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Literally Unthinkable?

Male Witches in Early Modern Europe

by

Lara Marie Apps 

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

in

History

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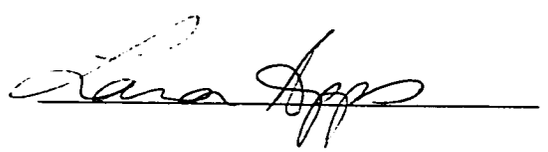

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ABSTRACT

Modern scholars of early modern European witch-beliefs and witchcraft prosecutions have focused on the figure of the female witch, virtually excluding the male witch from witchcraft historiography. This thesis critiques the political-ideological assumptions behind this exclusion, arguing that male witches are important historical subjects who illuminate the complexity of early modern views on gender and witchcraft. Although most witches were women, many men were also tried for witchcraft, and in some regions actually comprised the majority of those accused. Case studies show that despite different social identities, the cumulative concept of witchcraft applied to both male and female witches. *Contra* Stuart Clark, male witches were not unthinkable to learned witchcraft theorists, including the authors of the *Malleus maleficarum*, who discussed them frequently in their demonological treatises. The male witch fit within a gendered framework of witch-belief, in which witchcraft and male witches were implicitly feminized through a complex network of conceptual associations.

University of Alberta

Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

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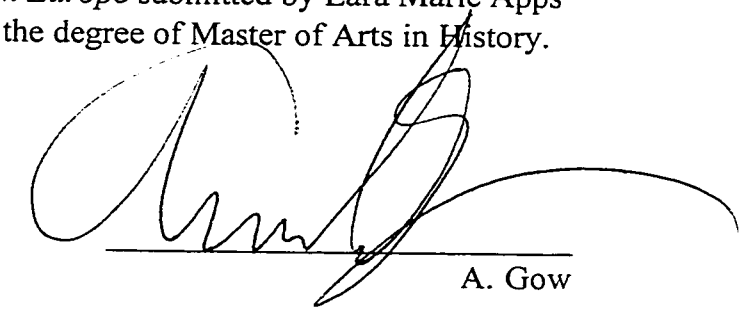

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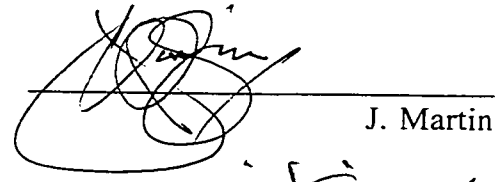

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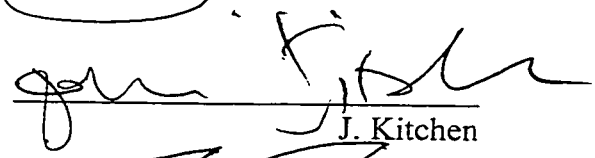

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LIST OF TABLES

NOTE ON CITATIONS

The first citation of any work is always given as a complete reference. Subsequent citations of the same work are abbreviated. In quotations of pre-modern sources, I have retained original orthography. Italicized characters indicate where original contractions have been expanded. Unless otherwise credited, translations are my own.

INTRODUCTION

The gestation of this thesis began in the spring of 1998, while I was working on a seminar paper. The paper included a section on the infamous *Malleus maleficarum*, or Hammer of Witches, which I had chosen as a benchmark of misogyny for the pre-Reformation period. While considering my material, I decided that I ought to comment on the authors' use of the feminine, rather than the masculine, form of the Latin word for witch in their title.[1] I had intended the point to be a relatively minor one, meant solely to support my general remarks about Heinrich Institoris' and Jacob Sprenger's negative attitudes toward women.[2] I did not expect to open up a wholly new line of inquiry.

I had been working from Montague Summers' 1928 English translation of the *Malleus maleficarum*, and decided that it would be prudent to consult a Latin edition. I had simply assumed, for various reasons, that the feminine usage found in the title would be consistent throughout the text.[3] When I checked the 1669 edition held at the Bruce Peel Special Collections Library, however, I encountered something entirely unanticipated: the first line of the text read "Utrum asserere maleficos esse; sit adeo

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[1] '*Maleficus*' is the masculine variant, '*malefica*' the feminine. Both mean, literally, 'evildoer', and were used widely in the ancient, medieval and early modern periods to denote a person who committed evil deeds by means of magic. In the title *Malleus maleficarum*, the word '*maleficarum*' is a feminine genitive plural.

[2] Although Institoris and Sprenger argue merely that witches are mostly, not exclusively, women, the use of the feminine '*maleficarum*' in their work's title suggested to me that in fact they believed witches were essentially female.

[3] The primary reason was that in Latin, groups containing both males and females are represented by the masculine plural, even if there are more females than males in the group. The feminine plural implies an absence of males from a group; therefore, Institoris' and Sprenger's use of the feminine plural in their title suggests that all witches (or at least, all the witches they are concerned with) are female. This is consistent with the usual understanding of the *Malleus maleficarum's* contents and arguments, so there seemed to be no reason to expect any deviation from such usage.

catholicum, quod eius oppositum pertinaciter asserere omnino sit hareticum?".[4] Where one would expect the authors to use the feminine accusative '*maleficas*', they had used the masculine '*maleficos*'. Furthermore, as I worked my way through the text, there were many other references to '*malefici*' as well as to '*maleficae*', sometimes within the same sections. In several instances, the text refers plainly to male witches both as specific individuals and as a group.

I was, frankly, puzzled. I could detect no obvious pattern for Institoris' and Sprenger's grammatical gendering of witches, and I was amazed that Institoris and Sprenger, notorious to modern scholars as the primary authors of the "witches as women" paradigm, would write about witches in the masculine at all, let alone in their opening lines. I sensed immediately that this was significant, but it took some time to develop my inquiry from the level of "what on earth am I seeing here?" to something that, one hopes, is more sophisticated.

The first step, of course, was to consult academic treatments of gender and witchcraft, demonology, and the *Malleus maleficarum* itself to find out what others had made of Institoris' and Sprenger's male witches. Somewhat to my surprise, I discovered that virtually nothing had been published on this topic. The most detailed discussions I could find were the extremely brief and unsatisfactory references in the works of Gerhild Scholz Williams and Sigrid Brauner.[5] Indeed, male witches in general are rare in witchcraft historiography, despite the ubiquity of gender as an issue in the study of witch-hunting and witch-beliefs. It was as if there was a hole at the center of witchcraft studies, to borrow an image from Robin Briggs, into which male witches and the learned discourse about them had disappeared.[6] This invisibility was especially striking in the work of Stuart Clark, who, in an otherwise masterly analysis of early modern demonology, suggests that witchcraft theorists were incapable of

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[4] Institoris, Heinrich & Sprenger, Jacob. *Malleus maleficarum*, in *Malleus maleficarum* (1669 edn.), I (vol. 1), 1. "Whether to claim that there are witches is a catholic proposition, because to assert the opposite view steadfastly is wholly heretical."

[5] See Chapters 1 and 3.

conceptualizing male witches. It was clear that there was a gap in witchcraft historiography that needed to be addressed.

This has meant confronting a historiography largely committed to causal explanation and a polarized, essentializing view of gender and its relationship to witch-hunting and witch beliefs. It has also meant engaging with a strongly politicized discourse about witches: inside of academe and out, the (female) witch is a potent symbol of women's oppression by men, and, somewhat paradoxically, of women's power.

The overtly political dimension to the study of witches in early modern Europe demands a high level of consciousness and reflexivity regarding language, representation, and meaning. My goal in this thesis is to make what is hidden visible -- not only the male witches themselves, but also the historiographical structures and politics that exclude them as historical subjects. This may seem threatening to some readers, especially to those with a heavy investment in representing witches as essentially female, or in claiming the study of early modern witches as women's history. I disagree with these kinds of viewpoint; however, I consider my work to be a feminist history, in Joan Wallach Scott's sense: "Feminist history [is] not just an attempt to correct or supplement an incomplete record of the past but a way of critically understanding how history operates as a site of the production of gender knowledge."[7]

My concentration on male subjects may appear to subvert the feminist project of constructing women as historical subjects, or to diminish the importance of the female witch. I prefer to think of it as a logical application of a relational concept of gender, in which men and women are defined and constructed in terms of one

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[6] Robin Briggs, *Witches & Neighbors: The Social and Cultural Context of European Witchcraft* (New York: Penguin, 1998 [HarperCollins, 1996]), 10.

[7] Joan Wallach Scott, "Introduction", *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia UP, 1988). 1-11: 10.

another.[8] With this understanding of gender and its historical construction, male witches are neither irrelevant nor a threat, but necessary components of a complex phenomenon. Any endeavour to understand the relationship between gender and witchcraft has to take male witches into account and explain how they 'fit' within the gendered framework of early modern beliefs about witches; without them, we are ignoring one half of the gender relation and, necessarily, limiting our knowledge about both men *and* women in early modern Europe. As Caroline Walker Bynum has put it, "the study of gender is a study of how roles and possibilities are conceptualized; it is a study of one hundred percent, not of only fifty-one percent, of the human race."[9]

This thesis contains three main arguments: first, that male witches have been actively excluded from witchcraft historiography; second, that their exclusion by modern scholars is not congruent with early modern understandings of witches; third, that male witches could exist within the framework of early modern witch beliefs because they were implicitly feminized. Although the first chapters focus on my disagreements with prevailing views about male witches, my conclusions are not utterly opposed to modern scholarly understandings of the relationship between gender and witchcraft. Indeed, my argument that male witches were implicitly feminized supports the view that early modern Europeans correlated witchcraft with women very closely. On the other hand, this association was neither exact nor straightforward, as the early modern acceptance, conceptually speaking, of male witches shows.

I mentioned above that this thesis topic requires consciousness and reflexivity regarding language, representation, and meaning. The very first questions I posed to

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[8] Ibid., "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis", 28-50: 29. Andrea Cornwall and Nancy Lindisfarne have criticized the relational concept (see Chapter 4) on the basis that it is too narrow to admit of possibilities other than simple male-female difference. "Dislocating masculinity: Gender, power and anthropology", *Dislocating Masculinity: Comparative Ethnographies*, eds. Andrea Cornwall & Nancy Lindisfarne (London: Routledge, 1994), 11-47: 18. I agree with their viewpoint, and my understanding of gender includes those possibilities, including hierarchical differentiation within genders. The relational concept, nevertheless, is at the core of this understanding.

myself when I made my 'discovery' of the *Malleus's* male witches concerned these issues: what did Institoris and Sprenger mean when they used the masculine *malefici*? Why did they sometimes write *malefici* and sometimes *maleficae*? Were they alone in following this pattern of grammatical gendering, or was it the usual practice in early modern witchcraft treatises? Most importantly, how much significance should I attach to the language of witchcraft literature, not just to what was said but also to the ways in which things were said?

Renato Rosaldo has said that "no mode of composition is a neutral medium".[10] This is as true of my own writing as it is of early modern witchcraft theorists; if I ascribe significance to their language choices, then I must be aware of the significance of my own. In addition, I must be conscious that I am ascribing significance to the empirical "fact" that there were male witches and that witchcraft theorists discussed them. As Keith Jenkins points out, "facts" are selected, distributed, and weighted in finished narratives: "The facts cannot themselves indicate their significance as though it were inherent in them. To give significance to the facts an external theory of significance is always needed."[11] In other words, meanings are made, not found. Roland Barthes has argued that creating meaning is the essence of what historians do: "The historian is not so much a collector of facts as a collector and relater of signifiers; that is to say, he organizes them with the purpose of establishing positive meaning

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[9] Caroline Walker Bynum, "In Praise of Fragments: History in the Comic Mode", *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion* (New York: Zone, 1992), 11-26: 17.

[10] Renato Rosaldo, "After Objectivism", *The Cultural Studies Reader*, ed. Simon During (London & New York: Routledge, 1993; orig. essay 1989), 104-117: 106.

[11] Keith Jenkins, "Introduction: on being open about our closures", *The Postmodern History Reader*, ed. Keith Jenkins (London & New York: Routledge, 1997), 1-35: 10. The area of science studies contains some of the most interesting work related to this idea. See, for example (this is a very limited sample), Ian Hacking, "Making Up People", *The Science Studies Reader*, ed. Mario Biagioli (New York & London: Routledge, 1999), 161-171; Donald Mackenzie, "Nuclear Missile Testing and the Social Construction of Accuracy", *Science Studies Reader*, 342-357; Ludwik Fleck, *The Genesis and Development of a Scientific Fact* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1979 [1935]); H.M. Collins, *Changing Order: Replication and Induction in Scientific Practice* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago, 1992 [1985]; Steven Shapin, *A Social History of Truth: Civility and Science in Seventeenth-Century England* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1995 [1994]).

and filling the vacuum of pure, meaningless series."[12] That being the case, it is important to be open about the kinds of assumptions and positions that inflect the meanings one creates.

A useful approach to my particular disclosure is an examination of the word 'witch'. The term is unavoidable, but it is extremely problematic because of the range of meanings associated with it. To begin with, in common modern English usage, the word 'witch' almost invariably denotes a female. For example, the *Concise Oxford Dictionary* defines 'witch' in female terms, as "a sorceress, esp. a woman supposed to have dealings with the Devil or evil spirits."[13] The term 'warlock' is commonly used to denote a male sorcerer, but this usage implies that there is some distinction between witches and warlocks. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the Old English etymology of the word 'witch' includes two forms: *wicca*, for a male witch, and *wicce* for a female. 'Warlock' meant 'oathbreaker, traitor, or devil'.[14] Modern English has lost the explicitly gendered forms of 'witch', but attributes the feminine gender to the word implicitly. The modern use of two different words for male and female witches is problematic, in my view, because it encourages the exclusion of men from discussions of witches.

In both Latin and French, for example, two very common words for 'witch' are used for both men and women, the only distinction being the gender-indicative endings. In Latin, the most common word is *maleficus/malefica*; in French, we have *sorcier/sorcière*. There are many other terms as well, including gender-specific words such as *necromanticus* (or *nigromanticus*) and *pythonissa*, which were specialized terms for certain kinds of magic-users. In general, however, early modern authors employed rather generic words when they talked about magic-users, words that did not distinguish between male and female witches as witches.

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[12] Roland Barthes, "The discourse of History", *Postmodern History Reader* (orig. essay 1967), 120-123: 121.
[13] *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English*, 9th ed., ed. Della Thompson (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995).
[14] *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford University, 1971).

The closest English equivalent to this kind of non-distinguishing language is 'sorcerer/sorceress'. In the interests of strict correspondence with early modern style, I considered using these terms instead of 'male witch' and 'female witch'. I decided against it, however, because it might lead to some confusion when discussing other scholars' work. In addition, it would mean backing off from an engagement with the various interpretations of the witch when the point of the exercise is to open up debate on precisely that issue. I use 'witch' for both men and women, with the gender specified as necessary for clarification. Despite the problems of modern English usage, this is consistent with early modern categories.

The second problem with the word 'witch' is more complex. To whom does the label apply? Given that for most people today, or at least most potential readers of this thesis, early modern witchcraft was not 'real', what does it mean to refer to a historical subject as a witch, without quotation marks around the word? The question leads directly into a thorny tangle of issues, including realism, referentiality, agency, and subjectivity. There is not enough space to do full justice to each of these topics; nevertheless, it is important to address them here and establish my positions explicitly.

In the first chapter of his book *Thinking With Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe*, Stuart Clark tackles the problems of realism and referentiality head-on. He states that the witchcraft beliefs of the past have been assumed by modern scholars to be "radically incorrect about what could happen in the real world . . . because of an overriding, though largely unspoken, commitment to the realist model of knowledge." This model views language as "a straightforward reflection of a reality outside itself" and judges utterances "to be true or false according to how accurately they describe objective things." Witchcraft beliefs, for example the belief that witches flew to sabbaths, do not, generally speaking, correspond with "the real activities of real people"; in Clark's terms, they lack referents in the real world. According to Clark, this lack of reference to an empirical

reality has led scholars to dismiss witchcraft beliefs "out of hand as mistaken and, hence, irrational" or to explain them away

> as the secondary consequences of some genuinely real and determining condition--that is to say, some set of circumstances (social, political, economic, biological, psychic, or whatever) that was objectively real in itself but gave rise to objectively false beliefs.

Clark objects to these two approaches on the grounds that they make it impossible to interpret witchcraft beliefs as beliefs "in terms of either their intrinsic meaning or their capacity to inspire meaningful actions."[15]

What is needed, he argues, is a different (Saussurean) concept of language that allows it not to be constituted by reality but instead to constitute reality itself, and that understands that "success in conveying meanings . . . relies on relationships within the [language] system, and not on relationships between the system and something external to it." With this view of language, the focus of inquiry would shift away from putative external determinants of witchcraft beliefs to the meanings of those beliefs within their specific frameworks. This does not mean that the historian would have to accept witchcraft beliefs; rather, the whole issue of the truth or falsity of those beliefs would become irrelevant. As Clark puts it, "Witchcraft's apparent lack of reality as an objective fact would simply become a non-issue, and the consequent need to reduce witchcraft beliefs to some more real aspect of experience would go away", thus freeing historians to concentrate their interpretative endeavours on the ways in which the beliefs made sense to those who held them.[16]

Clark's approach to witchcraft beliefs provides one of the major underpinnings of this thesis. My interest in male witches is precisely in elucidating how they fit into an ostensibly anti-female framework, or, to put it another way, into an early modern web of beliefs about witches, men, and women. Behind this interest

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[15] Stuart Clark, *Thinking With Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997), 3-5.
[16] Ibid., 6. Cf. The 'strong programme' in the sociology of knowledge, put forward by David Bloor in *Knowledge and Social Imagery*, 2nd ed. (Chicago & London: University of Chicago, 1991 [1976]).

lies the assumption that, in Clark's words, "a body of ideas that survived for nearly 300 years must have made some kind of sense".[17] Witchcraft beliefs do not have to be 'true' in our web of beliefs in order to have seemed rational and coherent to early modern Europeans.[18]

With respect to the labeling of early modern men and women as witches, a non-realist methodology allows one to bypass the process of deciding whether or not each individual is 'really' a witch, since there is no way of determining this outside their frame of reference. For the purposes of this inquiry into the early modern web of beliefs about witches, once a person has been labeled as a witch by some contemporary, then they are one.

This leads to problems of subjectivity and agency. By adopting, without qualification or quotation marks, the label 'witch', I leave myself open to the charge of replicating what we tend to assume were injustices perpetrated against those accused of witchcraft.[19] For some authors, those accused and executed were victims, and they refer to them as such. Such authors tend also to identify with these (female) 'victims'. Anne Barstow, for instance, who employs victimization rhetoric, dedicates her book *Witchcraze* to "those who did not survive".[20] One could argue that it is legitimate to refer to early modern witches in this way if one is interested primarily in the perspective and experiences of the accused. On the other hand, there are several problems with this approach.

First, the identification of modern feminist scholars with early modern witches seems, as Diane Purkiss has suggested, impertinent. Barstow's dedication assumes a

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[17] Ibid., viii.

[18] The notion of a web of beliefs is derived from Richard Rorty. Rorty treats beliefs as "habits of action" and a web of belief as a "self-reweaving mechanism" that reacts to the environment. Beliefs cannot be separated out from their webs: "a belief is what it is only by virtue of its position in a web." All beliefs are thus already contextualized. "Inquiry as Recontextualization: An anti-dualist account of interpretation", *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth: Philosophical Papers Volume 1* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997 [1991]), 93-110: esp. 93, 98. Cf. Collins.

[19] In her book *Lewd Women and Wicked Witches*, Marianne Hester puts double quotation marks around the word.

[20] Anne Llewellyn Barstow, *Witchcraze: A New History of the European Witch Hunts* (San Francisco: Pandora, 1995 [1994]).

commonality of experience with the witches, an assumption to which Purkiss's remarks are particularly apt: "In the face of a degree of fear and suffering which most of us cannot even imagine, a more humble and less eager identification might be advisable."[21]

More importantly, however, the use of victimization rhetoric introduces methodological problems. Referring to witches as victims imposes a single perspective on a multitude of actors. There is no way to employ the rhetoric of victimization and at the same time offer meaningful interpretations of those who accused, tried, tortured, executed, or just wrote about witches: the frames of reference are incompatible. Indeed, it is doubtful that calling witches victims is always consistent with the perspective of the witches themselves. Diane Purkiss, Lyndal Roper, and Malcolm Gaskill have all produced studies that suggest witches possessed agency and, in some cases, deliberately represented themselves as witches.[22]

Nevertheless, it is true that my adoption of witch-hunters' and witchcraft theorists' categories and views of witches objectifies the individuals caught on the receiving end of witch trials. This is regrettable, even distasteful given the ordeals many of the witches suffered; however, it is unavoidable in a study devoted to the beliefs of those who thought witches were real and dangerous.

The existence of male witches, and particularly their presence in demonological treatises, raises many questions. Can the male witch be assimilated within a patriarchal framework? Is the male witch a figure of the earlier witch-hunting phase only? Were male and female witches believed to be fundamentally different? Were

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[21] Diane Purkiss, *The Witch in History: Early Modern and Twentieth-Century Representations* (London & New York: Routledge, 1996), 13.

[22] Purkiss, *op. cit.*, esp. "Self-fashioning by women: choosing to be a witch", 145-176; Lyndal Roper, "Witchcraft and fantasy in early modern Germany" and "Oedipus and the Devil", *Oedipus & the Devil: Witchcraft, sexuality and religion in early modern Europe* (London & New York: Routledge, 1994), 199-225, 226-248; Malcolm Gaskill, "The Devil in the Shape of a Man: Witchcraft, Conflict and Belief in Jacobean England", *Historical Research* 71, no. 175 (1998): 142-178. The agency debate is inflected strongly with issues of resistance and collusion; not surprisingly, it is focused on the agency of women.

male witches somehow gendered 'female' by witchcraft theorists? How can gender theory help us make sense of the conceptual relationship between male and female witches?

This thesis attempts to show that the male witch was not, conceptually speaking, different from the female witch, and that early modern writers refer to male witches throughout the witch-hunting period, not just at the beginning. The male witch was not feminized in the ways one might expect; that is, the male witch was not assumed to be, or normally described as, homosexual or effeminate. He was, however, connected with female witches and with femininity via late medieval and early modern beliefs that only the weak-minded could be duped by the devil into becoming his servants. The male witch suggests that gender, or rather sex, was not, at the conceptual level, the *primary* characteristic of the witch: the primary affinity between male and female individuals with witchcraft was related to their status as 'fools'. Women were by definition more prone to weak-mindedness, but men were by no means immune; and, like women, foolish men represented threats to the (patriarchal) social order. Male and female witches thus have more in common than the majority of participants in the witchcraft and gender debate suggest.

The first chapter of this thesis deals with the historiography on witchcraft and gender as it relates to male witches. Chapter 2 presents data on the number of male witches in early modern Europe, as well as two sixteenth-century case studies of individual witches. Chapter 3 introduces fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth-century demonological representations of male witches. Chapter 4 draws on classical and medieval sources as well as early modern material to argue that male witches were implicitly feminized.

CHAPTER 1

INVISIBLE MEN: EXCLUDING THE MALE WITCH

Between roughly 1450 and 1750, secular, Inquisitorial, and ecclesiastical courts across continental Europe, the British Isles, and the American colonies tried approximately 110, 000 people for the crime of witchcraft, executing around 60, 000.[1] Almost all historiography dealing with early modern witchcraft is concerned, on some level, with explaining why this happened. There is no shortage of interpretations: the last thirty years have seen the historical study of witchcraft transformed "from an esoteric byway into a regular concern of social, religious and intellectual historians" who have carried out intensive, often interdisciplinary research in the archives of continental Europe, the British Isles, and the New World.[2]

This mass of research has produced a variety of explanations for the so-called witch craze, including the acculturation of the masses by the élite,[3] state-building,[4] and mass psychosis.[5] One of the most contentious sets of interpretations concerns the relationship between witch-hunting and gender. Of the thousands of people tried and

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[1] Brian Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe*, 2nd ed. (London & New York: Longman, 1995), 25. Estimates of the number of trials and executions vary, and figures such as Levack's represent a combination of hard data and 'allowances' for missing records. Levack's numbers have been accepted as reasonable, if conservative, by the general community of scholars working on this topic.

[2] Robin Briggs, "'Many reasons why': witchcraft and the problem of multiple explanation", *Witchcraft in early modern Europe: Studies in culture and belief*, eds. Jonathan Barry, Marianne Hester, & Gareth Roberts (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996), 49-63: 49.

[3] See e.g. Robert Muchembled, "Satanic myths and cultural reality", *Early Modern European Witchcraft: Centres and Peripheries*, eds. Bengt Ankarloo & Gustav Henningsen (Oxford 1990), 139-160.

[4] See e.g. Christina Larner, *Enemies of God: The Witch Hunt in Scotland*; see also Brian Levack, "State building and witch hunting in early modern Europe", *Witchcraft in early modern Europe*, 96-115, for a useful discussion of this thesis.

[5] See e.g. H.R. Trevor-Roper, *The European Witch-Craze of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (rpt. London: Penguin, 1990). Originally published in *Religion, the Reformation and Social Change*, 1967.

executed for the crime of witchcraft, seventy-five to eighty percent were women. This distinctive feature of early modern witch-hunting aroused little scholarly comment until witchcraft studies entered its "golden age" of the past quarter-century. Over time, however, it has generated a complex, politicized debate over its significance.

This debate has produced much valuable work that illuminates the role of early modern notions of gender in witchcraft prosecutions. Unfortunately, the debate has tended to polarize those scholars (mostly feminists) who argue that patriarchy and misogyny were the primary causes of witch-hunting, and those who resist feminist theories and interpretations. The female witch has become a site for struggles over historical method and feminist politics, but there is very little room in the research agenda for the male witch, even though men comprised twenty to twenty-five percent of the total number of executed witches. What work there is on male witches tends to be limited, for the most part, to enumeration. Rigorous application of gender analysis to the male witch rarely enters the historiographical picture.

The exclusion of male witches from witchcraft historiography is the result of active (but not necessarily conscious) processes and assumptions. With few exceptions, modern scholars see the witch as essentially female, and are not prepared to recognize male witches as historical subjects of the same importance as female witches. It is not that they are unaware of the existence of male witches. Most serious studies, including current survey texts, mention male witches; however, the male witch vanishes quickly from view, as he is turned invisible by a combination of rhetorical strategies. This exclusion, which inverts the elision of women from traditional history, is not restricted to feminist scholarship. Male scholars participate in the exclusion also, even, paradoxically, when they present research that is specifically about male witches.

The debate itself is embedded within a strongly gendered discourse. For instance, it has become practically *de rigeur* to begin a 'serious' discussion of gender and witchcraft by skewering the most extreme examples of feminist interpretation one

can find. The usual suspects are Margaret Murray, Andrea Dworkin, Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English.[6] Diane Purkiss describes this process as a "ritual slaughter" or rite of distantiation designed to keep the academic's masculine rationality at a safe distance from feminine irrationality and credulity.[7] The kind of language that is often used supports her critique: for example, it is surely no accident that Robin Briggs refers to "the wilder shores of the feminist and witch-cult movements".[8] The connotations of his description characterize feminists and modern pagans as irrational and uncivilized Others with whom he does not wish to be identified. Even though he is referring specifically to the extreme positions, it is not a great leap to associate all members of the feminist and pagan movements with "wilder shores", and thus to discredit them by implication.

For their part, feminist scholars are fond of pointing out male academics' insensitivity to women and gender issues. H.R. Trevor-Roper, Erik Midelfort, Alan Macfarlane and Keith Thomas have all been criticized for their interpretations of women and witch-hunting, which implied at certain points that women were at fault. Trevor-Roper, for instance, wrote in a striking passage that

> The Devil with his nightly visits, his *succubi* and *incubi*, his solemn pact which promised new power to gratify social and personal revenge, became 'subjective reality' to hysterical women in a harsh rural world or in artificial communities -- in ill-regulated nunneries . . . or in special regions like the Pays de Labourd, where . . . the fishermen's wives were left deserted for months. And because separate persons attached their illusions to the same imaginary pattern, they made that pattern real to others.[9]

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[6] In the context of witchcraft historiography, Murray is best known for her theory that there was a real witch-cult: *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe* (London: Oxford University, 1921); Dworkin for claiming 9 million women were burned as witches: *Woman-Hating* (New York: Dutton, 1974); Ehrenreich and English for their theory that witch-hunting was a systematic attempt by male doctors to eradicate women's medicine, especially midwifery: *Witches, Midwives and Nurses: A History of Women Healers* (London: Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperate, 1973). All three positions have been discredited.

[7] Purkiss, 62-63.

[8] Briggs, *Witches & Neighbors*, 8.

[9] Trevor-Roper, 120.

Here we have irrational women, improperly controlled by men, as the root cause of the witch hunts. This is Trevor-Roper's most detailed comment on the issue of women as witches. Erik Midelfort, writing about southwestern Germany, devoted several pages to a discussion of why "witch panics almost always singled out adult women for special attention." He focused on demographic explanations, but remarked that "women seemed somehow to provoke an intense misogyny at times" and that scapegoated groups attract to themselves the scapegoating mechanism.[10]

Alan Macfarlane and Keith Thomas, historians of witchcraft in England, also suggested that it was women's behaviour that caused suspicion to fall on them; however, they are criticized more often by feminists for denying a role for male-female conflict in witch-hunting. Thomas, for instance, stated that "the idea that witch-prosecutions reflected a war between the sexes must be discounted, not least because the victims and witnesses were themselves as likely to be women as men."[11]

Barstow's views on these historians indicate the degree of polarization between feminist and non-feminist accounts that can occur:

> Historians were denying that misogyny and patriarchy are valid historical categories and were refusing to treat women as a recognizable historical group. Reading these works is like reading accounts of the Nazi holocaust in which everyone would agree that the majority of victims were Jewish, but no one would mention anti-Semitism or the history of violent persecution against Jews, thereby implying that it was "natural" for Jews to be victims. Without mention of a tradition of oppression of women, the implication for the sixteenth century is that of course women would be attacked -- and that it must somehow have been their fault.[12]

Despite the fact that Trevor-Roper, Midelfort, Macfarlane and Thomas were generally sympathetic toward early modern witches, Barstow casts them in the role of

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[10] H.C. Erik Midelfort, *Witch Hunting in Southwestern Germany 1562-1684: The Social and Intellectual Foundations* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1972), 182-183.
[11] Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century England* (rpt. London: Penguin, 1991 [Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1971]), 679. Alan Macfarlane, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England: A Regional and Comparative Study* (rpt. Prospect Heights, Ill.: Waveland, 1991 [Routledge, 1970]).
[12] Barstow, 4.

Holocaust deniers and, by implication, Nazi sympathizers. She is correct to point out these historians' tendency to find fault with women's behaviour; however, her characterization, like Briggs' description of feminists, asserts the hegemonic authority of her own approach and, it could be argued, suggests that it is the *non*-feminist historians who are irrational.[13]

Given the struggle for control over the discourse about the female witch, one would expect something similar in connection with the male witch, but this is not the case. Male witches serve a useful function as spoilers of the more simplistic 'witch-hunting as woman-hunting' interpretations, but otherwise little is said about them. Most of what is written about male witches stems directly from the conclusions drawn by Alan Macfarlane, Erik Midelfort and William Monter in their early studies of Essex, southwestern Germany and the France-Switzerland border region.[14]

These conclusions may be summarized as follows: a few men were accused of witchcraft, but they were usually related to a female suspect (Macfarlane); men were accused of witchcraft, sometimes in large numbers, but this happened only when a witch-hunt spiraled into a mass panic and the normal stereotype of the female witch broke down (Midelfort); men were accused of witchcraft, sometimes in large numbers, but this was because they lived in areas that conceptualized witchcraft as heresy (Monter).

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[13] One could read this another way, namely, that Barstow views non-feminist male historians as rational in a pejorative sense. This would be consistent with certain feminist theories about the link between (negative) rationality and patriarchy, as well as with interpretations of the Nazi holocaust as a product of modernization and rationalism. Unfortunately, Barstow does not offer a discussion of her views on rationality and Nazism. I infer, however, from her tone and her use elsewhere of expressions such as "orgy of hatred" (p. 54) that she interprets witch-hunting as irrational; her close association of the "witch craze" with the Nazi holocaust would therefore make the latter a product of irrationality also. Studies of witch-hunts and witch-hunting bear some striking historiographical relationships to Holocaust studies. For a useful introduction to the latter, see Michael R. Marrus, *The Holocaust in History* (London: Penguin, 1993 [1987]. Cynthia Eller's recent book *The Myth of Matriarchal Prehistory: Why an Invented Past Won't Give Women a Future* (Boston: Beacon, 1999?) includes an accessible, critical sketch of feminist theories linking patriarchy with rationalism.

[14] Macfarlane and Midelfort, *op. cit.*; E. William Monter, *Witchcraft in France and Switzerland: The Borderlands During the Reformation* (Ithaca & London: Cornell UP, 1976).

Feminists and non-feminists alike have quietly (sometimes silently) incorporated Macfarlane's, Midelfort's and Monter's limited remarks within their own interpretations of witchcraft and gender. This commonality is possible because of a tacit consensus that male witches are neither as interesting nor as important as female witches and, furthermore, that they are not 'real' witches. At the extreme, this attitude toward male witches is manifested in their simple erasure from analyses of witchcraft.

A recent essay by the medievalist Kathleen Biddick demonstrates this erasure. In her discussion of Carlo Ginzburg's book *Ecstasies: Deciphering the Witches' Sabbath*, she summarizes his argument as follows:

> For him, Inquisitorial persecution and popular notions of conspiracy are serial phenomena running in a kind of zigzag way from lepers to Jews to *women* over the fourteenth century. . . . In his study of the witches' Sabbath, Ginzburg divided the possibilities for continuity and discontinuity among Jews and *women* in interesting ways. Jews seem to 'disappear' from the European imaginary, and *women* almost magically take their place [italics mine].[15]

This would not be an inaccurate synopsis, except that Biddick has substituted women for witches. Ginzburg, unusually for witchcraft historians, always refers to both male and female witches. His scheme for the shifting targets of persecuting impulses is not "lepers to Jews to women", but "lepers-Jews; Jews; Jews-witches."[16]

It is difficult to imagine how Biddick could have missed Ginzburg's point that witches were, and were understood to be, both male and female. The very first words

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[15] Kathleen Biddick, "The Devil's Anal Eye: Inquisitorial Optics and Ethnographic Authority", *The Shock of Medievalism* (Durham & London: Duke University, 1998), 105-134: 131. Biddick's remarks about witchcraft are based almost entirely on a rather selective reading of the *Malleus maleficarum*, not, as far as one can tell, on any independent study of archival material. She has some interesting things to say about the construction of ethnographic authority by Inquisitors and modern microhistorians; however, she offers no comment on her own reading practices or justification for altering the original sense of Ginzburg's arguments.

[16] Carlo Ginzburg, *Ecstasies: Deciphering the Witches' Sabbath*, trans. Raymond Rosenthal (New York: Penguin, 1992 [orig. *Storia Notturna*, 1989]), 71.

of the book are: "Male and female witches met at night".[17] In the chapter Biddick cites, Ginzburg says at one point that

> Like the lepers and Jews, *male and female witches* are located at the margins of the community; their conspiracy is once again inspired by an external enemy - the enemy par excellence, the devil. Inquisitors and lay judges will search for physical proof of the pact sealed with the devil on the bodies of the *male and female witches*: the stigma that lepers and Jews carried sewn onto their clothing [italics mine].[18]

Finally, on the very page that Biddick cites from that chapter, Ginzburg remarks that "For almost a century trials had been held against the sect of anthropophagous male and female witches".[19] One can only conclude that Biddick either willfully or unconsciously eliminated the male witches, who are out in plain sight in Ginzburg's text. If she did this willfully, distorting Ginzburg's argument along the way, it suggests a remarkable degree of arrogance; if her erasure of male witches was unconscious, it indicates that her feminist 'optics' contain a blind spot. Either way, Biddick's inability to respect Ginzburg's sense of the term 'witch' demonstrates the power of the paradigm of the female witch and the discomfort that scholars feel when confronted with male witches.

More commonly, especially in surveys, male witches are mentioned once or twice and then forgotten, and witches are referred to subsequently as if they were exclusively female. Keith Thomas, for example, draws his readers' attention to the fact that some witches were men, but then switches to the feminine pronoun: "A witch was a person of either sex (but more often female) who could mysteriously injure other people. The damage she might do . . . could take various forms."[20] A particularly objectionable version of this elision is presented by Anne Barstow. After explaining that "it is through an analysis of the percentage of women and men accused

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[17] Ibid., 1.
[18] Ibid., 72.
[19] Ibid., 76.
[20] Thomas, 519.

and of the percentage condemned that the gender bias of this persecution emerges",[21] she goes on to say:

> Given the chaotic state of the records, the temptation to round off the numbers is strong. Yet I found myself carefully retaining each awkward figure . . . As Joan Ringelheim, researcher of women in the Nazi holocaust, stated of her work, to drop numbers now is to kill these persons twice. Wanting to record every known victim, to ensure that the historical record finally acknowledges *her* death, I offer the most complete record available at this time [italics mine].[22]

The dead witches are envisioned as female only, even though Barstow is well aware that thousands of men were also accused of and executed for the crime of witchcraft. According to her own standards, Barstow is in fact killing some witches twice by speaking as if all witches were women. One has to wonder how she would respond if someone wrote as if all witches were men.

Barstow is in good company. The late sociologist Christina Larner, best-known in the context of the gender debate for her "sex-related but not sex-specific" formulation,[23] expressed her own opinion of male witches as follows: "The question of to what extent and under what circumstances males got involved in witch trials . . . is a *diversion* which *distracts attention* from the wider issue of female criminalization [italics mine]."[24] In other words, the men who suffered through witchcraft trials are *not as important* as the women.

One could defend Barstow's and Larner's indifference toward male witches on the grounds that they are performing the important task of writing women's history.

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[21] Barstow, 20.

[22] Ibid., 22. Given that Barstow's work is a synthesis of others' research, and seems to have involved no additional archival research whatsoever, her comment about the state of the records is misleading and self-important. Purkiss remarks that the appropriation of the Holocaust by radical feminists shows that "the narrative of the Holocaust has become the paradigmatic narrative for understanding atrocity in the twentieth century", something which, as she points out, is "deeply problematic" as both history and politics. See p. 16-17. One should note that despite her clear aim to 'debunk' the Burning Times myth of a women's holocaust, Purkiss fails to mention male witches.

[23] In *Enemies of God*, Larner wrote that "the substantial proportion of male witches in most parts of Europe means that a witch was not defined exclusively in female terms. . . . Witchcraft was not sex-specific but it was sex-related." P. 92.

[24] Larner, "'*Crimen Exceptum*'? The Crime of Witchcraft in Europe", *Witchcraft and Religion*, 35-67: 62.

There is nothing wrong with focusing on women; however, there is something disturbing, on several levels, about an act of historiographical revenge that replicates, by inversion, the past neglect of women as historical subjects. To put the elision of male witches in perspective, one has only to read the words of Johannes Junius, who was executed as a witch in 1628. In a letter smuggled from prison, Junius wrote to his daughter:

> Innocent have I come into prison, innocent have I been tortured, innocent must I die. . . . the executioner [came], and put the thumb-screws on me, both hands bound together, so that the blood ran out at the nails and everywhere, so that for four weeks I could not use my hands . . . Thereafter they first stripped me, bound my hands behind me, and drew me up in the torture. Then I thought heaven and earth were at an end; eight times did they draw me up and let me fall again, so that I suffered terrible agony.[25]

Junius's letter speaks eloquently to the fact that both male and female witches could experience the same terrors; yet scholars such as Barstow and Larner seem to privilege the suffering of women over that of men. In doing so, they are committing an injustice against certain historical subjects -- human beings -- solely on the basis of their male sex.

As troubling as open exclusions are, they are less problematic than the more subtle strategies that 'declassify' male witches. Men are regularly discussed in terms which suggest that they were essentially different, as witches, from women -- and therefore not really witches at all. Sometimes this approach is blunt, as in Barstow's assertion that

> The fact that overall about 20 percent of the accused were male is less an indication that men were associated with witchcraft than it appears. Most of these men were related to women already convicted of sorcery . . . and thus were not perceived as *originators* of witchcraft. Of the few who were not related, most had criminal records for other felonies . . . witchcraft was not the original charge but was added on to make the initial accusation more heinous.[26]

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[25] "The Persecutions at Bamberg", *Witchcraft in Europe 1100-1700: A Documentary History*, eds. Alan C. Kors & Edward Peters (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1997 [1972]), 253-259: 257-258.
[26] Barstow, 24.

Merry Wiesner presents a variation of this argument, stating that "male suspects were generally relatives of the accused women" and

> the men accused in mass panics were generally charged with different types of witchcraft than the women -- of harming things in the male domain such as horses or crops rather than killing infants or spoiling bread -- and only rarely accused of actions such as night-flying or pacts with the Devil.[27]

Although Barstow and Wiesner do discuss male witches in general terms, the effect of their description is to eliminate male witches as valid historical subjects by casting them as either mere collateral damage in the persecution of women, or as something completely different from female witches and therefore uninteresting.

A more subtle sleight of hand is performed by William Monter in his study of male witches in Normandy. This important article is one of the most thorough discussions of male witches, and does much to challenge the notion that early modern witch beliefs and witch-hunting were uniformly misogynistic. Monter provides a wealth of data about male witches, beginning with the fact that in this "unremarkable province" close to "the heart of northern and western Europe", men comprised the majority of those tried and executed for witchcraft.[28] What is more, the proportion of male witches actually rose over time.[29] Finally, Monter's data indicates that certain occupational groups -- shepherds, blacksmiths and clerics -- were particularly vulnerable to witchcraft accusations.[30]

Monter's study of Normandy is exciting because it offers concrete evidence that early modern beliefs about witches were not sex-specific. For example, both men and women were searched for devil's marks, with men "as likely as women to display

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[27] Merry E. Wiesner, "Witchcraft", *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe*, New Approaches to European History (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1995 [1993]), 218-238: 233-234. Barstow and Wiesner derive their assertions from a combination of Macfarlane's and Midelfort's conclusions.
[28] William Monter, "Toads and Eucharists: The Male Witches of Normandy, 1564-1660", *French Historical Studies* 20, no. 4 (1997): 563-595, 564.
[29] Ibid., 584, table 3.
[30] Ibid., 581-584.

such anaesthetic spots." Although, Monter suggests, "It was difficult to accommodate beliefs about the orgies at the witches' sabbath to a predominantly male population of witches", this did not prevent at least one man from confessing to having attended a sabbath and copulated with a succubus.[31]

In the end, however, Monter reclassifies the male witches as heretics, thus harking back to his conclusions of 1979.[32] The Normandy witches, especially the shepherds, were in the habit of using Eucharists to perform magic. Monter argues that "the judges of Rouen inflicted such severe punishments on those shepherds . . . not because they were magicians, but because they profaned the Eucharist, the body of Christ."[33] To be fair, this particular statement concerns the reason for the unusual severity of the Rouen Parlement toward male witches, not the reason for their existence in the first place; however, shortly before he makes this comment, Monter wonders "why Normandy put mostly male witches on trial", then launches directly into his discussion of profaning the Eucharist.[34] The implication, perhaps, is that Normandy's male witches were 'really' suspected of being heretics, not witches.

The most striking instance of the invisibility of male witches is found in Stuart Clark's interpretation of demonological views of gender and witchcraft. Demonological literature is a major source for the assumption that witch-hunting was primarily about persecuting women. Witchcraft treatises, particularly the infamous *Malleus maleficarum* of 1487, are blamed by some scholars for the gender bias of witch-hunts. Gerhild Scholz Williams, for example, says: "Kramer's *Malleus Maleficarum* gave the starting signal to a discourse on witchcraft and women that gathered momentum in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries and realized its

[31] Ibid., 588-589.
[32] Explained in Chapter 4 of this thesis.
[33] Monter, "Toads and Eucharists", 592.
[34] Ibid., 590.

full destructive potential between the years 1580 and 1630."[35] Sigrid Brauner took a similar view in her study of the construction of the witch-image in early modern Germany, arguing that the *Malleus maleficarum* represented "a watershed in the history of the witch hunts" because it marked the first time that a work on witchcraft as heresy argued that most witches were women.[36] Implicit in both of these formulations is the view that the *Malleus* was a typical demonological work: fundamentally misogynistic and responsible for the high percentage of female victims of witch-persecution.

In his recent studies of early modern demonology, Stuart Clark questions both the woman-hunting argument and the attribution of blame to demonologists. He points out that if witch-hunting was indeed a function of misogyny, then "we ought . . . to find woman-hating in abundance in those who most actively supported it. The problem is that we do not." According to Clark, "early modern demonologists showed little interest either in exploring the gender basis of witchcraft or in developing it to denigrate women." They expressed negative attitudes toward women, but these were not "eccentric" or unusual for the time and place. This is not to say that they were not misogynists -- but most witchcraft theorists were not much concerned with the subject of women as witches. Drawing on a cultural heritage of ideas about women, including Aristotle's views about women as imperfect men, and the clerical misogyny of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the authors of demonological treatises took women's "greater propensity to demonism" for granted, and "felt no need to elaborate on it or indulge in additional woman-hating to back it up." As Clark puts it, the

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[35] Gerhild Scholz Williams, "Magic and Gender: The Struggle for Control in the Witchcraft Tracts of Kramer, Weyer, and Bodin", *Defining Dominion: The Discourses of Magic and Witchcraft in Early Modern France and Germany* (Ann Arbor: Michigan UP, 1995), 65-88: 65.

[36] Sigrid Brauner, *Fearless Wives and Frightened Shrews: the Construction of the Witch in Early Modern Germany* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts, 1995), 29.

femininity of the witch was "more of a presupposition than a problem" for witchcraft theorists, who were in this respect "entirely representative of their age and culture".[37]

Clark suggests that the association of witchcraft with women operated at a fundamental conceptual level that went deeper than the social or material surface of early modern culture. He argues that a conceptual affinity between witchcraft and women made it "literally unthinkable . . . that witches should be male." This affinity derived from the binary structure of early modern European thinking, which polarized everything into a dual symbolic classification system. Within this system, the male/female polarity was a primary, and hierarchically weighted, form of symbolic differentiation. In a nutshell, men were "symbolically associated with a range of other positive items and categories, and women with their negative counterparts." Rationality, for instance, a 'positive' trait associated with men, had its 'negative' counterpart, irrationality -- which was associated with women. These polarized associations were not necessarily antagonistic; they were often complementary. Nevertheless, women were seen as fundamentally negative opposites to men in all their physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual attributes.[38]

Witches, and witchcraft, were thought of as wholly negative, as inversions of everything good. According to Clark, their negative, inversionary 'position' within the binary cognitive framework of early modern Europe placed them, by definition, on the female side of the male/female polarity. As he puts it,

> At a demonological level . . . witches were female because the representational system governing them required for its coherence a general correlation between such primary opposites as good/evil, order/disorder, soul/body, and male/female; they were females who, by behaviour inspired by the master of inversion, the devil, inverted the polarized attributes accorded to the genders in later medieval and early modern learned culture; and of these

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[37] Stuart Clark, *Thinking With Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997), 112-115.

[38] Ibid., 119-123.

subversives, they were thought to be the most extreme and the most dangerous.[39]

Clark's structuralist thesis works well as an explanation of why witchcraft was generally linked with *women*; however, it does not explain why demonological treatises, like witchcraft accusations, include male witches. If the conceptual correlation between witches and women was as powerful and restricted as Clark suggests, then it is very difficult to make sense of the fact that early modern authors seemed to have no trouble imagining, discussing, and fearing male witches. Why, if the link was so clear and logical, were there any male witches at all?[40] Clark's assertion that the binary structure made it unthinkable that witches should be male simply does not correspond with the fact that the authors of demonological treatises referred frequently to male witches.

Why are historians so reluctant to take male witches seriously in their analyses of gender and witchcraft? In the case of feminist scholars, the answer is relatively simple: they do not consider the persecution of men to be as important as the oppression of women, and the male witch does not carry the same symbolic power for them as the female witch does. Furthermore, paying too much attention to male witches might diminish the role and significance of women in early modern witchcraft historiography. For non-feminists, the male witch may represent an unwelcome link between the modern academic and the irrational. Excluding the male witch from witchcraft historiography betrays a need to distance the modern (male) academic from a witch-figure that has been constructed over time as symbolic of superstition, femininity and powerlessness. The male witch threatens this image by

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[39] Ibid., 132-133.
[40] Malcolm Gaskill poses the same question in his article "Devil in the Shape of a Man", cited in the Introduction.

confusing the tidy links between femininity and witchcraft; he also threatens the self-image of the academic, who needs to represent the witch as the Other.[41]

We need to overcome this tendency to polarize, and to reconceptualize the nature of gendered oppositions in both modern and early modern culture. The male witch provides a means of exposing our assumptions and developing more nuanced understandings of the relationship between masculinity, femininity and witchcraft.

[41] I have drawn on Diane Purkiss's analysis of modern academics' relationship to witches, esp. 60-67.

CHAPTER 2

SECONDARY TARGETS? MALE WITCHES ON TRIAL

Before discussing the demonological treatment of male witches, it is useful to examine 'real life' examples from witchcraft trials. As the previous chapter has shown, the prevailing view in witchcraft studies is that male witches were rare exceptions to the rule and are less important and interesting, as historical subjects, than female witches. There is a kind of conventional historiographical wisdom about male witches, which may be summarized as follows: male witches were a) accused in small numbers; b) accused primarily because they were related to female witches; c) accused primarily in large witch hunts, in which panic broke down the stereotype of the female witch; d) not accused of diabolic witchcraft, especially the sexual aspects; e) accused in larger numbers in areas where witchcraft was treated primarily as heresy rather than as *maleficium*; f) accused of different types of witchcraft from that of female witches.

These generalizations are rarely questioned, despite the fact that they are derived, for the most part, from the early regional studies by Monter, Midelfort, and Macfarlane rather than from comparative analyses. Whereas almost everything else, it seems, about witchcraft and witch-hunting (especially anything to do with women) has been dissected under multiple microscopes, their hypotheses regarding male witches, put forward in the 1970s, have been absorbed as comfortable verities and allowed to stand virtually untested.

This chapter examines several cases in which men were accused of witchcraft. Examining a few cases is not the same thing as a *comprehensive* comparative analysis, and one must be wary of merely replacing old generalizations with new ones; however, the examples discussed in this chapter indicate clearly that the conventional

wisdom regarding male witches is faulty on empirical grounds and fails utterly to account for the complexity of witchcraft cases involving men.

The 'Big Picture'

As Robin Briggs has put it, "Counting heads is a useful way of shaking our ready assumptions, and of bringing a degree of rigour into the discussion."[1] One of the most dangerous assumptions, methodologically speaking, would be to impart too much significance to the statistical commonplace that women comprised seventy-five to eighty percent of those tried for witchcraft in early modern Europe. This figure represents an estimate that covers continental Europe, the British Isles, and the American colonies, over a period of roughly three hundred years: it masks the crucial fact that ratios of male to female witches were extremely variable. The following table (page 29) illustrates this variability between regions.

Table 1 is an original synthesis of others' research. Similar tables can be found in many studies. Ordinarily, they are compiled in order to marshal statistical support in evidence of a bias against women. Obviously, my purpose is somewhat different, and I have designed my table accordingly. I have omitted the usual column listing the percentage of female witches, in favour of one listing the percentage of male witches. The arrangement of data is also somewhat unusual. Instead of grouping statistics by region or chronology, I have sorted them according to an ascending numerical order of the percentages of male witches. I have done this for two reasons: first, to highlight the *range* of percentages; second, and more importantly, to avoid, as far as possible, giving the false impression that the data sets are directly comparable. As one can see from the second column, the chronological periods covered are too variable to allow meaningful comparison of statistical data.

[1] Robin Briggs, "Men against Women: The Gendering of Witchcraft", *Witches & Neighbors: The Social and Cultural Context of European Witchcraft*, (New York: Penguin, 1998 [1996]): 257-286, 263.

Table 1

Witchcraft Prosecutions by Gender (Accused, Indicted or Tried)

Place	Dates	Female	Male	% Male
Bishopric of Basel	1571-1670	181	9	5
Hungary	1520-1777	1482	160	10
Essex Co., England	1560-1602	158	24	13
SW Germany	pre-1627	580	88	13
(executions)	post-1627	470	150	24
New England	1620-1725	89	14	14
Scotland	1560-1709	2208	413	16
Norway	1551-1760	c. 690	c. 173	20
Venice	1550-1650	714	224	24
S. Sweden	1635-1754	77	25	25
Fribourg	1607-1683	103	59	36
Zeeland	1450-1729	19	11	37
Pays de Vaud	1539-1670	62	45	42
Finland	1520-1699	325	316	49
Burgundy	1580-1642	76	83	52
Estonia	1520-1729	77	116	60
Normandy	1564-1660	103	278	73
Iceland [2]	1625-1685	10	110	92

[2] Sources for Table 1: E. William Monter, *Witchcraft in France and Switzerland: The Borderlands During the Reformation* (Ithaca & London: Cornell UP, 1976), 119, table 7; Gabor Klaniczay, "Hungary: The Accusations and the Universe of Popular Magic", *Centres and Peripheries*, 219-255: 222, table 8.1; *Calendar of Assize Records: Essex Indictments: Elizabeth I*, ed. J.S. Cockburn (London: HMSO, 1978); Midelfort, table 14, 181; Carol F. Karlsen, *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman: Witchcraft in Colonial New England*, 48-49, tables 1 & 2; Christina Larner, *Enemies of God*, 91; Hans Eyvind Naess, "Norway: The Criminological Context", *Centres and Peripheries*, 367-382: 371, table 14.1, & 378; Ruth Martin, *Witchcraft and the Inquisition in Venice 1550-1650* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 226; Per Sörlin, *'Wicked Arts': Witchcraft and Magic Trials in Southern Sweden, 1635-1754* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 122, table 5.4; Monter, *Witchcraft in France and Switzerland*, 119, table 7; Marijke Gijswijt-Hofstra, "Witchcraft before Zeeland Magistrates and Church Councils, Sixteenth to Twentieth Centuries", *Witchcraft in the Netherlands from the fourteenth to the twentieth century*, ed. Marijke Gijswijt-Hofstra & Willem Frijhoff, trans. Rachel M.J. van der Wilden-Fall (Rotterdam: Rotterdam UP, 1991; 1987), 103-111: 110-111; Monter, *Witchcraft in France and Switzerland*, 119, table 7; Antero Heikkinen & Timo Kervinen, "Finland: The Male Domination", *Centres and Peripheries*, 319-338: 321; Monter, "Toads and Eucharists", 564 n. 1. Data from the Parlement of Burgundy; Maia Madar, "Estonia I: Werewolves and Poisoners", *Centres and Peripheries*, 257-272: 267, table 9.2; Monter, "Toads and Eucharists", 584, table 3; Kirsten Hastrup, "Iceland: Sorcerers and Paganism", *Centres and Peripheries*, 383-401: 386.

Although it is impossible to draw certain kinds of specific conclusions from the comparison of such diverse data sets, several features stand out. First, for a phenomenon described by one historian as the exemplification of "men's inhumanity to women", there is a suspiciously large number of cases against men: 2, 247 in this sample, which does not cover all of Europe.[3] Second, as mentioned above, the proportion of male to female witches could be extremely varied. The statistical range from five percent male witches in the Bishopric of Basel to ninety-two percent in Iceland, with other regions 'filling in' the gap between those two figures, makes the value of general estimates seem highly dubious. Finally, there were regions of Europe where men actually comprised the *majority* of those accused of witchcraft.

Perhaps one could discount Iceland and Estonia as peripheral to European culture and therefore not representative of the whole; but what about Burgundy and Normandy? In any case, it is clear that any attempt to establish representativeness would be problematic. Is the Bishopric of Basel really more representative of gendered patterns of witch-hunting than Iceland, because it tried so many more women than men? Or is Norway truly representative, on the basis of its 'perfect' number of male witches?

Scholars' difficulty in coming to grips with the fact of male witches is exemplified by G.R. Quaife, who, in his discussion of the gender bias of witch hunts, explains male witches away as the political opponents of prosecutors; cunningmen; or relatives of female suspects. He actually suggests that in the case of New England, the male witches who were related to a female witch "should be discounted" in an assessment of gender bias because they were merely "secondary targets as husbands or associates of a female witch". Discounting these men, he argues, raises the proportion of women in the New England trials to almost ninety percent, which, he says, corresponds neatly with the proportion in England. Quaife extrapolates from

[3] Joseph Klaits, *Servants of Satan: The Age of the Witch Hunts* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1985), 51.

this result that "the gender bias against women may be greater in other jurisdictions than the raw figures indicate."[4]

What Quaife does not address, and, in his rush to 'improve' the proportions of accused women, may not have even considered, is that a statistical criterion ought to be applied to an entire set of raw data, not to a pre-selected group only. If, as he suggests, 'secondary' targets of witchcraft accusations ought to be discounted, then the overall number of witches must drop sharply. It was unusual for more than a small number of individuals to be accused as primary targets; the ordinary pattern for witch hunts, including the New England trials, was for primary targets to accuse directly or implicate indirectly several secondary targets, including both male and female relatives. Discounting all secondary targets would alter the statistical picture significantly. Quaife, however, avoids this result by constructing a double standard, which presupposes, by implication, that early modern Europeans did not 'mean it' when they accused men of being witches but were serious when they accused women. That Quaife is able to suggest this without providing any qualitative evidence of early modern beliefs about male witches indicates the power of statistical figures within witchcraft historiography -- and the lack of methodological sophistication among some historians.

The point here is not to deny that, generally speaking, more women than men were accused of witchcraft. That is a central feature of early modern witch-hunting that cannot be ignored. Nevertheless, it is a feature that is far from uniform - and that lack of uniformity must be taken into account in analyses of gender and witchcraft in early modern Europe. The 'big picture' was not monochromous, even on the often-polarized field of gender; it needs to be shaded in, nuanced, to reflect its polychromous character. One means of accomplishing this goal is to make the men accused of witchcraft visible through specific case studies.

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[4] G.R. Quaife, "Gender, Sex and Misogyny: I", *Godly Zeal and Furious Rage: The Witch in Early Modern Europe* (New York: St. Martin's. 1987), 79-96: 81.

John Samond, Essex

The first case study comes from the County of Essex in England. The Calendar of Assize Records contains the well-known Essex indictments, records which Alan Macfarlane plumbed for his path-breaking 1970 study *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England.* They have since been analyzed again, this time from a feminist perspective, by Marianne Hester.

Macfarlane noted that Essex witches were usually women, and found that of the twenty-three men accused, "eleven were either married to an accused witch or appeared in a joint indictment with a woman."[5] This fact is reiterated by several authors in order to make the male witches 'invisible'. Marianne Hester, for instance, barely mentions male witches in her revisionist analysis of the Essex trials, except to remark that "in England more than 90 percent of those formally accused of witchcraft were women, and the few men who were also formally accused tended to be married to an accused witch or to appear jointly with a woman."[6] Joseph Klaits also refers to the Essex data, using it to support his assertion that "many of the accused men were implicated solely due to their connection with female suspects."[7]

These statements, including Macfarlane's, assume that the women involved in the eleven cases were accused *first* and were the cause of the accusations against the men. This is problematic because the indictments, which provide the bulk of the evidence for any interpretations of witchcraft in Essex, do not provide detailed information about individual cases. In some instances, it is possible to work out who was most likely to have been accused first. For example, in August 1579 Richard Presmary and his wife Joan were indicted and convicted at the Chelmsford Assizes on the charge of murder by witchcraft. Joan Presmary had been indicted for witchcraft in

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[5] Macfarlane, 160. My own count of male witches in the Essex records is 24, not 23.
[6] Marianne Hester, *Lewd Women and Wicked Witches: A Study of the Dynamics of Male Domination* (London & New York: Routledge, 1992), 108.
[7] Klaits, 52.

the previous year, at the Brentwood Assizes of July 1578.[8] Richard Presmary had no prior indictments. It seems reasonable that in this case Joan Presmary may have been accused first, because she would have had a reputation as a witch already. This tells us nothing about *why* Richard Presmary would have been accused this time, but it does appear to support the suggestion that men were secondary suspects.

On the other hand, in many cases there is no way of knowing, from the indictments, who was accused first. William and Margery Skelton, a couple from Little Wakering, were indicted and convicted on multiple counts of murder by witchcraft at the Chelmsford Assizes of March 1573. Neither Skelton appears to have had previous indictments. This case is especially interesting because the four murders are divided up evenly between the couple: William bewitched one girl, Margery bewitched another, and the couple committed the remaining murders together. There is nothing in the indictment record to indicate which of the Skeltons first fell under suspicion, or who the 'lead' witch was.[9] Similarly, Richard and Agnes Dunne were indicted for witchcraft together in July 1589; since both lacked any previous indictments, there is no way of knowing which Dunne was the primary suspect.[10]

It may very well have been that in all of these cases it was the women who first 'attracted' the charge of witchcraft, and that the men were suspected merely because of their association with them. On the other hand, the case of John Samond suggests that it was equally possible for men to be suspected independently; furthermore, this case suggests that women may at times have been the secondary suspects.

John Samond, also known as Smythe, Smith, or Salmon, first appears in the Essex indictment records in July 1560, three years before the Witchcraft Statute of

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[8] *Essex Indictments*, record nos. 1084 (Richard and Joan Presmary) and 1010 (Joan Presmary). The indictment for the joint case states that on 10 January 1579 the couple bewitched a bricklayer, Gabriel Smythe, so that he died on 17 July 1579. There is no obvious connection with Joan Presmary's individual case.

[9] Ibid., record no. 620. The deaths attributed to the Skeltons dated back to 1568.

[10] Ibid., record no. 2000. The Dunnes were charged with bewitching a gelding and two men. They were found not guilty. The record does not actually state that Agnes was Richard's wife.

1563 was passed.[11] On this occasion, he was charged with having bewitched to death John Graunte and Bridget Pecocke, who died on 29 August and 29 May respectively. He was eventually acquitted the following year, at the Chelmsford Assizes of March 1561.[12] Samond reappears several times in the Essex Assize records, usually on a charge of witchcraft, until his final indictment in 1587, at which point he was found guilty and sentenced to be hanged.[13]

Samond is an important figure because his frequent appearances in the indictment records allow us to compare his charges with those of several women indicted at the same assizes. His cases demonstrate that, contrary to some of the generalizations described at the beginning of this chapter, men could be accused of witchcraft independently of their female relatives and were not always accused of practicing magic that was different from that of women. Indeed, the striking thing about John Samond, besides his frequent appearances before the assizes, is that there is no clear and sharp distinction between him and the female witches indicted in Essex.

In 1560, at the time of his first indictment, Samond was a beer-brewer with a reputation. The indictment states that

> John Samond of Danbury . . . , beer-brewer, otherwise called John Smythe, is a common enchanter and witch as well of men as beasts . . . not having God before his eyes, but being moved and seduced by the instigation of the devil, by the devilish arts of enchantment and witchcraft, on 28 May, 1 Eliz. and diverse days and places as well before as afterwards, at Danbury aforesaid, of his malice aforethought, a certain John (*sic*) Graunte and Brigit Pecocke did bewitch and enchant, by reason of which the said Brigit . . . until 29 August next following did languish, on which day the said Brigit . . . died. And the said Antony Grant . . . from the 28 May in the year above said until the 28 May next following did languish, on which day the said Antony . . . died.[14]

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[11] On the Witchcraft Statute of 1563, see James Sharpe, "The Theological and Legal Bases for Witch-Hunting", *Instruments of Darkness: Witchcraft in England 1550-1750* (London: Penguin, 1997 [n.p.: Hamish Hamilton, 1996]), 80-102: 90.
[12] *Essex Indictments*, record nos. 95 and 109.
[13] Ibid., complete references to John Samond, alias Smythe, Salmon, Smith: record nos. 95, 108-110, 418, 423, 561, 568, 571, 1699-1700, 1704, 1729, 1790, 1792.
[14] C. L'Estrange Ewen, ed., *Witch Hunting and Witch Trials: The Indictments for Witchcraft from the Records of 1373 Assizes held for the Home Circuit A.D. 1559-1736* (New York: Dial, 1929), 77-78.

Unfortunately there is no explanation of why or how he bewitched his victims, but this is normal for indictments, which are very terse documents. What is interesting here is the identification of Samond as a "common enchanter and witch".[15] The language used to describe him is the same as that used to describe a woman, Margery Stanton, at the 1579 Chelmsford Lent sessions. In Latin, the indictment against Samond reads: "Joh*an*es Samond . . . com*mun*is incantator ac fascinator tam hominu*m* qua animaliu*m*".[16] The indictment against Stanton is virtually identical: "Margeria Stanton . . . existens co*mmun*is incantatrix et fascinatrix t*a*m hominu*m* qu*a*m bestia*rum* et alia*rum* reru*m*".[17] The two witches are differentiated only by the use of appropriate masculine and feminine endings for the words 'incantator/incantatrix' and 'fascinator/fascinatrix'. If English people believed that there was an essential distinction between male and female witches (as witches), this is not reflected in their legal language.[18]

Samond's next appearance at the assizes, in March 1570, was on a charge of grand larceny. He was accused of stealing sheep from two other men, found guilty, but allowed benefit of clergy.[19] At the same assizes, two women, both from the village of Little Baddow, were indicted for murder by witchcraft; one was found guilty, the other acquitted.[20]

In August 1572, John Samond was indicted again for witchcraft. This time, he is listed as a yeoman and beer-brewer, and his wife Joan is indicted with him. This case is important for what it suggests -- or, more accurately, what it does *not* suggest

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Transcription and translation of the full indictment against Samond, which is listed by Ewen as indictment no. 1.

[15] *Essex Indictments*, no. 95. Samond was indicted originally in Queen's Bench, but his case was transferred to assizes 30 Jan. 1561. He was tried by jury in March 1561 and found not guilty. Nos. 108-110.

[16] Ewen, 77.

[17] Ibid., 81. Indictment no. 122 (1063 in *Essex Indictments*).

[18] In *Essex Indictments*, Cockburn translates "communis incantator ac fascinator" as "common wizard". See the Introduction for comments on the use of 'wizard'.

[19] *Essex Indictments*, no. 423.

[20] Ibid., no. 428 (Alice Swallow) and 429 (Alice Bainbricke).

-- regarding the relationship between male witches and their wives.

We have seen that modern scholars tend to assume a causal relationship in which the man is accused because of his association with a female witch. Anne Barstow, for instance, argues that most male witches "were related to women already convicted of sorcery . . . and thus were not perceived as *originators* of witchcraft [original italics]."[21] Although there is not enough information given in the indictments to say with any certainty what the background to this case was, it seems unlikely that suspicion of Joan Samond would have led to suspicion against her husband, instead of the other way around. John Samond had a reputation for witchcraft that had landed him in court before, whereas this was his wife's first indictment (as far as one can tell). Furthermore, the charges themselves suggest that suspicion may have fallen on John first. The first charge against John Samond is for bewitching to death two cows belonging to William Treasure. This is the most recent of the three bewitchings listed in the indictment and, significantly, Treasure had given evidence against Samond in the 1570 sheep-stealing case. It is reasonable that Treasure may have suspected an act of revenge and accused John Samond, and that the other charges against John and his wife (maiming one man and laming another) were brought forward subsequently.[22]

Two other witchcraft cases at this session show that the kind of charges made against John Samond were not gender-specific. Agnes Francys was found guilty of bewitching a horse and three people, and Agnes Steademan was found guilty of bewitching a woman and four cows so that they became "violently ill".[23] In 1587 Samond was indicted for murdering a woman by witchcraft. Three women, indicted at the same assizes, were charged with killing livestock and a person by witchcraft.[24]

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[21] Barstow, 24.

[22] *Essex Indictments*, no. 571 (Ewen no. 56). Cockburn's version of the indictment is a synthesis of several separate indictments. Ewen's transcription of the charge of harming Edward Robynson is very interesting: the indictment is in Latin, but uses the English words "witchcraftes inchantementes charmes & sorceries". Ewen 79-80.

[23] Ibid., no. 580 (Francys) and 582 (Steademan).

[24] Ibid., no. 1704 (Samond), 1730 (Joan and Frances Preston), and 1731 (Rose Clarens).

There is nothing in these indictments to suggest, as Merry Wiesner does, that there was a divide between men's and women's witchcraft.[25]

The main difference between Samond and the women accused of witchcraft at the same assizes is that the women (except for his own wife) were generally found guilty, while he was acquitted. It is tempting to conclude that Samond was acquitted because he was a man; however, it is important to remember that conviction rates for witchcraft in England were relatively low for both women and men. On the Home Circuit, less than half of the witchcraft indictments resulted in convictions, and only twenty-two percent of those indicted were executed.[26] In English witchcraft trials, a guilty verdict was by no means a foregone conclusion, and there are many cases in the Essex records of women going free.

In any case, Samond's luck ran out later in 1587, at an assize session that demonstrates how difficult it is to draw solid conclusions about the role of gender in witchcraft prosecutions. Samond was indicted at the Chelmsford Assizes in July, on the charges of bewitching Henry Hove "so that he languished until 5 Apr. and then died" and of killing a cow by witchcraft. Samond was tried before a grand jury, found guilty, and sentenced to be hanged. At the same session, two women were also indicted for witchcraft: they were acquitted.[27]

Despite Samond's many indictments, we do not know very much about him. There is simply not enough information available to us to enable us to say with any

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[25] Merry Wiesner, "Witchcraft", *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995 [1993]), 218-238: 234. Wiesner states that men were accused "of harming things in the male domain such as horses or crops rather than killing infants or spoiling bread". She is referring specifically to mass panics, but the implication is that this is a general tendency. Lyndal Roper has found that in sixteenth-century Augsburg there was "a gendered specialization in the practice of sorcery itself", which "emerges most vividly in the different ways male and female sorcerers made use of parts of the body in sorcery." Men used written spells and "more exotic bodily relics derived from criminals", while women used more spoken spells and "the natural magical properties of the body." This does not necessarily mean that there was specialization in terms of the *kinds* of spells cast, in Wiesner's sense; nonetheless, Roper's suggestion that the *forms and practices* of magic were subject to gendered specialization is worthy of further investigation. "Exorcism and the theology of the body",*Oedipus & the Devil: Witchcraft, Sexuality and Religion in Early Modern Europe* (London & New York: Routledge, 1994), 171-198: 188-190.

[26] Sharpe, 111.

[27] *Essex Indictments*, nos. 1792 (Samond), 1795 (Joan Gibson), and 1793 (Alice Bust).

certainty why he was finally convicted in 1587. If all of the accused witches at that assize session had been convicted, we could surmise that they faced a 'hanging' jury that simply found everyone guilty, but the acquittal of the two women prevents us from reaching that conclusion. Perhaps, after twenty-seven years, Samond had exhausted the court's and community's patience. We cannot know, and in that sense John Samond does not help us establish explanatory models; but then, that is why he is so valuable. Samond is almost as much of a nuisance to modern scholars looking for patterns as he was to his community of Danbury. He muddles the patterns, and in doing so forces us to re-examine our assumptions about both male and female witches.

Chonrad Stoeckhlin, Oberstdorf

From 1587 to 1592, a wave of witch trials rolled across the prince-bishopric of Augsburg. In one district, Oberdorf, the trials claimed sixty-eight lives: "the single largest persecution to be found anywhere between the Danube and the Alps."[28] This wave began in the judicial district of Rettenberg in 1586, when Chonrad Stoeckhlin, a herdsman in the alpine village of Oberstdorf, accused Anna Enzensbergerin of being a witch. Stoeckhlin's accusation initiated a series of trials that resulted in the executions of approximately twenty-five people, including Stoeckhlin himself. Although both men and women were accused during the course of the trials, all of those executed in the district of Rettenberg, except for Stoeckhlin, were women.[29]

This case appears, on the surface, to reflect a simple anti-female dynamic. Several women were burned at the stake on the word of a man, and those men who were also accused managed to escape the fire. Wolfgang Behringer, whose microhistory of Chonrad Stoeckhlin provides the basis for this discussion, suggests,

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[28] Wolfgang Behringer, *Shaman of Oberstdorf: Chonrad Stoeckhlin and the Phantoms of the Night*, trans. H.C. Erik Midelfort (Charlottesville: Virginia UP, 1998 [orig. *Chonrad Stoeckhlin und die Nachtschar: eine Geschichte aus der frühen Neuzeit*, München, 1994]), 116.

[29] Ibid., 114. For a summary of the events which places them within a wider German context, see Wolfgang Behringer, *Witchcraft Persecutions in Bavaria: Popular magic, religious zealotry and reason of state in early modern Europe*, trans. J.C. Grayson & David Lederer (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997 [orig. 1987]), 115-211, esp. 124-5, 177-180.

plausibly, that "the court was readier to accept accusations directed against women" and that "men showed themselves readier to flee" when they were accused.[30] The fact that one man was executed may not seem significant when viewed against the number of women who died.

The case of Chonrad Stoeckhlin *is* significant, however, precisely because the trials at Rettenberg were so biased against women. In a context which seems almost uniformly misogynistic, Stoeckhlin, like John Samond, confuses the pattern and forces us to ask more questions about the relationship of gender to witch trials and witch beliefs. Also like Samond, Stoeckhlin fails on several counts to fit the model of the male witch constructed by modern scholars. He was accused independently of a close female relative (there was a connection with a female relative, but not in a way which conforms to the model); he was accused at the very beginning of a witch panic, not in its later stages; and he was accused of the most stereotypical elements of witchcraft: the pact with the Devil, night flight to the Sabbath, and sexual intercourse with the Devil.

How did Stoeckhlin become a witch? His complex path to the stake has been reconstructed by Wolfgang Behringer from the court records of his trial. Born in 1549, Chonrad Stoeckhlin was the horse wrangler of Oberstdorf, a position of responsibility and considerable status. According to Behringer,

> The post of horse wrangler was the most eminent in the hierarchy of herdsmen, well above the more numerous herdsmen for oxen, cows, goats, sheep, and geese. . . . horses were regarded as prestige animals, whose care demanded the greatest attention and the highest qualifications.[31]

Stoeckhlin was married, and he and his wife had seven children, of whom only two survived infancy. He inherited his position as horse wrangler when his father went blind in 1567. His mother died in 1571, a year of famine. Stoeckhlin and his family

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[30] Ibid.
[31] Ibid., 4.

were not wealthy, but they seem to have been comfortable: they had a house and were able to keep a cow in the wintertime.[32]

In February 1578, Stoeckhlin and his friend Jacob Walch, an oxherd, spent an evening drinking wine and talking about death and the afterlife. They made a pact with each other that "whichever of the two should die first should come to the other one . . . and [should] show him what it is like in that world."[33] Eight days later, Walch died suddenly. After another eight days, while Stoeckhlin was out in the woods, Walch's spirit appeared to him and told him to repent his sins.[34] Stoeckhlin and his family took this instruction seriously, and after a year of penance Stoeckhlin was rewarded by a visit from what would turn out to be his personal angel.[35]

This angel, which Stoeckhlin described to his interrogators as "a person dressed in white with a red cross on his (or her) forehead", transported him to "a strange and distant place" where he witnessed "pain and joy". The angel became Stoeckhlin's "soul-guide"; it appeared several times a year to take him on soul-journeys as part of a group Stoeckhlin called the phantoms of the night (*die Nachtschar*).[36]

In addition to his responsibilities as a herdsman, Stoeckhlin "was well known as a healer not only in his own village but perhaps beyond his village as well."[37] It was not unusual for herdsmen to function as healers of both animals and humans: "Herdsmen served . . . as veterinarians; like blacksmiths, midwives, and executioners, their help was much in demand for human sicknesses too", including illnesses caused by magic.[38] Stoeckhlin's contact with the supernatural realm of the *Nachtschar* increased his perceived powers and led his fellow villagers to connect his healing

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[32] Ibid., 6.
[33] Ibid., 9-11.
[34] Ibid., 12-14.
[35] Ibid., 17.
[36] Ibid., 18-23. See Behringer for a full discussion of *die Nachtschar* and parallels with similar folklore, e.g. the *benandanti* described by Carlo Ginzburg.
[37] Ibid., 83.
[38] Ibid., 7.

abilities to special powers of identifying those who had caused magical illnesses. He became a witch-finder: he named the witches responsible for injuries and sicknesses, and knew how to force them, ritually, to undo their evil magic.[39]

In the spring of 1586, someone in Oberstdorf consulted Stoeckhlin about a string of injuries. The horse wrangler determined that a sixty-year-old woman, Anna Enzensbergerin, was the culprit, and urged her to reverse her spell. Instead of doing so, however, Enzensbergerin fled the village for a time. When she returned, the authorities of Oberstdorf arrested her on "the bare testimony" of Stoeckhlin, who had learned she was a witch from the leader of the night phantoms. This accusation would prove to be Stoeckhlin's undoing. The district authorities sent an inquiry regarding the case to the Dillingen Ruling Council. The Council ruled that Enzensbergerin should be held in custody, Chonrad Stoeckhlin should be questioned, and an executioner should be found "who would know 'how to torture these kinds of people.'" Around 27 July, Stoeckhlin was arrested and taken to Fluhenstein Castle, near Sonthofen. His first hearing took place on 29 July, when he was questioned by the district judge, district governor, and county clerk.[40]

Why arrest Stoeckhlin, a respectable and respected member of the community, whose powers were for healing, not harming, people? Stoeckhlin was not, by our standards, and certainly not by his own, a witch; however, the officials of the bishopric of Augsburg seem to have found it all too easy to suspect him of being one. They knew that he had accused Enzensbergerin, and they knew about his nocturnal flights. At the first hearing, they questioned Stoeckhlin about his journeys, and he explained that there were three kinds of journey: that of the *Nachtschar*; the "righteous journey" in which "the dead are led to their places"; and the witches' flight. Stoeckhlin said that he never flew with the witches and knew nothing about their flight, but his story meshed too well with his learned interrogators' beliefs about

[39] Ibid., 84.
[40] Ibid., 90-92.

witches to allay their suspicions. Aerial flight, at night, with a group of mysterious men and women, led by an 'angel'... as far as the authorities were concerned, what Stoeckhlin described to them was the witches' flight to the sabbath, led by Stoeckhlin's "sex-devil".[41] Their image of Stoeckhlin was not improved when Anna Enzensbergerin and Barbara Luzin, his deceased mother's stepsister, not only confessed to being witches but also claimed that they had learned all they knew from Stoeckhlin's mother, Ursula Schedlerin. Ironically, Stoeckhlin had accused both women himself.[42]

On the basis of Stoeckhlin's initial hearing and the confessions of Enzensbergerin and Luzin, the district officials compiled a lengthy questionnaire of 146 items. The questions reveal the primary elements of their belief that Stoeckhlin was a witch: no one could recognize witches unless he already belonged to their society; the *Nachtschar* were really witches flying to the sabbath; Stoeckhlin's angel was a black sex-devil; Stoeckhlin's mother was a witch; and several of Stoeckhlin's children had died early, possibly sacrificed to the devil or used to make witches' salves.[43] They interrogated Stoeckhlin again in November and December, gradually forcing his original narrative to conform with theirs. Stoeckhlin was tortured brutally, and confessed in December to all of the charges in the questionnaire. His ordeal came to an end on 23 January 1587, when he was burned at the stake. He spent over six months in prison, was subjected to tortures which nearly killed him, and was transformed by the official process from a healer and witch-finder into a witch.[44]

There is nothing about Stoeckhlin's case to set him apart from the thousands of other witches who were accused, tried, and condemned in early modern Europe. By the time his interrogators were finished, Stoeckhlin had become, from a learned point of view, the most stereotypical witch imaginable. He flew on a goat; he attended the sabbath, where he and the other witches "danced, feasted, and copulated"; he had a

[41] Ibid., 92-95.
[42] Ibid., 99-100.
[43] Ibid., 95.

demon lover; he renounced God and made a pact with the Devil;[45] he murdered his own children; he practiced harmful magic; he had a devil's mark; and he could transform himself into an animal.[46] The only thing 'wrong' with the picture is that Stoeckhlin was not an old, poor, marginal woman, but a fairly young man with a family and a decent living.

If we look at Chonrad Stoeckhlin from a perspective coloured by conventional assumptions about male witches, we might be tempted to dismiss him as an aberration who adds nothing to our understanding of witchcraft and gender. A male witch who was accused at the beginning of a witch-hunt, independently of a female relative,[47] and charged with every diabolic element in the early modern learned concept of witchcraft, looks very strange -- if one is committed to the idea that 'real' witches are necessarily female. This perspective would assume, in effect, that the men who suspected and condemned Chonrad Stoeckhlin made a category error; that they were not conforming to their own belief system. Such a conclusion would be unacceptable. There is no suggestion, and no reason to believe, that Stoeckhlin's judges experienced any sense of cognitive dissonance when confronted by a male witch. On the contrary, they appear to have been committed fully to his 'witchness' from the moment he was first brought to their attention. If those men, supposedly more apt to associate women with witchcraft than we are, could assimilate a male witch within their framework, then we must commit ourselves to doing the same.

Samond and Stoeckhlin were unusual within their specific contexts because they were *male* witches, but as *witches*, they were not unusual. Nor were they unique:

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[44] Ibid., 102-105.
[45] Ibid., 103-104.
[46] Ibid., 100.
[47] Behringer places great emphasis on the charge that Stoeckhlin's mother was a witch, stating at one point that "Stoeckhlin's participation in the society of witches was obviously deduced from the notion that being a witch was inheritable" (105). Elsewhere, he suggests that "being related to a witch was enough to prompt the suspicion that one was a witch" (118). This emphasis seems greatly overstated. According to the chronology of the case, Stoeckhlin was already under suspicion, on totally independent grounds, before anyone mentioned that his mother had been a witch. Furthermore, if the inheritability of witchness was so essential, why were Stoeckhlin's wife and children never called for questioning (118)?

the same can be said of many other male witches, who also resemble closely the stereotypical (female) witch. For example, witches were feared for their power to cause impotence. In 1658, a man named Besnard appeared before the seigneurial court of Montreal on the charge of having cast a spell on a newlywed couple that prevented the consummation of their marriage. He was fined and banished.[48]

During the famous Salem trials of 1692, six men were hanged as witches. Of these, four were related to female witches, and thus support the generalization that men were secondary targets of accusations. However, two of the men were not related to accused women. John Willard was a newcomer to Salem Village, and George Burroughs was the former minister of the community.[49] Burroughs was represented by several witnesses as an extremely powerful wizard, and stands out from the other witches.[50] Willard, on the other hand, was described as a wholly typical witch who afflicted several individuals, causing illness and death. He even "suckle[d] the apparition of two black pigs on his breast", just as so many female witches were supposed to have suckled their familiars.[51]

In a more spectacular case, the Jesuit priest Urbain Grandier was executed in 1634 at Loudun, having been found guilty of making a pact with the Devil, attending the witches' sabbath, owning books of magic, and causing the demonic possessions of several Ursuline nuns. Evidence against Grandier included the presence of several Devil's marks on his body. These insensitive spots were found "'in the most secret parts of his body, in the two buttocks close to his anus, and in the two testicles.'" It was very common for witches to be searched for Devil's marks, and for them to be

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[48] Jonathan Pearl, "Witchcraft in New France in the Seventeenth Century: The Social Aspect", *Historical Reflections/Réflexions Historiques* 4, no. 1 [1977]: 191-205, 193.
[49] Karlsen, 49.
[50] "George Burroughs", *Salem-Village Witchcraft: A Documentary Record of Local Conflict in colonial New England,* eds. Paul Boyer & Stephen Nissenbaum (Boston: Northeastern University, 1993 [1972]), 67-90. Burroughs was said, for instance, to possess extraordinary strength.
[51] "Testimony of Susanna Sheldon", *Salem-Village Witchcraft*, 55-57: 56. Sheldon also testified that Elizabeth Colson "suckled, as it appeared, a yellow bird."

found on or near the sexual organs, especially when the witch was a woman.[52] A particularly interesting feature of Grandier's case is that many of his associates, both male and female, were accused of being witches after his arrest.[53]

Finally, William Godfrey, a yeoman farmer in New Romney, Kent, was charged with witchcraft in 1617. His neighbours accused him of various *maleficia*, including laming lambs, killing horses, and killing a child. Godfrey's wife and two children, a son and a daughter, were not accused of witchcraft, and the case against him was thrown out.[54] That Godfrey's neighbours were serious about their accusations may be inferred from an assault on him. William Clarke attacked Godfrey with a cudgel "in a vain attempt to extract a confession" after Godfrey joked about bewitching Clarke's mare.[55]

Malcolm Gaskill has pointed out that Godfrey, a middling householder, prosperous farmer and landlord, and active participant in civic life, "stands outside the stereotype" of the "elderly, marginal widow dependent on charity, or the equally socially-ambivalent younger single woman who fails to meet the conventional expectations of her neighbours, often her female peers." On the other hand, Gaskill argues, "Godfrey's story can also be read as a classic tale of fear and *maleficium*." The case raises the issue of "the way historians classify aspects of the past": as Gaskill says, "we can either explain away the social identity of the accused as an exception to a rule or, more fruitfully, we can redefine the rule to accommodate that identity within a broader interpretative scheme."[56]

Such an interpretative scheme needs to take into account the similarities between male and female witches. As the examples presented in this chapter

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[52] Robert Rapley, *A Case of Witchcraft: The Trial of Urbain Grandier* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's UP, 1998), 151. Anne Barstow has emphasized the sexual nature of searching for marks on *women's* bodies; it can hardly have been less sexual to search for marks in the private parts of men's bodies.
[53] Ibid., 159-162.
[54] Gaskill, 151-156.
[55] Ibid., 157.
[56] Ibid., 158-159.

demonstrate, the social identities of witches were variable, but, once labeled as such, they all fit within the framework of early modern beliefs about witches as devil-worshippers and practitioners of *maleficium*. Conventional modern generalizations about male witches have created a false dichotomy between the men and women accused of witchcraft and have imposed on the past a narrow conception of early modern attitudes toward gender and witchcraft. Gaskill's closing comments about William Godfrey and his accusers are appropriate: "Godfrey's case may well have been atypical, but to the people of New Romney in 1617 -- not least Godfrey himself -- it was as valid and real an experience of the European 'witch-craze' as any other prosecution in the early modern period."[57]

In order to be meaningful, our interpretative frameworks have to be just as capable of accommodating the atypical experiences as they are of accommodating the typical. In the case of early modern beliefs about witches, this means adopting a flexible approach to issues of gender that recognizes the commonalities between male and female witches and the validity of early modern beliefs and experiences.

[57] Ibid., 170.

CHAPTER 3

'LITERALLY UNTHINKABLE':

DEMONOLOGICAL DESCRIPTIONS OF MALE WITCHES

The previous chapter presented challenges to historiographical generalizations about the patterns of prosecution of male witches. The next two chapters follow a similar approach to conventional perspectives on the demonological treatment of witchcraft and gender. Through the examination of witchcraft theorists' descriptions of male witches, I aim to show that, just as with the 'real life' cases, modern scholars' views do not take into account sufficiently the complexity of early modern beliefs.

The sources for this discussion are demonological treatises published in the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The body of witchcraft literature is much too large to permit a complete survey; there is, however, a smaller group of works that could be considered canonical, at least from a modern perspective. This 'canon' includes Jean Bodin's *De la démonomanie des sorciers*, Johann Nider's *Formicarius*, and the *Malleus maleficarum*, which occupies pride of place within the literature as possibly the most (in)famous treatise of them all: "virtually every academic work on witchcraft persecutions published since W.G. Soldan's ground-breaking *Hexenprozesse* of 1843 utilizes the *Malleus* in some fashion".[1] In this chapter, I present data compiled from ten of these canonical works, as well as a brief discussion of demonological illustrations.

Demonological literature has received relatively little scholarly attention, compared with the number of published studies that focus on non-literary, archival materials such as court records and pamphlets. Eric Wilson's comment on the

[1] Eric Wilson, *The Text and Content of the* Malleus Maleficarum *(1487)*. Unpublished dissertation, Cambridge 1991, 1. I thank Chris Mackay for bringing this material to my attention.

ubiquity of the *Malleus maleficarum*, quoted above, is only slightly misleading: although witchcraft scholars refer to the *Malleus* and its fellow texts frequently, they rarely engage in sustained analyses of these works. As Wilson says, "no scholar has ever essayed a full-length study of the [*Malleus*]".[2] One reason for this neglect is the recent social-historical emphasis on non-élite subjects; another is the generally poor reputation that demonological texts have as documents of barbarity, superstition, and irrationality. H.R. Trevor-Roper said of them that

> To read these encyclopedias of witchcraft is a horrible experience. Each seems to outdo the last in cruelty and absurdity. Together they insist that every grotesque detail of demonology is true, that scepticism must be stifled, that sceptics and lawyers who defend witches are themselves witches, that all witches, 'good' or 'bad', must be burnt, that no excuse, no extenuation is allowable . . . When we read these monstrous treatises, we find it difficult to see their authors as human beings.[3]

The historiographical tide is shifting, and several recent monograph studies of demonological works and the contexts in which they were produced are now available.[4] There are also essay collections and several individual articles dealing with this body of material.[5] In general, however, demonological literature has not occupied much scholarly attention, and within the historiographical genre of demonological studies, research has emphasized the links between demonology and the rise and decline of witch-hunting.

This approach often takes the form of summarizing and criticizing the arguments of individual authors. For example, Christopher Baxter's essay on Johann

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[2] Ibid. But Eliane Camerlynck cites a dissertation titled *Le Malleus Maleficarum: sa structure et ses lois de composition*, Jean Goulet, Montréal, 1975.
[3] Trevor-Roper, 79.
[4] E.g. Sophie Houdard, *Les Sciences du diable: Quatre Discours sur la sorcellerie, Xve - XVIIe siecle* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1992); Clark, *Thinking With Demons*; Ian Bostridge, *Witchcraft and Its Transformations, c. 1650 - c. 1750* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997); Jonathan Pearl, *The Crime of Crimes: Demonology and Politics in France 1520-1620* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier UP, 1999).
[5] E.g. Sydney Anglo, ed., *The Damned Art: Essays in the Literature of Witchcraft* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977); Peter Segl, ed., *Der Hexenhammer: Entstehung und Umfeld des* Malleus maleficarum *von 1487* (Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 1988); Eliane Camerlynck, "Féminínité et sorcellerie chez les théoriciens de la démonologie à la fin du Moyen Age: Étude du *Malleus maleficarum*", *Renaissance and Reformation* 19 [1983]: 13-25.

Weyer's *De praestigiis daemonum* consists mainly of an evaluation of Weyer's effectiveness in opposing witch-hunting. Baxter argues (against Trevor-Roper) that Weyer's work is actually "a protest against policies of toleration"; if only, Baxter implies, Weyer had been more rational, he could have achieved the proper goal of arguing for tolerance.[6] Baxter remarks in his conclusion that "Weyer's writings badly misfired as a defence of witches", in part because "his simplistic theological commitment prevent[ed] him from pushing through to a logical and systematic re-interpretation of traditional attitudes an unprecedentedly diverse, though individually unoriginal, range of arguments for tolerance."[7]

Although there is genuine debate over the role of demonology in the development and decline of witch-hunting,[8] interpretations of demonological conceptions of gender and witchcraft are remarkably uniform in their concentration on what witchcraft theorists had to say about women. There is some disagreement over how representative or extreme demonological misogyny was (see Chapter 1's discussion of Clark's views), but the focus on women has not been challenged. This is understandable, to a point. There is no denying that the major demonological treatises of the period, both those that advocated witch-hunting and those that opposed it, accepted that most witches were women. For example, in their explanation of why more women than men were witches, the much-quoted Institoris and Sprenger incorporated many citations of classical, biblical and medieval authorities. One of these, a citation of Valerius' letter to Rufinus, reads:

> Chimera*m* mulier*em* es*s*e nescis sed scire debes q*uod* monstrum illud triforme insigni venustetur facie leonis olentis maculetur ventre capre

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[6] Christopher Baxter, "Johann Weyer's *De Praestigiis Daemonum*: Unsystematic Psychopathology", *The Damned Art: Essays in the Literature of Witchcraft*, ed. Sydney Anglo (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977), 53-75: 53.

[7] Ibid., 71.

[8] This debate incorporates broader issues concerning the definition and division of élite and popular culture, 'top-down' dynamics, acculturation, persecution, and state-building. For an overview see again Briggs, "'Many reasons why'". See also Norman Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons: The Demonization of Christians in Medieval Christendom*, rev. ed. (London: Pimlico, 1993 [orig. ed. Chatto & Heinemann 1975]); Larner, *Enemies of God*; Carlo Ginzburg, "Deciphering the Sabbath", *Centres and Peripheries*, 121-138; Muchembled, "Satanic Myths and Cultural Reality".

> virulente cauda vippere armetur. vult dicere. q*uod* est aspectus eius pulcer. tactus fetidus. co*n*uersatio mortifera.[9]

When one reads such statements, it is not difficult to see why modern scholars, especially feminists, have been fascinated by demonological treatments of women. As Diane Purkiss has pointed out, the *Malleus* in particular has the "ability to arouse strong feelings" of indignation in the reader.[10]

The problem is not that scholars have paid attention to the early modern demonological discourse about women and witchcraft; it is that they have given their attention *only* to the discourse about women, as if early modern authors said nothing about men as perpetrators of witchcraft. This is not because scholars are unaware of the presence of male witches within demonological texts. Several historians, all of whom were writing from a feminist perspective, have noticed that early modern authors discussed male witches. For example, Anne Barstow mentions that Henri Boguet, chief judge of St. Cloud in Franche-Comté and author of the *Discours des sorciers*, said that male and female witches were equally addicted to the carnal pleasures offered by the Devil.[11] Carol Karlsen remarks on the language used by early modern authors: "While authors of theological descriptions of witchcraft sometimes employed female pronouns when speaking generally about witches, more commonly they used the 'generic' male."[12] Finally, Susanna Burghartz, while arguing that "a concentration on women as witches is certainly evident" in Nider's *Formicarius*, says

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[9] Heinrich Institoris & Jacob Sprenger, *Malleus maleficarum*, Speyer, 1487, facs., ed. André Schnyder (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1991), Part I Q. 6, p. 44. This edition will be cited hereafter as *Malleus maleficarum*. Most modern readers will be more familiar with Montague Summers' translation: "You do not know that woman is the Chimaera, but it is good that you should know it; for that monster was of three forms; its face was that of a radiant and noble lion, it had the filthy belly of a goat, and it was armed with the virulent tail of a viper. And he means that a woman is beautiful to look upon, contaminating to the touch, and deadly to keep." *The Malleus Maleficarum of Heinrich Kramer and James Sprenger* (New York: Dover, 1971 [London: John Rodker, 1928; rpt. 1948]), 46. Hereafter cited as Summers.

[10] Purkiss, 11.

[11] Barstow, 173.

[12] Carol F. Karlsen, *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman*, 3. Karlsen seems to be referring to New England authors, but she does not specify which ones or cite textual examples.

that "all the same, Nider's examples of witches include an astonishing number of men."[13]

The critical point here is that this is *all* that these authors have to say about the inclusion of male witches in early modern texts: they mention it once, then never bring it up again. In Barstow's case, the reference to Boguet's "even-handedness" is not even in the main body of the text; it is more or less buried in an appendix. Burghartz's astonishment at finding a number of male witches in the *Formicarius* is particularly telling. Burghartz knows from reading Richard Kieckhefer's study of medieval European witch trials that in the mid-fifteenth century, when the *Formicarius* was composed, a significant proportion (32%) of witches were male, and she knows that "it was always possible to prosecute men for witchcraft".[14] Why, then, the astonishment? Her reaction to the *Formicarius*, which parallels my own initial confusion when faced with the *Malleus maleficarum*, indicates a strong degree of conditioning by a historiography and ideology that is always already committed to a particular way of reading demonological texts. Modern readers appear to assume that there will be no surprises in the gendered discourse of these texts, and then seem unable to address them except in deceptively casual, throwaway remarks.

Even Stuart Clark, whom one might expect to engage with demonological male witches, does not. Indeed, he does not mention their textual existence at all, despite his careful reading of the early modern gendering of witchcraft. Like the other historians discussed above, he is well aware that many witches were men. He evinces no interest in this fact, however, preferring to focus on why witches "were *conceived* to be women [original italics]."[15] Clark suggests two points that bear on the subject of male witches: first, that there was a "lack of conformity between demonological

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[13] Susanna Burghartz, "The Equation of Women and Witches: A Case Study of Witchcraft Trials in Lucerne and Lausanne in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries", *The German Underworld: Deviants and Outcasts in German History*, ed. Richard J. Evans (London & New York: Routledge, 1988), 57-74: 60.
[14] Ibid., 59. Burghartz cites Richard Kieckhefer, *European Witch Trials* (London, 1976), 100-147.
[15] Clark, 133.

theory and the actual sexual breakdown in those witchcraft prosecutions where men made up a significant minority or even a substantial portion of those accused." Second, he states that "it was literally unthinkable", at a demonological level, "that witches should be male," because early modern theorists were committed to a hierarchically structured binary framework in which femaleness was associated with evil.[16] In effect, Clark argues not only that there was a conceptual affinity between women and witchcraft, but also that there was a conceptual *barrier* between men and witchcraft.

Clark's conclusions are similar to those of Eric Wilson, whose dissertation on the *Malleus maleficarum* was supervised at Cambridge University by Robert Scribner. Wilson devotes a chapter to the issue of women in the *Malleus*, but never once refers to the fact that the text's authors also wrote about men who were witches, or to their use of both *maleficus* and *malefica*. He actually says that "the text even employs the feminine form of the Latin word for witch . . . rather than the more commonly employed masculine."[17] Wilson also knows full well that many witches were male, and he states his agreement with Christina Larner that witch-hunting was sex-related rather than sex-specific;[18] nevertheless, he concludes that there was a "necessary relationship between women and witchcraft".[19]

Both Clark and Wilson suggest that early modern demonology was sex-specific and thus different from witchcraft prosecutions, which were merely sex-related. This position is actually more extreme than that of most feminist scholars, who at least hint that demonological conceptions of gender and witchcraft were not always tidy and coherent. It is not, perhaps, completely surprising that it is the feminists who have shown more sensitivity. Their primary purpose, generally speaking, is to explain the preponderance of women in witch trials; the contents of

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[16] Ibid., 129-130.
[17] Wilson, 7.
[18] Ibid., 11.
[19] Ibid., 264.

demonological treatises are mined for evidence of systematic misogyny, not treated as worthy objects of study in and of themselves.

In contrast, scholars such as Clark and Wilson are interested in recovering demonological texts from the historiographical neglect into which they had fallen. Clark and Wilson are not unsympathetic to feminist concerns, and treat the issue of women and witchcraft seriously; however, their underlying concern is with demonstrating the logic and coherence of early modern demonology. This leads Clark and Wilson to exclude male witches from their discussions because they are unable to incorporate them without subverting their intellectual-historical agenda of making the texts respectably coherent.[20]

I have emphasized the exclusion of male witches from analyses of witchcraft literature so strongly because it is simply not credible that scholars working with these texts (at least those working with original-language editions) do not know about them.[21] As Table 2 shows, it was not at all uncommon for early modern authors from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century to refer to witches in both masculine and feminine terms. Furthermore, certain treatises included illustrations of both male and female witches, and individual male witches are described in many tracts. It is only by deciding, *a priori*, that male witches are insignificant that one could treat early modern demonology as sex-specific.

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[20] In his discussion of ritual inversion, Clark acknowledges that "no language-game escapes a degree of incoherence", and that early modern beliefs about witchcraft contained "ambivalences and contradictions". However, he suggests that "these ambivalences and contradictions ought not to be over-dramatized or over-interpreted" (29-30). In the case of gender and witchcraft, ambivalences and contradictions have not been interpreted at all, or, in Clark's case, even mentioned.

[21] Researchers working with English-language editions might be forgiven for failing to notice the use of masculine terminology. As I discussed in the introduction, English does not have adequate parallel terms for male and female witches, which causes some translation difficulties. In addition, the only current English translation of the *Malleus maleficarum*, the most widely cited demonological treatise, is seriously flawed. Montague Summers not only believed in witches but also approved of the *Malleus*' misogynistic passages: "exaggerated as these may be, I am not altogether certain that they will not prove a wholesome and needful antidote in this feministic age", xxxix. More importantly, Summers rarely indicates in his translation where Institoris and Sprenger use a masculine term, and in fact distorts at least one passage by changing an original masculine term to a feminine: in Part I, Q. 14, "Dicuntur enim malefici (*Malleus maleficarum*, 72) " becomes "For they are called witches (*maleficae*) [Summers, 75]".

Textuality

When I 'discovered' that Heinrich Institoris and Jacob Sprenger referred to witches in both masculine and feminine terms, one of my first questions concerned the relative frequency of the masculine usage. Just how often did these and other authors employ masculine forms when discussing witches, and did they do so more regularly than they used feminine forms? Modern commentary on the language of demonology (in a philological sense) is sketchy, and I found nothing that answered my specific questions about the *Malleus* satisfactorily. For example, Sigrid Brauner offers a brief discussion of the use of *maleficus* and *malefica* in the *Malleus*, but her assertion that Institoris and Sprenger "use the male plural form *malefici* for sorcerers in general but reserve the female form *malefica* for the modern witch" is mistaken.[22]

My approach to this problem was fairly simple: I counted the number of times the authors used masculine and feminine terms for witches. My aim in tabulating this information about linguistic gendering is to challenge Clark's notion that early modern witchcraft theorists were incapable of imagining that witches could be male, on the grounds that language choices are not accidental and that early modern authors must have *meant* to use both masculine and feminine terms. If they were capable of representing witches as male, it follows that they were also capable of conceptualizing male witches -- otherwise, their language would make no sense.

For this purpose, an extensive survey of the very large corpus of witchcraft literature is unnecessary. A small sample of major texts is sufficient to show that witchcraft theorists had no difficulty representing witches as male. The texts were selected partly on the basis of availability in original-language editions, but also for their status as well-known treatises with which most historians would have some

[22] Brauner, 123. In Part I, Q. 1, Institoris and Sprenger refer to "moderni malefici": "Tertium etiam sane intelligere expedit cum moderni malefici sepius ope demonum transformantur in lupos et alias bestias." *Malleus maleficarum*, 11. "Third, it is advantageous to have a sound understanding, since modern witches are quite often transformed by the power of demons into wolves and other beasts."

familiarity. There is some uniformity, in that nine of the texts are 'pro' witch-hunting, the exception being Friedrich Spee's *Cautio Criminalis*.

Early modern terminology for magic and magic-users varied considerably, even within élite discourse. The terms *maleficus* and *malefica* were quite common, but so were the terms *saga*, *sortilegus*, and *veneficus*, to list only a few Latin words. The sample texts employ several different terms, which are to a large degree synonymous. In my tabulations, I was most interested in parallel forms, such as *maleficus/malefica* and *sorcier/sorcière*, but I have also enumerated other terms so as to give a reasonable indication of the relative frequency of references to male and female witches. In general, words that appear only once or twice, or have a specialist meaning, such as *necromanticus* or *pythonissa*, have not been included in the tabulation.

The *Formicarius*, *Malleus maleficarum*, *De laniis*, and *Flagellum haereticorum* use *maleficus* and *malefica* almost exclusively. Daneau employs a variety of terms: *veneficus* (24), *sortilegus* (16), *maleficus* (4), and *sortiarius* (140) for male witches; *venefica* (1), *saga* (1), and *satanae* (86) for female witches. Binsfeld prefers *maleficus* and *saga* (30), but also uses *malefica* (17). Rémy uses *sortilegus* (24) and *saga* (34) most often for male and female witches respectively, but also *maleficus* (6) and *malefica* (5), and refers to a *sortilega* once. Bodin and De Lancre employ *sorcier* and *sorcière*. In *Cautio Criminalis*, Spee uses *maleficus* for male witches and *saga* for female witches. The figures given represent the sum totals of both plural and singular forms.

Where possible, I have used first editions of these treatises, as indicated in the footnotes to the table; however, first editions have not always been available, which raises the issue of textual stability. As Adrian Johns has pointed out recently, *contra* Elizabeth Eisenstein, early modern printed texts were not inherently stable, and the fixity of print in the period has been much exaggerated.[23] There is no reason to assume

[23] Adrian Johns, "Introduction: The Book of Nature and the Nature of the Book", *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making* (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1998), 1-57.

that demonological treatises were any less susceptible to piracy and printers' errors (or emendations) than, say, Galileo's *Sidereus Nuncius*, whose later editions featured corrupted images.[24]

Indeed, comparisons of two editions of the *Formicarius*[25] and twenty-one copies (sixteen different editions) of the *Malleus maleficarum*[26] reveal that demonological treatises were not completely stable. For example, the first lines of both treatises contain textual variants. In the 1480 edition of the *Formicarius*, book 5 begins: "Ultimo loco p*er* libellum quintum sub formicaru*m* proprietatib*us* de maleficis & eorum decepc*i*onibus concludere restat".[27] The same line of the 1669 edition reads: "Nunc per libellum quintum sub formicarum proprietatibus de maleficis & eoru*m* deceptionibus agere placet."[28] The first line of the 1487 *Malleus maleficarum* reads: "Utrum asserere maleficos esse sit a deo catholicum q*uod* eius oppositu*m* pertinaci*ter* defendere o*mn*ino sit hereticum."[29] In several later editions, the word *defendere* is replaced by either *asserere* or *offendere*.[30]

This textual variation suggests a need for caution when assessing the reception of demonological works. Different editions were not necessarily alike; indeed, they were highly unlikely to be identical. Certain variations call into question broad assertions about the reception of the *Malleus* and other texts: for instance, despite some claims to the contrary, not every edition of the *Malleus* included a copy of the

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[24] Ibid., 22-23.
[25] Köln, 1480 and Lyons, 1669. See below.
[26] Speyer, 1487 (Schnyder facs., Houghton Library Inc. 2367.5, British Library IB 8581); Lyons, 1669 (Bruce Peel Special Collections, BL 719.I.18); Cologne 1494 (Houghton Inc. 1462); Nuremberg 1494 (Houghton); Frankfurt 1588 (Houghton); additional editions BL 1606/312, 719.b.2, 719.b.1, 718.c.48, 232A37, IA 8634, IB 8615, IA 7503, 719.b.5, 719.b.3, IA 7468, IB 1953, 1606/345.
[27] Johannes Nyder, *Formicarius*, Köln 1480, facs. ed. (Graz: Akademische Druck u. Verlagsanstelt, 1971), intr. Hans Biedermann. Book 5, ch. 1, p. 190. "In this final place, through the fifth book, it remains to conclude, under the properties of ants, concerning witches and their deceptions."
[28] Ioannis Nider, *Formicarius*, *Mallei maleficarum* vol. I (Lyon, 1669), 305-354: 305. The meaning of this sentence is essentially the same as that in the 1480 edition.
[29] *Malleus maleficarum*, 7. "Whether to claim that there are witches is a catholic proposition, because to assert the opposite view steadfastly is wholly heretical."
[30] E.g. Lyons, 1669 (British Library 719.i.18): "asserere"; Cologne, 1611 (British Library 719.b.1): "offendere".

papal bull *Summis desiderantes*.[31] On the other hand, the gendered terminology of the *Formicarius* and *Malleus* is remarkably stable. I have detected only one variant, which is found in the *Formicarius*. In book 5, chapter 3, the 1669 edition has *maleficarum* where the 1480 edition has *maleficorum*.[32] While my search for variants has been limited, I am reasonably confident that this particular feature of demonological treatises was not significantly affected by textual instability, and that the textual gendering of witchcraft was consistent during the early modern period.

Counting words may seem to be a strange way of uncovering textual meaning. We are more accustomed to what we might think of as qualitative approaches to language, in which we puzzle over the meanings and intentions of specific language choices; we do not usually quantify those choices. In this case, however, quantification provides a means of introducing some methodological rigour to the discussion of gender and witchcraft. Given the hegemonic status of conventional readings of demonology, it would be extremely difficult to make the case for the inclusion of male witches as significant subjects without some kind of hard data.

The data presented below is not meant to establish definitively the universal patterns of gendered language usage in early modern demonology. Such a goal would be well beyond the scope of a Master's thesis. However, even a rough approximation of the complexity of demonological concepts of witchcraft and gender is an important step toward breaking out of our own tendency to essentialize past beliefs.

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[31] E.g. Klaits, 44. "the *Malleus* seemed to benefit from papal sanctions, as each edition reprinted Innocent's bull as a preface to the work." The Speyer 1487 edition owned by Harvard's Houghton Library does not include the bull.

[32] Lyons, 1669, 314; Köln, 1480, 201.

Table 2

References to Witches in Demonological Texts

Edition	Author	Text & Edition	Feminine	Masculine
1480[33]	Nider	*Formicarius*, Bk. 5	13	47
1487[34]	Institoris & Sprenger	*Malleus maleficarum*	453	197
1489[35]	Molitor	*De laniis*	44	35
1580[36]	Bodin	*De la demonomanie des sorciers*	399	820
1581[37]	Jacquier	*Flagellum haereticorum*	3	40
1581[38]	Daneau	*De veneficis*	88	174
1591[39]	Binsfeld	*Tractatus de confessionibus*	47	157
1595[40]	Rémy	*Daemonolatria*	40	30
1613[41]	De Lancre	*Tableau de L'Inconstance*	296	335
1632[42]	Spee	*Cautio Criminalis*	258	41

These figures represent a reduction of complex usage patterns to a simple dichotomy between masculine and feminine references. Speaking broadly, the

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[33] Nyder, *Formicarius*, Köln 1480, facs. ed. The *Formicarius* was composed *circa* 1435 but not published until 1480. Book 5, which deals with witchcraft, was often printed with the *Malleus maleficarum* and other tracts during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It is sometimes cited as the *Formicarium*, and Nyder is ordinarily spelled Nider. See Hans Biedermann's introduction to the facsimile edition.

[34] Heinrich Institoris & Jacob Sprenger, *Malleus maleficarum*, Speyer 1487, facs. ed. (Göppingen: Kümmerle Verlag, 1991), ed. André Schnyder. First edition.

[35] Ulrich Molitor, *De laniis & phitonicis mulieribus*, Cologne 1489, facs. ed. (Paris: Emile Nourry, 1926). First edition Constance 1488. Facsimile includes a French translation.

[36] Jean Bodin, *De la demonomanie des sorciers*, Paris 1580, facs. ed. (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1988). First edition. No accent in title of this edition.

[37] Nicolas Jacquier, *Flagellum haereticorum fascinariorum*, Frankfurt/Main 1581. Houghton Library 24244.172. Bound with several other tracts, including Erastus' *De lamiis* and Daneau's *De Veneficis*. *Flagellum haereticorum fascinariorium* pp. 1-183 of volume. The *Flagellum* is a fifteenth-century tract (1458?).

[38] Lambertus Danaeus, *De Veneficis*, Frankfurt/Main 1581. Houghton Library 24244.172. Bound with several other tracts (see previous note). *De Veneficis* pp. 184-299 of volume. First published in 1574.

[39] Pierre Binsfeld, *Tractatus de confessionibus maleficorum et sagarum recognitus & auctus*, Trier 1591. Houghton Library 24244.48. First published at Trier in 1589.

[40] Nicolaus Remigius, *Daemonolatreiae Libri Tres*, Lyons 1595. Houghton Library 24244.5. First edition.

[41] Pierre De Lancre, *Tableau de L'Inconstance des Mauvais Anges*, Paris 1613, abridged rpt, ed. Nicole Jacques-Chaquin (Paris: Aubier, 1982). First published at Paris in 1612.

[42] Friedrich Spee, *Cautio Criminalis*, Frankfurt, 1632, rpt., ed. Theo G.M. Van Oorschot (Tübingen & Basel: A. Franck Verlag, 1992). First published at Rinteln in 1631.

references to witches in demonological texts may be divided into 'abstract' and 'concrete' categories. Abstract references concern the characteristics and abilities of witches as a 'species'. For example, in the first chapter of Book 5 of the *Formicarius*, the Piger asks the Theologus (the *Formicarius* is written as a dialogue between these two speakers) about witches and their relationship with demons: "Desidero igitur nosce*re* Primo q*uo*t modis & q*ua*liter malefici & super*stici*osi sibiq*ue* si*mi*les regunt*ur* equ*it*an*t*ur & dementa*n*tur p*er* demones".[43] Abstract references are ordinarily plural, and very often masculine. Nider, for instance, always uses the masculine when referring to witches in the abstract. Some abstract references are singular, and are masculine or feminine depending on the author and context. In the *Malleus maleficarum*, singular abstract references are usually feminine, but the section concerning whether the devil and witch must cooperate in order to perform *maleficium* begins: "An catholicu*m* sit asserere q*uod* ad effectu*m* maleficiale*m* se*mper* habeat demon cu*m* malefico *con*currere ve*l* q*uod* vnus sine altero vt demon sine malefico vel econuerso talem possit producere."[44] In this passage, the abstract witch is referred to in the masculine plural ablative *malefico*.

Concrete references describe actual witches, usually in connection with a trial. These references are either masculine or feminine, singular or plural, depending on the context. Early modern authors never, to my knowledge, confuse the gender of their concrete references. Whether a woman or a man is the subject of discussion, the term used to describe that individual always agrees in grammatical gender with their biological sex. I have found no instance of a male witch described in grammatically feminine terms, or vice versa.

It is important to distinguish between abstract and concrete language because such references have different, but related, heuristic values. Abstract references

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[43] Nyder, Bk. 5, ch. 1, p. 191. "I desire, therefore, to know, first, in how many ways and in what manner witches and similarly superstitious men are ruled, ridden and driven mad by demons."
[44] *Malleus maleficarum*, Part I, Q. 2, p. 13. "Whether it is a Catholic proposition to claim that in order to achieve an act of sorcery a demon must always act in conjunction with a witch or that one without the other, for instance a demon without a witch or vice versa, is able to produce such an act."

suggest the degree to which early modern witchcraft theorists conceptualized witches as inherently gendered. It is an imperfect measure of such conceptualization: abstract masculine references were most likely meant to include females, and in any case grammatical gender cannot always be read as indicative of 'actual' gender. For example, several feminine Latin nouns -- *agricola*, *nauta*, and *poeta*, to list a few -- refer to traditionally masculine occupations. On the other hand, the fact that differential forms existed for witches suggests that the use of a masculine noun, such as *maleficus*, was not purely a matter of grammatical convention. Conceptual flexibility was built into the languages of early modern witchcraft theory.

The texts do provide clues as to how their authors were using language. In the *Formicarius*, Nider uses the masculine plural *malefici* unless referring specifically to female witches. That this usage is inclusive of men and women is suggested by his statement that Peter of Como burned many witches of both sexes: "multos vtriusq*ue* sexus incineravit maleficos."[45] Here, *maleficos* clearly means both men and women. This is actually a concrete reference, but it is reasonable to assume that his abstract references are also inclusive, since he devotes a later chapter to the special wickedness of women. Interestingly, Nider does not say "*maleficos et maleficas*"; presumably, this would have been considered redundant.

For the most part, Jean Bodin follows Nider's pattern. Masculine plurals and singulars are used unless female witches are the specific subject of reference. For instance, Bodin begins his first chapter: "Sorcier est celuy qui par moyens Diaboliques sciemment s'efforce de paruenir a quelque chose."[46] This use of the masculine singular in a chapter devoted to defining what a witch is constructs the witch as male, not female -- at least in a linguistic sense. Similarly, Pierre de Lancre

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[45] Nyder, Bk. 5, ch. 3, p. 202.

[46] Bodin, Bk. 1, ch. 1, p. 1. "A 'witch' is someone who knowingly tries to accomplish something by diabolical means." Trans. Randy A. Scott. Jean Bodin, *On the Demon-Mania of Witches*, trans. Randy A. Scott, abridg. and intr. Jonathan L. Pearl (Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 1995), 45. Bodin is not one-hundred-percent consistent: in Bk. 4, ch. 4, he makes an abstract reference in the feminine. "Si donc Sorciere a esté co*n*damnee co*m*me Sorciere, elle sera tousiours

commences *Tableau de L'Inconstance* with a chapter on the inconstancy of demons, in which (abstract) witches are referred to in the masculine. For instance, in a discussion of the inconstancy of demons, he writes that

> A la vérité les Démons ont quelque certaine légèreté, laquelle fait qu'ils peuvent aisément et un moment surnager et enfoncer, et en communiquer les moyens aux Sorciers non pas que de là on doive tirer une preuve certaine et infailable qu'ils sont Sorciers.[47]

The linguistic patterns of the *Malleus maleficarum* are far more complex than the works of Nider, Bodin and De Lancre. Institoris and Sprenger[48] begin with masculine references, but gradually switch to an almost exclusive use of feminine forms for abstract discussions. This linguistic transformation is not smooth. Institoris and Sprenger explain that the heresy of witches ought to be described in feminine, not masculine terms, because most witches are women: "Plura hic deduci possent sed intelligentibus satis apparet non mirum quod plures reperiuntur infecti heresi maleficorum mulieres quam viri. Unde et consequenter heresis dicenda est non

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reputee Sorciere, & par consequent presumee coupable de toutes les impietés, dont les Sorciers sont notés." Accents lacking in the original. P. 189.

[47] De Lancre, Bk. 1, discours 1, p. 60. "In truth, demons have a certain inconstancy, by which means they are able easily in one moment to float and to sink, and communicate the means of doing so to witches -- not that one should draw from this certain and infallible proof that they are witches." De Lancre is referring to the water test. The inconstancy of demons seems to be a quasi-physical attribute that allows them to change their density.

[48] There is some debate over the actual authorship of the *Malleus*. Although Jacob Sprenger has traditionally been considered Institoris's co-author (Bodin actually refers to Sprenger as the sole author of the *Malleus*), there is evidence that he had little or nothing to do with writing the book. See e.g. Hans-Christian Klose, "Die angebliche Mitarbeit des Dominikaners Jakob Sprenger am Hexenhammer nach einem alten Abdinghofer Brief", *Paderbornensis Ecclesia: Beiträge zur Geschichte des Erzbistums Paderborn, Festschrift für Lorenz Kardinal Jaeger zum 80. Geburtstag am 23. September 1972*, ed. Paul-Werner Scheele (München: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1972), 197-205; and Peter Segl, "Heinrich Institoris. Persönlichkeit und literarisches Werk", *Der Hexenhammer*, 103-126. Institoris's role has not come under the same degree of scrutiny, no doubt because of his involvement in trials discussed in the text. One wonders, though: Institoris's 1485 piece on the Innsbruck trials uses feminine terminology almost exclusively, while the *Malleus* does not. Could this be an indication of multiple authorship of the *Malleus*? See Hartmann Ammann, "Eine Vorarbeit des Heinrich Institoris für den Malleus Maleficarum", *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung*, suppl. vol. VIII, ed. Oswald Redlich (Innsbruck: Wagner'schen Universitäts-Buchhandlung, 1911), 461-504. On the other hand, Segl has noted that in a later work Institoris refers to "*magorum et maleficorum*". Segl, 116.

maleficorum sed maleficarum vt a potiori fiat denominatio."[49] Nevertheless, they do not always apply this rule consistently. At the end of Part I, while explaining that the sins of witches exceed the sins of Adam and Eve, the text switches several times from *maleficorum* to *maleficarum*. In Part III, which deals with the practicalities of witch trials, a discussion about witnesses includes the statement "Item sicut hereticus contra hereticum ad testificandum admittitur, ita maleficus contra maleficum."[50]

The use of masculine references in abstract discussions of witches was probably not intended to suggest that most witches were male, especially in texts such the the *Formicarius*, *Malleus maleficarum*, and *Tableau de L'Inconstance*, that included sections explaining why women were especially attracted to witchcraft. However, it does indicate a readiness to represent witches as male without any need to justify or question such representations.

Concrete references to male witches reinforce this impression of a flexible linguistic and conceptual framework. We saw in Chapter 2 that accusers and officials demonstrated no sense of cognitive dissonance when confronted with male witches. Likewise, the authors of the four treatises discussed here show no signs of confusion or need to explain the existence of male witches, despite their views that witches were predominantly female.

In the *Formicarius*, *Malleus maleficarum*, *Demonomanie*, and *Tableau de L'Inconstance*, at least one individual male witch is described at length, often recurring

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[49] *Malleus maleficarum*, Part I, Q. 6, p. 45. "More reasons could be spun out, but it is clear enough in our understanding that it is no wonder that more women than men are found to be infected with the heresy of witches. Whence, and consequently, the heresy ought to be called not 'maleficorum' but 'maleficarum', so that it will be named for the principal adherents." I believe that the feminine usage espoused by Institoris and Sprenger was not meant to be exclusive, counter-intuitive though this seems. First, they never argue that all witches are women, merely that most of them are; second, there are instances in the text where they refer to *maleficae* but then use a masculine pronoun in the same sentence. E.g. "Patet *quod* modica sit comparatio per respectum ad maleficas et eorum opera." Part I, Q. 16, p. 79. "It is clear that the comparison [of other forms of superstition] is limited with respect to witches and their works."

[50] Ibid., Part III, Q. 4, p. 198. "Thus, just as a heretic is allowed to bear witness against a heretic, so a witch may bear witness against a witch."

in the text as a kind of forensic exhibit. In the *Formicarius* and *Malleus*, this witch is Staedelin (or Stedelein), the "*grandis maleficus*" of Poltingen;[51] in the *Demonomanie*, Trois-eschelles appears several times (Staedelin also makes an appearance); and De Lancre devotes several pages to a discussion of Isaac de Queyran.[52] There are many other references to male witches. Bodin, for instance, discusses various famous, learned witches, including Cornelius Agrippa, Pietro d'Abano and Guillaume de Line.[53] In the *Malleus maleficarum*, Institoris and Sprenger include a section concerning three types of witchcraft that *only* men practice.[54]

What is so striking about these passages describing male witches is that, again, the authors make no effort to justify using the terms *maleficus* or *sorcier*. Clearly, male witches were not considered by these authors to belong to a fundamentally different category of evil-doer from female witches; regardless of sex, they were all witches first and foremost.

Images

Additional evidence for the capacity of early modern Europeans to conceive of male witches is found in images of witches. Demonological treatises were rarely illustrated,[55] but some of those that were offer further proof that witches were not believed to be exclusively or necessarily female. Very many early modern images of

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[51] Staedelin is described at some length. One important element is his confession to having magically induced several miscarriages; this suggests that, again, male witches were not necessarily thought to practice gender-specific magic, the archer-witches of the *Malleus* notwithstanding. Nyder, Bk. 5 ch. 3, 202. "stedelein grandis maleficus . . . fatebatur se in certa domo vbi vir & vxor simul manebant per sua maleficia successiue in vtero vxoris prefate septem circiter infantes occidisse ita vt semper aborsum faceret in femina annis multis".

[52] Both Trois-eschelles and Isaac de Queyran confess to having attended witches' Sabbaths and worshipping the Devil. Bodin, Bk. 3 ch. 5, p. 151; De Lancre, Bk. 2.4, pp. 158-166.

[53] Bodin, Preface.

[54] *Malleus maleficarum*, Part II, ch. 16. The most important of these is archery-witchcraft. Archer-witches, or *sagitarii malefici*, have extraordinary powers of archery, which they receive from the Devil.

[55] Jane P. Davidson, "Great Black Goats and Evil Little Women: The Image of the Witch in Sixteenth-Century German Art", *Journal of the Rocky Mountain Medieval and Renaissance Association* 6 [1985]: 141-157, 143.

witches, for instance the famous drawings and paintings of Albrecht Dürer and Hans Baldung Grien, depict female witches. There are, however, a number of images from demonological tracts that depict male witches.

The first examples are contained in Ulrich Molitor's *De laniis et phitonicis mulieribus*, which was first published at Constance in 1488.[56] Although the work's title refers specifically to women, two of the six woodcut illustrations are of male witches. In the first such illustration, three witches are flying on a forked stick while simultaneously transforming into animals. It is clear from the clothing that at least one of the figures is male.[57] The second of these woodcuts depicts a man riding what appears to be a wolf. Charles Zika has found that this particular woodcut "represents that witch as a woman in only one of the almost twenty versions produced in the 1490s" (the female version appears in the Ulm 1490/1 edition of *De laniis*).[58]

Olaus Magnus' *Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus* (Rome 1555) also contains illustrations of "male and female witches engaging in a variety of acts."[59] In one woodcut, a male witch is using a knotted rope to influence the winds; in another, a male witch is shown dancing in a ring with demons.[60]

Finally, Francesco Maria Guazzo's *Compendium maleficarum*, first published at Milan in 1608, is a veritable treasure trove of images of male witches. The work contains a large number of woodcut illustrations, almost all of which depict both men and women. One group of four woodcuts shows men and women trampling the cross, being baptized by the Devil, giving him clothing, and swearing allegiance to him while standing in a magic circle. There is no doubt that these people are witches. In all four images, a well-dressed man is foregrounded, an equally well-dressed woman stands

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[56] Ibid. Charles Zika suggests that *De laniis* was first published in 1489.
[57] Charles Zika concurs with my interpretation of this image. Zika, "Dürer's witch, riding women and moral order", *Dürer and his Culture*, eds. Dagmar Eichberger & Charles Zika (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998), 118-140: 132.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Davidson, 148.
[60] Ibid., 151.

immediately behind him, and a mixed group occupies the background.[61] Another illustration depicts a man and a woman together roasting a infant while a couple in the background prepares to boil a child in a cauldron.[62]

To Charles Zika, the *De laniis* woodcut of the male witch riding a wolf suggests that "the gender link in representations of witchcraft has clearly not yet been established in the 1490s".[63] Given that this image was reproduced in sixteenth-century editions, and that the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century works by Olaus Magnus and Guazzo also included depictions of male witches, we ought to push Zika's insight further. The gender link in visual representations of witchcraft was strong in the early modern period, as evidenced by the fact that the majority of images depicted witches as women; however, this link could not have been absolute. If early modern artists and printers had been incapable of imagining male witches, it is improbable that they would have chosen to depict them, especially in illustrations of demonological tracts that furnished many descriptions of the activities of female witches.

Conclusions

Conventional assessments of demonological concepts of witchcraft and gender need revision. First, Stuart Clark's statement that demonological theory about gender and witchcraft did not conform to the patterns of prosecution appears somewhat too broad. One could argue that although the patterns of language usage do not conform precisely to patterns of prosecution, they do reflect them, in that both generally include a minority and, at times, majority, of men. There is thus no deep gulf between demonological theory and actual prosecutions.

Second, views of early modern demonology as sex-specific, exemplified by Sigrid Brauner's assertion that "by 1500, the sex-specificity of witches was so widely

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[61] Francesco Maria Guazzo, *Compendium maleficarum* [Milan 1608], ed. Montague Summers, trans. E.A. Ashwin (New York: Dover, 1988 [John Rodker, 1929]), bk. I, ch. VI, pp. 14-15.
[62] Ibid., bk. II, ch. II, p. 89.
[63] Zika, 133.

accepted that it was implicitly assumed in texts about witches"[64] and Stuart Clark's remark that it was literally unthinkable that witches should be male, are clearly overdrawn. Witchcraft theorists may have taken it for granted that witches were mostly female, but they did not treat witchcraft as sex-specific. One can only interpret early modern witchcraft theory as sex-specific by ignoring a considerable body of evidence to the contrary.

[64] Brauner, 13.

CHAPTER 4

MAKING SENSE: THE GENDERING OF WITCHCRAFT

Thus far, this thesis has concentrated on constructing the male witch as a valid historical subject. In this final chapter, I wish to change gears and attempt to answer the question of how early modern Europeans, specifically witchcraft theorists, made sense of male witches. Given that they generally associated witchcraft more strongly with women than with men, it seems at first rather odd that early modern authors did not address explicitly the apparent (to us) anomaly of the male witch. However, as I have suggested so far, the nonchalance with which early modern Europeans approached the concept of the male witch suggests their prevalence as a matter of routine. Although it is somewhat problematic to approach the question this way, asking why early modern witchcraft theorists did not regard male witches as anomalous -- in other words, why there was no conceptual barrier to them -- provides a useful starting point for developing an integrative interpretation of the gendering of witchcraft.

In this chapter, I argue, first, that early modern theorists were unperturbed by male witches because they were already familiar with them in the guise of ancient and medieval heretics and sorcerers. My second, more speculative, main argument concerns the feminization of the witch. The most essential feature of the early modern witch was his or her subservient relationship with the Devil, who duped men and especially women into worshipping him. The witch was thus by definition weak-minded, a trait that had been associated from antiquity with women. A man accused of being a witch was also, therefore, implicitly feminized. In one sense, this feminization lends support to Stuart Clark's argument for a binary structure underlying the gendering of witchcraft; on the other hand, it cautions us against

making that binary structure too procrustean to accommodate flexible gender constructions.[1]

Ancient and Medieval Antecedents

Edward Peters has argued that the classic early modern witch "was a distinct type" that should not be confused with earlier types of magic-user.[2] However, historians of witchcraft and witch-beliefs, including Peters, agree generally that the night-flying witch who made a pact with the Devil and worshipped him in exchange for supernatural powers was a learned, cumulative construct that developed over centuries of Christian demonization of heretics and sorcerers. If we trace these two elements in the witch's heritage, we see that early modern authors would have been thoroughly familiar with the idea that both men and women could be devil-worshippers and magicians. There was therefore no reason for witchcraft theorists to be surprised or confused by the existence of male witches.

One of the central aspects of learned early modern witch-belief was the Sabbath, where witches gathered to worship the Devil, dance, feast, indulge in sexual orgies, and practice cannibalism and infanticide. The Sabbath myth and its components have occupied the attention of many scholars, who have attempted to demonstrate, variously, either élite or folk origins.[3] The debate over origins need not concern us here; what is important, for the present purpose, is that learned ideas about the witches' Sabbath correspond very closely to traditional stereotypes concerning heretics.

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[1] I have borrowed this image of the procrustean binary structure from Christopher A. Faraone, *Ancient Greek Love Magic* (Cambridge & London: Harvard University, 1999), ix.
[2] Edward Peters, *The Magician, the Witch, and the Law* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1978), 170.
[3] See e.g. Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons*; Ginzburg, *Ecstasies*; Muchembled, "Satanic Myths and Cultural Reality"; Robert Rowland, "'Fantasticall and Devilishe Persons': European Witch-beliefs in Comparative Perspective", *Centres and Peripheries*, 161-190; Gustav Henningsen, "'The Ladies from Outside': An Archaic Pattern of the Witches' Sabbath", *Centres and Peripheries*, 191-215; Éva Pócs, *Between the Living and the Dead: A Perspective on Witches and Seers in the Early Modern Age*, trans. Szilvia Rédey & Michael Webb (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1999). Carlo

Norman Cohn has argued that the early modern notion of the Sabbath evolved from much older fantasies about various dissenting groups. Early Christian apologists encountered widespread beliefs that Christians engaged in cannibalism, infanticide and incest;[4] Jews were ridiculed in the ancient world for supposedly worshipping a donkey-god;[5] and the Catiline conspirators were believed by Dio Cassius to have practiced ritual murder.[6] Christianity survived such accusations, of course, but over the centuries

> tales of erotic debauches, infanticide and cannibalism were revived and applied to various religious outgroups in medieval Christendom. In the process they were integrated more and more firmly into the corpus of Christian demonology. . . . the powers of darkness loomed larger and larger in these tales, until they came to occupy the very centre of the stage. Erotic debauches, infanticide and cannibalism gradually took on a new meaning, as so many manifestations of a religious cult of Satan, so many expressions of Devil-worship.[7]

Montanists, Paulicians, Bogomils, Waldensians, Cathars, and other groups were all believed by Catholic authorities to engage in these practices.[8]

When early modern authors described the activities of witches, they incorporated these stereotypical charges against heretics. Johannes Nider, for instance, explained that in Lausanne certain witches cooked and ate infants,[9] and Guazzo wrote that at their gatherings witches "sing in honour of the devil the most obscene songs . . . and then in the foulest manner they copulate with their demon lovers."[10] Given that

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Ginzburg's ambitious attempts to locate the origins of the witches' Sabbath in a prehistoric shamanistic culture are especially fascinating but also problematic.

[4] Cohn, 1-4.

[5] Ibid., 5-6.

[6] Ibid., 6.

[7] Ibid., 36.

[8] See Ibid., 35-78 for detailed discussions of the accusations against these groups. Similar stereotypes extend to the present day, with belief in covert groups that practice devil-worship "spread very widely through the Western world." The alleged practices of such groups "include human sacrifice, cannibalism and depraved sexual orgies." Jean La Fontaine, "The history of the idea of Satan and Satanism", *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: The Twentieth Century*, eds. Bengt Ankarloo & Stuart Clark (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1999 [London: Athlone, 1999]), 88-93: 87.

[9] Nyder, Bk. 5, ch. 3, p. 202. "in lausanensi ducatu q*uida*m malefici p*ropri*os natos infantes coxera*n*t & comede*ra*n*t*".

[10] Guazzo, 38.

so many of the early witchcraft theorists were inquisitors (Jacquier, Nider, Institoris, and Nicolas Eymeric, to name a few), their incorporation of these elements is not surprising. Inquisitors would, presumably, have been familiar with these alleged activities of heretics, and, since witches were devil-worshippers, it makes sense that they would believe them to engage in similar practices.

The important thing about the similarity between witches and heretics is that, as William Monter has pointed out, "heresy itself was not sex-linked".[11] Both men and women participated in heretical movements, and both men and women were thought to participate in the traditional depravities. Therefore, theorists who believed that witches practiced similar evil acts would have had no reason for surprise at the notion that men took part, despite their view that women were especially susceptible. In short, there were precedents for the participation of men in devil-worship.

Monter made a similar connection in his 1976 study of the Jura region in the fifteenth century, where three dioceses -- Geneva, Lausanne and Sion -- prosecuted more male than female witches. Monter found that these exceptions "to the fifteenth-century trend to equate witchcraft with women" were also those dioceses "which first popularly identified sorcery with heresy", specifically, with Waldensianism. He suggests that because heresy was not sex-linked, "in a region where heresy and witchcraft were closely connected in the popular mind, witchcraft was not originally sex-linked either."[12] The corollary of Monter's argument is that in regions where heresy and witchcraft were *not* closely connected, witchcraft was sex-linked.[13]

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[11] Monter, *Witchcraft in France and Switzerland*, 23.

[12] Ibid., 22-24. Monter bases his hypothesis of a connection between witchcraft and heresy on linguistic evidence: in Geneva, Lausanne and Sion, "the earliest vernacular words for 'witch' [e.g. *vaudois*] were distinctly derived from words for 'heretic'." In other areas, where most witches were women, vernacular terms rooted in sorcery, such as *casserode* and *genauche*, were more common. Pp. 22-23.

[13] One is compelled to note here that Monter seems to use the term 'sex-linked' only when the majority of witches are women. Witchcraft is not sex-linked, it appears, when the majority are men. This is another obvious instance of historians' bias against male witches. There is no logical reason to view witchcraft as sex-linked in one instance and not in the other -- unless, that is, one is employing completely asymmetrical standards of sex-relatedness.

Although one has reservations about Monter's causal correlations, his evidence suggests that a conceptual link between witches and heretics could have kept the door open, as it were, for male witches.

Early modern witchcraft theorists incorporated stereotypes about heretics within their beliefs about witches, but they rarely discussed particular heretics as simple heretics (that is, without the suggestion that they were also sorcerers). In contrast, demonological texts are chock-full of references to famous magic-users from classical, biblical, and secular sources. Such references were usually included to support authors' views concerning witches' powers. For instance, when Institoris and Sprenger argue that witches have the power to transform men into animals, they cite the example of Circe, the sorceress who transformed Odysseus' companions into swine.[14] Many of these references describe male magic-users, who seem to have been in abundant supply in the ancient and medieval world. These figures, more so than medieval heretics, provided precedents that prevented witchcraft theorists from developing a conceptual barrier to the idea of male witches. In addition, the consistent presence of male magic-users over such a long period indicates a wider degree of acceptance of the notion that access to magical power was not limited to women.

The evidence of Greek and Latin curse tablets indicates that the practice of magic was widespread and that men participated in it in large numbers. In a recent essay, Daniel Ogden states that over 1, 600 curse tablets, or *defixiones*, are currently known to scholars.[15] These tablets, which were usually made of lead, bore written curses of various kinds: litigation/political, competition, trade, erotic, and prayers for justice.[16] They have been found "in every modern country around the

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[14] *Malleus maleficarum*, Part II, Q. 1, ch. 8, p. 119. "famosissima maga circes mutauerit socios ulixis in bestias." This reference to Circe derives from Augustine, *City of God*, Bk. 18 ch. 17. It appears in almost identical form in many works on magic, including Isidore's *Etymologies*, Bk. VIII, Ch. IX, *PL* 82, 310-314: 311, and Rabanus Maurus' *De magicis artibus*, *PL* 110, 1095-1110: 1097.

[15] Daniel Ogden, "Binding Spells: Curse Tablets and Voodoo Dolls in the Greek and Roman Worlds", *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: Ancient Greece and Rome*, eds. Bengt Ankarloo & Stuart Clark (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1999 [London: Athlone, 1999]), 1-90: 1.

[16] Ibid., 31.

[Mediterranean], and also in Britain", and date from the early fifth or even sixth centuries BC to the eight century AD.[17]

Ogden suggests that "many curse tablets were probably made, activated and deposited by amateurs on an ad hoc basis."[18] Specialists may have assisted in the manufacturing of tablets, for instance with inscribing a curse text on it, but, as Ogden points out, these specialists were not necessarily magicians. On the other hand, long and complex curse texts "will often have depended on handbooks" that provided magical formulae.[19] In addition, "since obscurity and difficulty were important sources of 'power' for ancient magic, it may have been more satisfying to visit a professional, one of supposedly arcane knowledge and mysterious skills, for the text of a tablet".[20]

Whether or not the author of a curse tablet was a professional, "the vast majority of all curse tablets, including erotic ones, are written by men." Furthermore, Ogden cautions, "it is possible that some of the curse tablets contain the actual words of women, but we must remember that they are largely formulaic, and we can never be sure that even an apparently personally worded text was not composed with the aid of or simply by a male (professional or otherwise)."[21] Although this evidence does not necessarily show that men were more active participants in magic than women, it indicates clearly that men were 'everyday' magic-users. As both Daniel Ogden and Fritz Graf have pointed out, however, the evidence of curse tablets (and magical papyri) does not match up with literary representations of magic as a female activity:

> In Theocritus as well as Virgil, or in the elegiac poets, and generally in the great majority of the literary texts, it is women who practice magic, whether erotic or of another kind. This situation amounts to an astonishing reversal of what we find in the epigraphic texts and the [magical] recipes on the papyri.[22]

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[17] Ibid., 4-6.
[18] Ibid., 54.
[19] Ibid., 55.
[20] Ibid., 57.
[21] Ibid., 62-63.
[22] Fritz Graf, *Magic in the Ancient World*, trans. Franklin Philip (Cambridge & London: Harvard, 1997 [orig. *Idéologie et Pratique de la Magie dans l'Antiquité Gréco-Romaine*, 1994]), 185.

We shall return to this important point later in the chapter. For now, I wish merely to note that this evidence demonstrates that the literary emphasis on female practitioners of magic does not tell the whole story about magic use in the ancient world.

Considering this overemphasis on women in ancient literary texts, which are far more likely to have been known to early modern authors than curse tablets, it is all the more striking to find Jean Bodin citing many ancient examples of *male* magic-users. In his preface to *De la demonomanie des sorciers*, Bodin lists, as *sorciers*, Orpheus, Aristeas the Proconnesian, Cleomedes the Astypalian, Hermotimus of Clazomenae, Apollonius of Tyana, and Romulus.[23] None of these ancient *sorciers* correspond very closely to the early modern witch, but Bodin evidently believed that they were of the same breed. He mentions them in order to counter the arguments of sceptics, and refers to Orpheus as a "maistre Sorcier".[24]

The Bible and related texts, such as the *Acts of the Apostles*, furnished additional examples of male magic-users. The female Witch of Endor was cited very frequently in demonological texts, but so were the Pharaoh's magicians and Simon Magus. Ulrich Molitor, for instance, discusses Simon Magus at some length in *De laniis*. In a section dealing with whether *malefici* and *strigae* could transform men into animals with the aid of the Devil, Molitor describes Simon's deception of the Emperor Nero: "Sic symon magus perstrinxit oculos neronis & carnifices qui decollando arietem. credidit se symonem decollasse. in oculis suis ministerio dyaboli perstrictis deceptus."[25] Nero's executioners beheaded a ram, but because Simon, with the aid of the Devil, 'bound' the Emperor's eyes, Nero believed that Simon had been beheaded.

In addition to the various ancient literary sources at early modern authors' disposal, medieval sources and society provided many examples of male magic-users. Valerie Flint and Richard Kieckhefer have both argued that magic was widespread in

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[23] Bodin, Preface, unpaginated.
[24] Ibid., Bk. I, Ch. 1, p. 3.
[25] Molitor, unpaginated.

medieval Europe, despite official prohibitions against it. Of the early medieval period, Flint says that it "was remarkably well supplied with influential and respected harioli, auspices, sortilegi, and incantatores";[26] in the later medieval centuries, Kieckhefer says, "we find various types of people involved in diverse magical activities."[27] These people and their activities are described in a range of medieval sources. For example, Isidore of Seville's *Etymologies* provided an encyclopedic summary of magic-users and their special powers. His work was incorporated in later tracts against magic, including those by Rabanus Maurus and Burchard of Worms, who wrote in the ninth and early eleventh centuries.[28]

Specific references to male magic-users are not difficult to find. In his *History of the Franks*, Gregory of Tours describes a man named Desiderius, who, Gregory says, "practised the foul arts of necromancy." Another man, who claimed to possess holy relics, turned out to own "a big bag filled with the roots of various plants; in it, too, were moles' teeth, the bones of mice, bears' claws and bear's fat", which the Bishop Ragnemod "recognized . . . as witchcraft."[29] Gervais of Tilbury wrote in his *Otia Imperialia* about an English magician at the court of Roger II of Sicily; this magician found the burial place of Virgil, unearthed the poet's bones, and took his book of magic.[30]

Other male figures appear in accounts of prosecutions for magic use. In the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, many of these men were ritual magicians or necromancers. Early in the fourteenth century, three men -- Bernard Délicieux (1319) and Matteo and Galeazzo Visconti (1320) -- were tried for using necromancy against

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[26] Valerie I.J. Flint, *The Rise of Magic in Early Medieval Europe* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, 1994 [1991]), 60.
[27] Richard Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1997[1989]), 56.
[28] Isidore of Seville, *op. cit.*; Rabanus Maurus, *op. cit.*; Burchard of Worms, *Decretum* Bk. X (*De incantatoribus et auguribus*), *Patrologiae Latinae* 140, 831-854, ed. J.-P. Migne.
[29] Gregory of Tours, *The History of the Franks*, Bk. IX, Ch. 6, trans. Lewis Thorpe (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985 [1974]), 483-485.
[30] Peters, 54.

Pope John XXII.[31] At the court of Charles VI of France, at least four men were charged with practicing sorcery after claiming to be able to cure the king's illness with magic. The second of the four men, Jehan de Bar, confessed to invoking demons, devil-worship, and ritual magic. He was condemned and burned in 1398.[32] In 1403, two men, named Poinson and Briquet, presented themselves to the king "with the pretence of being able to discover the cause of the king's disease." They set themselves up in the woods outside the town gate, where they built a magic circle of iron and made "magical invocations, which apparently produced no results whatsoever." Both men were arrested and subsequently burned.[33]

Books of magic, such as the Munich handbook, offer further evidence that magic use was both widespread and practiced by men.[34] Ritual demonic magic of the kind found in such books was a masculine preserve; more specifically, it seems to have been the specialty of a "clerical underworld". Richard Kieckhefer asserts that necromancy "was not a peripheral phenomenon in late medieval society and culture", and that fears concerning such magic were "grounded in realistic awareness that necromancy was in fact being practised, and in an almost universally shared conviction that it could work."[35]

If this was indeed the case, then it helps explain why, despite their general belief that women were more prone than men to witchcraft, early modern authors never claimed that witchcraft was wholly sex-specific. In addition to being the inheritors of a long intellectual and cultural heritage that recognized the existence of

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[31] Richard Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites: A Necromancer's Manual of the Fifteenth Century*, Magic in History (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University, 1998 [Sutton, 1997]), 1.
[32] Jan R. Veenstra, *Magic and Divination at the Courts of Burgundy and France: Text and Context of Laurens Pignon's* Contre les devineurs *(1411)* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 68. The first man involved was Arnaud Guillaume, who attended the king in 1393.
[33] Ibid., 72-73.
[34] For the Munich handbook, see Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*. For other books of magic, see *Conjuring Spirits: The Texts and Traditions of Medieval Ritual Magic*, ed. Claire Fanger, Magic in History (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University, 1998), especially the essay by Juris Lidaka, "*The Book of Angels, Rings, Characters and Images of the Planets*: Attributed to Osbern Bokenham."
[35] Kieckhefer, *Forbidden Rites*, 10.

male magic-users, witchcraft theorists and their readers, especially those in the fifteenth century, were likely to have been familiar with necromancy and with the fact that it was practiced by men. It would have been difficult, to say the least, to construct the argument that men could not be witches, since evidence to the contrary was all around.

Having said that, one is forced to ask why witchcraft theorists persisted in believing that women had a greater natural propensity to witchcraft than men did. The situation in the early modern period is analogous to that of the Greek and Roman worlds; as we have seen, ancient authors represented magic as something practiced by women, despite the fact that men also practiced magic. Early modern authors did not, as Chapter 3 demonstrates, exclude male practitioners from their discussions; however, explicit statements such as Pierre de Lancre's comment that "la femme a plus d'inclination naturelle à la sorcellerie que l'homme. C'est pourquoi il y a plus de femmes Sorcières que d'hommes" presented witchcraft as a predominantly female activity.[36] The fact that witchcraft theorists could hold this view and, at the same time, discuss male witches frequently in their texts, suggests that the gendering of witchcraft was a complex affair.

Gendering Witchcraft

In the previous section, I attempted to demonstrate that the lack of a conceptual barrier to the idea of male witches can be explained in part by witchcraft theorists' familiarity with various ancient and medieval prototypes. In this final section, I shall address the question of what it meant, in conceptual terms, to label a man as a witch within a framework that both explicitly and implicitly feminized witchcraft.

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[36] De Lancre, 89. "Woman has a greater natural inclination to witchcraft than man. That is why there are more female witches than male."

On one level, the feminization of witchcraft is obvious. Pronouncements by authors such as Nider, Institoris and Sprenger, and de Lancre that witchcraft was practiced mostly by women identified it clearly as a female activity. Did this mean that men who practiced witchcraft were regarded as feminine? As I will attempt to show, male witches were not treated as feminine in overt ways; however, they were associated with certain traits that feminized them implicitly.

Fritz Graf's explanation of the 'mismatch' between ancient literary representations of magic and the reality of magical practice suggests one avenue of exploration. He argues that magic, especially erotic magic, was a "secret weapon" in male social competition, a weapon that was "unworthy of the ideal warrior of the world of men."[37] Men who used magic stepped "over the borderlines of male behavior", because "a true man does not need . . . magic -- the only male sorcerers are those funny foreign specialists."[38] If we adopt Graf's interpretation of ancient men's attitudes toward male magic use, we can read early modern statements about the predominance of female witches as implicit warnings to male readers that practicing magic was womanish behaviour. This is an intriguing line of thought, and suggests a depth to fears about witches that goes beyond what other scholars have had to say on the subject. Early modern anxieties concerning (female) witches' powers to interfere with men's minds and bodies, and especially with their procreative abilities, have been addressed by various scholars; but the idea that authors of demonological treatises may have been, on some level, trying to dissuade men in particular from becoming witches has not been explored.

Unfortunately, early modern authors do not come straight out and make convenient statements about 'real' men not needing witchcraft. They do not even attempt to portray male witches as effeminates in any obvious sense. The male

[37] Graf, 186-187.
[38] Ibid., 189.

witches described in demonological texts are not homosexual;[39] indeed, even their demon lovers are female.[40] They are not described as wearing women's clothing, working in women's occupations, or having feminine habits. So far, the idea that male witches were feminized looks like a red herring. However, this is the case only if one seeks nothing but examples of overt feminization that correspond to modern views on masculinity and femininity. When we broaden our perspective to accommodate earlier concepts and less overt means of feminizing men, we find several clues.

For instance, there are tantalizing hints that some male witches may have had certain physical attributes associated with women. In her book *The Color of Angels: Cosmology, Gender and the Aesthetic Imagination*, Constance Classen explores the embodiment of gender codes and hierarchies through the senses.[41] According to Classen, "along with being assigned different sensory qualities", such as 'hot' or 'cold', "men and women were associated with different sensory domains." At a fundamental level, women were associated with the physical body and the senses, while men were associated with the mind and soul.[42] Further gendered distinctions

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[39] William Monter found in his study of the Jura region that many men accused of witchcraft were also accused of "grave sexual crimes", including sodomy, but this does not necessarily mean that male witches in general were thought to engage in homosexual activity. *Witchcraft in France and Switzerland*, 135-136.

[40] See e.g. Bodin, 132.

[41] Constance Classen, "The scented womb and the seminal eye: embodying gender codes through the senses", *The Color of Angels: Cosmology, Gender and the Aesthetic Imagination* (London & New York: Routledge, 1998), 63-85. Classen's discussion covers a very wide range of sources from the ancient, medieval and early modern periods, and the views she describes were not necessarily constant or consistent. Nevertheless, her work on the gendering of the senses offers an intriguing way of opening up the discussion of the gendering of witchcraft. Classen herself argues that "the witch-hunters of the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries took the traditional negative stereotypes of women's sensory traits and practices and made of them a diabolic female sensorium in which each of the senses was dedicated to evil", 78-79. This interesting interpretation is, unfortunately, marred by Classen's conclusion that "the witch-hunts were, at least in part, designed to put the fear of God and of the executioner into women, and to clamp down on attempts by women either to aspire to male forms of power, or to empower themselves through traditional women's work", 82.

[42] Ibid., 63-65. Merry Wiesner's *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe* provides a general overview of attitudes toward women's bodies. On the association of women with the physical, see also Caroline Walker Bynum, "Women Mystics and Eucharistic Devotion in the Thirteenth Century", *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion* (New York: Zone, 1992), 119-150: 146-150. On early modern theologies of the body, see Lyndal Roper, "Exorcism and the theology of the body", *Oedipus and the Devil*, 171-198. On sexual difference and gender construction more generally, see Joan Cadden, *Meanings of Sex Difference in the Middle Ages: Medicine, Science, and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1995 [1993]), 167-227; and

operated within the domain of the senses. "Each sense was considered to have superior and inferior uses", which were assigned to men and women respectively, but also, different values were imparted to each of the senses. "Sight and hearing were held to be more closely associated with the 'higher' functions of the mind, and the other senses with the 'lower' functions of the body."[43]

Two of these associations are of particular interest. Smell, a 'lower' sense, was associated with women, who were "held to be especially productive of odors", both good and bad.[44] Sight, on the other hand, was a 'higher' sense associated with men because the eyes and the male sexual organs were thought to share a 'seminal nature'. According to Classen, "women, who were symbolically castrated or incomplete men, could be imagined as exhibiting the weak sight and intelligence attributed to eunuchs."[45]

With these associations in mind, the physical descriptions of Trois-eschelles and Staedelin, two male witches, take on a potential new importance. Trois-eschelles, who recurs several times in Bodin's *Demonomanie*, was hanged at Paris in 1571 after denouncing over one hundred and fifty others as witches.[46] (He was supposed to have received immunity, but seems to have angered the king while giving a 'command performance' of his powers, and was condemned after all.)[47] Apparently, Trois-eschelles was blind; twice, Bodin refers to him once as "l'aueugle", or "the blind

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Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1990).

[43] Ibid., 66.

[44] Ibid., 70.

[45] Ibid., 71.

[46] Bodin, Bk. 2, Ch. 1, p. 52. The date given on this page is 1574 (see note 49), but this is surely an error for 1571.

[47] Ibid., 3.3, 134. "Et me souuient que Trois-eschelles Manseau estant en la presence d'vn Roy, fist vn traict de son mestier, qui estonna le Roy à vray dire . . . le Roy le fist sortir, & ne le voulut on ques voir, tellement que au lieu d'estre fauory, on luy fist son procés, & fut condamné comme Sorcier . . .". "I recall that Trois-eschelles, while in the presence of the king, performed an example of his craft, which truly amazed the king . . . But immediately the king sent him out and never wanted to see him again, so that instead of being favoured, he was tried and condemned as a witch . . .". Scott, 156.

one",[48] another time as "l'aueugle Sorcier", the blind witch.[49] Staedelin, the "grandis maleficus" of the *Formicarium* and subsequent works, was immortalized by Johannes Nider in several descriptive passages. In one, Nider tells the reader that when Staedelin was arrested, he gave off a great stench: "cum sepe dictus iudex petrus antefatum scadelem [Staedelin] capere vellet p*er* suos famulos ta*n*tus tremor manibus eoru*m* i*n*cuss*us* est & corporibus & naribus illapsus tam malus fetor vt se fere desperare*n*t an maleficum inuadere auderent."[50]

Admittedly, these are only two instances of male witches possessing what Bodin and Nider may or may not have thought were feminine attributes.[51] As evidence of the gendering of witchcraft, this is too scanty to permit one to draw solid conclusions. On the other hand, it is not entirely implausible, in my view, that early modern authors and their readers may have regarded such traits as signs that male witches were, if not overtly feminine, at least not unquestionably masculine. In any case, the question of how early modern Europeans perceived the body of the male witch ought to be explored. As Lyndal Roper has stated,

> How a culture imagines the body is one of its most fundamental and revealing elements . . . Theories of the body, whether explicit or implicit, may assume a sharp division between the body and the mind, or they may articulate a profound interconnection between what is mental, physical and spiritual. Among the issues which cluster around concepts of the body are questions of individuation, how we define the boundaries of a person and his or her bonds with other people, living or dead; the causal links between illness or other kinds of physical harm and psychic, emotional or spiritual powers; and the

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[48] Ibid., 2.4, p. 80. "Et n'y a pas long temps, c'est à dire lan M.D. LXXI. entre ceux qui furent deferez Sorciers par l'aueugle, qui fut pendu à Paris . . .". "Not long ago, that is, in 1571, among those who were denounced as witches by the 'blind one', who was hanged at Paris . . .". Scott, 112.

[49] Ibid., 2.1, p. 52. "Et mesme l'aueugle Sorcier, qui fut pendu à Paris l'an M.D. LXXIIII, & qui en accusa cent cinquante, & plus . . .". "Even the blind witch who was hanged at Paris in 1574, and who denounced one hundred and fifty or more others . . .". Scott, 93.

[50] Nyder, 5.4, 202. "When the said judge Peter wished his servants to arrest the aforementioned Staedelin, their limbs and bodies were seized by such trembling, and their nostrils assailed by such a great stench, that they nearly despaired of arresting the witch."

[51] Bodin does state that witches are foul-smelling, but he explains that this is because they copulate with demons, who may take on the bodies of the dead. Women have sweeter breath than men, but their intimacy with Satan causes them to become unnaturally hideous and foul. 3.3., p. 133: "les anciens one appellé les Sorcieres *foetentes* . . . pour la puanteur d'icelles, qui vie*n*t comme ie croy de la copulation des Diables, lesquels peut estre prennent des corps des pendus, ou autres semblables pour les actions charnelles et corporelles".

> nature of what we might call a 'person' and his or her relation with the divine.[52]

The body of the witch, who crosses many boundaries, including that between the physical and spiritual realms, is a critical site for examining early modern culture. There are some studies that deal with the body of the witch, but they focus on female witches only.[53] A serious study of the early modern perceptions of the body of the male witch would add to our understanding not only of witch-beliefs, but also of the ways in which the relationships described by Lyndal Roper were constructed.[54]

There is one element of the gendering of witchcraft that may be tackled with more confidence. When explaining the reasons for women's greater susceptibility to becoming witches, both sceptics[55] and believers in witchcraft attributed it first and foremost to women's intellectual fragility. The misogyny of learned witch-beliefs has been much reviewed by scholars, and there is no need to cover the same ground again here, except to recall Stuart Clark's remarks that "the association of witchcraft with women was . . . built on entirely unoriginal foundations": Aristotelian physiology, a "deeply entrenched Christian hostility to women as the originators of sin", and many commentaries by the Church fathers and medieval writers on the faults and vices of

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[52] Roper, "Exorcism and the theology of the body", 171.

[53] See e.g. Roper, *op. cit.* above and "Witchcraft and fantasy in early modern Germany"; Purkiss; Barstow; Classen.

[54] Another important avenue of inquiry is "the body as object and target of power", suggested by Michel Foucault. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage, 1995 [1977]), 136. Roper engages to some degree with this issue in the two essays cited above.

[55] For example, Johann Weyer, who published his attack on witch-hunting, *De praestigiis daemonum*, in 1563, wrote that

> most often . . . the Devil thus influences the female sex, that sex which by reason of temperament is inconstant, credulous, wicked, uncontrolled in spirit, and (because of its feelings and affections, which it governs only with difficulty) melancholic; he especially seduces stupid, worn out, unstable old women.

De praestigiis daemonum, trans. John Shea, *Witches, Devils, and Doctors in the Renaissance* (Binghamton, New York: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1991), 180-181.
One of Weyer's arguments against witch-hunting was that using women as his servants would be counter-productive to the Devil's evil purposes:

> because of their age and sex and as a result of the cold, moist, dense, sluggish constitution which renders their bodies unsuitable, they hinder the work of the demon's fine and subtle substance, so that if he seeks the cooperation of these women, he is disturbed and hindered in the performance of his task. Ibid., 85-86.

women.[56] Clark also points out that "the experts on witchcraft . . . were entirely representative of their age and culture" in terms of their views about women, and that "they showed little interest in exploring the gender basis of witchcraft or in using it to denigrate women."[57]

There are several valuable studies of demonological views of women, including Clark's own elegant and illuminating analysis of the binary structure underlying such ideas (see Chapter 1).[58] However, this subset of witchcraft historiography lacks an exploration of the conceptual relationship between male witches and the association of women with witchcraft. I have already touched on perceptions of the body; for the rest of this chapter, I shall examine the connection between witchcraft and weak-mindedness. The starting point for this investigation is the learned view of women's susceptibility to witchcraft. Discussions of why most witches were women are not only expressions of learned misogyny; they are also definitions of the most essential characteristic of the early modern witch.

In the *Malleus maleficarum*, Institoris and Sprenger furnish a detailed explanation for the predominance of female witches.[59] This discussion hinges on their association of women with mental weakness; over and over again, they explain the greater number of female witches in terms of the intellectual feebleness of women. To begin with, women are more credulous than men, which is why the Devil, whose chief aim is to corrupt faith, prefers to approach them instead of men.[60] Institoris and Sprenger elaborate on this point by drawing on various authorities to demonstrate that women are impressionable,[61] intellectually child-like[62], quick to abjure their faith,[63]

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[56] Clark, 114.
[57] Ibid., 115.
[58] See also Eliane Camerlynck; Sophie Houdard; Gerhild Scholz Williams, works cited in Chapter 1.
[59] Many of the arguments are borrowed almost verbatim from Nider.
[60] *Malleus maleficarum*, I.6, p. 41. "quia p*r*one sunt ad credendu*m*. et quia principaliter demon querit corrumpere fide*m*. ideo potius eas aggredit*ur*". This passage is supported by a reference to Ecclesiastes 19: "Quia cito credit leuis e*s*se corde et minorabit*ur*."
[61] Ibid. "a natura p*r*opter fluxibilitatem complexionis facilioris sunt impressionis".
[62] Ibid., p. 42. "Mul[i]eres ferme vt pueri leui sententia sunt." A paraphrase of Terence.
[63] Ibid. "Mala ergo mulier ex natura cum citius in fide dubitat etiam citius fidem abnegat".

excessively emotional,[64] have weak memories, and lack discipline.[65] The statement that "all witchcraft comes from carnal lust, which is in women insatiable"[66] is notorious; however, the key to Institoris and Sprenger's view of women's susceptibility to witchcraft is reflected more accurately in the following remark: "q*uod* in omnibus viribus tam anime q*ua*m corporis cum sint defectuose non mirum si plura maleficia in eos quos emula*n*tur fieri p*ro*curant."[67] The insatiable carnal lust derives from women's fundamental weaknesses, which also form the basis of witchcraft. If women were not so weak, they would not be such inviting targets for the Devil's temptations, nor would they fall prey to them and abjure their faith, which, the authors of the *Malleus* say, "est fundamentum in maleficis."[68]

At no point do Institoris and Sprenger say that all witches are women, or suggest that the abjuration of faith is not common to all witches, whether male or female. We can infer from the arguments that the explanation concerning female witches is based not only on traditional stereotypes of women, but also on a prior conceptual link between weakness, particularly intellectual weakness, and witchcraft. This link constitutes the heart of the early modern concept of the witch and of the feminization of witchcraft. According to the logic of Christian perceptions of magic as demonic, witches were necessarily weak-minded, because they sought out the Devil, or were tricked or seduced by him, and willingly became his servants. Both men and women could be intellectually weak, and therefore both could be snared by the Devil; however, because such weakness had been regarded since antiquity as a particularly feminine characteristic, witchcraft was inevitably feminized.[69]

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[64] Ibid., 43. ". . . ex inordinatis affectionibus et passionibus varias vindictas querunt excogitant et infligunt siue p*er* maleficia siue aliis quibuscu*m*q*ue* mediis."
[65] Ibid. "Quantu*s* insuper defectu*s* in memoratiua potentia cum hoc sit in eis ex natura vitium nolle regi sed suos sequi impetu*s* sine quacunq*ue* pietate ad hoc studet et cu*n*cta memorata disponit."
[66] Summers, 47. *Malleus maleficarum*, I. 6, 45. "Omnia p*er* carnalem co*n*cupiscientiam, que quia in eis est insatiabilis".
[67] *Malleus maleficarum*, I.6, 42. "Because they are defective in all essences, as much of the mind as of the body, it is no wonder if they endeavour to cause more misfortunes in those whom they envy."
[68] Ibid.
[69] See e.g. Margaret Y. MacDonald, *Early Christian Women and Pagan Opinion: The Power of the Hysterical Woman* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1996).

In Late Antiquity, early Christians, confronted not only by the 'omnipresence' of magic in the pagan world,[70] but also with accusations that they themselves practiced magic, fought back. They identified the pagan deities and *daimones* as the evil demons of the Bible, and characterized magic, which involved invoking the gods and *daimones*, as the worship of demons. Valerie Flint summarizes the process as follows:

> The characterisation of 'magic' as the work solely of wicked demons, and of 'sorcerers' and 'magicians' as their servants, stemmed from two convergent developments. In the first place, the concept of the 'daimon' changed . . . In the second, 'magia', or 'magic', became the *chief* term whereby the most powerful of the emerging religions described, and condemned, the supernatural exercises of their enemies. . . . [The] 'daimon' was translated . . . into the evil demon of Judaic and Christian literature -- a figure who could never help or co-operate with man for his good, but was instead his most bitter foe. Thus, those humans who looked to obtain supernatural help in the older ways and through an older or different 'daimon', came to be viewed by many as terminally deluded . . . Sorcerers and magicians were then 'demonised' by being declared subject only to the demonic forces of evil . . ..[71]

There were two major consequences of this demonization process. First, "early Christian writers tended to see all forms of magic, even ostensibly harmless ones, as relying on demons."[72] This perception of magic persisted through the medieval and early modern period. Natural philosophy admitted two branches of *magia*: natural magic and demonic magic. Both were occult, because their processes were secret and hidden from human intellect, but natural magic was not the work of demons. The men known as Renaissance magi, such as Cornelius Agrippa, Marsilius Ficino, and Pico della Mirandola, defended natural magic, which rose in prominence as a subject of natural philosophy during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[73]

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[70] Graf, 1.
[71] Valerie I.J. Flint, "The Demonisation of Magic and Sorcery in Late Antiquity: Christian Redefinitions of Pagan Religions", *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: Ancient Greece and Rome* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1999 [London: Athlone, 1999]), 279-348: 279.
[72] Kieckhefer, *Magic in the Middle Ages*, 38.
[73] Clark, 233. The intellectual history of natural and demonic magic is fascinating but well beyond the scope of this thesis. Part II of *Thinking With Demons* provides an excellent discussion of magic and its relationship to science. Kieckhefer's *Magic in the Middle Ages* is a useful introduction to the subject.

Demonic magic, however, did not disappear. In the *Malleus maleficarum*, for instance, Institoris and Sprenger make it clear that witches and the Devil must always work in conjunction.[74] Jean Bodin states in the *Demonomanie* that "without the pact with Satan, though a man had all the powders, symbols, and witches' words, he could cause neither man nor beast to die."[75] In addition, the defenders of natural magic were sometimes condemned as witches themselves. Both Jean Bodin and Pierre de Lancre, for example, call Cornelius Agrippa a master witch.[76] To those who believed that all magic required the assistance of demons, anyone who engaged in it, in any form, was in fact practicing devil-worship.

From a Christian perspective, the logical consequence of the association of magic with demons and devil-worship was that magic-users were fools. Augustine expressed an early version of this idea in the *City of God*:

> What foolishness it is, then, or, rather, madness, to submit ourselves to demons, . . . when by the true religion we are set free from those vices [anger, passivity of the soul, vanity, disquietude] in respect of which we resemble them! . . . What reason is there, . . . apart from folly and miserable error, for you to humble yourself to worship a being whom you do not wish to resemble in your life?[77]

Close to eleven centuries later, Jean Bodin explains that

His article "The Specific Rationality of Medieval Magic" is a more complex analysis of magic in medieval culture. *American Historical Review* 99, 3 (June 1994): 813-836. See also Peters, *op. cit.*; Flint, "The Demonisation of Magic"; Richard Gordon, "Imagining Greek and Roman Magic", *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: Ancient Greece and Rome*, 159-275; Ioan P. Couliano, *Eros and Magic in the Renaissance*, trans. Margaret Cook (Chicago & London: Chicago University, 1987 [*Eros et magie a la Renaissance*, 1484, Paris, 1984]); Elizabeth M. Butler, *Ritual Magic* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University, 1998 [Cambridge, 1949]); Noel L. Brann, *Trithemius and Magical Theology: A Chapter in the Controversy over Occult Studies in Early Modern Europe* (Albany: SUNY, 1999).

[74] *Malleus maleficarum*, I.2, p. 18. "*Con*cludamus quod ad maleficiales effectus de quibus ad presens loquimur malefici cum demonibus *semper* concurrere et vnum sine altero nihil posse efficere."

[75] 2.8, p. 116. ". . . sans la paction auec Sathan, qua*n*d vn homme auroit toutes les poudres, caracteres, & parolles des Sorcieres, il ne sçauroit faire mourir ny homme ny beste." Trans. Scott, 140.

[76] E.g. Bodin, 1.3, p. 20: " . . . Agrippa . . . a esté toute sa vie le plus grand Sorcier qui fut de son temps . . .". (Agrippa . . . was for his whole life the greatest witch of his age." Scott, 69.) De Lancre, 1.2, p. 69: "Ce grand Sorcier Agrippa était de cet avis . . .". "The great witch Agrippa was of this opinion . . .".

[77] Augustine, *City of God* 8.17, p. 337-338.

> evil spirits tricked people in ancient times, as they still do now, in two ways: one openly with formal pacts in which it was usually only the *greatest simpletons and women* who were snared. The other way was to deceive virtuous but *very foolish men* by idolatry and under a veil of religion [italics mine].[78]

In his preface to *De la demonomanie des sorciers*, he counters sceptical objections to the epistemological value of witches' confessions with the statement that the witches whose testimonies are in question were for the most part "completely ignorant people or old women".[79] In essence, as the *Malleus maleficarum* also suggests, people become witches because of an intellectual lack or failing (as well as a moral failing).

In these two passages, Bodin makes explicit a set of conceptual connections that more often operate only implicitly within early modern demonology.[80] The first connection, witch/weakness, is a binary construct that, within the logical framework of Christian demonology, seems to have been necessary and indivisible. The second connection, femininity/weakness/masculinity, is an asymmetrical triad. Both men and women share the trait of weakness, but it is linked far more strongly with women than with men.

When these two sets come together in early modern witch-beliefs, they create a web of associations in which a person believed to be a witch is necessarily also believed, on some level, to be weak-minded. When that person is a woman, the associations link up in what we might visualize as a circle: each element -- witch, weakness, woman -- reinforces the other, creating, in essence, a stable system. If, however, the witch is a man, the associative dynamic is somewhat different. There is

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[78] Bodin, 1.3, p. 15. ". . . les malins esprits anciennement trompoient, comme ils sont encores à present, en deux sortes l'vne ouuertement, auec pactions expresses, où il n'y auoit quasi que les plus lourdaux, & les femmes qui y fussent prises: l'autre sorte estoit pour abuser les hommes vertueux, & bien nais, par idolatrie, & soubs voile de religion . . .". Trans. Scott, 63.

[79] Ibid., Preface, unpaginated. ". . . pour la plupart sont gens du tout ignorans ou vieilles femmes . . .". Trans. Scott, 41.

[80] Bodin's comments are not isolated, but similarly explicit statements are rare. However, in my view, the logic of demonology, combined with the explicit rhetoric one does find, supports the reading of demonological texts as implicitly feminizing male witches.

nothing in the web of associations, or in the intellectual traditions and past experiences, to prevent belief in male witches. However, because the conceptual link between women and weakness is stronger than that between men and weakness, witches are associated more strongly with femininity. As a result, a *male* witch causes conceptual 'reverberations' within the web that associate him not only with weakness, but also with femininity.[81]

Does this feminization of witchcraft and male witches mean that Stuart Clark is correct to argue that the early modern gendering of witchcraft was based on binarism? Clearly, as this thesis has endeavoured to demonstrate, his view that male witches were "literally unthinkable" within early modern demonology is incorrect. At first glance, male witches appear to flatly contradict Clark's carefully worked-out system of correspondences between witches and women; one might, therefore, be tempted to dismiss his interpretation as fatally flawed. Doing so, however, would mean throwing a perfectly good baby out with the bath water. There is too much evidence of binary thinking both in early modern culture generally and in demonology in particular to permit a facile rejection of Clark's thesis. Furthermore, my examination of male witches and the way they made sense to early modern witchcraft theorists offers evidence of binarism at work on an implicit level.

What it also shows, though, is that Clark's interpretative scheme is too rigid. Early modern witchcraft theorists did not construct an exclusive conceptual correspondence between witches and women; indeed, it would have made very little sense for them to do so, given their experience with actual male witches. What they did construct was a web of associations that, while similar in some respects to Clark's binary framework, was not so rigidly polarized as to prevent 'leakage' across the

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[81] My argument here is influenced by the metaphor of the 'Hesse-net', described by H. M. Collins as a network, or spider's web, of concepts that is "mutually supporting since everything is linked to everything else" but is also susceptible to change: "by virtue of the way that everything is connected, a change in one link might reverberate through the whole of the network." "The Scientist in the Network: A Sociological Resolution of the Problem of Inductive Inference", *Changing Order: Replication and Induction in Scientific Practice* (Chicago & London: Chicago University, 1992 [1985]), 129-157: 131. See also Rorty, *op. cit.*

gender boundary. It is important to remember that although demonology feminized male witches, it never made them *female*. To put it another way, male witches were never re-constructed in such a manner as to make them unrecognizable as males.

The feminized male witch has important implications for the way we speak of gender and its construction in early modern Europe. Andrea Cornwall and Nancy Lindisfarne have written that the portrayal of the social construction of masculinity and femininity as strictly relational rests on "a number of questionable assumptions, among them the idea that these qualities cannot be ascribed to a single individual at the same time." They argue that although "an important aspect of many hegemonic discourses is their focus on an absolute, naturalized and, typically, hierarchized male/female dichotomy whereby men and women are defined in terms of the *differences* between them", it is necessary to consider not only "the relation *between* maleness and femaleness", but also "how hierarchical relations between men and women reproduce differences *within* those categories."[82] The feminized male witch is an excellent example of the construction of difference within a gender category, and forces us to rethink the binary model of early modern gender.

The male witch also highlights the feminization of subordinates in early modern European culture. Witches were feared for their power, but they were also understood to be subservient to the Devil in a very literal sense. Bodin once again furnishes explicit statements of this idea, describing witches as Satan's slaves.[83] However, other signs of this subordinate relationship were extremely common within demonological literature: the anal kiss, signifying homage; the Devil's sexual use of female witches, often described as painful to the witch; the necromantic practice of making offerings to demons; the physical beatings inflicted on disobedient witches by

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[82] Andrea Cornwall & Nancy Lindisfarne, "Dislocating masculinity: Gender, power and anthropology", *Dislocating Masculinity: Comparative Ethnographies*, eds. Andrea Cornwall & Nancy Lindisfarne (London: Routledge, 1994), 11-47: 18.

[83] Bodin, 3.3, p. 135: "Mais pourquoy Sathan ne depart de ses tresors cachez en terre à ses esclaues?" "Why does Satan not leave his treasures, hidden in the earth, to his slaves?" Ibid., 137-138: "quel malheur peut estre plus grand que le rendre esclaue de Sathan pour si peu de recompence en ce monde,

the Devil; and finally, the fundamental role of the witch as the Devil's instrument for spreading evil. Like mental weakness, this subordination to the Devil bears a strong conceptual association with femininity via powerlessness and passivity.[84]

This chapter began by posing the question of how learned early modern Europeans made sense of male witches. On one level, the answer is fairly simple: male witches existed, so authors of witchcraft treatises incorporated them in their demonologies. Such a conclusion is not very rewarding; however, probing more deeply into the conceptual associations at work in early modern demonology uncovers a complex web that reflects not only beliefs about witches but also how learned European men constructed gender.

& la damnation eternelle en lautre?" "what misfortune can be greater than to make oneself Satan's slave for so little recompense in this world, and eternal damnation in the other?" Scott, 157.

[84] See e.g. Cornwall & Lindisfarne; Richard C. Trexler, *Sex and Conquest: Gendered Violence, Political Order, and the European Conquest of the Americas* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1995). For a classic discussion of the social and cultural meaning of slavery, see Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge & London: Harvard University, 1982). Brian Levack has hinted at an association between servility and feminization, but in the context of distinguishing between male magicians and female witches. *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe*, 38. One should note that Levack's citation of James VI and I's *Daemonologie* to support his view that male magicians commanded the Devil while female witches served him is completely misleading. Levack quotes the statement that "Witches ar servantes onelie, and slaues to the Devil; but the Necromanciers are his maisters and commanders" out of context. The statement is a characterization of vulgar opinion, which, as the text explains, is only "in a maner true". Men may command the Devil, "not by anie power that they can haue over him, but *ex pacto* allanerlie: whereby he oblices himself in some trifles to them, that he may on the other part obteine the fruition of their body & soule". King James the First, *Daemonologie* (1597), rpt. Bodley Head Quartos, ed. G.B. Harrison (London: Bodley Head, 1924), 9.

CONCLUSION

Summation

This thesis began by posing several questions, which may be summed up, informally, as "What are these male witches doing in these demonological texts?" and "Why wasn't I ever told about this?" Not every single question that arises in the course of a research project can be answered, and this thesis leaves certain issues basically untouched. I have attempted, however, to address what I believe are the most fundamental questions.

Chapter 1 tackled the first of these, namely, why male witches are not more common subjects in witchcraft historiography. As I carried out my research on male witches, I became convinced that it was not possible that specialists in early modern witchcraft could be unaware that it was not sex-specific, even among the most misogynistic demonological authors. Modern scholars of various ideological and methodological leanings have excluded male witches from witchcraft historiography by either ignoring or 'declassifying' them. This exclusion betrays the unreflexive nature of much witchcraft historiography, in which political-ideological agendas (not limited to feminist scholars) and *a priori* assumptions are permitted to pre-determine how early modern evidence is read and what conclusions are drawn from it.

Chapter 2 began seriously the work of unpacking conventional wisdom about witchcraft and gender. First, I presented data, synthesized from other scholars' archival research, that showed wide variation in the proportion of male to female witches. This data constituted part of a more general criticism of the way witchcraft historians use statistical information to mask regional diversity and present a monochromatic picture of witchcraft prosecution dynamics. Second, I presented two

case studies of male witches in Essex and Germany. These case studies demonstrated that many generalizations about male witches, derived from specific regional studies, are not in fact suitable for Europe-wide application. For instance, the common generalization that men were accused of witchcraft because they were related to a female witch, with the implication that there is a direct causal relationship, looks very shaky when examined closely in specific contexts. The notion that men were accused of practicing different types of witchcraft than women also appears dubious, although worthy of further investigation. In short, simplistic portrayals of the relationship between gender and witchcraft in early modern Europe do not reflect the complex and untidy state of affairs that even the briefest overview reveals.

In Chapter 3, I introduced the male witch as found in demonological literature. This chapter challenged directly Stuart Clark's position that male witches were conceptually impossible for early modern witchcraft theorists. I presented data from several demonological texts that shows early modern authors using masculine terminology to describe witches in general and speaking directly about male witches. I also discussed demonological illustrations depicting male witches. This set of evidence establishes conclusively that there was no conceptual barrier to male witches, in any period of the witch-hunting era. I also discussed the issue of textual variation, and concluded that although demonological texts show signs of variation, they are stable enough to suggest that even if later readers and printers thought of witches as specifically female, they did not feel strongly enough about it to introduce changes in the original masculine terminology of the *Malleus*. Finally, I addressed the issue of language usage, illustrating that conceptual flexibility was built into early modern witchcraft theory and that the individual male witches described in the texts share many features with female witches.

Chapter 4 addressed the question of how early modern Europeans made sense of male witches within a conceptual framework that feminized witchcraft. I argued, first, that the ancient and medieval world provided prototypes of the male witch.

These prototypes were found in traditional beliefs about heretics and magicians, which came together in beliefs about the Sabbath and demonic agency in magic. My second argument was that the essential characteristic of the witch -- the thing that made a witch a witch -- was weak-mindedness. This trait was associated with femininity, and its correlation with witches meant that male witches were implicitly feminized. Another set of associations, between witches and subservience, also feminized male witches. This feminization suggests that interpretations of early modern gender in strictly binary terms are too restrictive, and do not take into account possibilities for shared gender attributes or hierarchical differentiation within genders.

This thesis tackles some complex problems, but is also intentionally limited in scope. My research on male witches does not, and cannot, explain why early modern Europeans were so eager to prosecute witches, nor does it explain the putative shift from a more or less gender-neutral concept of witchcraft to one that was associated closely with women. Indeed, it casts doubt on the validity of the second question: if, as I have attempted to show, male witches were in fact not considered anomalous by early modern Europeans, then we must ask ourselves whether a paradigm shift in the gendering of witchcraft actually occurred. Answering this question would involve exploring in more detail early modern male witches and ancient and medieval witches (or magic-users) of both sexes. Another question not addressed directly in the thesis is whether beliefs about male witches changed over the witch-hunting period. This is an issue that requires a much wider sample of sources and freedom from the need to justify studying male witches at all.

Final Thoughts

Some time ago, another student, whom I had just met, asked me what my research topic was. When I replied that I studied witches in early modern Europe, she said "Oh, so you're doing women's history." I responded with some irritation that it

was more like *anti*-women's history. Unfortunately, at that point I had to take my leave, so I do not know what turn the conversation might have taken. Previous experience suggests that I would have had to explain that not all witches were women.

The notion of anti-women's history provides a helpful focus for some final remarks. As I said at the beginning of Chapter 4, much of this thesis is devoted to constructing the male witch as a valid historical subject. This necessarily involves challenging the view that "the story of witchcraft is primarily the story of women".[1] This view is on one hand the result of the exclusion of male witches, and on another a primary cause of it. The female witch has become so heavily laden with gender-political meaning that any displacement of her from the sole occupation of the historiographical center stage is difficult. However, for methodological and ideological reasons it is both necessary and desirable. As I have endeavoured to show, male witches were relatively significant figures. Although far fewer male witches were prosecuted than female witches, the number of male witches who were accused, tried, tortured, and executed should not be ignored or glossed over. Male subjects are not less important or interesting as human beings than female subjects, and should not be treated as if they were. Yet, this is the general thrust of most current witchcraft historiography. It is in this sense that my work is opposed to women's history, or rather, a particular type of women's history exemplified by Anne Barstow's *Witchcraze*.

Otherwise, I regard my research as affiliated with women's history, or more precisely feminist history, in that I have brought to it certain feminist theoretical approaches. Most important of these, of course, are the ideas that gender is socially constructed and that it is a primary idiom of power. Without these concepts, this thesis could have offered little more than a mere enumeration of male witches.

I have attempted to do more than that, arguing that male witches were not necessarily different in essence from female witches, that there was no conceptual

[1] Karlsen, xii.

barrier to the idea of male witches, and that they 'made sense' thanks to a complex web of associations that feminized witchcraft and, by extension, male witches. I have also suggested that the male witch provides insight into early modern witch-beliefs, constructions of gender, and the relationship between them.

The male witch indicates that rigidly structured interpretations of the link between gender and witchcraft do not do justice to the complexity of early modern beliefs. Neither feminist analyses based on theories of patriarchy, nor Stuart Clark's binary framework, adequately explain the demonological association of witchcraft with women. These interpretations do not even begin to elucidate the inclusion of male witches within that association, because they are predicated on an assumption that male witches do not, conceptually speaking, exist. The male witch is therefore extremely valuable as a device for unpacking interpretations: as soon as one attempts to reconcile them with the evidence of witch-trials and demonological texts, it becomes obvious that the explanatory models are constructed from the outset in such a way that they cannot explain male witches. Like Stuart Clark's demons, male witches, it turns out, are "good to think with".

One final thought: in my Introduction, I describe this research as a reaction to the initial confusion I experienced when I encountered male witches in the *Malleus maleficarum*. In effect, I construct a narrative of discovery that traces the progression of my ideas and interests as well as the incremental development of this project. This self-referential narrative element is neither accidental nor without purpose. My study of male witches, and their place within early modern culture and modern historiography, has been from its inception an exercise in playing 'Awkward Student' and unpacking various black boxes.[2] At the end of the project and its story, it seemed appropriate, therefore, to reflect this dynamic by leaving some of my own intellectual scaffolding uncovered.

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[2] For black boxes, see Bruno Latour, *Science in Action: How to follow scientists and engineers through society* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1987). For the 'Awkward Student', see Collins.

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