (left), 2b. (below)

*A Rehearsall both straung and true, of  
heinous and horrible actes committed  
by Elizabeth Stile, Alias Rockingham,  
Mother Dutten, Mother Deuell, Mother  
Margaret, Fower notorious Witches,  
Apprehended at winfore in the Countie  
of Barkl, and at Abbington arraigned,  
condemned, and ececuted on the 26  
daye of Februarie laste. Printed in  
London 1579 for Edward White at the  
little North-doore of Paules at the sign  
of the gun, and are there to be sold.  
Source: British Library*



2c. (Below), 2d. (Right)



*A Rehearsall both straung and true, of heinous and horrible actes committed by Elizabeth Stile, Alias Rockingham, Mother Dutten, Mother Deuell, Mother Margaret, Fower notorious Witches , Apprehended at winfore in the Countie of Barkl, and at Abbington arraigned, condemned, and ececuted on the 26 daye of Februarie laste, was printed in 1579 at a printing house in London. The pamphlet's text describes the alleged acts of witchcraft committed by four elderly women and a male shape-shifter named Father Rosimonde, with a particular focus in the woodblock print illustrations on the accounts that demons in the shape of animal familiars had been used to send after the enemies of the four accused witches. This*

pamphlet combines general witchcraft lore from the European Continent and combines it with a uniquely English twist by adding details such as the witches' familiars.<sup>45</sup>

Images 1a and 1b depict the accused witch as a crone, or a woman who has aged out of her childbearing years, with attention paid to highlighting the wrinkles on the face to denote age, the faces of the alleged witches are also depicted in a quarter moon shape, with an over exaggeration of the chin and nose. The women are wearing the common period clothing found amongst the lower classes, shown in a domestic setting with the witch depicted on the right hand side in 1a sporting a basket full of fish, the witch on the left hand side writing with a feather quill pen, and the witch depicted in image 1b standing beside an Elizabethan period window while feeding her familiars from a wooden spoon and bowl.

The chimera creature in 1a depicts the true form of a witch's familiar with elements that display recognizable body parts that would visually convey to the intended audience that the creature is of demonic origin. The first noticeable clues toward the artist's intent to communicate with their audience that this creature is supposed to be a being from Hell is the dragon-like features including bird talons for front legs, bat wings, and a serpentine scaled tail. It also retains the body and horns of a goat as well as a quarter moon shaped human face that looks similar to the faces of the witches depicted in the illustrations.

The witch's familiars depicted in 1b are seen drinking the blood of their mistress in exchange for their services. The two toads, and what could either be a cat or a rat, are seated within a trunk which the text indicates is where a witch might house her familiars as a form of

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<sup>45</sup> *Witchcraft pamphlet: 1579*. British Library. Accessed October 3,2021.

<https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/witchcraft-pamphlet-a-rehearsal-both-strange-and-true-1579>



pet bed. The image in 1b showcases some of the variety of forms the witch's familiar was supposed to be capable of taking in order to avoid arousing suspicions; the final two images in 2c and 2d depict other visual examples of what a witch's familiar could be. With a sinisterly illustrated cat and a simplistic interpretation of a newt, the text indicates that nearly all forms of animals found naturally around the local area could actually be a demonic familiar in disguise, the point of the text underlying the idea in witchcraft lore that witches, particularly those from the lower classes of society, could hide in plain sight as seemingly ordinary people.

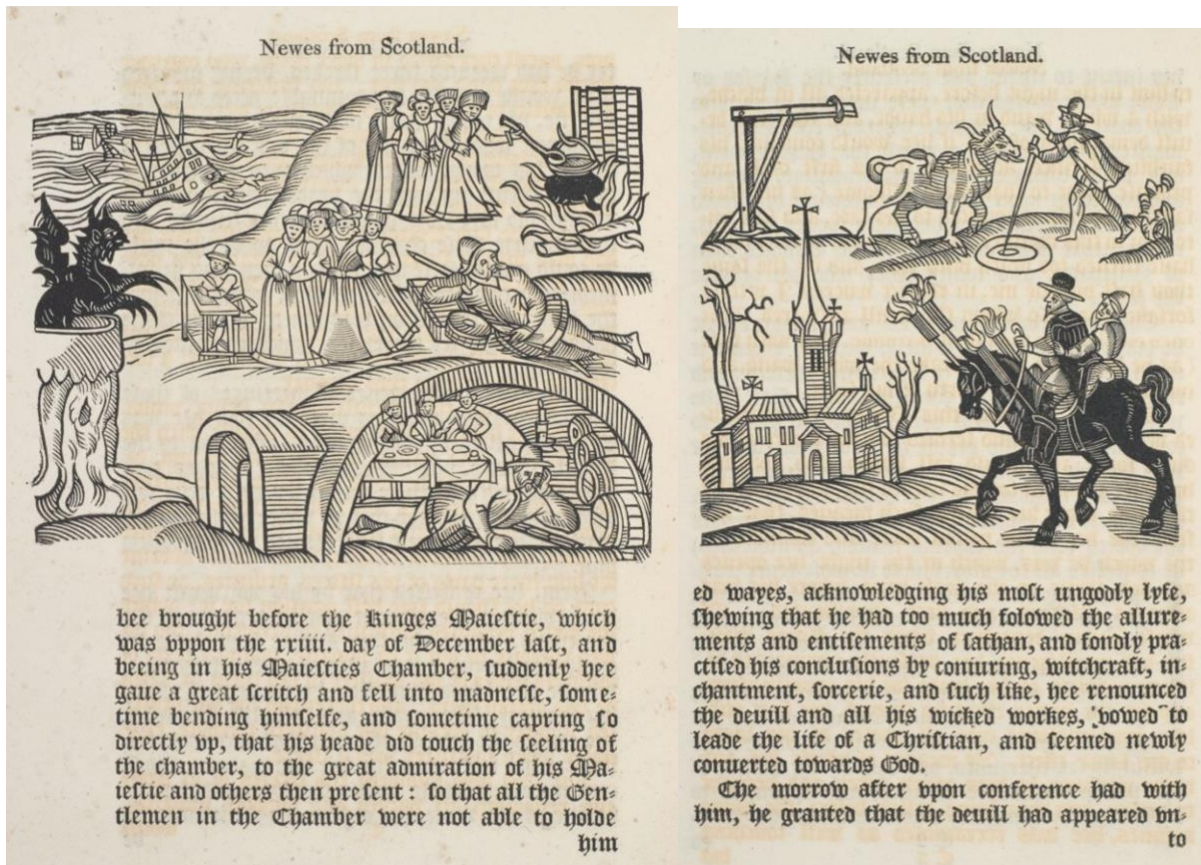


Image 3a. (Left) 3b. (Right)  
*Newes from Scotland*, printed in 1591 in London  
 Source: British Library

*Newes from Scotland* was published in 1591 from a London printing house shortly after King James VI of Scotland began persecuting accused witches for an alleged conspiracy plot to

assassinate him and his wife by conjuring a storm to sink their ships. Within the text it portrays the accounts of three accused witches, and depicts the Satanic deeds of Dr. Fian through woodblock print illustrations. Dr. Fian, an accused male wizard, was one of the few men who had been accused of consorting with the Devil in order to assassinate the Scottish monarchy. Among his alleged crimes Dr. Fian had confessed, under torture, to being the clerk of the Devil, Being present at all Sabbath meetings with an alleged number of two-hundred witches in attendance. He had also confessed to curse a rival suitor to the woman he fancied with madness, and then attempted to bewitch her into falling in lust with him. However, the young woman's mother was reportedly a witch as well and so deflected the bewitchment onto a cow, who then pursued Dr. Fian with amorous intent. Notably the tale of Dr. Fian, accused wizard is the only account that is accompanied by illustrations.<sup>46</sup>

In the upper left hand corner of 3a there is a dramatic depiction of a capsizing ship, referencing how it was claimed that witches had conjured the treacherous storms which nearly capsized the boats of the Scottish monarchy as they travelled the English Channel. Directly to the right of the sinking ship is a coven of witches gathered around a seemingly ordinary cooking cauldron, possibly indicating that they were literally brewing up the storm through magic. At the center of the illustration Dr. Fian is depicted sitting at a desk and writing on a piece of parchment while a coven of witches stands behind him. This was a visual representation depicting his accused role as the clerk of the Devil, where he was tasked with handling the bureaucratic elements to the conspiracy, a job which involved getting recruits to sign their

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<sup>46</sup> *Witchcraft in Shakespeare's England*. British Library. Accessed October 3, 2021. <https://www.bl.uk/shakespeare/articles/witchcraft-in-shakespeares-england>

names into the Devil's book and the like. To the immediate left of the illustration of his role as the Devil's clerk is a depiction of a prone smartly dressed man whose image is depicted to be bigger than the other characters, indicating that the figure is an important central figure to the story of the illustration. It is a fair possibility that the image of the lounging man is a depiction of Dr. Fian himself, the second image of the lounging male character at the bottom of the illustration confirm this with the figure being depicted in what looks to be a root cellar with witches conspiring over a table in a secret meeting behind him.

In the case of how the accused wizard is depicted in comparison to the witches, Dr. Fian is shown to be smartly dressed, with rather handsome features, while in comparison the witches are not given nearly as much detail to their appearance, their presence being there solely to denote the number and scale of the conspiracy.

In the far middling left of image 3a the Devil is depicted popping out of tree stump to rant against King James VI. The text reports that the Devil himself ordered his Earthly minions to assassinate the Scottish crown by conjuring storms to capsize the royal ships transporting the monarchs across the English Channel. It is notable that the stump, in which the Devil is standing within to address his minions, looks similar in design to a style of Christian church podium found in English parishes which are used to give sermons. The pose in which the Devil is depicted is invocative to that of a priest addressing his flock, harkening to the trend found in much of witchcraft lore that has witches worshipping the Devil in a dark parody of the traditions that Christians observed during their own religious practices. The difference in this case being that the Devil made use of a tree stump hinting that the witches Sabbath meeting had taken place in the wilds of the countryside and not inside a dwelling.

At the top of illustration 3b there is a depiction of a cow pursuing Dr. Fian with its tongue flicking outward in a snake-like or lustful manner. The text indicates that this is the same cow that had been bewitched after the accused wizard attempted to put a spell on a woman to force her to fall in love with him and it backfired. The gallows support without a rope on the far left alluded to his act of witchery leading to his execution. The bottom of image 3b depicts Dr. Fian and another man traveling on the back of a black horse towards a church, with torches affixed to the riding tackle, that could indicate they traveled by night. Given the assumption that the images are roughly in chronological order, this could be a reference toward Dr. Fian claiming to have been deeply disturbed by his close encounter with a bovine and shortly returned to worshipping the Christian God, or it could be referencing the accused wizard's capture by authorities. In contrast to the image of the Devil, the black horse is not depicted with any visible demonic references, if anything the horse seems to be presented as a noble steed and the only indication that something is amiss with the cow is how the creature is depicted with its tongue sticking outward in an unusual manner, along with the image of a man attempting to ward off its advances. This indicates that, aside from the bewitchment, these animals are normal beasts.



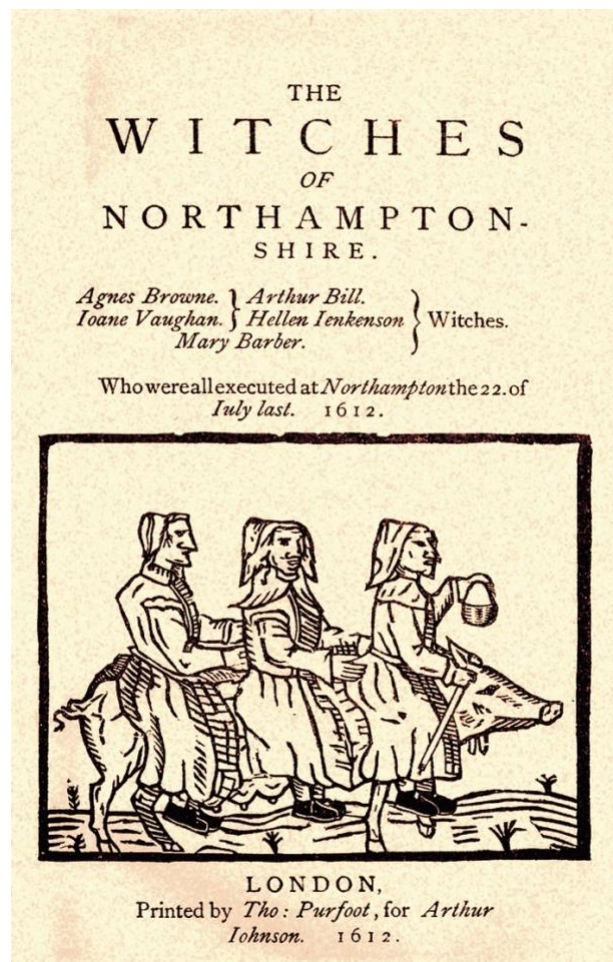


Image 4

*The Witches of Northampton-shire.*  
Printed by Tho: Purfoot,  
for Arthur Johnson in  
1612.  
Sources: Northampton  
Chronical and Echo,  
Rose of the Shires

*The Witches of Northampton-Shire*<sup>47</sup> was published by Arthur Johnson with a London printing house in 1612. It describes the account of five people of lower class being found guilty of committing witchcraft against their neighbors, as well as towards a handful of gentlemen and women who were of higher status. The accounts of the alleged witches' crimes included the accused being described as quite rude, low class, and uneducated. In the case of Joan Vaughan, the accused had the ill-manners to vow revenge when her rudeness prompted Elizabeth

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<sup>47</sup> *Witches in Northamptonshire.* Rose of the Shires. Accessed November 5, 2021.  
<https://www.roseoftheshires.uk/blog/witches.php>.

Belcher, a gentlewoman who was significantly higher in status, to strike Joan as punishment for being impolite. In this pamphlet there is a great deal of emphasis in portraying the accused of being of the lowest of classes, or simply not fitting in with the neighbors along with the accusations of the accused causing illness among other acts of magical malice. Arthur Johnson took great care to emphasize how out of place, or how undesirable the accused were by the social standards of the day.<sup>48</sup>

In the illustration the witch characters are wearing the garb generally worn by peasants from the early seventeenth century era, complete with coifs on their hair which were normally worn at this time for the sake of feminine modesty. Being fully dressed the witches look as though they could easily blend into their communities without anyone being the wiser, highlighting the witch's ability to infiltrate ordinary Christian life undetected. The exception to this is how the witches are depicted with sharp half-moon-faces with large noses and pronounced chins, denoting an undesirable ugliness that is reflected by their evil nature. The one to the far right carries a basket in her left hand and a cane in her right, tools which would not have been seen as out of place for an elderly woman of this time, but could easily be used as tools for nefarious magical use.

The sow in the illustration is depicted as being large enough, as well as unnaturally long enough, to comfortably carry three grown witches on her back. With mammary glands full of milk the creature is both uncanny in the way the sow is depicted with elongated proportions, as

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<sup>48</sup> Hillery. *The Northamptonshire Witch Trials: 1612*. Northampton Chronicle and Echo, November 4, 2020. <https://www.northamptonchron.co.uk/heritage-and-retro/retro/northamptonshire-witch-trials-terrible-ales-five-people-who-were-hanged-same-day-witchcraft-1612-3024234>.

well as showcasing the gender of the creature in what could be seen by some as an allegory for female sexuality. However, this interpretation would depend on who the intended audience would be, for it is doubtful that those who had extensive experience with livestock, or had a basic knowledge in animal husbandry, would interpret the swollen teats of a sow as an allegory for human breasts. For argument's sake the display of the sow's udders may not be intended as sexual for all audiences, it could also serve as a nod to the witches having committed their crimes during a certain time of the year, a time where pigs would farrow their litters on the local breeding schedule. Since pigs do not have a natural breeding cycle, but can give birth to a litter every six months, farmers would have introduced a boar during specific times of the year for easier breeding management. In this instance given the plowed field the sow is walking over, the season is possibly some time when the crops were just barely beginning to grow from seeds. However, given that one of the crimes the five witches of Northampton-shire had been accused of was bewitching livestock and having dealings with spirits, it is just as likely that the choice in depicting a sow with full mammary glands treading upon a mostly barren field is visual shorthand for how deviant demonic forces prosper from the suffering of mortal Christians.

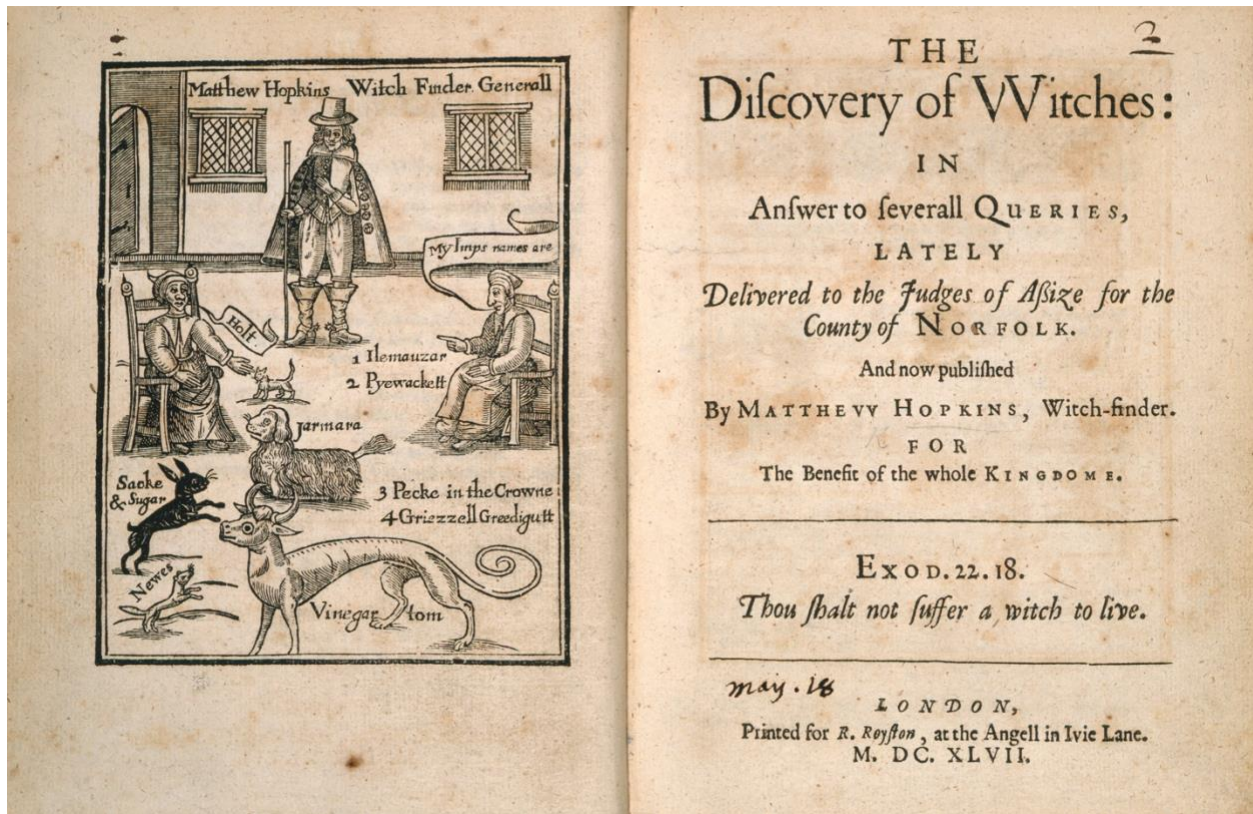


Image 5

*The Discovery of Witches: in answer to several queries lately, delivered to the judges of assize for the county of Norfolk. And now published by Matthew Hopkins, Witch-finder, for the benefit of the whole kingdome, Printed in London for R. Royston, at the Agell in Ivie Lane.*

Source: British Library

*The Discovery of Witches: in answer to several queries lately, delivered to the judges of assize for the county of Norfolk. And now published by Matthew Hopkins, Witch-finder, for the benefit of the whole kingdome, was published in 1647 as a defense of his actions in response to criticisms taken against him for illegally persecuting witches without permission by the English government (see Ch. 1 Cost and the English Civil War 1642-51).<sup>49</sup>*

There is a stark difference in appearance between the depiction of Matthew Hopkins himself (center top) in comparison to that of the two witches in the illustration. Hopkins wears

<sup>49</sup> *Witchcraft pamphlet: 1579*. British Library. Accessed October 3, 2021.

<https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/witchcraft-pamphlet-a-rehearsal-both-strange-and-true-1579>

the garments that would be found on a man of higher status, such as a judge or a Lord, his staff held in his right hand further underlines how his image denotes a sense of being of an elevated social rank, thus he is portrayed as a just and lawful authority figure. Through the cover art of his pamphlet he is insisting that he must be given proper respect by all in the kingdom. The image of Hopkins emphasizes his importance by placing him at the top center of the illustration, which draws the eye to gaze upon him first before any of the other elements in the artwork. The dapper depiction of Hopkins also serves as a contrast to the witches and familiars placed below him, both in the composition of the illustration, as well in the displayed social and gender status where Hopkins, as the male authority and the self-proclaimed Witch finder General, was literally considered above in rank to that of animals and old peasant crones.

The witches, who are seated to the right and left of the illustration, are portrayed in a style of dress that denotes them as two lower class women. Their facial features are exaggerated in the nose, mouth, and chin to convey their otherness in comparison to the self-proclaimed virtuous Hopkins, but not overstated to the point to distract the eye from the illustration of Hopkins himself. This deliberately makes the witches the opposite of the contemporary standard of beauty for the time, as well as being illustrated to look like undesirable old crones who are useless to Stewart Era Protestant society without a husband, or a means to bear more children. The witches give off the impression of being subservient, where they remain seated in chairs as they confess to the names of their impish familiars while Hopkins remains standing taller, as well as being visually above them on the page. For a pamphlet that consists of Hopkins attempting to justify his actions as a freelance self-proclaimed Witch finder General by attempting to argue about the necessity of his freelance

services, neither witch stands out nor do they appear distractingly menacing, they are merely set dressing whose purpose seems to be more of a visual contrast to make Hopkins appear better looking aesthetically, instead of being there to convince the public about the dangers of witchcraft.

According to the illustration the two accused witches have within their employ five familiars, which they had named and described to be a small cat, a long-haired dog, a black hair, a weasel, and a calf. Most notably four of the five animals depicted do not look menacing or outstanding with unusual features that would visually hint that they possess a demonic nature, the singular exception being the calf. With an unusually elongated body, cat-like back legs, paws instead of hooves for feet, and a long serpentine whip-like tail the calf looks as if it has been caught mid-transformation from its true demonic imp form into its disguise as an ordinary looking bovine. This detail conveys to the audience that the other animals are not what they seem.



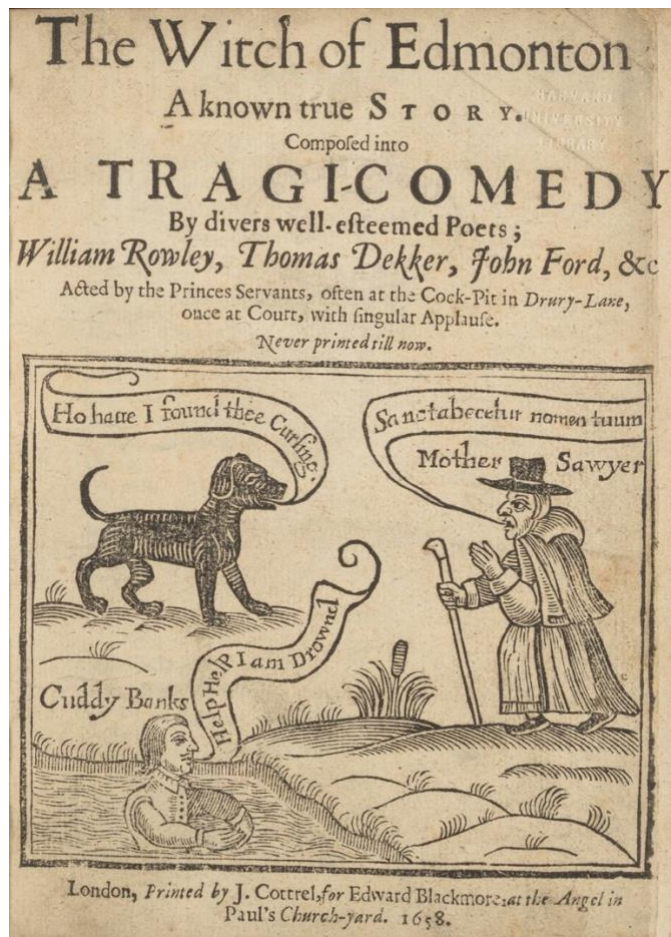


Image 6

*A Witch of Edmonton A known true Story. Composed into A tragic-comedy by divers well-esteemed poets; William Rowley, Thomas Dekker, John Ford, & Co. Acted by the Princes Servants, often at the Cock-Pit in Drury-Lane, once at Court, with singular applause. Never printed till now. Printed in London by J. Cottrel, for Edward Blackmore, at the Angelin Paul's Church-yard 1658. Source: Royal Shakespeare Company*

*A Witch of Edmonton A known true Story. Composed into A tragic-comedy,*<sup>50</sup> was written in 1621 and then later published into a pamphlet in 1658 by the poets William Rowley, Thomas Dekker, and John Ford as a play that was performed in London by the Prince Servants Company. Allegedly the play is inspired by accounts from a supposed real witch trial that had occurred in Edmonton where the accused was a witch by the name of Elizabeth Sawyer. As a form of

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<sup>50</sup> *The Witch of Edmonton*. RSC. Accessed November 5, 2021. <https://www.rsc.org.uk/the-witch-of-edmonton>.

entertainment to the citizens of London, the plot is written in the form of a moral tale where those who commit wrongdoings are damned and punished by the end of the play.<sup>51</sup>

In the illustration Mother Sawyer is depicted with the usual elements of the crone witch caricature with a hunched posture, exaggerated nose, and chin. She is dressed in clothing to protect her from the weather, including a capelet, wide brimmed hat, and a walking stick. In her word bubble she is speaking a magical spell in Latin in order to curse ill-health to the name of her victim; this is represented as being the cause of why the character Cuddy Banks is depicted chest deep in a body of water while crying out “*help! Help! I am drowned!*”. This implies that among Mother Sawyer’s alleged crimes of witchcraft she had used magic that caused the drowning of the male character. Banks is given notably regal features with well-groomed facial hair and a tidy slicked back hairstyle; and the elegant style of his shirt indicates that he either came from a respected position in the community, or he possessed some wealth.

The large black dog in the illustration speaks “Ho have I found thee cursing!”, showing that despite looking like a perfectly ordinary floppy-eared domestic dog the creature is not what it seems.

## Chapter 5. **Example analysis comparison to other contemporary works from the same era**

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<sup>51</sup> Johnson. *Female Bodies, Speech, and Silence in ‘The Witch of Edmonton.’* 12, no. 1 (2009): 69–91. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43499510>.



In this section I will be conducting a visual analysis of a sample size of English pamphlets during the same time period as the witchcraft pamphlets. As I have done in the previous chapter I will also be making particular note of how the individuals in the print illustrations are portrayed, the symbolism used to convey meaning, and any use of animals or demonic figures depicted. The purpose will be to analyze artistic style and use of symbolism in order to be able to compare and contrast the similarities and differences the witchcraft pamphlets share with other printed media of the time.

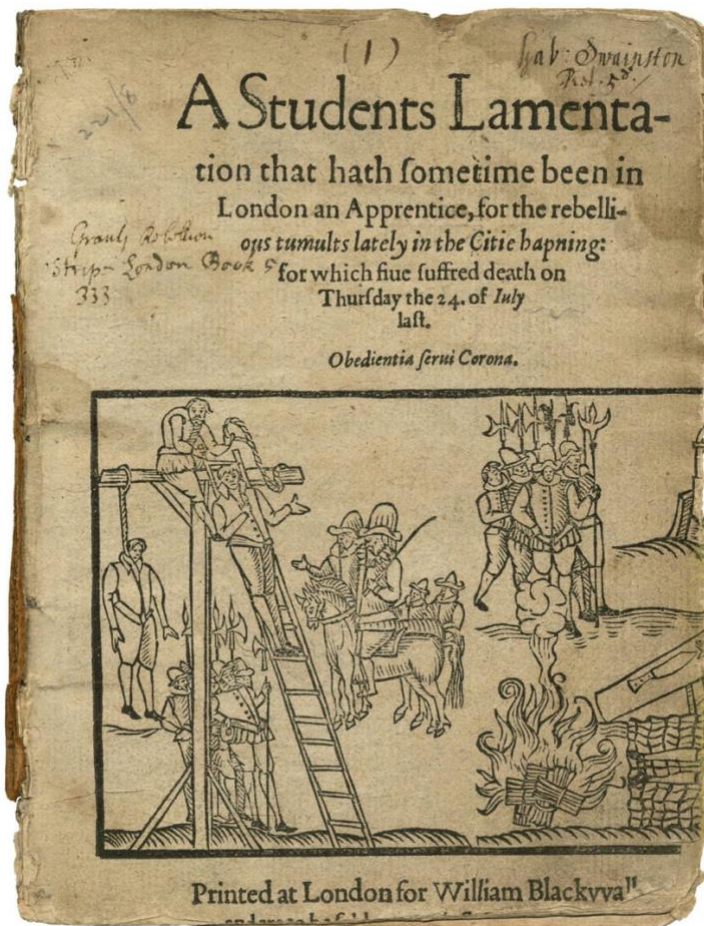


Image 7

*A Students Lamentation that hath sometime been in London an Apprentice, for the rebellious tumults lately in the citie hapning: for which fiue suffered death on Thursday the 24 of July last, Printed in London for William Blackwall.*  
Source: British Library

*A Students Lamentation that hath sometime been in Lonaon an Apprentice, for the rebellious tumults lately in the citie hapning: for which fiue suffered death on Thursday the 24 of July last, was printed in London in 1595 after a thousand apprentices protested unreasonable*

working conditions and five of the protestors were executed as a result. While commissioned by an anonymous person the pamphlet claims the author is a student and occasional apprentice who is urging the protestors to calm themselves as well as show a measure of obedience.<sup>52</sup>

At the far left of the illustration the image depicts fairly well-dressed and well-groomed prisoners being dragged up a ladder by guards and hanged at the gallows. The body language and expression of the prisoner on the ladder is that of sorrowful lamentation. To the far upper right of the surviving image is a group of guards marching past a building of some kind in the farthest corner of the page. Below the guards to the right is a depiction of a bon fire, a table with a large knife, a small hint of a hand beside the knife and what could be a stone wall or bundles of tinder in the bottom far right. The image on the right could be a depiction to the gruesome fate of the five hanged men whose corpses were drawn and quartered shortly after death. Overall the Illustration is more pro-elite with a grand show of force to the military, depicting the prisoners in casual but fairly decently tailored garments to undermine one of the key points of the uprising having been apprentices not being able to afford good clothing, and the showing of the fate of the five executed as a scare tactic to attempt to force readers to calm down in their protests while under the self-proclaimed assurance that the one who wrote the pamphlet was one of the apprentices and thus claimed know what they were talking about in regard to the plight of the protestors.

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<sup>52</sup> *Rebellion 1595*. British Library. Accessed October 3, 2021. <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/rebellion-by-london-apprentices-in-1595>

In the center of the illustration two horses carry more soldiers on their backs as they patrol the area for any more troublemakers on the loose. When dealing with protestors a creature as large as a horse would have been effective in disrupting civil unrest. The same would hold true if the animals were to be put to use as a military guard against possible escape. This emphasizes the resources the military had at their disposal, which underlines the author's point of remaining obedient to the authorities of London.

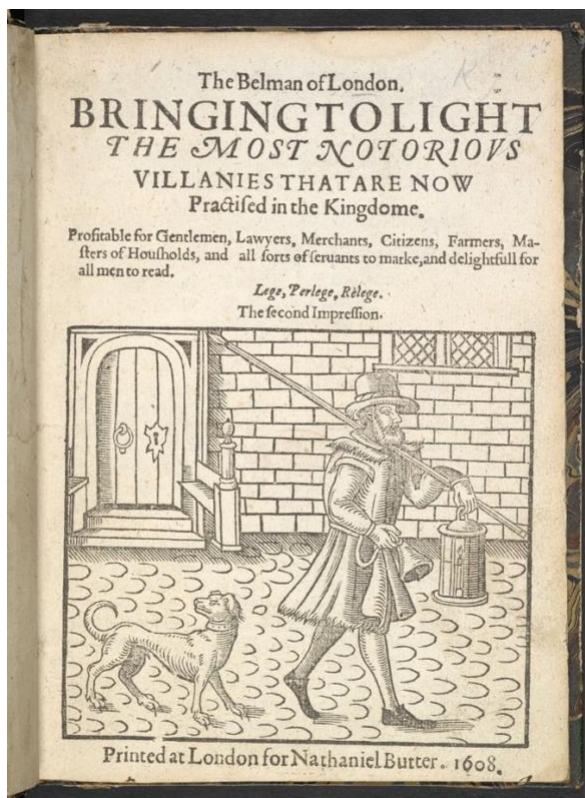


Image 8

*The Belman of London Bringing to Light the Most notorious villanies that are now practiced in the kingdome. Profitable for Gentleman, Lawyers, Merchants, Citizens, Farmers, Masters of Housholds, and all sorts of servants to marke, and delightfull for all men to read. Printed in London by Thomas Dekker for Nathaniel Butter 1608.*

Source: British Library

*The Belman of London Bringing to Light the Most notorious villanies that are now practiced in the kingdome. Profitable for Gentleman, Lawyers, Merchants, Citizens, Farmers, Masters of Housholds, and all sorts of servants to marke, and delightfull for all men to read, was*

published in London in 1608, and written by Thomas Dekker. The contents of the pamphlet describe the various vagabonds of London at the time.<sup>53</sup>

The man depicted in the illustration is a London bellman, an officer of the court whose job it was to announce important news to town squares and market places. Dressed smartly, he carries in his right hand a bell and in his left a lantern and pole as he treks down a cobbled London street. Given the content of the subject matter of the written material the presence of a bellman would indicate that the work is attempting to convey important public information.

The light colored dog following loyally after his master, a collar of ownership displayed proudly around his throat, treads along the cobbled street with the same air of importance as the bellman. It seems as if the dog is acting as both guard for the bellman and as a symbol of loyalty verifying the reliability of the content within the pages of the written work. This conveys that the law, who loyally serves the greater good of the public, is dispensing important information for their benefit.

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<sup>53</sup> *The Bellman by Thomas Dekker, 1608*. British Library. Accessed October 3, 2021.  
<https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/the-bellman-of-london-by-thomas-dekker-1608>



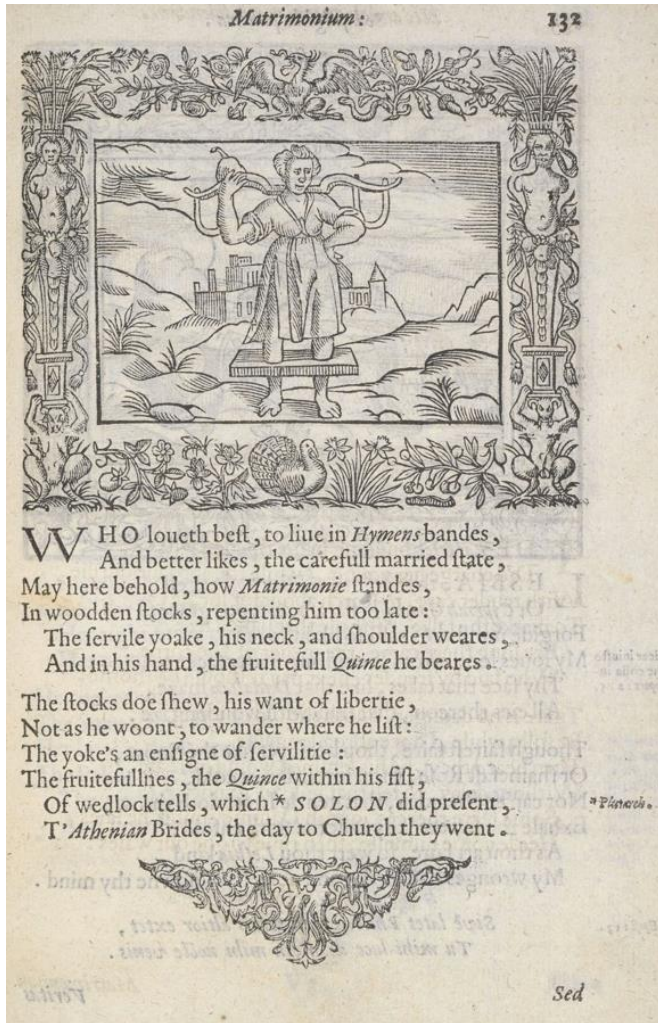


Image 9a. (Top Left)

*Minerva Britanna, or a garden of herorical devises, furnished, and adorned with emblems and impresa's of sundry natures, Newly devised, moralized, and published by Henry Peacham, Mr. of Artes,*  
 Source: British Library

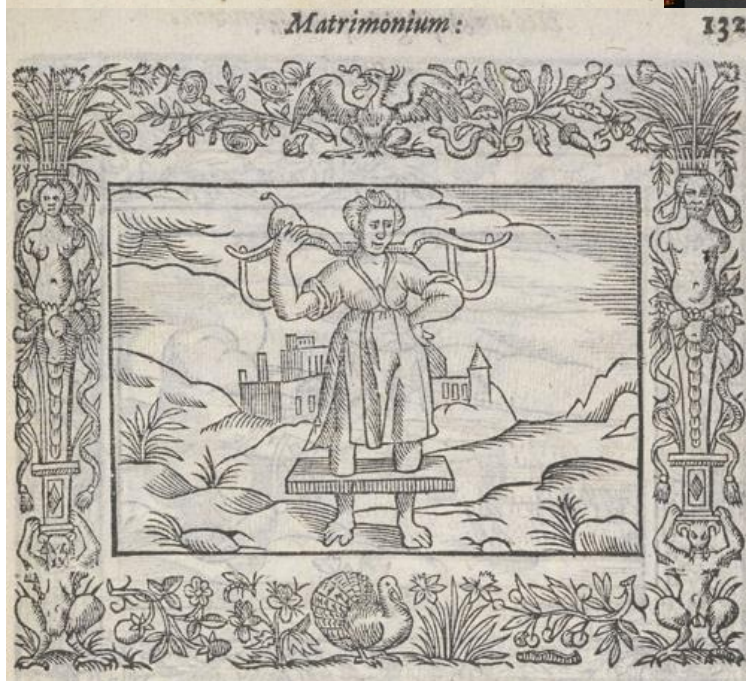
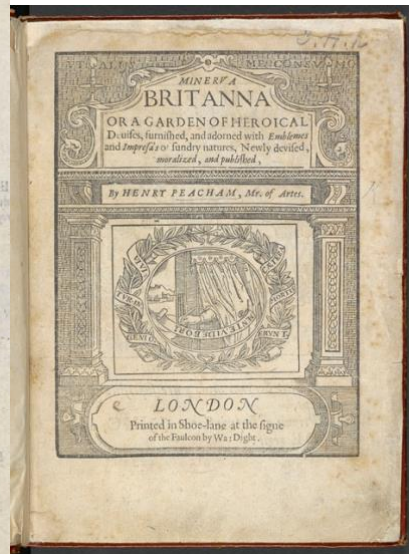


Image 9b. (Bottom Left), 9c. (Center Right)

*Minerva Britanna, or a garden of herorical devises, furnished, and adorned with emblems and impresa's of sundry natures, Newly devised, moralized, and published by Henry Peacham, Mr. of Artes,* (image 9c) was published in London in 1612. The work is comprised of illustrations representing key ideas such as Matrimony (image 9a-9b), Melancholy, and Phlegm that align to Western European Christian values as well as the four humors. Accompanying each illustration is a pithy poem relating to the topic.<sup>54</sup>

The female figure standing in the middle of the illustration within a hilly landscape with a castle behind her is identified in the poem as the whimsical allegory for matrimony in the form of an ideal bride, represented by her bonds of marital servitude with stocks binding her legs, and a cattle yoke balanced on her shoulders. Despite her feet being locked in stocks her arms are left free to show that she is bound of her own free will to the bond of marriage. The yoke was used by both animals and people to carry heavy weights on their shoulders, thus the goddess is shown to be adept at pulling her own weight when it comes to being sturdy enough in body to pitch in with the chores. Dressed scandalously in only a shift with a slit up one side of the skirt may be a nod towards a bride's role in the marital bed, a duty that is also symbolized with the fragrant quince fruit that she holds in her right hand. The text alludes toward it symbolizing the bride's love and fertility.

### **Analysis of animal or demonic imagery**

The border surrounding the illustration of the goddess of matrimony is decorated by grotesques, an artistic style that embraces stylized fanciful distorted forms. This, as is usually

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<sup>54</sup> *Woodcuts Peacham's Minerva Britanna*. British Library. Accessed October 3,2021. <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/woodcuts-showing-the-four-humours-and-marriage-in-peachams-minerva-britanna>

the case for grotesques, seems to be solely for decorative purposes only; it does not necessarily directly relate to the content of the main illustration, but more to do with the printmaker showing off their artistic skills. At the top center of the boarder is an image of a hippogriff with a snake trapped in its beak with an array of insects and floral designs surrounding either side of the creature; a similar motif is repeated at the bottom of the border whose center comprises the image of a turkey. To the right and left of the central image are demons balancing podiums with nude female busts at the top and attached fruit wreaths around the waists, and tall crowns comprised of reeds and flowering plants. In this case the animal and demonic imagery is largely purely decorative.

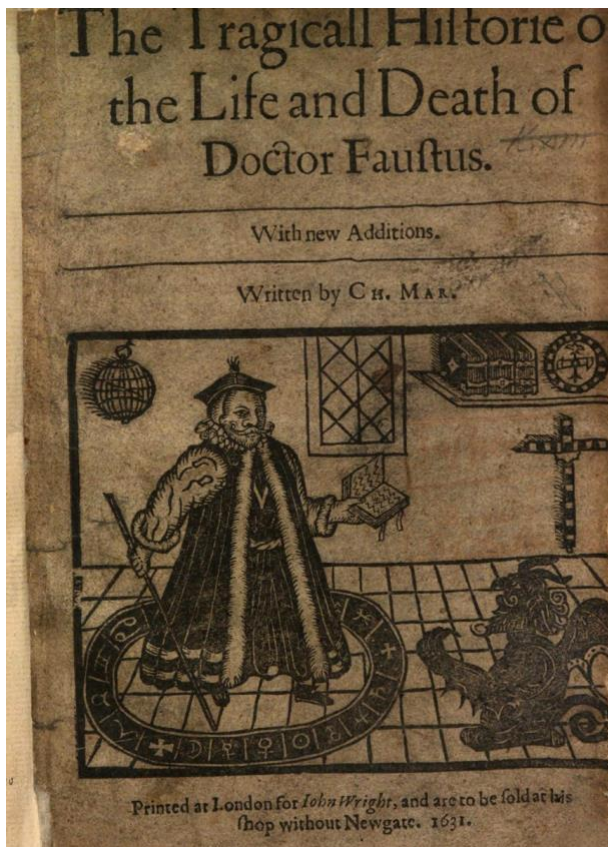


Image 10

*The tragical Historie of the life and death of Doctor Faustus.* By Christopher Marlowe, printed in London for John Wright, and are to be sold at his shop without Newgate, 1631.  
Source: British Library

*The tragical Historie of the life and death of Doctor Faustus*, was published in London in 1631 based off of the play by Christopher Marlowe. It is a tale about a magician named Faustus

who is unsatisfied by good Christian academic learning and thus makes a deal with hell in order to pursue the study of magic for the purpose of gaining power. The play is a moral tale which raises the question of what the cost is of abusing unnatural powers from the realms of magic and the pursuit of forbidden knowledge in order to achieve corrupted desires. As with all moral tales in this time period, if one deals with Devilish powers they suffer horrible fates, the demise of Doctor Faustus at the end being no exception.<sup>55</sup>

The wizard stands regally upright, well-groomed with a painstakingly styled mustache and beard while adorned in finely tailored robes as he stands within the center of a magic circle, a spell book in his left hand and a staff in his right conveying that he is highly distinguished in both dress and reputation. The room in which he resides is ornate with curiosities of a round bird cage, an ornately decorated bound small chest on a shelf, a decorated china plate or circular emblem, and a large ornate cross affixed to the wall. Even the fact that the floor of his domain is tiled denotes that the wizard comes from wealth, a fact that the artist emphasizes by having the floor be portrayed in a uniform grid pattern which would have required the work of skilled artisans to plan, measure, create, and then install the tile to fit the room. In the illustration the artist had used the lines of the tiles as a foreshortening technique to convey the depth of the room, and help the eye focus onto the symbols of the magic circle. The magical circle itself being made up of a combination of symbols for star constellations and two equal sided crosses.

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<sup>55</sup> *Marlowe's Doctor Faustus, 1631*. British Library. Accessed October 3, 2021.  
<https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/marlowes-doctor-faustus-1631>



The Devil rising out of the tiled floor is also shown to sport well-groomed facial hair, but his features are distorted with an enlarged nose and chin. In contrast to the wizard's layers of well-tailored robes the Devil is naked and his body distorted by bat-like wings extending from his shoulders, sharp scales along his arms, horns protruding from his skull, a tail curling out from his lower back, his curled hair left unmade, and his flesh so dark that the Devil looks like a silhouetted twisted parody of the wizard's own appearance. This can be taken as a dark reflection of the wizard's sinful nature.

## Chapter 6. Conclusions

Now that the witchcraft pamphlets and the non-witchcraft pamphlets have been analyzed, the very first noticeable aspect of how witches are portrayed in the illustrations when compared to other illustrations is that the distinctive crescent moon shaped faces of the witches with an exaggeration of the nose and chin is an intentional caricature design to use as visual shorthand for the viewer to be able to discern that the character in the image is a witch. Much in the same way political cartoonists will exaggerate certain features and styles of clothing in order to denote a certain stereotype that can be based on race, religion, gender, cultural sub-group, and so on, the witches shown in all of the witchcraft pamphlet illustrations sport a similar manner of clothing: a simple longed-sleeved dress with an apron around the skirt, a simple white hood covering the hair for modesty, and a white square of cloth worn about the shoulders like a collar or a shawl. This is very distinct as the style of the lower classes, which is interesting when compared to the male wizards in the pamphlet illustrations, who are better dressed, presented without the exaggerated features, and the two in the given

illustrations being a doctor and an academic, not peasants. There were lower class men accused of witchcraft at the time, and yet in the English witchcraft pamphlets they were not given the same level of negative attention as the women, simply by not being shown at all. Another fact that I have noted is the social status of the male witches in comparison to the female witches, as denoted by their clothing and portrayed attitude. The female witches are all exclusively lower class while the male witches are from higher class professions that involve a great deal of reading. The methods of the male versions of accused acts of witchcraft differ from the female acts of witchcraft as well. The male versions involve more academic elements such as cleric work and drawing complex magical circles on the ground and reading forbidden books. Meanwhile the descriptions of female acts of witchcraft are more domestic in nature, involving keeping pet familiars and making use of household tools as camouflaged objects to aid in their magical workings. Overall the differences between the men and women in the illustrations differ in class, the category of a professional role the male witch plays in their witchcraft acts as compared to the domesticity of the female counterpart. The depictions of the witches themselves differ with the male witches being given nicer clothing and distinguished features, while the female witches are reduced to a caricature with exaggerated features to highlight a sense of undesirable unfeminine ugliness to their faces. The dissimilarities between male and female witches is starkly obvious in how they are treated through the visual depictions.

The similarities between witchcraft pamphlets in comparison to other printed media during this timeframe is the use of symbolism to convey to the audience what the pamphlet's subject matter is about. This can draw heavily off of symbolism that requires contextual knowledge that the viewer would have needed to possess beforehand through cultural

exposure, or it can convey basic concepts without there being a need for too much background knowledge of the context in order to convey the illustration's point. Most witchcraft pamphlet illustrations do require some background knowledge about witchcraft in order to make sense of the imagery. However, once paired with the accompanying text, the pamphlets do a good job of providing the audience with a reference point to help them visualize what witches do with their magic. Much of the animal imagery in the witchcraft illustrations on the other hand, do well with conveying a sense of the demonic or the uncanny through bizarre physical distortions (images 5, 4, 2) or erratic behavior (Image 3b., 6) that clues in the viewer that something is sinister and abnormal. The same is true with the non-witchcraft pamphlets where an image can be packed with symbolism that pairs well with the accompanying text (image 9a.), even going as far as to have the text and the illustration enhance one another in a complementary pairing of visual representation with the narrative contexts.

One of the main differences between witch pamphlets in comparison to other media from the same timeframe is how the animal imagery serves different purposes. In witchcraft pamphlets animals are depicted as uncanny, or abnormal in some way. Image 6 has a black talking dog, image 5 has a seemingly normal looking line up of common animals easily found in a home out in the country, until your gaze lands on the calf who is actually a demon mid-transformation, and image 3b has a normal cow who has been twisted into an unsettling threatening lustful creature through evil bewitchment. The role of animals in witchcraft pamphlets is to serve the purpose of conveying to the audience that either something has upset the natural order of nature, or to convey that nothing in the world can be trusted for what appears to be normal turns out to be something supernaturally malevolent that came

from a place that was actively seeking to cause harm, and what made the demon even more terrifying was that it was in cahoots with a witch. Either way, the witch's familiar, or the vessel of Devilish magic, serves to give an illustration a sense of dread and horror, encouraging the masses to buy a copy of a pamphlet so that the populace could read about the crimes of witchcraft committed by the Devil's servants, learn methods and warning signs depicted in these stories in the hopes to educate themselves on how to perhaps avoid being attacked by a witch, and then experience a catharsis at the end when the evil witch is captured and executed. This is not unlike the appeal of "true crime" stories in the modern day. The only difference is that unlike in modern true crime, the witch trials involved basing cases off rumors and conspiracy theories which led to the persecution of innocent people for crimes they would have been physically incapable of committing, and there was no means to give the accused's side of the story an accurate or fair representation. In illustrations from non-witchcraft pamphlets, animal imagery serves either a role to compliment the narrative, a decorative role, or a thematic set-dressing role. The dog in image 8 for instance helps compliment the Bellman to show that the text of the pamphlet is trustworthy and loyal to the greater good of the readership. The animals and demons in image 9a serve a decorative purpose, and the horses in image 7 are set-dressing to showcase the military capabilities of the soldiers. The roles of animals in non-witchcraft pamphlets are more diverse and not limited to either being a bewitched hapless creature, or a demon in disguise. Depictions of demons in all of the pamphlets either serve a purely decorative purpose, such as in image 9a, or they are present strictly to convey the sinister powers of the Devil. The exaggerated features, the chimera appearances, and the stark uncanny quality to such alien fantastical forms represent a violation

of nature and an invasion of the supernatural into a mortal human space. Most images of the latter category of demonic characters accompany the same horror elements found with the animals of the witchcraft pamphlets, just no longer in disguise, thus emphasizing humanity's lack of control over the world if the universe is capable of suddenly setting demons on them at any given moment.

Something I have noted as a running theme in all of the pamphlets is an underlying intolerance to nonconformity, while at the same time there exists an underlying current of societal double standards. Image 9a in particular contrasts as a polar opposite to the witchcraft pamphlets in that what is being depicted in the art is the visage of an ideal bride, a goddess of matrimony, with the text going into detail about what defines a virtuous, faithful, and chaste wife. In contrast to image 9a, all of the witchcraft pamphlets depict what is seen as a woman who is the embodiment of evil for being everything that the figure in image 9a is not, through her vices, her unnatural powers given to her by the Devil, and her promiscuity. On their own, the contrasts between the desired young virtuous bride being accepted by society as a natural part of the community, while the witch is not, are starkly apparent. However, the meaning of the good versus bad black and white narrative, twists in an odd direction when one takes into account the inconsistencies with the rules put into place by the text not matching up with the illustrations.

In image 9a a subservient, young, beautiful woman is both idolized as a goddess of matrimony, while also depicted as a scantily clad servant bound to her husband, is portrayed as desirable. She is the embodiment of wholesome marital values, where part of those values insist upon the sanctity of virginity and refuting sins of the flesh; yet she is sexualized by being

shown in her undergarments. Meanwhile a rebellious, older woman is demonized as a monster that inspires terror, while also being a servant to a man, the Devil, who sets her to cause harm onto whole communities. Interestingly, despite the text in the witchcraft pamphlets going into explicit detail about the various sexual acts that the witches commit, all of the illustrations depict the witches as being completely dressed from head to toe with only the faces and hands exposed. Another inconsistency in how the intent to show a black and white good versus evil narrative falls flat is how the bride in image 9a is both a goddess to be worshipped, while also being a servant. This essentially robs the bride of her right to be a flawed human being, while at the same time reduces her down to a subservient role in her marriage that puts her on unequal footing in her romantic relationship. It should be argued that the witch character finds itself in a similar predicament, where the witch is robbed of her humanity by being a being that society fears, while at the same time not being allowed to own that power because a witch has to be subservient to the Devil and no one else. This reveals a double standard attitude, where no matter what a woman, or person who does not fit into societal roles did or did not do, was considered to always be subservient toward some form of male authority figure.

Tools and animals also played a role in the inconsistencies between what makes someone acceptable for society and what defines an individual as a witch. Household tools were something that a woman was expected to make use of in order to fulfill her duties with the chores. Witches did not conform to their place in society and thus household tools such as brooms and cauldrons became a props for evil deeds. This made the realm of the woman, along with the household's tools for upkeep and cookery, a place of paranoia according to witchcraft lore, which stated that witches can hide in plain sight, only pretending to be normal and

feigning to fulfill their role in society by using their tools for their intended purposes. The same holds true with the presence of animals in witchcraft illustrations, taking the familiar and making it unfamiliar by stating that what is seen is a lie, even though animals played such a crucial role towards survival in both rural and urban areas of England during the time period. People who lived outside of the main communities, or who were a little too strange to be able to rely on their neighbors, would have needed to rely on animals the most in order to survive being on the outskirts of society. Yet, because they were on the outskirts of society, these people were vulnerable to accusations through the means in which they were either fulfilling their expected role, or merely surviving using what they had. This double standard shows up again in clothing. As stated above witches in English pamphlets were described in text to be sexually immoral; in pamphlet illustration they remained fully clothed, while the ideal virtuous bride is adorned in sexualized undergarments. This implies that the audience would gladly condemn the sexual deviancy of the Devil's witch servants, and buy more pamphlets that would describe scandalous salacious dramas for their entertainment. However, because witches were depicted as grotesque caricatures of crones, or in certain cases were describing the odd male witch (images 10 and 3), paying English audiences would not necessarily desire to see such deviancy be displayed in an illustration the same way artists such as Hans Baldung Grien had done in his witchcraft print illustrations back in Germany, let alone be willing to buy a pamphlet with those sorts of salacious illustrations to accompany the text. A virtuous bride on the other hand, is easier on the eyes. This Allowed for artists to tantalize readers with an image of a pretty young woman that comes closer to the line dividing modest and immodest without fully

crossing that line into the realm of indecency, thus ensuring profit margins of selling the pamphlets.

The role of sexism, classism, and the fear of nonconformity to society did play a big role during the witch hysteria<sup>56</sup>. However, the pamphlets show that the situation was more nuanced than the strict gendered roles and the divides between the classes. For the strict rules of society did not apply to everyone depending on the circumstances. Sexual promiscuity was considered immoral, and yet court records and pamphlets go into explicit details of the alleged sexually deviant exploits of the accused. Virtue was valued above all and yet the illustration of an ideal virtuous bride has her wearing nothing but a small shift. The art takes elements of ordinary life, such as household tools, neighbors, animals, and twists the viewer's perspective to see these same elements in a sinister light. This increased the audience's perception of always being watched, never feeling safe, and instilled a need to purchase more information about the witchcraft threat. What the pamphlets reveal when you look closely enough is that a good portion of the propaganda surrounding the hysteria of witchcraft has a lot to do with business and furthering the career advancement of those involved with the witch trials. Sensational stories of sex, drama, and horror with a guaranteed punishment for the evil deeds by the end of the story sold really well, and in order to keep up the demand for a genre that profited from the witch hysteria, printmakers had to make use of art to accompany the commissioned pamphlets in order to draw readers in, and give customer's imaginations something to help the stories told in the pamphlets stick in their minds, making them crave to know more.

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<sup>56</sup> Roper. *Witch Craze*. Pg. 177.



## **Chapter 7. Relevancy of the pamphlets influence in history and how choices made in visual art influenced contemporary opinions at the time**

Art is a window into the beliefs of cultures from the past. By comparing art styles from witchcraft pamphlets with the illustrations of other pamphlet examples published around the same time period, we can discern context for historical events that took place around the time period of the English witch hysteria. It is crucial that witchcraft pamphlet illustrations are given more research, for the pamphlets were commissioned and printed with the intent for them to be bought by the general public, therefore appealing to the tastes of the masses. By studying how printmakers were able to draw in buyers of illustrated pamphlets, and what the masses would be willing to purchase at the time, we can find clues toward nuances in the overall historical context. Witchcraft pamphlets, and more specifically the illustrations of these pamphlets, need to be studied in-depth because of how hard these images would have hit the audience emotionally to see the terrifying sight of a witch and her demonic familiar, two agents of the Devil, one from hell itself, the other a traitor to their own community, and therefore increase their impact in how they contributed to the witch hysteria. Witchcraft pamphlets should also be studied for examples of where there were exceptions to those who had to conform to rules of society, those in the target audience who could get away with not adhering to societal rules and how that brings further complexity to the society during this time period.

The mass-produced art from these pamphlets and prints played a key role in not only giving visualization aid to the concept of witchcraft, but also helped to normalize and even

popularize a deadly outbreak of paranoid social hysteria. We may look back and wonder at the apparent senselessness of this past period of time in history, but it is important to recognize that, from the historical cultural context of the time period, science as we know it in the modern era did not exist, and magic was as real of a concept of the nature of the world as the stones on the road, or how everything living needs to eat to survive. Even if certain people of the time were dubious of the existence of witches there still was a certain power to being given an explanation for why bad things happened in the form of a monster that could be fought and triumphed over, the evil power cleansed from the community through mortal means. The lesson to take away from this historical time period is that illustrated methods of propaganda have always had an influence over people, and it is crucial to always keep a critical mind about where we get our information, be that from an paper pamphlet or from a computer screen.

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