# Hell's Belles:
# The Witch, Social Deviance, and Gender Performativity on the Jacobean Stage

Khristian Shane Smith
Marlinton, WV

BA, Bethany College, 2015

A Thesis presented to the Graduate Faculty
of the University of Virginia in Candidacy for the Degree of Master of Arts

Department of English

University of Virginia May, 2017

"How they may overturn the universe from its very foundations, and mingle the shades below with the gods above, this is their sole concern." – Nicholas Remy, *Daemonolatria libri tres*[1]

"Red crosses on wooden doors
And if you float you burn
Loose talk around tables
Abandon all reason
Avoid all eye contact
Do not react
Shoot the messengers…" – Radiohead, "Burn the Witch"

Witchcraft scholarship has gained considerable traction in the academy over the last fifty years. Today it is hardly startling, let alone outrageous, to see academic accounts of witchcraft adjacent to contemporary Wicca sourcebooks in the Occult and New Age sections of bookstores. The two have gained an interpersonal relationship within the last half-century, and arguably just as many scholarly works have focused on the relationship between Early Modern witchcraft and the development of neo-pagan belief as occult materials have argued they owe much of their cultural heritage to these documents. Whole sections of scholarly editions of demonologies have been dedicated to describing the influence those treatises have had on the evolution of contemporary witchcraft practices,[2] and the field's general criticism has absorbed the scholar and practitioner in an analytical and spiritual dialogue. Arguably there is no better time for scholars to approach witchcraft as a cultural phenomenon worthy of study, especially as a new theoretical and practical approach to understanding Early Modern thought, and it is in this realm of thinking that I wish to investigate witchcraft theatre in the following pages.

For the most part, scholarship regarding the language and imagery of witchcraft on the Tudor and Jacobean stage has covered a variety of topics read through a plethora of critical

---

[1] This passage appears only in the Lyons Edition of 1595, p. 9

[2] See Christopher S. Mackay's introduction to *The Hammer of Witches*, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2014, p. 1-58.

lenses. The witch has been argued to be everything from an exemplum of anti-feminine behaviors[3] to a representative for the Catholics lying outside of and dwelling surreptitiously within Reformed England, waiting to usurp and topple it.[4] However, no examination of Jacobean drama has yet to synthesize these accounts in a way that accurately or else neatly tries to explain, or at least contend, why the witch appealed so deliciously to dramatists in the early seventeenth century. Over the course of this thesis, I assert that the appeal of the witch for these dramatists resides in her being inherently deviant, particularly religiously and politically deviant, and unrestrained by authority. The very elements which made the witch fearsome and deplorable (unrestrained sexuality, unchecked glorification of vengeance, anti-establishment, self-empowerment, and chaos) make her a worthy theatrical subject for playwrights whose jobs are to make spectacles.

Elizabethan and Jacobean playwrights glory in deviance, chaos, and self-assertion. The very nature of these subjects is playful and susceptible to manipulation on the part of wordsmiths, and the witch is the epitome of ludicrousness and influence. This essay looks at witchcraft in its Early Modern contexts and how those frames of reference applied to the playwrights writing during the reign of James I (1603-25). The essay is divided primarily into two parts. The first concerns deviance as a sociological device and witchcraft as it was imagined and defined during the period, focusing on (1) the beliefs and practices associated with magic, (2) the fear of *maleficium*, and (3) those whom demonologists defined as witches and how. The second part examines the plays of the period themselves, how they textually engage with or inherited diabolic literary culture, and in what ways these plays examine and discuss themes of

[3] Jonson's *The Masque of Queens*
[4] Purcell and Nate's *Dido and Aeneas*

deviance and discord. Particular focus, for sake of brevity, is given to Thomas Middleton's *The Witch*, estimated to have been performed as early as 1611,[5] and its relationship with Ben Jonson's 1609 *The Masque of Queens*, and William Shakespeare's *Macbeth*.[6]

## I. Stop! Hammer Time: Witchcraft, A General History

### The *Malleus Maleficarum* and Continental Demonology

Much of what we consider Early Modern witchcraft today acquired its origins in that famous anti-feminist demonology conjured up by the vitriolic imagination of Heinrich Kramer under his Latinized name Henricus Institoris.[7] In the *Malleus Maleficarum*, Kramer asserts that witchcraft requires three elements: "the evil intentions of witches, aid from the Devil, and permission from God" (Russel 232). The treatise is divided into three parts, each subdivided into sections that focus on questions thematically-related to each main part. The first part is written for a clergy audience, and refutes critics who deny the existence of witches and hinder prosecutions. The second lays the foundation for the continuation of the work, and describes the actual forms witchcraft takes as well as the remedies proven to combat it. The third functions as a manual for judges confronting and combating witchcraft, and abets inquisitors by removing the burden from them. Nevertheless, descriptions of what witchcraft is, i.e., the inversion, corruption, and destruction of faith, and who can be a witch, i.e., any faithless or corruptible

---

[5] See the introduction material to *The Witch* in *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works*, Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino, eds., Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2010, p. 1129.

[6] Shakespeare's Macbeth is estimated to have been performed as early as 1606 (Gibson).

[7] There remains some debate as to whether the *Malleus* was co-authored by Jacob Sprenger. In the nineteenth century, Joseph Hansen proposed the theory that Sprenger had nothing to do with the *Malleus*, and that the addition of his name was a forgery on Kramer's part (Mackay 5). Mackay himself rebuts arguments of proponents of this theory (5). Meanwhile, other historians, like Broedal, contend that Sprenger's contribution was small, as he certainly wrote the *Apologia auctoris* that prefaces the piece (18). As there remains some debate in scholarship over the authority of authorship, I refer to Kramer alone throughout this essay and by his German name.

person (but with a particular emphasis on women), prevails in each of the three parts, and this prevalence constantly reminds readers of the real threat witches pose on Christendom.

Part one of the *Malleus* analyzes the subject of witchcraft theoretically through natural philosophical and theological lenses. It specifically addresses the question of whether witchcraft is a true phenomenon or merely delusionary, and concludes that witches and witchcraft must be real because the Devil is real (Broedal 22). In this section, Kramer asserts that witches enter into a pact with Satan, who supplies them with their power to produce harmful magical acts, establishing the essential connection that exists (and has since prevailed) between the Devil and witches.

Part two discusses matters of practice and documented witchcraft cases and trials, and reviews the powers of witches as well as their recruitment practices. The section details the various forms witchcraft can take, providing examples as to what kind of spells witches can cast and what sort of remedies can be administered to those affected (Mackay 13).[8] Regarding recruitment, part two claims that witches, rather than the Devil, do most of the recruiting by infecting or otherwise disrupting the lives of respectable matrons who are more easily persuaded due to the manifold weaknesses and imperfections of their gender. The presumed maxim holds that women are more inconstant and infirm by nature than men; thus, tormented matrons can be effortlessly swayed to turn to witches for consultation during times of trouble,[9] and as the text

---

[8] Most of the magic witches practice focuses on sexual deviance and child mutilation. Penises are magicked away, strife is placed between married and unmarried men and women, and midwives butcher children either to make a flying unguent from their fat or as a sacrifice to demons.

[9] The *Malleus* asserts that certain witches can "heal:" "sorceresses come in three varieties. Some heal and harm, some harm but are unable to heal, some only seem to heal, that is, to remove injuries" (Mackay 199-200).

maintains the official opinion that women are more carnal by nature, young maidens can be introduced to devils that may sexually tempt them to the practice (Broedal 30).

Part three covers the legality of witchcraft, and describes the ways to prosecute suspected witches. The arguments are written with regards to lay magistrates overseeing the prosecution. Part three offers a gradual guide for conducting witch trials, detailing the necessary methods to begin the process, interrogation procedures with emphasis on torture, and the formal charging of the accused (Broedal 34).[10]

Contemporaneous with Kramer, Molitor Ulrich wrote extensively about witches, but his position was less focused on torturing confessions out of women and the idea of a witch astride a flying stick, butchering babes, and participating in sabbath orgies. According to P.G. Maxwell-Stuart, witchcraft, as it is interpreted at the time of the early Renaissance, becomes "Janus-like" once we read authoritative treatises. Where one sect of demonologists look back towards popular magic, a magic largely concerned with "effecting cures, manipulating love or inflicting malefices on people, crops or animal" in their texts, another sect peers into the future, generating sensationalist claims that become commonplace among the elite, and thus filter down through society as authority. The *Malleus* effectively advances the campaign of the latter while the work of Molitor Ulrich maintains distance from sensationalism and foregrounds what later Protestant writers would contribute to the subject: "that God, not Satan, is master of this world."[11]

English Demonology

[10] The *Malleus* notes that any women who failed to cry during their trial were assumed to be witches (ibid. 549).

[11] See Maxwell-Stuart's chapter on Kramer and Molitor in *Witchcraft in Europe and the New World, 1400-1800*, New York: Pelgrave, 2001, p. 28-42.

Like Ulrich, not every demonologist saw witchcraft as fundamentally true or gendered as Kramer and his contemporaries did. In 1584, Englishman Reginald Scot published his *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*. In it, he rejected the principle theories of coeval witchcraft. Instead, he approached the phenomenon with severe skepticism, and attempted to lay a logical foundation for the nature of witches and what the term itself meant. In the *Discoverie*, Scot's skepticism about witchcraft is "grounded in the doctrine of divine providence, and in the conviction that the belief in witchcraft [is] a failure of genuine faith" (Almond 29). As a Biblicist Scot hardly denies the reality of witches, but he does refuse to attribute to them any of the same power he sees belonging solely to God: that is, he refuses to cede them "the powers of life and death" (Almond 29). Scot's claims that there are witches, all of which he found biblical reference to, and collapses those mentioned in the Old Testament into four varieties, but he claims that all are couseners or tricksters, regardless of their intention to do ill or bad. Prior to this, most demonologists, Kramer among them, held that witchcraft, regardless of its nature to do good or bad, was evil for it derived solely from Satan. Therefore, Scot joins ranks with his contemporary colleagues when he motions that witchcraft as a broad term umbrellas over a collection of cultural practices identified in the Old Testament. Nevertheless, he considered these practices, however magical or not, the work of charlatans.[12]

Scot's skepticism began ushering in a new way of approaching, interpreting, and debating witchcraft, especially in England. In 1616, John Cotta published his *The Triall of Witch-craft* wherein he asserts that supernatural phenomena are beyond human knowledge. Cotta asserts he believes in the power of the supernatural, particularly of the Devil, evil spirits, and sorcerers, but

[12] See Philip C. Almond's *England's First Demonologist: Reginald Scot and 'The Discoverie of Witchcraft,'* London: I.B. Tauris, 2011, 49-60.

he argues that such events are only understood through conjecture and inference, and he goes on to warn that many of those suspected of witchcraft are in actuality imposters or otherwise unwitting infernal agents.[13] Like other Early Modern witchcraft apologists and demonologists, Cotta cites classical and biblical texts as evidence for the existence of evil spirits. However, unlike earlier writers such as Kramer and de Lancre,[14] Cotta followed in the footsteps of skeptics like Reginald Scott, and used logic and reason to debunk certain assumed myths about the nature of magic and witches.[15] Nevertheless, he does maintain the position that magic factors into everyday life because some diseases appear suddenly, remain unexplainable by medical experts, and refuse to respond to standard remedies.

James I's *Daemonologie* and the Ebbing of Witchcraft Debate

Regardless of contributions by Scot and Cotta, the old maxims still retained some of their power. James VI's (later James I) *Daemonologie* went through several initial reprints and translations, one of which he commissioned himself upon his arrival in England in 1604. Following the news of the North Berwick trials, which attested that a coven of witches had sought to kill James by means of magic, the monarch devoted himself to the study of the supernatural. While his *Daemonolgie* is hardly as theoretically and detailed as something like the *Malleus* or de Lancre's *Tableau*, readers can hardly fault him for this. James was hardly about to instruct his readers in the finer points of practical magic, regardless of how much

[13] Scot, too, argues this.
[14] The latter composed *Tableau de l'inconstance des mauvais anges et demons* (1612).
[15] Cotta dismisses the "water tests" for witches where arraigned defendants would be submerged in water and float if they had renounced their baptism (104-6). He goes on to dismiss other means of testing whether a person is or is not a witch in the remainder of Chapter 14 (104-114).

theoretical knowledge he had. The purpose of the book was singular: "to increase the persecution of witches in Scotland and England. Everything was tailored to achieve this end."[16]

James was convinced, partially due to the confessions given to him by the Berwick witches, that he was a particular enemy of Satan, and, therefore, an enemy to all witches, and he began defending himself as fanatically against his supernatural enemies as he had against his political ones. When he arrived in England, one of his first acts was to replace Elizabeth's witchcraft statute with his own. Under Elizabeth, those who practiced witchcraft and sorcery were only subject to the most severe punishment if they were found to have used such arts to kill another person or commit similar serious bodily injury.[17] During Elizabeth's reign, the crimes in which witchcraft had been employed, not the sorcery itself, was the primary object of punishment. James on the other hand demanded severe punishment regardless of whether magic had been used to seriously harm others. Like other traditional demonologists, James held the belief that all magic derived from trafficking with the Devil and that practitioners were a real threat to his authority.

While the early part of his English reign met witchcraft hysteria with an almost equal rabidity as his reign in Scotland had, James nevertheless waned in his fervor, and he came to prove to his satisfaction that several of those who had accused others had been falsifying

---

[16] See Tyson's introduction to James' *Daemonologie*, Woodbury: Llewellyn Press, 2016, p. 1-43.
[17] "Under the law of Elizabeth, anyone who bewitched another without causing his death was subject to a penalty of one year in prison; the law of James made the same crime punishable by hanging. Minor infractions, such as using divination to locate stolen property, making love potions, or damaging property such as laming a cow or causing hail to flatten a crop in the field were still punishable by a year in prison and a term in the pillory, as they had been under the old law. James caused it to be a felony to invoke any evil spirit, or to have any dealing with an evil spirit. This meant that to keep a familiar spirit in the form of a cat, dog, rabbit, or other pet was punishable by death." (Tyson 7)

information.[18] James met the deception with rage and religious doubt, and some historians assert that James completely repudiated his belief in witchcraft. Thomas Fuller asserts in his *Church History of Britain* that James "grew first diffident of, and then flatly to deny, the workings of witches and devils as but falsehoods and delusions."[19]

Though the witchcraft hysteria in England progressed throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it began to ebb when increasingly more learned men turned away from discourses on diabolicism. Slowly, but surely, educated men withdrew from holding or publicizing their beliefs, not because they now saw through any of the logical inconstancies or contradictions inherent in demonology debates, but rather because of the exposure of such ideas to ideological division and debate as it grew more intense throughout the long Reformation. The process was nevertheless unhurried, but from 1660s onwards, "largely in part because of the permanent divisions inflicted on the body politic by the conflicts of the Civil War," witchcraft as a theory and practice became a subject of politicization, which prevented a consensual approach and ultimately silenced the subject. Nevertheless, the witch prevailed during the early years of James's reign, and she elicited real fear.

---

[18] In 1605 James paid three hundred pounds to the Reverend Samuel Harsnett to interrogate fourteen-year-old Anne Gunter, who had accused three women of witchcraft in Abingdon. Under Harsnett's questioning, Gunter admitted to pretending to be witched. While travelling north in 1618, James stopped at Leicester when six women were due to be hanged on the evidence of John Smith, a local twelve-year-old. Nine other women had already been executed on his testimony, but James examined the boy and determined that he was a fraud. Chief Justice Sir Edward Coke was disgraced, and the women were freed. James would later question another youth, Katherine Malpas of Westham in Essex, in 1621. Malpas accused two women of subjecting her to fits by means of demonic possession, but James, a self-acclaimed expert on possession, found her lying. Malpas confessed that another woman had taught her how to simulate fits so that she could charge money of others who wanted to witness Malpas' convulsions. (9)

[19] Rossell Hope Robbins, *The Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Demonology*, London: Spring Books, 1959, p. 279

Witchcraft as Disorder and Deviance

Acknowledging the existence of witches in a given community or to invoke the language of demonology in a political debate was "necessarily to raise the specter of disorder which lay the heart of Early Modern political behavior and thought" (Elmer 115). Counterarguments to such threats presupposed the "divine legitimation of the rule, be they monarch, bishop, magistrate, or corporation," and were often implemented during new or insecure regimes.[20]

Witch-hunting, as Kramer crafts it, is the liturgy of fear, and the myth of diabolism had paved the way for a sociology of authority. Through particular language and uniform descriptions,[21] likeminded magistrates and demonologists exacerbated social rifts innate in rural society by conferring on them some form of justification. Through cultural, moral, and religious rationalization, despite a spectacular appearance, the hysteria induced by Kramer's call to arms against a particular kind of woman sustained and terrified, and it serves as one of the many moments in West European history where social elites conquer the countryside by the forces of law and order,[22] and artists were only happy to abet.

During the formative years of the West's witch-craze, artists, demonologists, and printers developed a visual language that presented witchcraft as part of the contemporary discourse about gender and sexuality. In doing so, they extended the "social and cultural relevance of the

---

[20] "Conversely, instances of witchcraft tended to be dismissed by those secure in their authority, where the mere suggestion of diabolical infiltration of the body politic might be considered by the power-that-be as a challenge to their legitimate claim on power." (Elmer 116)

[21] "The theologians revived stereotypes that had no popular basis, in order to demonstrate the existence and progress of a huge satanic plot designed to make the powers of evil triumph upon earth. Such ideas unquestionably reflected the disarray of authority and especially of churchmen, confronted with the fissures that portended the disruption of Christian unity in the sixteenth century" (Muchembled 140).

[22] See Robert Muchembled's "Satanic Myths and Cultural Reality" in Early Modern European Witchcraft: Centers and Peripheries, Bengt Ankarloo and Gustav Henningsen, eds., Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990, p. 139-160.

witch," and, consequentially, extended "credence in the power of witchcraft" (Zika 270). From the sixteenth century on, witches began to adopt masculine features as they sought to appropriate male sexuality and power, gaining their own authority independent of men, and, in that way, inverting and perverting the divinely ordained gender and social hierarchy. Under the newly developing visual language and the *Malleus*'s effective authority, women became subjected to discriminatory and anti-feminist remarks.

Relying on a litany of biblical and classical authorities, Kramer develops a gender discourse that serves to prove that women, more so than men, are compelled to Satan and diabolicism. His *Malleus* asserts that women are more carnal and less faithful. For Kramer, female carnality results from her formation as an imperfect animal, and the defect originates in her sex being configured from a curved rib: that is to say, woman's very existence is contrary and twisted to man. Regarding her lack of faith, Kramer contends that Eve's response to the serpent's question in Genesis illustrates that she is doubtful and "does not have faith in the words of God," and that this characteristic is true of all women thereafter (165).[23] Thus, the inherited fickleness and faithlessness of femininity engenders the witch, whose every goal is to upend convention and conviction. And the fear that conventions and their authority would be critiqued and displaced by the mass worried even the most faithful men of authority.

[23] Faithlessness is also attributed to the very etymology of the word "femina," which Kramer claims is spoken as "fe" and "minus," meaning that women have and keep less faith. This absurdity is arguably one of the best-known examples of the anti-female reasoning of the *Malleus*, though the passage it derives from is borrowed verbatim from Antoninus of Florence's *Summa*. Mackay notes that the etymology only makes sense in Romance languages because the Latin fides is often reduced to fe, except in Italian where "fede retains the two syllables and "d" of the Latin form;" nevertheless, "archaic Italian used the form fé," which may have contributed to Antoninus' reasoning.

The Early Modern witch deviates from prescribed social norms in every way possible. During the period,

> Prosecutors and heirs of the Inquisition, the new fraternity of demonologists imagined that they were themselves persecuted, that the world was given up to diabolism, and that secret devil-worshippers were plotting to frustrate their purposes. Their imaginary sabbath was a reversal of the Christian liturgy, a copy of the Mass in which each separate feature was given a negative coefficient—a dark, morbid parody of the original. (Muchembled 140)

Arguably, the myths of Satanism and the sabbath were alien to popular mentality,[24] but the savagery it inspired had a specific role on social conduct. The rural outliers panicked with fear. Countryfolk sought to exorcize their terror and defend themselves against sorcery by informing on neighbors. Trials multiplied, and a cycle of private vengeances met with them. "Altogether the mental equilibrium of the rural populace was profoundly disturbed" (147).

In the countryside, the false sabbath rites diabolized practices, customs, and beliefs of the peasantry. Popular culture was absorbed by the elite and transfigured, translated, and mutilated into an act of deviance that spelled disaster for retainers of those old customs. Beliefs in the efficacy of forces inherent in human bodies were widespread and upheld; now, a witch might call up a storm by churning the waters of a pond and chanting, building on the inherent power of her being to extend into and affect the macrocosm around her.[25]

Satanism as it was founded by the inheritors of Inquisitorial fires worked to transpose the unmanageable beliefs into the realms of diabolism, forcing social control and eradicating the errors and superstitions of local communities. In the process, woman fell further from grace, vanishing as a seat of authority over children and as an importation of knowledge. Through the diabolic mythos, demonologists and other elite figures found ways to shove mothers to the

---

[24] See "Satanic Myths and Cultural Reality" p. 140-45.
[25] Muchembled, 149.

periphery by inducing their children to reject them and deem them unworthy in comparison to state approved schools. In short, a new social order bound in a universal belief system that could be easily controlled and policed was established.

The objective of the fearmongering succeeded: countryfolk respected law, became attached to a prescribed order, feared retaliation, and discontinued their practice of private vengeance. In an age obsessed with self-representation and burgeoning on the cusp of individualism, the great paradoxical success was that a select few made it possible to subject others by stripping them of their very individuality and self-governance.[26] Thus, the witch became the rebellious figure whose reliance upon magic restored everything the new Reformed regimes disposed.

## II. Hell's Belles and Their Roles on Stage

### *The Witch* and Female Empowerment

Keith Thomas asserts that witchcraft was generally believed to be "a method of bettering one's condition when all else had failed. Like most forms of magic, it was a substitute for impotence, a remedy for anxiety and despair. But it differed from the others in that it usually involved acts of malice towards other people" (522).[27] In *The Witch*, Thomas Middleton juxtaposes Ravenna's court with Hecate's coven of witches. In the aristocracy, courtiers waste their affluence on hedonism, treat women as collectibles, and engage in intrigues against one

[26] According to Jon Oplinger, "The view of social deviance stems logically from three critical, and for conflict theorists, standard, assumptions about the nature of society. It assumes (1) that society is animated and shaped by the struggle for scarce goods; (2) that this struggle is dominated by those with power; and (3) that this domination is reflected in the legal system. The law, in other words, protects the interests and world view of the powerful." (*The Politics of Demonology* 24)

[27] *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, 1971.

another. In his witches, Middleton creates a social collective that escapes these upper class follies. The dichotomy of court and coven shows audiences that, though they have authority in their class status, the aristocracy must use their servants and Hecate's magic to execute their secret agendas. The court is reliant on others; this is not so in the coven. Hecate and her fellow witches are autonomous. Their magic can conjure violent weather, force individuals to fall in love with one another against their will, and topple the rural economy, which in effect would eventually, though indirectly, destroy the court itself. Witchcraft's indirect nature makes it very dangerous to Ravenna's aristocrats, and Thomas Middleton's *The Witch* examines the division between coven and court to show us that the practice of witchcraft empowers women in and frees them from a gluttonous, sexist, and secretive patriarchal aristocracy that, except for the façade of virtue, does not differ from them in terms of diabolicism.

Gamaliel Bradford writes that "in spite of splendid poetry, [*The Witch*] is not attractive, and…the women in it offer nothing to redeem the rest" (15).[28] What Bradford failed to do is actually examine the witches as women, and I argue against his claim that there is nothing which could redeem the rest of the female characters in the work. *The Witch* has plenty to offer in the study of women; it utilizes powerful female figures who are able to express themselves liberally and attain their volition. While perhaps not redeemable in the general sense, the play nevertheless promotes female autonomy, and I think Bradford is too quick in dismissing what powers lie in Hecate and her coven and what this means for the other female characters.

The witches have great powers but they do not pretend to hide the limits of those powers from their customers nor do they abuse them in any way. The witches instead choose to express themselves honestly, and they subvert social protocols and free themselves from the abuses of

[28] "The Women of Middleton and Weber"

others by flying, producing violent storms, destroying livestock, engaging freely in sexual activity, and conjuring impotency in aristocratic men. As Stephanie Spoto notes, "the self-identification of witch helped impoverished women gain power and respect in their community" (54). Hecate and her coven isolate themselves from the court and earn respect in it by becoming and self-identifying as witches. They are not members of Ravenna's social structure, and they need not respect anyone but themselves. Instead of observing social conventions and flattering others, the witches outrightly say what they feel. Moreover, their economic relationship with the aristocracy indirectly influences the solutions to the plots each courtier designs.

Middleton's witches, though undoubtedly magical, never directly involve themselves in plots concerning the court. The witches discuss infanticide and murder amongst themselves, but such practices are not brought to the forefront of the stage. Murder and child mutilation occur offstage; nevertheless, they do occur if only in the imagination of the audience as put there by the witches' conversations. Most of the magic Middleton writes about embraces traditional witchcraft practices as taken from *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* by Reginald Scot, such as brewing viscera and organic matter together, flying by the aid of ointment made from baby fat, conjuring storms, and suffocating a sleeping farmer's daughter with nightmares.[29] The spells the coven cast on stage are at times jocular, reliant on stunning visual effects, and aimed at making mischief. And while comical at times, such magics are quite capable of completely undermining the authority of the court.

Witchcraft Economies

In Act 5, scene 2, Middleton depicts the witches as laboring. Hecate and her coven are busy preparing a death for Almachildes at the request of the Duchess who, believing she has

[29] All of these are registered in the *Malleus* in Part II.

successfully seduced Almachildes into killing her husband, now intends to ensure she is not caught. The plan is to kill Almachildes suddenly and subtly, but when the Duchess doubts Hecate's power, "[c]anst thou do this…/ So artfully, so cunningly!" (5.2.14, 17), Hecate flies into a rage. She recites Medea's prayer from Book VII of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in Latin which relates all that is within her ability.[30]/[31] In her fury, Hecate owes the court no obligations. She is an outlier, self-segregated and autonomous, and does not need to show respect to those who are ranked socially higher.

The witches owe allegiance to no one, and glory instead in their ability to incite suffering through their destructive arts. Hecate notes that Stadlin's speciality is raising storms "that shipwreck barques, and tears up growing oaks, / Flies over houses, and take *Anno Domini* / Out of a rich man's chimney" (1.2.134-36). Hoppo destroys young cattle, rips apart vineyards and orchards, and can magically transfer goods from one farmer to another. Stadlin's storms, which destroy ships and tear up the homes of the rich, focus on affecting the middle and upper class. The witches can use their power to strip others of their affluence, authority, and skills, if only by

---

[30] The English translation, as provided by Reginald Scot in *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*, is:
The rivers I can make retire,
Into the fountains whence they flo,
(Whereat the banks themselves admire)
I can make standing waters go,
With charms I drive both sea and clowd,
I make it calme and blowe alowd,
The vipers jawes, the rockie stone,
With words and charmes I break in twaine
The force of earth congealed in one,
I moove and shake both woods and plaine;
I make the soules of men arise,
I pull the moone out of the skies. (128)

[31] Medea is known as an enchantress in most myths, and often as a priestess of Hecate. Jonson in his footnotes to *The Masque of Queens* regards her as one of Hecate's daughters, along with Circe.

the means of a storm. Hoppo's powers lie in ruining rural economy. Both of these witches have the ability to radically alter the socio-economic status.

In her own section of Ravenna, apparently close to the farmlands as is revealed by her casting spells against farmers and her son's setting nightmares loose on the parson's daughter, Hecate wields authoritative power. When a farmer and his wife deny Hecate flour, barm, and milk, the witch takes pains to make them pay.[32] "I ne'er hurt their charmings, / Their brewlocks, nor their batches, nor forespoke / Any of their breedings. Now I'll be meet with 'em" (1.2.50-52). The witch casts her own form of judgment when her neighbors refuse to give her alms. Rather than remain passive and abused, Hecate bewitches the farm. She halts the breeding of animals, kills some, and prevents the farm from performing its necessary functions. The cows will no longer yield milk; the sheep will no longer prosper.

The basis of rural economy lies in the farm's ability to produce and breed animals. When these things went awry in Middleton's time, witchcraft was believed to be the fault. It is in this way that Hecate can destroy the economic foundation of Ravenna. When the lowest classes die out because they are unable to yield goods which the upper class themselves rely on to survive, the entire socio-economic structure is ruined. However, as Hecate suggests, she has no quarrel with farmers who comply with her begging and provide her foodstuffs. Though Hecate has the power to destroy everything, she stays her use. Unlike the court, she does not abuse what power she has. Rather, she uses it only when necessary but to an exacting degree.

---

[32] On the relationship between villagers and witches see Edward Bever's "Witchcraft, Female Aggression, and Power in the Early Modern Community" *Superstition and Magic in Early Modern Europe, A Reader*, Helen Parish, ed., New York: Bloomsbury, 2015 p. 275-305.

In early modern England, most women charged with *maleficium*[33] came from peasant families; "female witches were most likely to be the wives of labourers (46.9%) or husbandmen (22.4%)" (Kent 71). The lower classes were exploitable, especially the women within them, and there was a great ease at blaming women who practiced midwifery for the complications experienced in childbirth. The ease by which these women could be blamed for ill events may have accounted for the influx of witchcraft accusations. In Middleton's time the practice of midwives helped propagate the witchcraft hysteria.[34] James Keller states,

> …the most frequently cited charge against the domestic sorceress was interference with the birth process. She was suspected of 'preventing conceptions or…causing miscarriages, childbirth fatalities, or 'monstrous' (deformed) [newborns]…Moreover, allegations of abortion and infanticide were frequently leveled against such women…and the abandonment of maternal responsibilities often preceded a charge of witchcraft. (40)

It is no wonder that Middleton depicts his witches as women on the outskirts of the city, dealing with trade, and connects them with midwives rather than as women at ease.

When Aberzanes offers his newborn to an old woman whom he charges to raise it in Act 2, audiences should keep in mind the anonymity of the old woman and the fate children have suffered on stage already. The first child to appear in the play is the "unbaptizèd brat" that Hecate orders Stadlin to boil, and Hecate reveals to the Duchess that she feeds "barley soaked in infants' blood" to the ravens and screech owls that fly by her door (5.2.43-46).

Though Middleton's witches sacrifice children in the name of their arts, the description that these infants are unbaptized suggests that only the unsaved are doomed to feel the witches' knife. The witches have great power, but they never abuse it. From their very first appearance in Act 1, scene 2, the witches are established as an obverse for the court.

---

[33] Kent defines maleficium as "the black witchcraft of harm and injury…usually prosecuted in the assize courts, and punished by execution or imprisonment" (71).
[34] The *Malleus* notes that midwives "surpass all others in evil."

Middleton juxtaposes the celebration at court with the living and working conditions of the witches. In a stark contrast to the first scene of play, the second scene begins with constant movement and multitasking. Hecate enters calling on spirits and summoning her coven, "White spirits, black spirits, grey spirits, red spirits! / Devil-toad, devil-ram, devil-cat, and devil-dam! / Why, Hoppo and Stadlin, Hellwain and Puckle?" (1.2.5). Instead of the relaxed demeanor and pleasurable events depicted in the court, scene 2 introduces Hecate rushing around and working.

When Stadlin and the other witches confirm their presence, they do so by acknowledging that they are working. Stadlin cries, "Here, sweating at the vessel" (1.1.6) which reveals her laboring over her work. Standing over a boiling cauldron has caused her to sweat. Hecate commends Stadlin, telling her to boil the unknown concoction well. Hecate acknowledges Stadlin's labor over the potion, and instructs her fellow witches that someone should tend the flames while someone else brings her a dish so that she can begin "work upon these serpents" (1.2.12). Hecate and her coven share the responsibilities and labor. One member of the coven does not do more than the others; even when Hecate tells her son Firestone to gut the snakes, she turns from one task to another, and begins conjuring demons.

Although the work may not seem as though it is necessarily labor intensive, the witches' brief scenes in the play strive to show them as a commune that encourages and employs labor together. When Stadlin delivers a brass dish for Hecate to gut the serpents in, Hecate hands her an "unbaptizèd brat" to be boiled down so that its fat can be mixed with herbs and made into an unguent to lather on their skins and let them fly. These flights are highly desirable; Hecate's recollection of them is that they allow the witches to perceive "whole provinces" and that while

in the air they can gather with their incubi and "[d]ance, kiss, and coll" (1.2.26).[35] In opposition, courtiers, as we have seen in Amoretta's seduction of Almachildes for the Duchess and Hermio's poisoning the wine for Antonio, rely on their servants to do their work for them. Unlike the court, where servants wait on their masters, the coven works together so that everyone can reap the benefits. As is evident by the work the witches engage in, however, pleasure comes at a price.

The witches, more than the courtiers, understand that work must come before play. Hecate herself upholds this value when she instructs her son Firestone that he may not "overlay a fat parson's daughter" until after he finishes his work: "Sweat thy six ounces out about the vessel, / And thou shalt play at midnight" (1.2.99-100). Although Firestone's wanting to pursue "strange women" embitters Hecate, she nevertheless permits him to do so as long as he finishes his work first. Likewise, the witches engage in work in other scenes in which they appear. In Act 3, scene 3, the witches prepare to fly; however, their flight is not shown immediately, nor does the scene focus on the kissing, embracing, and feasting that Hecate states occur during the coven's celestial rendezvous. Rather, Middleton decides to show us an exchange between Hecate and Firestone as the latter finishes his collecting necromantic ingredients.[36] The scene focuses mostly on work and the relationship between mother and son. While Hecate shares an incestuous relationship with her son, the relationship explored in this scene is not focused on pleasure; it is focused on Firestones' training in his mother's arts.

As Hecate readies for her flight she spies Firestone with a basket of lizards, snake eggs, and herbs, and the herbs which Firestone gathers matter a great deal to her. She inquires whether

---

[35] The *Malleus* notes the means of congregation and rites administered at witches' Sabbaths, emphasizing the sexual deviancy of them (2.1.3-4)
[36] See Machumbled, "Satanic Myths"

he "cropped" them "by moonlight." According to Marion O'Connor's footnotes, the herbs which Firestone gathers and the ways in which he culls them come from Zacharie Jones' translation of Pierre Le Loyer's *Livre des Spectres*.[37] The meticulous focus on time, place, and herbs gathered suggests the concern the witches have for their craft and the skill it requires; thus the list of ingredients and the manner in which they are collected indicate the planning and physical labor that go into making spells. Hecate's focus on her son's assistance with her arts indicates that Hecate is training her son in her practice. Though Firestone is not particularly pleased with his mother's method of teaching him, and he often chastises her for her craft; nevertheless, he does obey her.

Inverted Feminity and Sexual Deviance

The very idea of the witch was an inversion of the passive model for feminine behavior. Instead of being chaste, the witch verbalizes and achieves her sexual desires. In contrast to the Renaissance's model woman, the witch is autonomous, powerful, artful, individual, sexual, and unruly. As James Keller argues, the witch represented the empowered female, otherwise helpless, who confronted social abusers (41). The witch commands herself, and autonomy is of vital importance with regards to Middleton's conception of her.

The witches freely engage in sexual activity and govern themselves. When Almachildes enters into the witches' cavern Hecate exclaims "The man that I have lusted to enjoy! / I have had him thrice in incubus already" (1.2.196-97). The line may allude to Hecate sleeping with a

[37] "Virgil doth recite…ceremonies which the Sorcerers used in gathering their herbs…as to cut them in the night time by the light of the Moonshine with a hook of brass, which maketh me also to remember certain observation of the Magicians and Sorcerers in times past, in cutting of their herb *Elleborus*, *Mandragoras* (*mandragora*, l. 27), and *Panaceum* (*Panax*, l. 28)…and those also of the *Druids*…who used, without any knife or iron, to pluck the herb which the called *Selago* (selago, l. 29)" (1152).

demon who took on Almachildes' form, but it also implies that Hecate has suffocated Almachildes with nightmares. The text's ambiguity offers multiple interpretations, either Hecate mated with a demon in the shape of Almachildes' figure, crept upon Almachildes as he slept and had sex with him, or else overpowered him in his sleep and asphyxiated him.[38]

By Middleton's time, the word incubus meant "a feeling of oppression during sleep, as of some heavy weight on the chest and stomach; the nightmare" (*OED* n. 2). The use of the word to mean "nightmare" came from the belief that the incubus descended on sleeping persons and often engaged with them in carnal intercourse (*OED* n. 1). The word incubus appears throughout the text of *The Witch*. When Hecate recalls her flights she says, "What young man can we wish to pleasure us / But we enjoy him in an incubus?" (1.2.27-28).[39]

Barbera Becker-Cantarino writes that we "know that the vast majority of the accused and convicted [of witchcraft] were women, mostly poor, single, or widowed and that the concept of the witch, totally absent from the polite Renaissance debate on women, was used in Protestant marriage theology as a negative role model…" (170). Hecate's role as a woman engaged in sexual seduction helps her rebel against the patriarchal authority of Almachildes and the court. For Katelyn McCarthy, Hecate's succubus/incubus relationship with Almachildes (and her murder of children in other scenes) distinguish her as a Lilith figure. McCarthy argues that such a figure "poses a threat to patriarchal society in that she offers women a different portrait of femininity — a portrait characterized by independence and autonomy" (40). Regardless of

---

[38] The power to emasculate and transfigure humans is detailed within the *Malleus*. Much of the books focuses on the subject of blasphemous sexual acts, and "diverting the minds of men to irregular love" (Mackay 172).

[39] While some scholars debate whether the word would be better replaced with succubus it is important to remember that the incubus could be any form of demon who undertakes the shape of another to copulate with witches.

whether Hecate actually slept with Almachildes or with a demon appearing in his image, the crone engages in carnal intercourse of her own volition as evidenced when she talks of the delight she takes in it at line 196. The female witches are granted the ability to take on any man in intercourse.

Via her use of witchcraft, Hecate is able to fulfill desires that otherwise would go unfulfilled had she been a member of the court or part of the Ravenna social structure. Separated from the court, the coven has the ability to wield their sexuality and their magic as they please. The court's coming to the witches indicates that the witches are vital to the court's retention of power,[40] but as Hecate's lines in Act 1 suggest, the witches are not supreme beings. They cannot necessarily directly undo all things, such as the bounds of matrimony, but they can indirectly spoil it. What is more, the witches understand and accept the limits of what powers they have.

When Sebastian demands that Hecate rise from her trance while summoning demons and aid him, she immediately asks what he desires from her: "Is't to confound some enemy on the seas?" (1.2.131), "Or dost thou envy / The fat prosperity of any neighbour?" (1.2.140-141), "Is it to starve up generatïon? / To strike a barrenness in man or woman?" (1.2.150-151). Hecate's inquiries do not suggest that her powers can do anything explicitly murderous, and when Sebastian asks if she can "disjoin wedlock" she says it is impossible since "'tis of heaven's fast'ning" (1.2.171). Rather, she notes that though the witches have the power to cause strifes and stir up jealousy, they cannot explicitly destroy marriage.[41] Furthermore, her asking Sebastian certain questions about what he would have her do implies that other courtiers have come to her before. Her questions all regard certain powers that undermine authority, bring

---

[40] *Witchcraft and Society in England and America, 1550-1750*, Marion Gibson, ed., p. 97.
[41] The *Malleus* states that marriage could be destroyed through impediments but not by direct acts or violence as the latter would make the Devil greater than God (172).

about ruin to property, and affect the whole economic structure of Ravenna; it is not unquestionable that many other patrons have come to her and used her craft to exact revenge, bewitch their peers, and hinder the progress of more prosperous enemies.

Independence and Power

The witches' powers are not weak. When Hecate and her coven fly in Act 3, scene 3, she instructs her son to watch the house while she is away. Grounded, as it were, Firestone loathes not being permitted to join them. He blames his mother for leaving him to "walk here like a fool, / and a mortal" (3.3.74-75). His implication is that mortals, those who are human, are fools. Regardless, the aside tells audiences that the court is, in some way, in the wrong.[42] By understanding and practicing witchcraft, Hecate and her coven can roam the air and become more than human.

In many ways, this goes against some of the traditional depictions of the witch in Middleton's time. Walter Stephens writes that

> Contrary to modern cliché, witches could not actually fly because they were defined as powerless in themselves. Like *maleficium*, a witch's flying could only be performed for her by a demon….it was the demon who carried aloft the witch's broomstick or other aircraft, enabling her to fly. (126)

Yet, Middleton does not use demons on stage.[43] Indeed, unlike other portrayals of witchcraft, *Doctor Faustus* for example, a demon never executes Hecate's demands or wishes. Her power is solely in and of herself. To fly, Hecate states she must "but 'noint" then mount (3.3.48). Unlike

[42] That is to say, the mortals are themselves fools because they labor under the impression that they are upright and moral. They bear morality as a façade, but their behavior is nevertheless as diabolic as the coven they rely on for vengeance spells.

[43] Unlike Faustus, for example, the demons of Hecate's world are imaginary visions brought forth either to her sight alone, or else unable to appear due to impediments during her conjurations.

the ideas Stephens suggests most of Middleton's contemporaries had about witches in Early Modern Europe, Hecate employs her own magical power to fly. Though a demon does appear on stage in the form of a cat to greet her, the specter does not come to make her fly; rather, he flies to "fetch his dues" — that is, "a kiss, a coll, a sip of blood." (49-50).

When Hecate rides the air, she speaks of being above the "woods, high rocks and mountains" (65), beyond the reach of hearing bells, wolves, waves, and even cannon fire. As she sings, "We fly by night 'mongst troops of spirits" (68). Middleton focuses on the word "amongst," not on, or by aid of, spirits. Unlike Stephens' point about the historical understanding of witches, Hecate and her coven fly with a multitude of supernatural forces, not because of them. Mortals are grounded and incapable of being anything but bound in their own mortality. Moreover, they are, in effect, powerless without the support of others.[44]

The Lascivious Ducal Court

Unlike the witches who have the power to freely make change, if only in indirect ways such as through the weather, the upper class fosters secret agendas and relies on others to help them execute them. Middleton counters the witches' hard work, sexual liberty, and power with the upper class' drunken objectification of women and invention of barbarous traditions like drinking from the skull of a vanquished enemy.

During the feast celebrating Antonio and Isabella's nuptials, Fernando notes that the Duke is relatively soberer than he has been or he is, at least, the least drunk member of the court: "It seems he's drunk the less, though I think he / That has the least, he's certainly enough" (1.2.40-41). Nevertheless, Fernando's point that the one who drank the least had drunk "enough" suggests that the inebriated state of the court is excessive. Fernando calls the court

[44] Macbeth shares this trait in 1.2.: "hover through the fog and filthy air"

gluttonous in lines 35 and 36: “Here’s marriage sweetly honoured in gorged stomachs / and overflowing cups.” Rather than revere marriage as a sanctified act, the court celebrates it by becoming “gorged,” that is crammed with food (*OED* adj. 1), and inebriated on “overflowing,” that is superfluous (*OED* adj.), cups of wine.

Fernando is being sarcastic in lines 35 and 36. He prefaces his claim about “sweetly honoured” marriage by comparing the banquet to a riot; he adds that at “such entertainments still / Forgetfulness obeys and surfeit governs” (1.2.33-34). As indicated by the use of the word surfeit in line 34, the court is excessive in its drinking and eating habits. The word surfeit reappears in Act 3, scene 2 when Isabella recalls the false news Francisca sent to her brother: “The gentleman her mother wished her to [marry], / Taking a violent surfeit at a wedding, / died ere she came to see him” (1.2.71-73). In both instances, the use of the word surfeit implies gluttony, and the lines exemplify how the court embraces gourmandism and inebriation. Surfeit as a disease in horses is brought on by excessive overfeeding, and the historical use of the word during Middleton’s time defines it as an illness attributed to excessive consumption (OED, n. 4. a). The ease with which Antonio and Isabella believe Francisca’s lie reveals the commonness of gluttonous casualties in courts. It is no wonder, then, why Fernando prefers a little more restraint, and it is this very preference that Gaspero mocks.

Gaspero serves Antonio, he is not a courtier himself, and his treatment of Fernando characterizes his opinion of the noble class. When Fernando exits, Gaspero says, “He hath not pledged one cup but looked most wickedly / Upon good malaga, flies to the black jack still / And sticks to small drink like a water rat” (1.1.43-45). Fernando prefers a “small drink,” that is, an ale, beer, etc. usually of a poor, weak or inferior quality (*OED* n. 1) to malaga, a fortified white wine from Spain (*OED* n. 1). Gaspero’s focus on “small drink” shows his contempt of the upper

classes inability to hold hard liquor. They are too weak for it. Furthermore, Gaspero's calling Fernando a "water rat" implies that the latter is a rodent and, since the term applies contemptuously to boatmen or sailors, a pirate (*OED* n. 2). Gaspero considering a member of his master's social class as too weak for harder liquor and labelling Fernando as a "water rat," and "fellow" once he is out of earshot suggests that the servant harbors resentment toward the upper class, or at least Fernando's representation of it.[45]

Gaspero's private asides in which he insults courtiers proves that servants have minds of their own which they are only capable of expressing to themselves when unobserved by authority.[46] It illustrates what level of knowledge servants have and to what degree they keep it to themselves. The notion that servants take umbrage with and cannot speak openly about their masters hints at the authoritative and repressive force of the elite; that Gaspero's dislike of Fernando comes from the latter's not living up to the expectations of a Ravenna courtier suggests that "forgetfulness" and "surfeit" are the expected behaviors of the upper class. In either scenario, Middleton illustrates the aristocracy as inept. Courtiers, for Gaspero, are weak and waste their time on parties and pleasure.

The Duke emphasizes pleasure with his first lines, "A banquet yet? Why surely, my Lord Governor, / Bacchus could never boast of a day till now / To spread his power, and make his glory known" (1.1.96-98). The Duke's allusion to Bacchus evokes a sense of carefreeness. Bacchus and Bacchanalia are both indicative of drunken revelry, and the Duke's compliment of his Governor's ability to create a celebration that even a deity could boast of is meant to indicate

[45] Perhaps he is simply too tame.
[46] Unlike the witches, who need not hide behind decorum for the sake of it.

the court's affluent exploits. Furthermore, the Duke's compliment serves as the first glimpse into the habit of courtly flattery.

Just as the Duke compliments the Governor's luxurious banquet, the Duchess emphasizes "this day's costs… your great love bestows" at line 101 (1.1.), which acts as a social compliment to the Governor's wealth and his willingness to share it with those he loves, that is, his niece. The Governor responds by telling her that the feast is to honor goodness and the Duchess' presence, again, a form of flattery that raises the Duchess to a higher position. However, the Duke interrupts this courtly exchange of compliments with a call to another round of drinking, and no one takes any pains to deny the Duke's wishes. In fact, the Governor supports the Duke's toast by claiming that the court has pledged many drinks already and "cannot shrink now for one" (1.1.108). The courtiers are complimentary, fashionable, and playful, but the interruption of drink and the loss of the conversation shared between the Governor and the Duchess tells audiences that social grace and compliments are replaced with drunkenness. Since intoxication is a priority to the court, courtiers carry insobriety into other parts of Ravenna's culture.

The Duke implies that there is another means of training young men in the court. He jokes about the round as an "excellent way to train up soldiers" (1.1.144), implying that Ravenna's army is best trained by "a circuit of a garrison or camp, the ramparts of a fortress, etc., made by a patrol, esp. during the night, to ensure that the sentinels are vigilant" (*OED* n.1 23. a), "a swinging stroke or blow with a sword" (*OED* n.1 18), "a dance in which the dancers move in a circle, typically while remaining in contact with each other, e.g. by holding hands" (*OED* n.1 17. a), or "a set of drinks bought for all the members of a group, in early use esp. for a toast" (*OED* n.1 29. a). Round as a blow from the sword implies fencing, round as a dance implies gatherings at court, and round as a set of drinks implies continuing to consume alcohol. Though

the Duke implies that a military circuit could "train" soldiers for war, the ambiguity of the word "round" proposes courtly matters can be useful training, too.

Recalling the beginning of the play, nobles can serve in battle; Sebastian recalls that he found Isabella married after leaving his three-year tour. If the court can train soldiers, then line 144 implies that the soldiers carry into their job a sense of indulgence and lack of work ethic: instead of practical training for warfare, aristocrats who fight in wars are taught to waste their energies on banquets and other social gatherings promoted by the affluent. Moreover, this affluence breeds an entitlement that fosters the objectification and subsequent buying of women.

Women as Commodity

Gaspero's remarks to Antonio's mistress Florida illustrate the objectification women suffer in Ravenna's court. When Florida comes to Gaspero crying that she will no longer be wanted by Antonio, Gaspero chides, "Are you so simple / — And have been fives years traded — as to think / One woman would serve him?" (1.1.55-57). His rhetorical question tells us that Antonio does not wish to keep to his vows of monogamy in marriage, and the lines serve to illustrate Florida as a commodity. Her being "traded" symbolizes her as an economic good rather than tell audiences she is a whole person. Invoking the work of Gayle Greene, Richard Levin suggests that "one of the dire effects of capitalism on woman is that it 'reduces [them] to terms of appetite and trade' who have to 'sell' themselves" to which he adds that women are "'sold' by the men who owned them."[47] Florida is a product of a culture that values women only as objects to collect, and Gaspero's comment on Antonio's nature to satisfy himself with many women endorses it.

[47] "Marxist Criticism And/Or/Versus A Clearer Sense Of Justice."

Florida's worthiness in Ravenna is her ability to be "owned" by men. Gaspero remarks that she is contracted to multiple men when he compares her to an inn with room enough to fit "one-and-twenty inmates" (1.1.70-75). He notes that she is "your grand strumpet's complement to a tittle" (69). Gaspero calling Florida a "strumpet" insinuates the "one-and-twenty" men who fill her "rooms" must be customers; he goes on to say that "half of 'em are young merchants" (72) who come and depart quickly. Their number is then replaced by "termers" who are "booted for all seasons" (75). Merchants were themselves traders, and tremers were men who came into London during court sessions either to engage in court business or intrigues. Gaspero implies then that half of the number who use Florida are of a lower station than aristocracy. This can insinuate the rest of her "inmates" are paying aristocrats.

The "grand" that Gaspero prefaces "strumpet" with implies that Florida is a higher quality escort rather than a common prostitute. "Grand" during Middleton's time meant "eminent; great in reputation, position, scale of operations" (*OED* adj. 3. b) and the term applied in legal jargon differentiated various designations from the "common" (*OED* adj. 4). "Complement" implies perfection or completion; thus Gaspero's epithet depicts Florida as the perfect courtesan, and he emphasizes this by stating she is complete "to the tittle," that is, to the smallest and most exacting degree. She is the perfect escort for aristocratic men, and since "half" of her rooms are unfilled by merchants and other members of the lower class, audiences can assume the rest of Florida's customers are aristocrats. In this way, Middleton implies Ravenna's court engages in a regular market for the buying of women. Thus, all women are "collectible" by aristocratic men, such as Almachildes.

When Amoretta, the waiting woman of the Duchess, refuses Almachildes' advances, he remarks, "Amsterdam swallow thee for a Puritan / And Geneva cast thee up again like she that

sunk / At Charing Cross and rose again at Queenhithe!" (1.1.84-86).[48] Middleton's word choices like "swallow thee" and "cast thee up" are sexual in nature. "[S]wallow thee" implies oral sex as well as vaginal penetration while "cast thee up" is a sexual euphemism for an erection. The action of sinking and rising implies an undulating movement, similar to the thrust of hips during intercourse. In insulting Amoretta for resenting his advances, Almachildes uses sexual language; he does not see her as anything other than a sex object.

In contrast, Amoretta takes great pride in her chastity and her ability to undermine Almachildes' authority. She refuses to be abused by Almachildes and intends to report him to her mistress, the Duchess. However, needing to report to her mistress implies that Amoretta relies on the aristocracy to acquire justice. Almachildes ignores her pleas, stating that the incident will only make the Duchess laugh. Amoretta's charge that her mistress will "not think / That you dare use a maid of honour thus" regards her mistress as just and compassionate towards her servant.

The Duchess' inability to approve of Almachildes's actions comes from Amoretta's choice of the phrase "not think;" however, the word "dare" implies the boldness or courage to do (*OED* v.[1] 1. a). Thus the line confesses that the Duchess may not even think about Almachildes' affront. The word dare suggests that Almachildes is neither bold nor courageous enough to be capable of assaulting Amoretta while also suggesting that the Duchess may perceive his movements as part of the culture and is actually unable to believe him as doing a wrong, which

---

[48] These lines center on two cities of contemporary radical Protestantism, and Almachildes compares Amoretta's treatment in them as that suffered by Queen Elinor, wife of King Edward I, at Charing Cross and Queenhithe. Legend holds that Queen Elinor falsely swore innocence to a murder charge. Middleton's metaphor recalls a dishonest courtier, and linking the metaphor to the radical Protestant cities implies moral hypocrisy. This is also a moment of foreshadowing where the Duchess, unlike Elinor, pleads guilty to murdering her husband. See the introduction in *The Collected Works* for more.

leaves Amoretta to more of Almachildes' advances. In fact, when the Duchess plans to murder her husband, she requests that her maid seduce Almachildes so that she can have him commit the deed. In this instance not only is Amoretta subject to Almachildes abuses, she is also necessary for the Duchess to execute her revenge.

Almachildes' inappropriate treatment of Amoretta seems to be rivaled only by the barbarousness of the Duke to his wife. Amidst the frivolity of the wedding affairs, the Duke produces a skull set as a cup for the purpose of sharing a toast to the newly wed couple. In his aside about the cup, the Duke notes that it was "once her father's head, which, as a trophy, / We'll keep till death" (1.1.117-18). The Duchess' father was the Duke's enemy at war, whom he slew in combat. This detail reveals that the Duchess is a war prize. She is not part of a marriage she agreed upon; rather, the Duke forced her into marriage after the death of her father. The exploitation of one war trophy, the cup, is just a mirror of his exploitation of the other, his wife. The cup itself is vaginal; cups symbolize the womb, thus the Duke has won a womb from his enemy in which he can breed his heirs. The Duke subverts the power of his wife's father by turning his head into an open receptacle, and the cup and the Duchess are one and the same: trophies gained by the Duke's emasculation of another man. That the Duke pronounces that he intends to keep and use the cup regularly insinuates that he means to exploit his having won a bride. The Duke's neglect of the Duchess' feelings prompts her conspiracy to murder her husband, but the Duchess is not alone in her ability to scheme.

Virtue as a Façade

When the Duchess interprets the Governor's expenses for the banquet as a tribute to his niece and her new marriage, the Governor's response is that he spends so much money on "love of goodness, and your presence" (1.1.103). His rhetoric serves as a reciprocation of courtly

flattery: the feast is not for his niece's marriage, it is for the very nature of being good and the Duchess' presence. By paralleling goodness and presence, the Governor implies that the Duchess is inherently good, but Middleton shows us that what the court perceives of people is a fabrication. The Duchess intends to murder her husband, and though mariticide serves as a way to undo wrongs committed against her, it is nevertheless a contrast to her outward appearance.

Sebastian and Almachildes each have secret agendas that none but themselves and the audience know. In the opening of the play, Sebastian relates his possessing "a world of business" to Fernando, "'Tis not fit / for any — hardly mine own secrecy — / To know what I intend" (1.1.18-20). The lines suggest wrongdoing. Sebastian's plans are unfit for anyone, including himself, to know, but Middleton exposes what his intentions are by having Almachildes offer a more open confession, "I will to the witches" (1.1.90).

Sebastian and Almachildes intend to use the skills the witches possess to further their secret agendas, and while Sebastian keeps audiences in the dark about his intention, Almachildes confesses his intention through soliloquy, revealing that the witches are essential for the courtier to execute his plans. Almachildes relies on another power beyond his own courtly authority to possess Amoretta. Moreover, this power, though supernatural, is a human resource. Almachildes's going to the witches promises procuring some enchantment that will let him attain Amoretta while Sebastian's hopes of annulling Antonio and Isabella's marriage are only revealed once he reaches the coven's cave and requests their service. When the witches reveal that they are incapable of nullifying marriage, Sebastian resorts to cursing Antonio with impotency.[49] The hope then is that the spell will make it impossible for Antonio and Isabella to consummate their marriage. Historically, women could petition a marriage annulment so long as they were virgins.

[49] Funnily enough, the spell Hecate uses to render Antonio impotent utilizes the skins of snakes.

This was the case with Frances Howard who, after a panel of seven matronly peers and two midwives determined her status of *virgo incorrupta* in 1613, was granted the right to annul her marriage to Robert Devereaux, the Earl of Essex, and marry Robert Carr, the newly named Earl of Somerset (O'Connor 1124). In Middleton's play, Sebastian's longterm hope is that the magically created impotency would grant Isabella the right to marry him.

Prior to his deployment for a three-year war campaign, Sebastian committed himself to Isabella. In the play's opening, Sebastian remarks that Isabella "is my wife by contract before heaven / And all the angels, sir" (1.1.3-4). Sebastian and Isabella exchanged vows without a public ceremony or clerical supervision.[50] Though not state sanctioned, such contracts were historically considered legally and morally binding (O'Connor 1129). When Sebastian leaves for war, Antonio seizes his opportunity and deceives Isabella, who comes to believe Sebastian had died. Antonio reveals his subterfuge in soliloquy after he discovers that his sister Francisca had a child by Aberzanes, another courtier:

> I was the man that told this innocent gentlewoman,
> Whom I did falsely wed and falsely kill,
> That he that was her husband first, by contract,
> Was slain i'th' field, and he's known yet to live.
> So did I cruelly beguile her heart — (5.1.58-62)

Antonio's admission of cheating his way into marriage comes out of his scheme to kill his sister and Aberzanes. Antonio employs his servant Hermio to poison the wine he shares with the lovers prior to performing the quick handfast between them. However, when Antonio employs him to poison some wine, Hermio disobeys his master and conceals this fact until it is in his best interest to reveal the truth to Antonio. Even his servants hide information from him; moreover,

[50] Pre-contract agreements *can* take place in private, but they do not need to. See 4.2.3-20 where it is revealed that Fernando had been the secret witness to the exchange.

Antonio relies on his servants to achieve his ends. In this way, he is powerless to do the act himself. He relies on someone beneath his social standing to do the work for him.

As each of these machinations come to fruition, Middleton reveals that all of the court is invested in secret plots. Furthermore, he suggests that the very schemes the courtiers devise, such as murder, and their attempt to hide these plans comes back to ruin them. As Kirsch writes, a common theme in Middleton is that "characters are foiled by the same weapon with which they played" (5.1.77). All deceitful protagonists are themselves deceived by the very devices they play with, or, as Antonio says, "I do but think how each man's punishment / Proves still a kind of justice to himself" (5.1.56-57).

Middleton and Jonson's *The Masque of Queens*

In Middleton's tragicomedy, the witches are hardworking, sexual, and honest about their craft and their abilities. The upper class appear as drunk objectifiers of women and inventors of barbarous traditions, like drinking from the skull of a vanquished enemy, who foster secret agendas. Neither the courtiers nor their servants are what they appear to be. Instead, each of them regularly engages in intrigues, at times against one another, which the audience alone is often privy to. The witches contrast the court; rather than hide their nature, the witches express it openly. They honestly confess the extent and limitations of their powers.

Although the courtier's association with the witches depicts the purchasing of magical goods, the courtiers are never converted to witchcraft. Hecate and her coven seem to only be interested in providing a service; any harm produced by their magic is indirect. Failed murders, deceiving others into marriage, and courtiers becoming impotent occur either because of the courtiers' ineptitude or because they intended for them to happen. In fact, the courtiers' scruples and secret stratagems make up the dramatic and hilarious events that comprise the piece. The

witches merely provide the magical means the courtiers require to succeed in their agendas; their place in the court's intrigues is peripheral and indirect yet centerfold and commanding.

It is difficult to read *The Witch* and not be convinced by some means or another that Middleton is elaborating on or else speaking directly to Jonson, who's 1609 *The Masque of Queens* likewise parallels witch coven with courtiers. In Jonson's elaborate (albeit short) masque, however, the witches are painted without the celebratory favor and fervor with which Middleton seems to imbue his. Rather they are black witches of antiquity, bent towards destruction and unable to succeed in the craft.[51]

Jonson's masque is easily divisible into two parts, the first comprises an antimasque of twelve witches performed by professional actors. Their wild, raucous, and chaotic dances and charms serve to unfix nature and return us to a primordial abyss. Instantly, their place is conquered by a gleaming white House of Fame, and twelve virtuous queens (here played by James' wife, Queen Anne and her ladies) imprison the witches and speak on the esteemed qualities and personhoods of virtue and fame as they are embodied in noble women.

Jonson's intention in *The Masque of Queens* is all but manifest from the onset: to establish a black-and-white contrast of character. It was a maxim of the day that the authorities in Jonson's time, especially on demonology, would try to establish that a series of opposites existed in the world.[52] In Jonson's case, this discourse is made present by the comparison

---

[51] *The Masque of Queens* 279-344

[52] Witchcraft manuals of all varieties long asserted that there was a distinct division between good and evil, and that pluralities covered the world over. Many of these treatises, the *Malleus* being one of them, used this maxim to indicate that there was no God if there was no Devil and therefore, no Devil if he did not have witches to aid him.

between the black hags of his antique coven, and the gleaming white ladies whose very names are taken from classical poetry as profound women of glory.[53]

Unlike Middleton's play with its breadth of length and gray morality, Jonson's is meant to invoke a simple division between what makes a virtuous and unvirtuous lady. If Middleton was aware of Jonson's work, which is easy enough to assume given Jonson's publication and advertisement history, then we may safely assume that his *The Witch* might be built on a sardonic review of what Jonson prescribes as virtuous and pure.

In Jonson's world, easily divisible and demarcated, the witches occupy an infernal space, quite literally hell, where they congregate to rend the heavens and earth, dissolving the world into Chaos by means of their charms: "the moon is red and the stars are fled. / But all the sky is a-burning" (73-4). The delight is in overthrowing the "glory of this night" (101) and comingling established divisions:

> Let us disturb [soft peace] then, and blast the light
> Mix hell with heaven, and make Nature fight
> Within herself; loose the whole hinge of things,
> And cause the ends run back into their springs (134-7).

Jonson even notes in his own annotations that his Dame[54] was modeled on classical Ate, the chief goddess of delusion, to "bear the Ate…out of Homer's description of her" in the *Iliad* where she appears "swift to hurt mankind." Her attire, barefooted with a tucked frock, while viragoesque in appearance also "make her seem more expedite" (530). The exact nature of her attire and the fashion of her hair all find their origin in Horace and Lucan, while the torch she bears derives from Nicholas Remy's *Daemonolatria*.[55]

---

[53] Penthesilea, Camilla, Thomyris, Berenice, Hypiscratea, Candace, Voadicea, Palmyrene, Zenobia, Amalasunta, Valasca, and Bel-Anna.
[54] Dame regular referred to a chief witch.
[55] The torch is made of a severed harm entwined with a serpent.

As the witches gather, each singing charms and detailing the *maleficium* they have performed, Jonson embeds his work with a rich tapestry of ancient and contemporary demonological sources. The telling of deeds by each Hag in turn details the assumed practices of witches during the Early Modern Period. Each Hag reveals what aspect of the craft she has been performing, and nearly all have some connection to necromancy, decay, and evisceration, and each event is undertaken at a particular time, with accordance to authoritative accounts on the manner of witches' rituals.

Jonson's presentation of witchcraft in *The Masque of Queens* is thus an illuminating cosmopolitan study of the subject, but it emphasizes Greco-Roman practices, and should not be mistaken as a portrayal of English black magic.[56]/[57] Rather than prove his dramatic ingenuity, *The Masque of Queens* does do well to illustrate Jonson's flair for scholarship.

From the details of their meeting place, to the very nature of their works, Jonson accurately captures a contemporary and compact treatise on the nature of witchcraft. It is more revised standard edition of ancient authorities and reputed witch characteristics than play, and Jonson seems to relish in this as the antimasque makes up well over half of the masque itself.

Like Middleton, it could be said that Jonson is entertaining the ideas of deviance, reversal, chaos, and the joy of infernal subjects; however, unlike his contemporary, Jonson does not intermix these characteristics with just and virtuous ladies. He maintains a distinction

---

[56] Where Jonson presents Greco-Roman practices with great scholarly detail, though with some misquotation, Middleton prefers to present witchcraft as contemporary, with some emphasis on Continental beliefs about witches appearing sporadically. His account, while less scholarly and more custodian in its appropriation of Scot, is in an almost every way as comprehensive and contained as Jonson's; therefore, of great use to us who want to pry from these rich sources all the information we can on Renaissance notions of the occult.

[57] For more on this, see Robert Rentoul Reed, Jr.'s The Occult on the Stuart Stage Boston: The Christopher Publishing House, 1965 p. 166.

between court and coven, and imposes that the latter, filled with the living spirits of celebrated female warriors, queens, and heroes (all traditionally masculinized), is the right and true femininity, while the other is a corruption.

Middleton corrupts this dichotomy, suggesting that the only virtue that the courtiers bear lie in their status as elites. This permits them a front of virtue but a total lack of it beneath the surface. In many ways, it is a vicious affront to Jonson's thesis, and an excellent critique, that not only invites us to strangely celebrate and encourage the black magic of Hecate and her witch coven, but affords us the opportunity to question the very validity of the argument pertaining to witchcraft in general. What is right honorable for Middleton is complex, deviant, and exuberant while Jonson's sticks with a traditional approach that is all too easy to scoff at.

The Witches of Macbeth

Shakespeare's witches, too, are difficult to locate let alone finger in terms of how they are supposed to be portrayed. Are the figures comic? or terrifying? It does not help much that Shakespeare portrays them as fickle, mutable in-between every scene: that is, Shakespeare plays with the representation of the witches purposefully.

Summers argues that Shakespeare's witches are not "agents" of evil, "they are evil; nameless, spectral, wholly horrible" in the opening scene of the play (289). However, by the time they reappear, the witches have lost their original image and reappear only to relate what mischiefs they have accomplished during the interval. Summers does note that the very shift is sudden, and its "violence and quickness are jarring to a degree" (289), and while I think he may be unware that he has done it, his explanation pardons their mutability: they are evil embodied *and* evil personified. They are as equally farce as they are terrifying, and in many ways, they establish the chaotic, deviant, and mutable behavior witches were purported to have. They

remain unstable, and even in its fallibility, that instability sustains their violent, paralyzing role brief as it plays out on stage.

Perhaps the most important features that both Middleton and Shakespeare share, beyond the obvious textual thefts that likely lengthened Shakespeare's original *Macbeth*, is the power of relatively absent characters. In a few short scenes, both Middleton and Shakespeare's witches establish oppressive and powerful atmospheres, though in fundamentally different ways, which blight the entirety of their plays.[58]

Shakespeare is famed for his ability to convey the themes of an entire play within a few short scenes. His *Macbeth* is no exception. The thesis of the play may well be "Fair is foul, and foul is fair" given the tendency of soft characters to be painted into vicious roles. The witches' commandment "hover through the fog and filthy air" combined with their first entrance, "when shall we three meet again, / In thunder, lightning, or in rain," put them at once into the elements. They saturate their natural setting in the Scottish Highlands, dissolving into the mist like a corruptible miasma that will sicken the landscape and people. Their fluidity is essential to their existence as agents of chaos, itself best exemplified in Act 4, scene 1.

As the witches gather around their cauldron, they sunder nature into its diverse parts and boil them together into a hallucinogenic "hell-broth" that will portend the coming events of the tragedy in spectacularly theatrical details. This can hardly be divorced from Middleton's own cauldron use, and the scenes of both shared a musical arrangement for the dance of white and red spirits.

In many ways, these witches relish in their power, and similarly they are essential for the progress of their plays, even though they hardly appear in either for more than a few scenes.

---

[58] Marion Gibson, *Witchcraft and Society*, p.97

Nevertheless, they affect the social environments of each playwrights' world, and without them the plot would not only cease to exist, but the very foundations of the governments with which they coincide would crumble.

Without the weird sisters, Malcolm would never attain the throne via Macbeth's corruption, nor would Banquo's issue go on to rule "double scepter'd."[59] Without Hecate and her coven, Ravenna's court would be debauched, and spouses would go on trying to kill each other.

Conclusions

In many ways, Jacobean witchcraft drama owed much to the appeal of deviance. For many antitheatrical writers, the language playhouse was the language of conspiracy. By turning patrons into idolaters, the playhouses sought, in the views of some, to invert the religious order of England, replacing the authorized language of the Bible and Protestant Christianity with a diabolic and pagan tongue, such that the theatre was, in effect, the worship of Satan.[60]

We need not look any further than Hecate's gesticulations and laughter at causing destruction, or her and Jonson's hags' orgies.[61] Middleton's continuous quotation of Scot transplants traditionally English witches, with a few continental tricks of the trade, into a foreign (more importantly, Catholic) ducal court, where their exuberant joy at wrecking havoc by plotting and consummating evil infects the very social order. Few similar examples of inhuman

---

[59] It remains traditionally accepted that James was the eighth descendent of Banquo, who reveals to Macbeth his person carrying two orbs and scepters, signifying his dominion over Scotland and England.

[60] Jonathan Barry, "Hell upon Earth or the Language of the Playhouse," Languages of Witchcraft p. 139.

[61] Here referring to historical Greek and Roman usage: "In *pl.* Secret rites or ceremonies practised in the worship of various gods of Greek and Roman mythology; *esp.* those practices connected with the festivals in honour of Dionysus or Bacchus, or the festival itself, which was celebrated with extravagant dancing, singing, drinking, etc." (OED)

glee exist alongside Middleton's contemporaries, and Hecate's joy in disruption, deviance, and chaos only make her, paradoxically, more human. Her enthusiasm and exuberance, especially in the most maligned circumstances, has the "human quality of contagion" (Reed 176).

Jonson's hags likewise laud and glory in their inverted, Satanic revelry. The posterior dancing, the farce and horror of it, the spectacular clash of black and red hell with glistening white and gold House of Fame are all invitations to think, within a safe place, on wicked thoughts. And just as Jonson's horrid Dame is in her conjuration, one can hardly miss the rhythm of these witches' incantations. "Double double toil and trouble / fire burn and cauldron bubble" might as well be tattooed on our everlasting Western history, as it has insofar that musical compositions of the witches' chant now range between everything from Opera to Harry Potter. Even the lyrics of these spells, Shakespeare's in particular, invite debauchery, revelry, and deviance from a culture that oppressively stomps upon any individualism that threatens the state politic as it is. "Double double toil and trouble" is not so much an empty play with rhyme as it is a rallying battle cry for the very glorious thing the theatre was best at: celebrating the depraved.

As John Parker notes, "the *here* of commercial theatre, really the whole presence and power of its fictitious representations, had been superimposed on a repudiated faith" (644).[62] Secular drama had done its job of removing all sacredness from the Catholic ritual, but kept the overall autonomy and commandment of devotion that the earlier religion had demanded. Only now that power and rite of theatrical, illusory experience manifested itself in cash payment.

[62] "What a Piece of Work is Man: Shakespearean Drama as Marxian Fetish, the Fetish as Sacramental Sublime," Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies, Fall 2004

This exchange of goods, in fact of something mundane, trivial, evanescent and ephemeral, for some fee should remind us of Hecate's exchange with the courtiers. The witches' very business is to confuse, astound, and distort. Their enterprise is built on duplicity, obfuscation, and chimeras, much as is theatre. For witches, as do actors, defy codified principles regarding gender and carnality. One of the very foundations of the witch is her likening to a concubine or prostitute – sexualized, corporeal flesh. So is it with the actor, whose many gesticulations and gyrations mimic the witches' sabbath and flight, whose very body and voice bring about images of chaos and contradiction, and whose performance invites the lurid celebration of deviancy.

Works Cited

Almond, Philip C. *England's First Demonologist: Reginold Scott and 'The Discoverie of Witchcraft.'* London: I.B. Tauris, 2011.

Barry, Jonathan. "Hell upon Earth or the Language of the Playhouse." *Languages of Witchcraft: Narrative, Ideology and Meaning in Early Modern Culture*. Stuart Clark, ed. New York: St. Martin's Press, LLC., 2001. 139-58.

Becker-Cantarino, Barbara. "Review: 'Feminist Consciousness' and 'Wicked Women': Recent Studies on Women in Early Modern Europe." *Signs* 20. 1 (Autumn, 1994): 152-175. *JSTOR*.

Bever, Edward. "Witchcraft, Female Aggression, and Power in the Early Modern Community." *Superstition and Magic in Early Modern Europe: A Reader*. Helen Parish, ed. New York: Bloomsbury, 2015. 275-305

Bradford, Gamaliel. "The Women of Middleton and Weber." *The Swanee Review* 29. 1 (Jan., 1921): 14-29. JSTOR.

Broedel, Hans Peter. *The* Malleus Maleficarum *and the construction of witchcraft: Theology and Popular Belief*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 2003.

Clark, Stuart. "Witchcraft and Magic in Early Modern Culture." *Superstition and Magic in Early Modern Europe: A Reader*. Helen Parish, ed. New York: Bloomsbury, 2015. 213-74.

Comes, Natalis. *Mythologiae Libri*. John Mulryan and Steven Brown, trans. Tempe: ACMRS. 316. 2006.

Cotta, John. "The Triall of Witch-Craft (1616)." *The English Experience: Its Record in Early Printed Books Published in Facsimile*. 39. New York: Da Capo Press, 1968.

"dare, v.1." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, March 2017.

Eds. Alan Charles Kors and Edward Peters. *Witchcraft in Europe 400-1700: A Documentary History*. 2nd Ed. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001.

Eds. Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino. *Thomas Middleton and Early Modern Textual Culture: A Companion to* The Collected Works. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007.

Ed. Marion Gibson. *Witchcraft and Society in England and America, 1550-1750*. London: Continuum, 2003.

Ed. Williams, Gerhild Scholz. *On the Inconstancy of Witches: Pierre de Lancre's Tableau de l'inconstance des mauvais anges et demons* (1612). Harriet Stone and Gerhild Scholz Williams, trans. Tempe: Arizona Studies in the Middle Ages and Renaissance. 16. 2006.

Elmer, Peter. "Towards a Politics of Witchcraft in Early Modern England." *Languages of Witchcraft: Narrative, Ideology and Meaning in Early Modern Culture*. Stuart Clark, ed. New York: St. Martin's Press, LLC., 2001. 101-18.

Gibson, Marion. *Early Modern Witches: Witchcraft Cases in Contemporary Writing*. New York: Routledge, 2000.

Goodcole, Henry. "The wonderfull discoverie of Elizabeth Sawyer, a Witch (1621)" *Early Modern Witches: Witchcraft Cases in Contemporary Writing*. Marion Gibson, ed. New York: Routledge, 2000. 299-315.

"gorged, adj.1." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, March 2017.

"grand, adj., n., and adv." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, March 2017.

Hodgkin, Katharine. "Reasoning with Unreason: Visions, Witchcraft and Madness in Early Modern England." *Languages of Witchcraft: Narrative, Ideology and Meaning in Early Modern Culture*. Stuart Clark, ed. New York: St. Martin's Press, LLC., 2001. 217-36.

"incubus, n." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, March 2017.

Jonson, Ben. “The Masque of Queens.” *Ben Jonson: The Complete Masques*. Stephen Orgel, ed. New Haven: Yale UP, 1969.

Keller, James R. “Middleton’s The Witch: Witchcraft and the Domestic Female Hero.” *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts* 4.4 (1991): 37-59.

Kent, E.J. “Masculinity and Male Witches in Old and New England, 1593-1680.” *History Workshop Journal* 60 (Autumn, 2005): 69-92. *JSTOR*.

Kirsch, Arthur C. “Middleton.” *Jacobean Dramatic Perspectives*. Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1972. 75-96.

Levin, Richard. “Marxist Criticism And/Or/Versus A Clearer Sense Of Justice.” *RENAISSANCE Forum* 1.2 (September 1996)*: Richard Levin*. N.p., Sept. 1996.

Mackay, Christopher S. *The Hammer of Witches: A Complete Translation of the Malleus Maleficarum*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2014.

"Malaga, n." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, March 2017.

Maxwell-Stuart, P.G. *Witchcraft in Europe and the New World, 1400-1800*. New York: Palgrave, 2001.

McCarthy, Katelyn Maire. “Middleton’s *The Witch* and Lilith.” *Transvestism, Witchcraft, and the Early Modern Lilith*. 37-43. Diss. Lehigh University, 2012.

Middleton, Thomas. “The Witch.” *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works*. Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino, eds. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2010. 1129-1164.

Muchembled, Robert. “Satanic Myths and Cultural Reality.” *Early Modern European Witchcraft: Centres and Peripheries*. Bengt Ankarloo and Gustav Henningsen, eds. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990: 139-160.

O'Connor, Marion. "The Witch." *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works*. Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino, eds. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1124-1164.

Oplinger, Jon. *The Politics of Demonology: The European Witchcraze and the Mass Production of Deviance*. Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1990.

"orgy, n." OED Online. Oxford University Press, March 2017.

"overflowing, adj." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, March 2017.

Parker, John. "What a Piece of Work Is Man: Shakespearean Drama as Marxian Fetish, the Fetish as Sacramental Sublime." *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 34. 3 (Fall 2004): 643-672.

Reed, Robert Rentoul, Jr. *The Occult on the Tudor and Stuart Stage*. Boston: The Christopher Publishing House, 1965.

Robbins, Rossell Hope. *The Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Demonology*. London: Spring Books, 1959.

"round, n.1." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, March 2017.

Russel, Jeffrey Burton. *Witchcraft in the Middle Ages*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1972.

Scot, Reginald. *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*. Courier Corporation, 1989. *Google Books*.

"small drink, n. and adj." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, March 2017.

Spoto, Stephanie Irene. "Jacobean Witchcraft and Feminine Power." *Pacific Coast Philology* 45 (2010): 53-70. *JSTOR*.

Stephens, Walter. *Demon Lovers*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002.

Stuart, James. “Daemonologie.” *The Demonology of James I: Includes the Original Text of Daemonologie and News from Scotland*. Donald Tyson, ed. Woodbury: Llewellyn Press, 2016.

Summers, Montague. *The History of Witchcraft and Demonology*. New York: University Books, 1956.

“surfeit, n.” *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, March 2017.

Thomas, Keith. Religion and the Decline of Magic: New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1971.

“water rat, n.” *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, March 2017.

"† veˈnefical, adj." OED Online. Oxford University Press, March 2017.

Zika, Charles. Exorcising Our Demons: Magic, Witchcraft, and Visual Culture in Early Modern Europe. Boson: Brill, 2003.