'One may be an Imp as well as another': The Familiar Spirit in Early Modern English Witchcraft Pamphlets

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Abstract

The familiar spirit was a phenomenon unique to early modern English witchcraft that, while appearing often in witchcraft narratives, has been the subject of little analysis. Appearing often as an animal, offering services in exchange for the witch's soul, and forming a unique relationship with the witch, the familiar spirit often appears in the narratives supplied by trial participants as described in pamphlet material. This thesis aims to analyse the appearance of the familiar in English pamphlet material in the early modern period, showing trends in the details provided over time. By analysing the 297 familiars described in English witchcraft pamphlets from 1566 to 1693, the themes of the familiar as an animal, as a demonic agent, and as a being connected to gender will be explored to reveal that trial participants co-authored testimonies about familiar spirits, revealing some of the beliefs and assumptions held by contemporaries about aspects of their culture outside of witchcraft. These contemporaries also used the familiar spirit to place the witch in a position of inversion and strengthened the connection of the category of witch with other, often negative, categories. As I will show in this thesis, through analysis of familiars within the pamphlet literature and investigation into cultural meanings behind the features of the spirit, contemporary trial participants presented familiars in their narratives as a way of formulating, negotiating, and/or solidifying their ideas about witchcraft, humanness, Protestantism, and gender ideals.

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Acknowledgements

I have heard many academics compare the completion of a doctoral thesis to having a child. Although the latter is something I have never experienced, if the adage holds up, I can whole-heartedly agree that it takes a village to raise a child—or in this case, spawn a thesis into existence and develop over time. This work is only present due to the support and dedication of so many wonderful people. Firstly, I would like to thank my supervisor, Professor James Sharpe, who spent countless hours overseeing my work, providing exceptional feedback and becoming a great academic mentor for me. Jim, thank you for encouraging me to explore my creative tangents and occasionally providing a good joke when I really needed a good laugh, even if it was at your expense. I would also like to thank the History Department, Centre for Renaissance and Early Modern Studies, and Humanities Research Centre at the University of York for providing an excellent environment for academic and personal growth with special thanks in this regard to Helen Cowie, Mark Jenner, Simon Ditchfield, Sethina Watson, and Stuart Carroll. Thank you to the Jarvis family, and the committee for the departmental teaching scholarship and Overseas Continuation Fund for the funds to complete this project. I also had several post-graduate colleagues who provided academic and emotional support. My gratitude goes out to Jonas van Tol, Elizabeth Biggs, Andrew Stead, Emma Martin, Emily Moore, Seb Owen, Simon Quinn, Salina Cuddy, Catherine Oakley, Marie Allitt, Emily Hansen and many more. Thank you to my wonderful friends, who have been some of my best cheerleaders through this gruelling process. Special thanks also goes to Charlotte Rose-Millar, who was very generous with her developing research, her friendship and her shared fascination with these funny little creatures. Finally, I would like to thank my family for their love. To my parents, Magda and José Ramon Garcia, thank you for teaching me that well-behaved women rarely make history and that my inquisitive mind should never be hidden. To my little brother, Jochi, thank you for teaching me to be unapologetically myself in all things. Most importantly, I would like to dedicate this thesis to my partner, Jarrod Leddy, who burst into my life like the music of angels and has never failed to leave me in awe of his love and support. Te amo.

Declaration

I declare that the work presented in this thesis is based on my own research and has not been submitted previously for a degree in this or any other university. No part of it has been published or is currently under review for publication. All sources are acknowledged as references.

Chapter 1. Introduction

In 1655, Thomas Ady, English demonologist, physician, and humanist, challenged the notion of the familiar spirit stating that 'it is lawful to keep… any Creature tame… and one may be an Imp as well as another… so the Devil need not go far for a bodily shape to appear in.'[1] It seems that Ady found it necessary to question the existence of these familiar spirits, which by the time he was writing were well-established within and central to the English early modern witchcraft narrative for almost a century. While mentioned in contemporary demonology and occasionally in trial documents, the idea of the familiar flourished in pamphlet material and was featured heavily in pamphlets throughout the period and throughout the country. These spirits, often in the form of animals, were given a myriad of characteristics including the ability to harm humans and cattle, feeding on the blood of the witch, and exchanging power for the soul of the witch. As I will show in this thesis, through analysis of familiars within the pamphlet literature and through investigation into cultural meanings behind the features of the spirit, contemporary trial participants presented familiars in their narratives as a way of formulating, negotiating, and/or solidifying their ideas about witchcraft, humanness, Protestantism, and gender ideals. While the familiar spirit was used by contemporary participants in English witchcraft trials, it does not really appear in the same likeness or frequency in continental trial records.[2] While familiars do not show up in the same fashion in other areas of Europe, they were often mentioned in influential modern analyses of English and European witchcraft, treated as an English regional variant on European witchcraft.[3]

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[1] Thomas Ady, *A Candle in the Dark: Shewing the Divine Cause of the Distractions of the Whole Nation of England, and of the Christian World* (London: 1655), 135. An extended quote for this is discussed in Chapter 2.

[2] There are a few cases of familiar type creatures in trial records from the Basque region. Julio Caro Baroja discusses de Lancre's writing noting how during the induction process, witch-initiates were given a toad as 'a kind of guardian angel'. See Julio Caro Baroja, *The World of Witches* (London: Phoenix-Orion, 1961), 174.

[3] For more on early modern European witchcraft, see Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Publishing, 1999) and Brian Levack, *The Witch Hunt in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Pearson Education, 2006). For surveys on England specifically, see Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Witchcraft: Studies in Popular Beliefs in 16th and 17th Century England* (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1978); Alan Macfarlane, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England: A Regional and Comparative Study* (London: Routledge, 1970) and James Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness: Witchcraft in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997). For a more in-depth

As Gaskill points out, '[h]istorians now tend to see England as one of many European variants rather than an exception to a uniform pattern.'[4] Yet despite this centrality within England and a rich and varied historiography about European witchcraft, the familiar spirit is lacking a lengthy and intersectional analysis.

Wallace Notestein was ground-breaking with the first scholarly approach to early modern English witchcraft in his move away from the rationalist triumphalist model that was prevalent in the century after witchcraft trials, which condemned the defenders of superstition and persecution, leading to a Whig, self-fulfilling progressive interpretation of witchcraft beliefs, such as the existence of the familiar spirit. Relying mainly on printed works, he concluded in his research that confessions were the result of physical and mental pressure. He used familiars sparingly to prove this point. For example, while analysing the Witchcraft Act passed by James I, he stated, 'it was only necessary to prove that the woman made use of evil spirits, and she was put out of the way. It was a simpler thing to charge a woman with keeping a "familiar" than to accuse her of murder. The stories that the village gossips gathered in their rounds had the keeping of 'familiars' for their central interest.'[5] Here, as he does throughout the work, he uses familiars as passing evidence, not analysing why familiars were present, let alone important to English witchcraft beliefs.[6] However, he should be credited with identifying them as an issue. He does provide one interesting bit of information on familiars, however, that has inspired some analysis in this work. Notestein describes a story of how Dr. William Harvey, king's physician and discoverer of the circulation of blood, was said to dissect a familiar, proving that it was no different from other non-preternatural toads.[7] While this is not in-depth analysis of the familiar, the inclusion

analysis of witchcraft pamphlet literature, see Marion Gibson, *Reading Witchcraft: Stories of Early English Witches* (London: Routledge, 1999) and her work *Early Modern Witches: Witchcraft Cases in Contemporary Writing* (London: Routledge, 2000).

[4] Malcolm Gaskill, *Crime and Mentalities in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 35.

[5] Wallace Notestein, *A History of Witchcraft in England from 1558 to 1718,* (Washington D.C.: American Historical Association, 1911), 105-106. Accessed through Project Gutenberg.

[6] Notestein does this also with his arguments that witchcraft accusations were the product of quarrels and the pressure that Matthew Hopkins exerted when eliciting confessions. See Notestein, *A History of Witchcraft,* 133-135, 167.

[7] Notestein, *A History of Witchcraft,* 160-162. However, his evidence here is dubious, as it is only based on the word of a contemporary who claimed that Harvey had written the description of the event in a letter to him.

of this story offers up some room for analysis on how the familiar spirit as a concept was under scrutiny by contemporaries.

Relying mainly on printed works as well, George Lyman Kittredge expanded on Notestein's move away from rationalist triumphalism and emphasised popular and elite beliefs and explored their interactions within witchcraft. He expanded on Notestein's inclusion of familiars in examples, providing some extension of analysis. While his inclusion of plentiful examples of familiars by animal type is useful for a start to understanding the role of the familiar in English witchcraft, he provides a few cases of analysis that are worth mentioning.[8] Kittredge discusses the Anglo-Irish case of Dame Alice Kyteler in 1324 and how her case 'comprises almost every superstitious curiosity discoverable in the witch-trials of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.'[9] Describing her familiar spirit called Robin or Robert Artis filius in the shape of a black dwarf and 'two similar companions…who sometimes took the shape as a cat or a shaggy black dog,' he connects these to similar beings that are described in the first English witchcraft pamphlet, that describing trials at Chelmsford in 1566.[10] On the origin of familiars, Kittredge comments that '[o]f course these doctrines were nothing new in 1558, nor were they imported from the Continent by Marian exiles. Every child in Britain was familiar with them, for they are primitive and universal, if anything in demonology is entitled to those much-abused adjectives.'[11] While this is an interesting hypothesis, he does not provide much evidence to prove this. The origins of the familiar are still a mystery today, although a few historians, such as Emma Wilby who is discussed below, have taken to heart his belief that it is from a 'primitive' and 'universal' place. Kittredge also saw witchcraft as a blending of beliefs and applies this to familiars stating, '[w]hen a witch is to blame for the hubbub, we have merely that blending of fairy-creed and witch-creed that is incident to the conversion of all elemental spirits into demons in the Christian sense: the goblins that once acted independently have become the

[8] Kittredge discusses dog- and cat-shaped familiars, as well as some interesting commentary on the fear of cats and superstitions about cats and the dead during his time. See George Lyman Kittredge, *Witchcraft in Old and New England* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1929), 177-179.
[9] Kittredge, *Witchcraft in Old and New England,* 52.
[10] Kittredge, *Witchcraft in Old and New England,* 52, 123. See John Phillips, *The Examination and Confession of certaine Wytches at Chensforde in the County of Essex, before the Quenes Maiesties Judges, the xxci day of July Anno 1566* (London, 1566).
[11] Kittredge, *Witchcraft in Old and New England,* 174.

witch's familiars or servants.'[12] While Kittredge expanded what familiars were to contemporaries, the analysis about it was selective and often dependent on few examples.

The problem of few examples was solved when C. L'Estrange Ewen published his massive works cataloguing witchcraft indictments from across the country. Starting with *Witch Hunting and Witch Trials* and expanding in *Witchcraft and Demonianism,* Ewen provided a myriad of sources for historians of witchcraft to use, especially as an avenue for quantitative analysis.[13] While most of his works are dedicated to source material, Ewen does offer some interesting comments about the familiar spirit and the witch mark, a concept closely associated with the familiar because of the belief of familiars using the witch mark as a nipple in which to suck blood from the witch. Ewen explains that with '[t]he doctrine of the satanic brand having for long been accepted and the practice of feeding or rewarding the familiars by allowing them to such blood becoming established, it was no great step to regard spots, which had the appearance of yielding blood, as the Devil's marks, and a certain sign of witchcraft.'[14] He attributed the origin of familiars in England to the tradition of pet-keeping among elderly women who were isolated in their communities.[15] He also hypothesises on why familiar spirits come in the form of animals stating that, 'ancient philosophers supposed that demons entered into beasts because they were desirous of bodily warmth and that, revelling in the smell of blood, they in return for the gratification of their senses, willingly destroyed persons as desired by the sacrifants.'[16] However what is most notable is the inclusion of familiars and their descriptions in the abstracts which Ewen provides. The inclusion of these shows how pervasive beliefs about familiar spirits were on a wide

[12] Kittredge, *Witchcraft in Old and New England,* 216.
[13] Thomas, Macfarlane, and Serpell all acknowledge Ewen's work as assistive in their own quantitative analyses. See Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*; Macfarlane, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England*; James Serpell, "Guardian Spirits or Demonic Pets: The Concept of the Witch's Familiar in Early Modern England, 1530-1712," in *The Animal-Human Boundary: Historical Perspectives*, ed. Angela N.H. Creager and William Chester Jorden (Rochester, N.Y.: University of Rochester Press, 2002).
[14] C. L'Estrange Ewen, *Witchcraft and Demonianism: a conscise account derived from sworn depositions and confessions obtrained in the courts of England and Wales* (London: Heath Cranton Limited, 1933)*,* 75.
[15] Ewen, *Witchcraft and Demonianism*, 69.
[16] Ewen, *Witchcraft and Demonianism,* 72-73.

geographical and chronological scale in England and something which cannot be ignored when discussing the breadth of witchcraft in England.

After Ewen, the most influential works on the study of witchcraft in England are Alan Macfarlane's *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England* and Keith Thomas's *Religion and the Decline of Magic.* Working from a bottom-up perspective, using sociological and anthropological models, both historians linked the rise of witchcraft to larger changes occurring in the period, most notably tensions caused by the Reformation, population increase, inflation, and a rise in poverty-stricken people. Their 'charity-refused' model opened up new avenues of analysis and had a significant impact on witchcraft historiography. Owen Davies explains that '[h]istorical thought on witchcraft has been heavily influenced by the work of Keith Thomas and Alan Macfarlane, both of whom have stressed that the dynamics of witchcraft were embedded in village communal relations.'[17] Their analysis focused on the inner workings of accusations and confessions. Sharpe points out that '[w]hereas most previous academic work on witchcraft had taken an intellectual history perspective, and concentrated on the learned texts written by educated clergymen and jurists, Macfarlane and Thomas demonstrated that in England at least the bulk of witchcraft accusations originated among the peasantry, and were the product of interpersonal tensions among villagers.'[18] While their analysis and conclusions have been met with plenty of criticism for other reasons, they follow the pattern of those before them by mentioning familiars, using them within examples, but generally adding little to the analysis of them. Keith Thomas agreed with Ewen that women kept familiars because of their loneliness, which is why familiars were more likely to be similar to companion animals.[19] He also notes that there was a 'striking instance of the clear association in the popular mind between witchcraft and the presence of a toad in the suspect's house.'[20] He explains that '[l]ike everyone else, the witches had been taught to personify their evil thoughts as the intrusion of Satan. By succumbing to temptation they had, symbolically, joined the Devil's army.

[17] Owen Davies, "Urbanization and the Decline of Witchcraft: An Examination of London," in *The Witchcraft Reader,* ed. Darren Oldridge, (Hove: Psychology Press, 2002), 403.
[18] James Sharpe, "The Witch's Familiar in Elizabethan England," in *Authority and Consent in Tudor England: Essays presented to C.S.L. Davies*, ed. G.W. Bernard and Steven J. Gunn (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), 219.
[19] Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic,* 525.
[20] Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic,* 446.

A few may even have thought that he heard their prayers and granted their wishes.'[21] Macfarlane interestingly points out the trend that the familiar spirit often was said to have appeared when a witch cursed her neighbours.[22] He also saw familiars as proof of the 'only slight connection' between mental derangement and witchcraft beliefs, depicting them as illusions of ill-treated and elderly witches.[23] Macfarlane's and Thomas's work, while contributing to witchcraft historiography greatly, offered little analysis of the familiar spirit.

Historiography of the Familiar Spirit

While these early historians have pointed out the main aspects of the familiar, there have been only a few cases of expanded analysis specifically on the familiar spirit in the last few decades. These interpretations stemmed from the historiography's trend to be more regionalised, specialised, and bring in interdisciplinary approaches. Many historians, especially those concentrating on England, mention the basic characteristics of the familiar spirit and acknowledge its uniqueness, yet there has been no exhaustive analysis of the familiar spirit, although a few shorter works or sections of larger works have been dedicated to it. Works dedicated to the familiar tend to fall into one of three categories: an expansion of the details outlined in the previous historiography; the familiar used as an example to challenge the historiography; or interdisciplinary approaches providing different avenues of analysis.

Both James Sharpe and Orna Alyagon Darr have used the familiar to expand upon the current historiography, working some analysis of the familiar into their larger works. Sharpe also published an essay dedicated solely to the familiar. Focusing mainly on where the origins of familiars, a 'multifaceted phenomenon' unique to England,[24] Sharpe's work is more useful here as a guide to questions the familiar raises and what types of analysis, such as animal-human relations in the period, must

[21] Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic,* 524.
[22] Macfarlane, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England,* 171.
[23] Macfarlane, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England,* 183.
[24] Sharpe mentions that there is a possible trace of the familiar spirit in the Basque country, though he dismisses this as not enough like English familiars in malicious actions to be comparable. Sharpe, "The Witch's Familiar", 226-227.

be considered.[25] Expanding on ideas in *Instruments of Darkness*, he shows how the familiar was present throughout the English witchcraft trials and shows how the familiar was made up of both malefic and diabolic elements, a matter of concern to trial participants of all classes.[26] Like Sharpe, Darr provides an overview of the many forms a familiar can take. She expands on the analysis of the familiar by providing a hypothesis that the preferred shapes of familiars helped the belief that they could visit witches in jail and outlines the beliefs of demonologists about familiars.[27] Developing her thesis that the witch mark meant different things to different members of the learned class (highlighting divines, lawyers, and physicians), she states that '[t]he variety of opinions about imp evidence resembled those surrounding the devil's mark. Physicians led the radical side, completely rejecting imp narratives as evidence… The divines found themselves in an awkward position because of the prominence of imp narratives and the theological difficulties they presented.'[28] Darr's approach ties the familiar with the witch mark, using the familiar as a way to explore the concept of the witch mark as evidence and proof of witchcraft by contemporaries.

For the second category of challenging the historiography, we must start with Margaret Murray's long thoroughly discredited work on witchcraft as part of a larger pre-Christian cult. Although Murray's methods have been criticised as poorly evidenced and assumptive, she does provide some analysis that is worth mentioning here, if only for the express purpose of debunking later in this work. Murray defines two different kind of familiars: the divining familiar, 'which did not belong to the witch but was an animal which appeared accidentally after the performance of certain magical ceremonies' and the domestic familiar.[29] Murray adds a few items of note about the domestic familiar and witch mark. Claiming that the familiar was confined to England, she states that the domestic spirit was 'found chiefly in the eastern counties of England.'[30] She also points out the trend of familiars to be gifted

[25] Sharpe, "The Witch's Familiar," 225.
[26] Sharpe, "The Witch's Familiar"; Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness.*
[27] Orna Alyagon Darr, *Marks of an Absolute Witch: Evidentiary Dilemmas in Early Modern England* (London: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2011), 145-147.
[28] Darr, *Marks of an Absolute Witch,* 152. However, as discussed later in Chapter 3, divines had a plethora of Biblical references to the familiar at their command to grapple with the concept.
[29] Margaret Alice Murray, *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe: A Study in Anthropology* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1921), 203.
[30] Murray, *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe,* 222.

from fellow witches and witchcraft to be passed from mother to daughter, like many familiars.[31] Related to the familiar, Murray wrote that the witch mark developed because 'the witch who was possessed of a supernumerary nipple would regard it as something supernatural, and would use it to nourish a supernatural animal.'[32] She also offers some analysis on why some familiars appear as humans. She states that '[a]s these familiars were generally called 'Devils' it is sometimes difficult to distinguish them from the Grand-Master [a figure Murray has theorised as a man who witches were identifying as the Devil and was the leader of their supposed cult]; but the evidence, taken as a whole, suggests that at certain parts of the ritual [referring to the sabbat] every individual of the company was known as a Devil.'[33] Murray challenged the historiography, wrongly, using the familiar as proof for a larger British pagan cult.

However, the familiar has also been used in a constructive way to bring other elements into the forefront of witchcraft studies. Diane Purkiss and Deborah Willis have used the familiar as a way to expand their views that the witch was threatening because women were seen with fear by men because of their natural feminine power.[34] As Willis explains, '[w]hereas in village-level discourse the witch is almost always a dominating mother who controls childlike demonic imps, in elite discourse…she is subordinated to a diabolic male "master", becoming the servant or "drudge" of a devil now represented … as an adult male … a rival of God and the godly fathers who rule in his name.'[35] While Willis uses both the witch teat and the familiar to argue 'the centrality of the maternal breast in village constructions of the witch,' Purkiss expands this by showing how the witch, placed as both anti-mother and anti-housewife, was a threat to female contemporaries, who made up most of the accusers for the trials.[36]

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[31] Murray, *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe,* 223.
[32] Murray, *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe,* 209.
[33] Murray, *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe,* 228.
[34] For more on this, including an in-depth discussion of Purkiss's research, see Chapter 4 on gender. Diane Purkiss, *The Witch in History: Early Modern and Twentieth-century Representations* (London: Routledge, 1996)*;* Deborah Willis, *Malevolent Nurture: Witch-hunting and Maternal Power in Early Modern England* (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 1995)*.*
[35] Willis, *Malevolent Nurture,* 15.
[36] Willis, *Malevolent Nurture,* 52; Purkiss, *The Witch in History.*

Greg Warburton in his article on familiars follows in this gender-centric vein, concluding that 'Women herein were active agents, using the familiar in varied ways to give shape, substance, and particular meaning to their involvement in English witchcraft,' and that '[w]omen used the familiar in diverse and creative ways that refuted such interpretations and which enabled them to present witchcraft in terms of the early modern environment as they perceived and experienced it.'[37] While I agree with this point, extending it to all trial participants, male or female, Warburton postulates that women perceived witchcraft as non-diabolic until at least 1645.[38] This has been argued against by Charlotte Rose Millar, one of the rising leaders in the field, whose work on sixteenth-century witchcraft pamphlets 'demonstrates that a key concern about witchcraft for both theologians and ordinary people stemmed from a fear of the witch's relationship with the Devil and the power that she…may have gained from diabolic allegiance.'[39] Millar challenges the notion put forth by Thomas and Macfarlane that witchcraft was purely malefic in England.[40] In the article, Millar quickly analyses how we see evidence in sixteenth-century pamphlets opening up avenues of research in the origins of the familiar, its relation to the Devil, and its influence of and on gender and sexuality. She concludes that 'the pact between a witch and her familiar formed the basis for accusations of indecent and inappropriate sexual behaviour… demonstrated by the sexual transgressions present in nearly all surviving witchcraft pamphlets and focus on the familiar's role within them.'[41] Briggs's analysis is in this same vein, commenting that, 'the animal familiars or imps which appear in almost every well documented case [of witchcraft] quite clearly performed the role of the Devil.'[42]Millar continues to challenge the historiographical narrative with her work on familiar spirits and emotions.[43]

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[37] Gregory Warburton, "Gender, Supernatural Power, Agency and Metamorphosis of the Familiar in Early Modern Pamphlet Accounts of English Witchcraft," *Parergon* 20, no.2 (2003): 117-118.
[38] Warburton, "Gender, Supernatural Power," 117.
[39] Charlotte Rose Millar, "The Witch's Familiar in Sixteenth-Century England," *Melbourne Historical Journal*, 38 (2010): 114.
[40] Millar, "The Witch's Familiar", 115.
[41] Millar, "The Witch's Familiar", 123.
[42] Robin Briggs, *Witches and Neighbours: The Social and Cultural Context of European Witchcraft* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2002), 29.
[43] Upcoming publications include: *The Devil is in the Pamphlets: Witchcraft and Emotion in Early Modern England,* Routledge Early Modern History Series, (forthcoming 2017); "Familiar Spirits" in *Emotions in Early Modern Europe: An Introduction*, ed. Susan Broomhall, (Routledge: forthcoming 2016); "Over-Familiar Spirits: Seventieth Century English Witches and Their Devils" in *Unbridled*

Garthine Walker's thoughts also seem to differ from Millar's conclusion that diabolism was more present than previously considered in the sixteenth and early seventeenth century. As she explains, '[h]istorians often imply that the [1604 Witchcraft] Act's significance lies in its introduction of continental diabolism into English law. It is more accurate, however to say that the statute introduced a form of *English* quasi-diabolism by criminalising the witch's relationship with her familiar spirits.'[44] While the 1604 Witchcraft Act more or less repeated the 1563 act in meaning, the explicit statement of engaging with a familiar spirit being a felony brought the spirit to the forefront of legal concern. Walker uses the familiar spirit to challenge the notion that witchcraft was actually a *criminum exceptum* because its 'intimate and quotidian' presence was easily found in everyday life by those who were looking for witchcraft.[45] This is similar to Francis E. Dolan's comments that witches' '"imps" or "familiars", popularly perceived as both small household pets and fiendishly busy embodiments of the devil, further exemplify how accounts of domestic crime conflate the familiar and the dangerous, the self and the other.'[46]

There also have been a few interdisciplinary and comparative approaches to the familiar spirit. Emma Wilby, following the tradition of Carlo Ginzburg, challenges the tradition that familiars were either the product of mental illness, prosecutional or social coercion, or misapprehension that we saw earlier in the historiography.[47] She sees familiars, as well as other aspects of the British preternatural world as 'expressions of popular experiential traditions rooted in pre-Christian shamanistic beliefs and practices.'[48] The identification of this popular shamanistic visionary

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Passions: Emotions in the History of Witchcraft, eds. Laura Kounine and Michael Ostling, Palgrave Series for Studies in the History of Emotions, (forthcoming 2016).

[44] Garthine Walker, "The Strangeness of the Familiar: Witchcraft and the Law in Early Modern England" in *The Extraordinary and the Everyday in Early Modern England: Essays in Celebration of the Work of Bernard Capp,* ed. Angela McShane and Garthine Walker (Basingstoke: Palgrave-MacMillan, 2010). Italics are the author's.

[45] Walker, "The Strangeness of the Familiar", 113.

[46] Francis Elizabeth Dolan, *Dangerous Familiars: Representations of Domestic Crime in England, 1550-1700* (Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994), 16.

[47] Carlo Ginzburg, *The Night Battles: Witchcraft and Agrarian Cults in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 1992); Carlo Ginzburg, *Ecstasies: deciphering the witches sabbath* (London: Huntinson Radius, 1990). Ronald Hutton also connects early modern English witchcraft to folkloric beliefs in Ronald Hutton, *The Pagan Religions of the Ancient British Isles: Their Nature and Legacy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991).

[48] Emma Wilby, *Cunning Folk and Familiar Spirits: Shamanistic Visionary Traditions in Early Modern British Witchcraft and Magic* (London: Sussex Academic Press, 2005), 5. Also see her work Emma Wilby, *The Visions of Isobel Goudie: magic, witchcraft, and dark shamanism in seventeenth century*

tradition leads her to suggesting, along with Purkiss that the familiar is 'a form of household fairy, or hob.'[49] While Wilby's analysis offers a better-evidenced argument than other pre-Christian cult theorists such as Murray, it seems to remove the familiar from the period in which it rises in popularity, untethering it from its time and place in a way that is productive for expanding the origins of the spirit, but incomplete in its analysis. Francesca Matteoni's work on blood in the early modern period takes the theme of origins of superstitions and anxieties surrounding blood and examines the familiar through a comparison with Italian preternatural beliefs.[50] She argues that 'contrasting feelings, fears and beliefs related to dangerous or extraordinary individuals, such as Jews, witches, and Catholic saints, but also superhuman beings such as fairies, vampires and werewolves, were rooted in the perception of the body as an unstable substance, that was at the base of ethnic, religious and gender stereotypes.'[51] Her conclusions about familiars were particularly interesting, as while she followed Purkiss, Dolan, and Walker in showing how the familiar was 'located in the routine of the everyday world,' '[t]he presence of this record seems to testify to the idea of the familiar, though somehow linked to a shared complex and learned theories, but it was not an English transformation of the devil's pact, but an original belief.'[52] Finally, James Serpell has conducted an interesting quantitative study of the familiar spirit and its animal forms.[53] Mostly the work is a statistically-backed analysis of the forms familiars took, with little new analysis beyond the aforementioned. However, Serpell hypothesized that the familiar did not take root on the Continent because there was no room within official witchcraft beliefs.[54] The historiography surrounding the

Scotland (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2010) for a more detailed case-study into the relationship between witchcraft and shamanistic beliefs.

[49] Diane Purkiss, s.v. "Fairies" in Richard M. Golden, ed., *Encyclopedia of Witchcraft: The Western Tradition,* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2006), 346; Emma Wilby, "The Witch's Familiar and the Fairy in Early Modern England and Scotland," *Folklore* 111, no.2 (2000); Wilby, *Cunning Folk and Familiar Spirits.*

[50] Francesca Matteoni, "Blood Beliefs in Early Modern Europe," (PhD Thesis, University of Hertfordshire, 2009).

[51] Matteoni, "Blood Beliefs in Early Modern Europe," 4. Wilby also points out the importance of blood when communicating with spirits. Wilby, *Cunning Folk and Familiar Spirits,* 144-145.

[52] Matteoni, "Blood Beliefs in Early Modern Europe" (PhD), 155. Matteoni points out that this is the case as opposed to sabbats which are situated in the realm of fantasy, 153. Matteoni's work is discussed further in Chapter 3 on the familiar's connections to the religious environment of the period.

[53] Serpell, "Guardian Spirits". Serpell's work is further discussed below in Chapter 2 on animals.

[54] Serpell, "Guardian Spirits", 182.

familiar spirit while at first, therefore, recently has started to shift as new perspectives are brought forward and as scholars concentrate on new areas.

While there have been fewer works dedicated to the familiar, there has not been a comprehensive study published about the familiar spirit. An analysis encompassing considering the familiar spirit as an animal form, religious threat, form of evidence, gendered creature and folkloric being, has not hitherto been undertaken. Also, the familiar is often analysed within the world of witchcraft, and while this is obviously useful, a study examining the familiar in its own right, as related to witchcraft but not intrinsically tied to it, could open up new questions and considerations. Historians are yet able to consider the familiar and its characteristics as figures within the greater culture, spreading and shifting over time. Additionally, these works often use pamphlets for their sources, but rarely consider how the familiar was used by all trial participants. Darr, Purkiss, and Willis, all consider how the familiar is used by 'experts', witches, and patriarchal figures, in order to examine the various participants' beliefs and anxieties. There remains, however, the need for an analysis bringing together the perspectives of these participants.

James Sharpe termed early-modern English witchcraft belief as 'for educated and uneducated people alike, only one aspect of a broader intellectual system that incorporated other elements which the modern observer would regard as "irrational" or "superstitious".'[55] Witchcraft was not an isolated intellectual system, outside the daily life of those who believed in its power or danger. The belief system surrounding English witchcraft was shaped and influenced by the surrounding culture. Historians can therefore use witchcraft as a testing ground for other cultural aspects of the period and analysis of the familiar can serve as an entryway into wider culture. As Gaskill points out, 'witchcraft accusations illustrate the struggle for survival and authority… and in the process offer intriguing insights into the complex ways in which ordinary people behaved, thought and communicated.'[56] Studying witchcraft can give insights into what contemporaries thought and believed to be important, both in and outside of the realm of witchcraft. Analysis of the familiar can advance this in a more specific vein, especially since the literature surrounding the being is limited at the moment. As Barry and Davies point out, '[i]n England,

[55] Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness,* 37.
[56] Gaskill, *Crime and Mentalities,* 33.

…there are few new insightful court records to be mined … [and] English witchcraft historians, exploiting the potential of the print and digitised collections, will, in the next few years, focus on textual analyses, situate witchcraft in broader studies of magic, [and] examine related beliefs within a more ethnographic framework.'[57] Therefore, the familiar, as a little-studied aspect of English witchcraft, a defining element of English witchcraft,[58] can be analysed within these trends, as a 'detailed investigation into the phenomenon of familiars is currently one of the most urgent items on the agenda for future research into English witchcraft history.'[59]

Primary Research Questions

In order to begin to fill in this gap in the knowledge, some key questions must be confronted. How did the familiar form within the minds of contemporaries as a concept within witchcraft? What elements of the familiar come from outside of witchcraft beliefs? As we will see, some features of the familiar spirit were already established by the first English witchcraft pamphlet and some were introduced through the period. As different voices from different classes interacted in trials, and subsequently the publishing of a pamphlet on witchcraft, we must ask: how does the familiar spirit show the interchange between popular and elite cultures at the time? Because these trial participants had different motivations and different ideas when it came to cultural norms, we must also ask: what purpose did the familiar serve within witchcraft narratives for different trial participants? Ultimately, trial participants were concerned with the familiar because something about it signalled danger, although what kind of danger was dependent on who was describing it. Therefore, we must consider: what threat did the familiar pose to early moderns that they were so concerned with it? These questions are recurrent themes throughout this thesis and are considered in the light of the different approaches that are taken below.

Methodology

Quantitative Analysis

[57] Jonathan Barry and Owen Davies, "Introduction," in *Palgrave Advances in Witchcraft Historiography,* ed. Jonathan Barry and Owen Davies (New York: Palgrave-MacMillan, 2007), 6.
[58] Robin Briggs, *Witches and Neighbours*; Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness;* Clive Holmes, "Women, Witnesses and Witches," *Past and Present* 140 (1993): 45-78.
[59] James Sharpe, *Witchcraft in Early Modern England* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2001), 64.

In order to gain some perspective on the prevalence of the familiar in early modern English witchcraft trial pamphlets, I have compiled a database of the cultural language used by trial participants to describe the familiar. This allows systematic analysis of the representations of familiars and identification of trends overtime. In making this database I identified 293 familiars in the 36 trial pamphlets published between 1561 and 1693 that discuss familiars in an English trial context. As Serpell explains, 'Familiars… appeared regularly in trial evidence and confessions from 1566 onward, so the concept was clearly well established in the popular imagination long before it acquired formal, legal recognition.'[60]

To begin the compilation of this database, I searched for pamphlet material in Early English Books Online (EEBO) and Eighteenth Century Collections Online (ECCO) using the following search terms: 'witch'; 'witchcraft'; 'familiar' plus witchcraft as a topic limiter; 'familiar spirit'; 'imp'; 'demon'; 'devil' plus witchcraft as a topic limiter. After eliminating the duplicates (by title and year published) and adding in specific pamphlets I collected that were referenced in the historiography, I tediously went through the 141 entries, eliminating those that did not actually have mentions of familiars. This list, leaving 119 titles, was then compared to bibliographies compiled by colleagues researching in the field as a cross-check.[61]

Pamphlets and books that discussed familiars in a theoretical manner, not providing examples associated with 'real' witches,[62] were excluded from this part of the analysis in order to focus on the language used by trial participants and see if the language and description of earlier pamphlets informed later trials. While 79 pamphlets in this period discuss familiars, I have eliminated possession-dominated narratives from the quantitative analysis as these forms of spirits were described more as apparitions than the familiar spirits we see in maleficium-based cases. Some pamphlets in this study discuss the same case, but were published separately, usually with different details and emphasis. These have also been included in this study and

[60] Serpell, "The Witch's Familiar," 160.

[61] I would like to thank James Sharpe, Charlotte Rose Millar, and Vicky Carr for their formal and informal feedback on this process.

[62] The perceived reality of witches and familiars are treated as genuine throughout my analysis, as it was considered genuine by contemporaries. Although there will be some analysis on what was actually occurring when trial participants provide certain details, the term 'real' here is meant to convey examples that are attributed to assumed real people and events.

are entered in as separate data points. Therefore, pamphlets in this study are identified by publication year, not trial year if this was different.

To supplement my own research, I have used Ewen's catalogue of witchcraft trials as a starting point to find trial cases and provide a compass on what themes and details to explore. Serpell's analysis on the familiar and its animal forms was used to help understand the impact of the Hopkins and Stearne trials on the features of the familiar. Both of these sources have contributed to the parameters I have set on the data, especially the period to which I have limited my analysis of this data. There are some limitations to trial pamphlets as a source that might have an impact on the comparative potential of this data. Limitations such as loss of sources and limitations of this thesis prevent this analysis from comparing the discussion of familiars in pamphlets to pamphlets that do not have familiars, so secondary sources will have to be relied on for this. Serpell justified this by considering Ewen's research stating '[b]ecause of the sketchy nature of most of the assize records, it is virtually impossible to obtain an accurate estimate of the proportion of English witch trials that actually included evidence of the use of familiars… Ewen's 1933 study, [however,] based on reasonably detailed depositions and testimonies, generates a figure of 60 percent (270 out of 450 cases), of which roughly half were brought by Hopkins and Stearne.'[63] Furthermore, due to damage and inconsistent archiving of pamphlets, we do not know how many pamphlets have been lost or how truly representative those we do have access to typify regions or years.

In my research, I have found that my data is similar that of Ewen, offering a distribution of pamphlets that mention familiars throughout the period, peaking in 1645-1649. In Figure 1 below, we can see how pamphlets that mention familiars are prevalent throughout the period, with the longest gap in pamphlets being right before a huge spike (1630-1644 and 1645-1649 respectively). This gap is quite substantial since it comprises of almost 10% of the total amount of years included in this study. This gap also coincides with a decline of trials as a whole during these decades. James Sharpe found that there was a major decline in the official concern about

[63] Serpell, "The Witch's Familiar," 164. It should be noted that this number includes trial records, which my database does not. It also is calculated using individual witches, separating the Hopkins-Stearne mass witchcraft trials into individual cases. It also includes "other animal manifestations" such as hallucinations during possession cases which this data does not.

witchcraft in the 1620s and 1630s, postulating that 'by the 1630s, at least in the metropolitan area and the Home Counties, witchcraft prosecutions were ebbing, and educated opinion was obviously becoming very sceptical about the usefulness of indicting suspected witches and hence, possibly, of the reality of malefic witchcraft.'[64] While this figure does not represent how dominant familiars are in certain pamphlets, it does show interest in the production and distribution of pamphlets that contained details about familiars and how these pamphlets were spread over time. It also shows an increase in the amount of pamphlets, and hence presumably trials, which contained familiars in them. This is contrary to findings that most witchcraft prosecutions occurred in the reign of Elizabeth, giving some indication that the popularity of familiars did not follow the popularity of witchcraft indictments.[65] It does not account for the degree to which familiars are concentrated in some pamphlets—cases with multiple witches and/or multiple familiars, the detail in which descriptions are given, and the overwhelming surge of familiars in the Hopkins/Stearne trials.

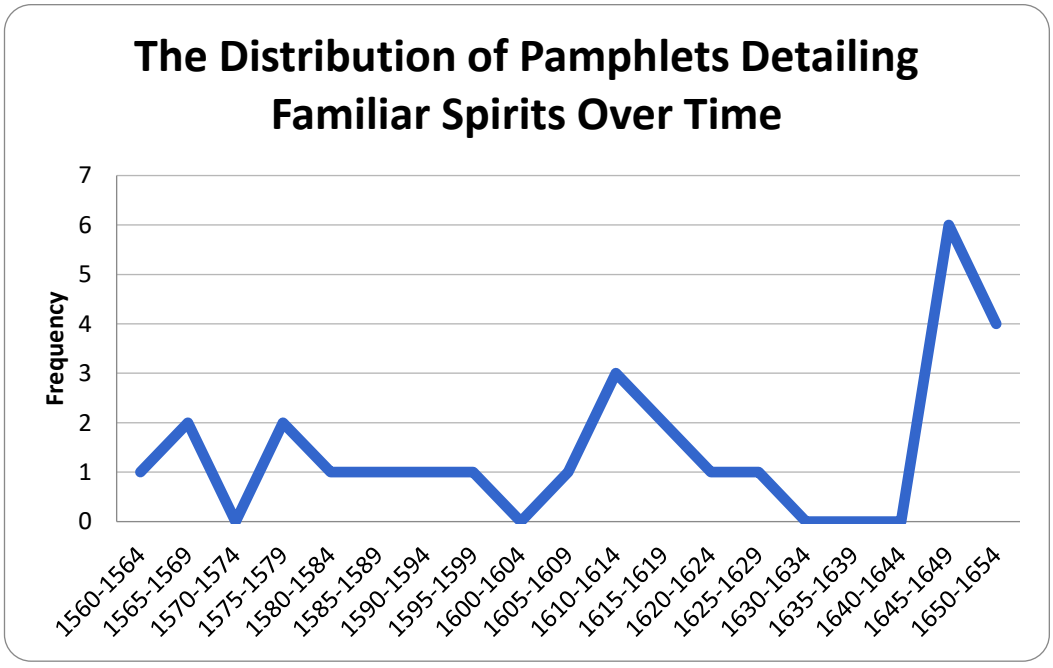

Figure 1: The Distribution of Pamphlets Detailing Familiar Spirits Over Time. This shows, by half-decade, 36 witchcraft trial pamphlets mentioning familiars, peaking in the late 1640s due to the Hopkins/Stearne trials.

[64] Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness,* 127.
[65] Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness,* 108.

In order to identify familiars in pamphlets I identified not only contextual evidence, but also certain terms ('Identifiers') that branded familiars to both trial participants and pamphlet audiences. In these pamphlets I recorded the identifiers that trial participants and pamphlet writers used, counting not the frequency of each term within the pamphlet, as this would skew the data for larger trials, but rather if a term was used with a pamphlet even once to refer to a familiar. This allows for analysis of the dissemination and popularity of the terms used to identify familiars and whether this is changed over time. This analysis also helps determine discrepancies or assortment of identifiers by trial participants. I also included mentions of the Devil in this when trial participant statements gave the Devil familiar-like qualities or had identifier overlap with familiars.

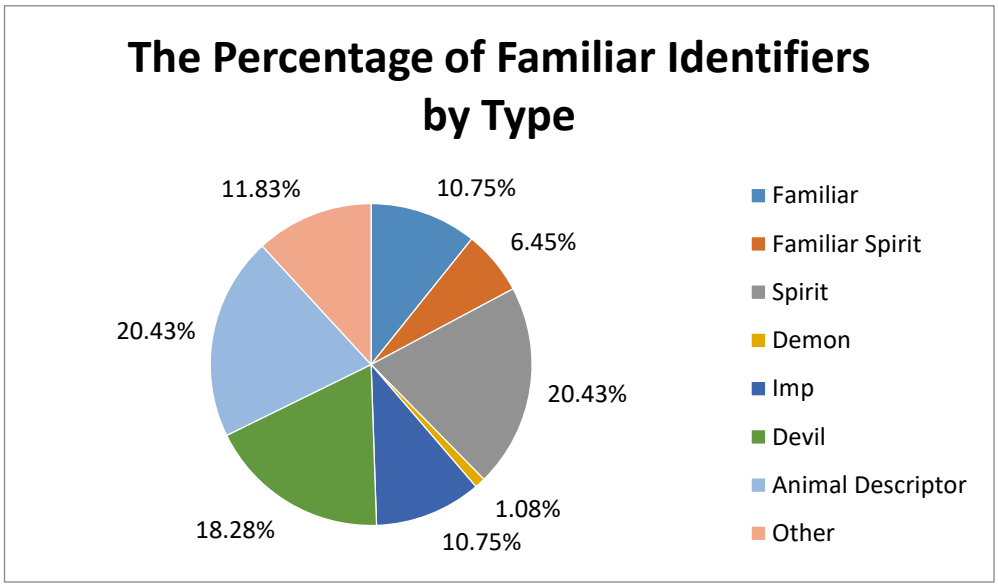

Figure 2: Percentage of Familiar Identifiers by Type

When terms are compared side by side, the identifiers "Spirit" and "Animal Descriptor" were used most often to describe familiars, tying at 20.43% of mentions. This does not include saying a familiar is "like a cat" but rather when the animal descriptor substitutes where familiar could stand such as "the cat sucked on her thigh". As Serpell states, '[t]he tendency of English trial witnesses either to 'invent' familiars when no pets were available to incriminate, or to attribute supernatural agency to the chance appearance of rats, mice, birds, snails, or insects in the vicinity of accused persons, reveals a widespread popular superstition regarding the existence of malevolent supernatural beings or 'spirits' that assisted or represented witches in

their magic, and preferentially adopted the physical form of animals while doing so.'[66] The identifiers "Familiar" and "Devil" were the next most used coming at 10.75% and 18.28% respectively, giving some indication that trial participants and pamphlet writers associated familiars with diabolic ideas. There was a total of 93 different instances of identifiers used, with the most being 23 different identifiers in 1645-1649, possibly indicating that these trials contained the largest amalgamation of different ideas about the familiar spirit. These identifiers shifted in popularity and variation throughout the period as can be seen in Figure 3.

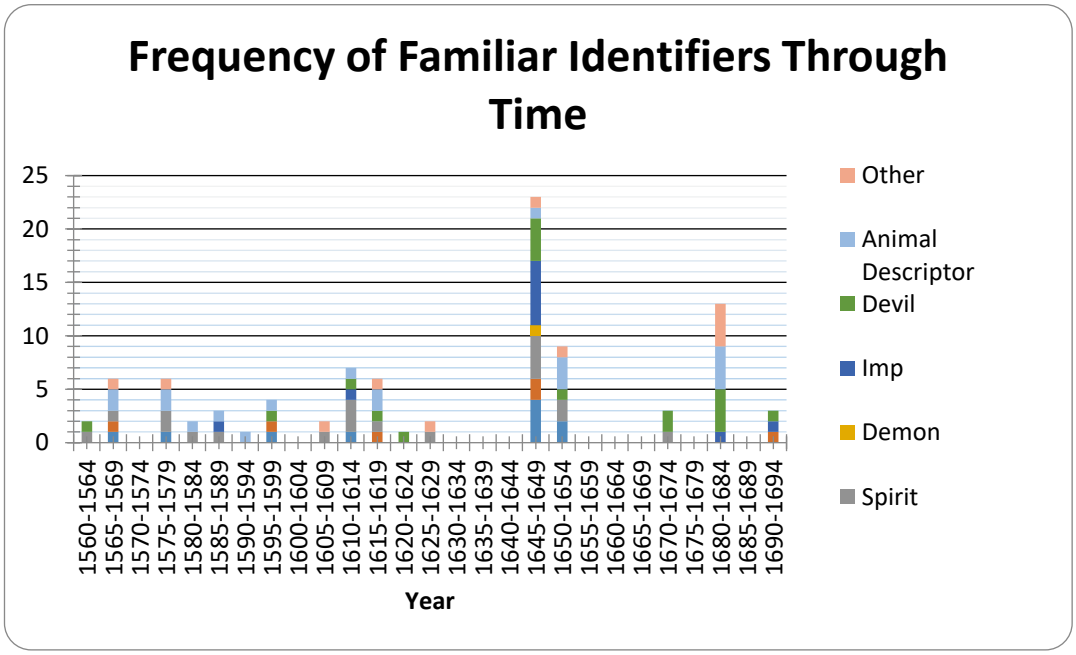

Figure 3: Frequency of Familiar Identifiers Through Time

We see that the identifier "spirit" seemed to gain popularity earlier in the period, appearing in all but two of the half-decades that have pamphlets in the study. However, in the 1645-1649 bracket, "imp" was used most frequently, while only appearing twice before. Serpell makes an interesting point about this identifier stating that, '[t]he fact that these beings were usually referred to as 'imps' also indicates some ambiguity in the popular mind concerning whether such creatures existed independently of the witch, or were alien offshoots of her own persona.'[67]

[66] Serpell, "The Witch's Familiar," 179.
[67] Serpell, "The Witch's Familiar," 179.

This bracket also sees the most diversity of identifiers, encompassing all eight categories. “Demon” is surprisingly low in frequency in this analysis, but does make appearances periodically. However, from the 1645-1649 interval onwards, the term “Devil” appears consistently, indicating a diabolic concern later in the period.

Looking at how the familiar was referenced by contemporaries through time is also profitable line of analysis. In Figure 4, data are displayed by the number of familiars that are reported in each half-decade, giving a more accurate depiction of what kind of language was used to describe familiars was over time. It also displays how many witches were accused in each trial in order to perceive if the testimony of one witch held more weight statistically than others.

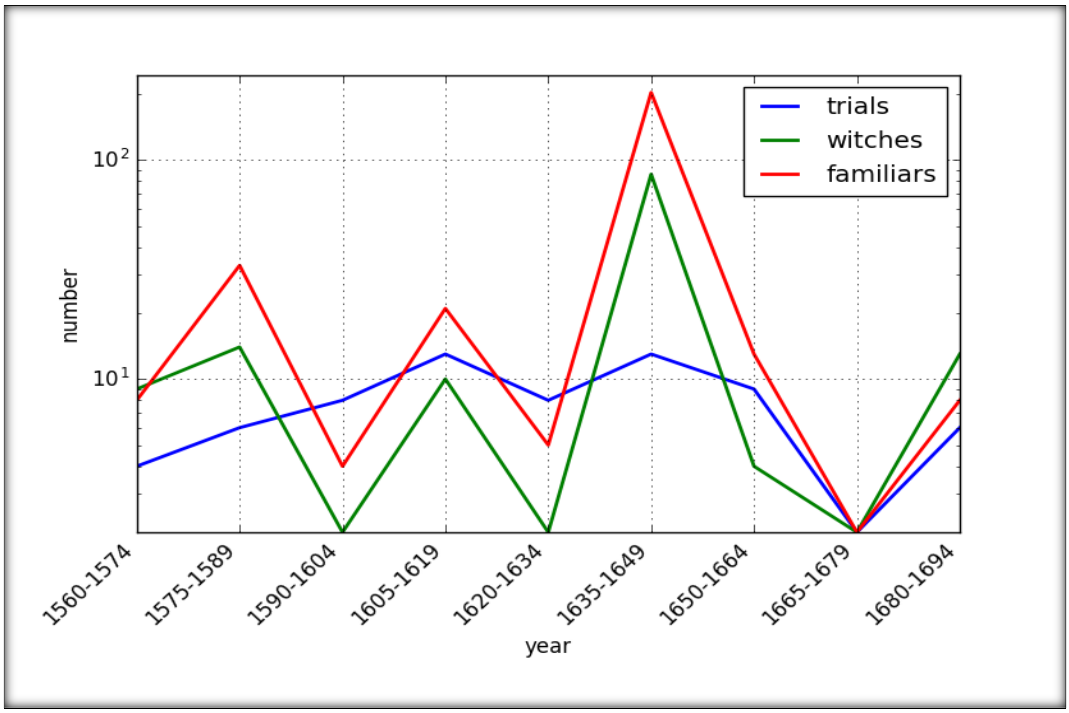

Figure 4: Identified Familiars v. Witches Accused Over Time

Figure 4 demonstrates several salient features. Firstly, the domination of information obtained in the late 1640s skews the data, especially with the high ratio of familiars to witches, making the trends in previous decades hard to establish. However, we do see the trend of trial participants and pamphlet writers to report more on familiars, dominating much of the Hopkins and Stearne trials and how this trend extended after the 1640s. Both Hopkins and Stearne were focused on proof of witchcraft, defending the use of searchers looking for marks and teats, the pact or covenant made by the witch to sell her soul, and the widespread presence of witchcraft throughout the

country. Using methods of interrogation such as keeping their prisoners awake for days on end and 'watching' (the act of constantly monitoring), these witchfinders reported witnessing familiars visiting their witches and had a disproportionally larger level of confession and conspiracy than had been seen previously in England.[68] The publicising of their findings then spread further expectations of what was needed in witchcraft confessions, allegations, and pamphlet material. Their work established a legacy of familiar spirits being common occurrences in witchcraft pamphlets that lasted for the following fifty years.

It is also important to consider geography to see if a higher proportion of familiars was due to the dominance of sources concerning certain areas. While the amount of familiars distributed throughout the country was wide-reaching, the low number of sources from some counties skews the overall data. One can postulate that this concentration was not only affected by proximity to London, but also high profile cases such as those put forth by Hopkins and Stearne.

In my data, 21 out of the 39 historic counties are represented. Essex and Suffolk contain the largest number of familiars, no doubt due to the prevalence of the Hopkins and Stearne trials. As we can see, the familiar was present throughout England, throughout the period, and had many different names associated with it. Therefore, in order to meet the goals of intersectionality outlined above, I will be considering the whole of the period and will not be limiting my analysis to one region of the country, as pamphlets travelled to various regions, spreading concepts about the familiar. The main characteristics of the familiar seem to follow three main themes, which I have subsequently reflected in the structure of this thesis: the spirit in animal form, religious apprehensions, and the being related to gender.

Pamphlets

Darr, as well as many other witchcraft historians, points out that '[a]lthough the pamphlets and tracts cannot provide a full and systematic picture of the prosecution, these literary texts are probably the richest existing documentation of conflicting

[68]For a very in depth discussion on Hopkins and Stearne, see Malcolm Gaskill, *Witchfinders: A Seventeenth-Century Tragedy* (London: John Murray, 2005).

attitudes toward the proof of witchcraft in English society.'[69] Due to their detail of not only the court proceedings but also events leading up to the trial, pamphlets provide a level of detail provided from multiple voices in the text. As Gibson says, '[i]f we can begin to analyse these multivocal documents to see who telling us what about witchcraft and why, we can suggest what witchcraft meant to the different types of people who constructed it.'[70] Crime pamphlets such as these were popular, well-distributed and widely read, reaching a wide audience both geographically and socially. Oldridge adds that '[a]t the time of the most intense witchcraft persecutions in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, there was already a large market for publications on the subject, ranging from learned treatises on the problem of satanic magic to ballads recounting the activities of individuals accused of the crime.'[71]

Pamphlets, with their wide readership, were part of a genre which provided confirmation to already accepted ideas about witchcraft, and, when new concepts were introduced to the narrative through demonology, continental trials, or the further infusion of popular culture into trial statements, spread them. In her work *Reading Witchcraft,* Gibson writes that '[t]he "concerned parties" in a witchcraft examination would be the victim, who initiated the process and, importantly, told the basic story; the questioning magistrate; the witch, answering and adding information; and the scribe, noting and editing events.'[72] All of these 'co-authors' as Gibson calls them, had influence on the text and the manner in which the case was presented. For first and foremost, these pamphlets were to relate a culturally agreed upon narrative and to do that, many authors were needed to shape and edit it to fit a set of codified events. Roper states that 'pamphlet accounts of trials also circulated, the stereotypical sensationalist images, providing a sequential narrative which "fixed" the terrors of the witch story in visual form.'[73] However, Gibson believes that documents, 'cannot tell us truths. We ought instead to realise that they *can* tell us

[69] Darr, *Marks of an Absolute Witch,* 12. See: James Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness,* XX; Alan Macfarlane, "Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart Essex," in *Articles on Witchcraft, Magic and Demonology: Witchcraft in England,* ed. Brian Levack (London: Garland Publishing Inc., 1992), 7; Marion Gibson, *Reading Witchcraft,* 6; Emma Wilby, *Cunning Folk and Familiar Spirits,* 46; Charlotte Rose Millar, "The Witch's Familiar", 114-115.
[70] Marion Gibson, *Reading Witchcraft*, 13.
[71] Darren Oldridge, "General Introduction," in *The Witchcraft Reader,* ed. Darren Oldridge (London: Routledge, 2002), 1.
[72] Gibson, *Reading Witchcraft,* 21.
[73] Lyndal Roper, *Witch Craze: Terror and Fantasy in Baroque Germany* (London: Yale University Press, 2004), 120.

about how witches, witnesses, magistrates, legal clerks, pamphleteers, and perhaps readers, wanted witchcraft to be seen.'[74] Instead, she hypothesises that by attempting to unravel the prompted questions and understanding the process of interrogation, it can be seen that the '[w]itch and questioner may be battling for control of the process, or they may be collaborating, knowingly or not, ghost writing one another's contributions.'[75] Through the negotiation and dialogue of an interrogation between witch and magistrate, the witch had her own voice to detail her story and the magistrate led her in particular directions with the questions asked of her.

Gibson's work reveals a way of reading witchcraft pamphlets that acknowledges the multitude of voices that are captured and how the genre works within both legal and print conventions. Other historians of the crime pamphlet genre have shown how 'authors used stories about crime as a springboard in order to discuss broader issues, such as economic and social change, politics, and religion.'[76] Crime pamphlets could be used as a means of propaganda, reinforcing religious, social, or political norms.[77] In her extensive analysis of rogue pamphlets in London, Liapi addresses what Gibson does not, acknowledging the impact of market forces and literary culture as well as the content itself, showing how 'when criminals addressed the audience, they could claim a limited (but existent) degree of agency.'[78] Several works have also expanded on how the pamphlet was used as a way of distributing polemical and political ideas as well as being subject to them. Tessa Watts, discussing the interaction of print and culture, sees cheap print as a medium in which the populace could be given examples of an unsophisticated, but impactful, piety without needing a knowledge base of the detailed theological debates occurring in the period.[79] Joad Raymond expands on this, describing how 'pamphlets became a foundation of the influential moral and political communities that constitute a 'public sphere' of political opinion,' placing the concept of a 'public sphere' much earlier than the

[74] Gibson, *Reading Witchcraft,* 35.
[75] Gibson, *Reading Witchcraft,* 19-20.
[76] Elena Liapi, "Writing Rogues: Cheap Print Representations of Deviance in Early Modern London" (PhD Thesis, University of York, 2013), 36.
[77] Peter Lake, "Cheap Print, Protestantism and Murder in Early Seventeenth Century England," in *Culture and Politics in Early Stuart England,* ed. Kevin Sharpe and Peter Lake (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993).
[78] Liapi, "Writing Rogues," 297.
[79] Tessa Watts, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

previous historiography.[80] Pamphlets then must be considered not only line for line, as Gibson analyses, but also within a larger network of literary genre, affected by and influencing the social, political, and religious changes of the time. As Sharpe points out, 'For people in this period inhabited a culture that was hungry for news, where gossip was an integral part of life; this was in many respects a story-telling culture.' Therefore, we must consider what was in these stories within the larger genre of pamphlets. While a detailed analysis of the witchcraft pamphlet within this larger genre framework is beyond the scope of this work, my analysis of familiars aims to expose how the spirit within the witchcraft pamphlet genre can be used as a way to peel back the layers of contributing voices that Gibson describes, but also can contribute to the understanding of how the construction of the pamphlet was a way of spreading, negotiating, and solidifying ideas.

As Sharpe opines, '[a]lthough the importance of concern over *maleficium* and of interpersonal tensions remains clear, the problem of elite views on witchcraft in early modern England has been reopened, and it is now recognised that on certain levels witchcraft presented an intellectual, even a political, problem.'[81] Stuart Clark's *Thinking with Demons* helps to give perspective on the motivations of European witchcraft beyond village level, analysing the religious, political and linguistic problems missing from Thomas and Macfarlane's works. This view can be summed up when Clark claims that 'the incidence and severity of the campaigns actually mounted against witches depended on a complex interplay of social, institutional, and ideological circumstances.'[82]

Religious beliefs, popular folklore, and social expectations were assembled together to make up what it was to be a witch. These were expressed through opposites. The witch was the opposite of a good Christian married woman who kept the house and raised pious children. She was expected to display behaviour that was the inverse of normal behaviour and gender standards. As Clark explains, '[w]hatever its influence over representational systems as a whole, the gender relation is hierarchically

[80] Joad Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 25-26.

[81] Sharpe, "The Witch's Familiar," 219.
[82] Clark, *Thinking with Demons,* 527.

weighted so that, once the processes of interchangeability, reinforcement, and correlation have had their effect, men are symbolically associated with a range of other positive items and categories, and women with their negative counterparts.'[83] Ian Maclean outlines this type of thinking by explaining that there existed a polarised classification system in which the male or masculine was associated with the good, light, and straight, while women were left with the inverse of these—evil, dark, and ill-formed.[84] As Maclean points out, this way of thinking has roots in Aristotle who classified gender in 'dualities in which one element is superior and the other inferior,' which early modern people inherited as a way of grouping hierarchical positives together (patriarchy, goodness, strength) and by default grouped the inverse of these (femininity, evilness, weakness).[85] Joseph Swetnam, for example, wrote that a woman was 'nothing else but a contrary unto man.'[86] Although Swetnam is known as a misogynist—a bias that is not absent from witchcraft but merely inflated to the point of obscuring other influences of gender on the topic—the sentiment of inversion is reflected in many thoughts of contemporaries in less hateful ways. This 'dependence on antithesis as a rhetorical figure' is a theme that can be seen throughout this thesis (human/animal, Christian/witch) and particularly was used by contemporaries to discuss gender norms, placing the witch as the anti-housewife and anti-mother.[87]

The term "trial participants" is used throughout this thesis to describe all those who contributed to the accusation and conviction of a witch including: the accused themselves, the presiding magistrate, the accusers, other witnesses, and pamphlet writers. While this is encompassing those who theoretically had a voice in the process of constructing the content of trial details through pamphlets, the courtroom audience, jury, and pamphlet publishers are included in this term where specifically indicated. The term "witch" is used throughout the work to identify the person

[83] Clark, *Thinking with Demons,* 119.
[84] Ian Maclean, *The Renaissance Notion of Woman: A study in the fortunes of scholasticism and medical science in European intellectual life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 2-3.
[85] Maclean, *Renaissance Notion of Woman,* 37-38.
[86] Joseph Swetnam, under the pseud. Thomas Tel-troth, *The ariaignment of lewde, idle, forward, and unconstant women* (London, 1615), 33.
[87] Clark, *Thinking with Demons,* 124. For an earlier statement of Clark's work on inversion, see Stuart Clark, "Inversion, Misrule and the Meaning of Witchcraft," *Past and Present* 87 (1980), pp.98-127.

accused or suspected of witchcraft, those who would be identified as a witch by their peers, and does not necessarily confirm self-identification through confession or conviction on the grounds of witchcraft. Those who are identified as cunning folk are not included in this study unless they are accused of malefic or diabolic magic. Satan, is identified as "the Devil" as opposed to "the devil" to differentiate the being from what some contemporaries call familiar spirits. "Blood feeding" and "blood giving" are also distinguished in this work. The former refers to the explicit sucking of blood from the body of a witch by a familiar. The latter refers to the giving of blood through non-sucking methods to the familiar.

Summaries of Chapters

As stated above, this thesis takes a thematic approach considering the familiar in its animal form, as a demonic spirit, and linked to gender. In Chapter 2 of this thesis, the occurrence of the familiar spirit taking on an animal shape is analysed. As shown above, it was common for trial participants to identify a familiar by an animal appearance. This chapter aims to understand why trial participants chose an animal shape for this spirit to adopt and what that shape signalled to contemporaries about behaviour, status, and the fluidity of identity between human and beast. Through this we examine how familiars were often treated as pets. Much like other pets in the period, the familiar spirit was given an 'honorary humanity' that was seen as threatening when coupled with the spirit's ability to talk and its preternatural categorization. This ultimately was a threat to God-given dominion. The chapter also explores how the category of 'human' was not assured considering beliefs about metamorphosis, less-than-humans (the poor, women, minorities), and monstrous births and how this unsure status was reflected in witchcraft beliefs such as possession and the witch mark. The chapter also considers the most common animal forms of familiar spirits (cats, dogs, amphibians, and mice/rats) in order to unpack what trial participants might have alluded to when using these animal forms. Ultimately, this chapter aims to show that trial participants used familiar spirits, tapping into a long tradition of using animals as a narrative tool, a way to convey their beliefs and culture.

In Chapter 3, the process of how the familiar spirit was transformed into a demonic being and connected to larger theological concerns by reformers is explored. Through analysis of demonological perspectives of witchcraft narratives, the familiar is shown to have been used as a tool for trial participants and their influencers to convey their religious beliefs and shortcomings. The chapter considers how the acculturation process of the Protestant Reformation impacted witchcraft narratives in England and how the familiar was changed from a malefic-centred being to a diabolic spirit. This analysis begins with an exploration of the appearance of familiar spirits in the Bible, how contemporaries used these scriptures in order to justify their beliefs, and how pamphleteers and demonologists cited these scriptures injecting them into public consciousness. It also considers how the witch, with the help of the use of the familiar, was made into a symbol of idolatry and rebellion and was tied through this to anti-Catholic rhetoric. The chapter also considers how the witch mark and blood feeding were linked with reformists' ideas about the familiar as a demonic being. Overall, we see the process of demonising the familiar spirit was conveyed through a greater movement of reformers attempting to establish beliefs about preternatural spirits as either superstitious or within a larger demonic network.

In Chapter 4, the familiar spirit is explored as it connects to gender, a theme that dominates witchcraft narratives not only because the majority of witches were women but also in the language and features used in trial participants' testimonies and confessions. Through this we can see that the familiar can be seen as a being that symbolised anxieties about maintaining gender ideals, seen specifically in the placement of the witch as both anti-housewife and anti-mother. The familiar is shown to be a being that threatens the household, through its invasion of physical boundaries, use of precious resources such as food and domestic product, and surrounding anxieties about cleanliness. In this light, the cultural connections between the familiar spirit and other household-visiting spirits, such as the fairy and the hobgoblin, are considered. The familiar spirit also allowed trial participants to place the witch as an anti-mother through its connections with the witch teat, which was seen as a perverse form of breastfeeding. This chapter also briefly discusses the problem of male witches with familiars and how the familiar was given a gender by some trial participants. Ultimately this chapter aims to add to the historiographical

argument that witches being women was a phenomenon beyond misogyny and analysis requires more nuance into women's voices in the pamphlet material.

Chapter 2. ‘Phantasie of keeping things tame’: The Familiar Spirit in Animal Form

In 1566 in Hatfield Peverel, Elizabeth Francis confessed to giving her blood to something in the likeness of a white-spotted cat, which she fed, kept in a basket, and named Satan.[1] She said that Satan was given to her by her grandmother,[2] who told her to renounce God and that the cat would do her bidding with the reward of a drop of blood. In her confession she explained events in her life through her interactions with the cat, ultimately implicating other women of practicing witchcraft by giving the cat away to a new owner. Her confession follows the pattern of most printed confessions, where through the implied questions of the magistrate, a story is woven, which interprets the events of the village and concerns of the accusers through the lens of witchcraft. Elizabeth stated that when her grandmother taught her witchcraft, ‘she counselled her to renounce God and His word, and to give of her blood to Satan (as she termed it), which she delivered her in the likeness of a white spotted cat, and taught her to feed the said cat with bread and milk, and she did so. Also, she taught her to call it by the name of Sathan, and to keep it in a basket.’[3] Elizabeth ‘kept this cat by the space of 15 or 16 year.’[4] The familiar spirit is presented as almost a pet, yet has diabolic elements such as its name, the giving of blood, and the renouncing of Christianity. According to Elizabeth, and later Agnes’s confession, Agnes Waterhouse received Satan the cat from Elizabeth in a pot with wool. Willing him to perform maleficium, she prayed the paternoster in Latin and ‘she gave him for his labour a chicken, which he first required of her, and drop of her blood.’[5] Agnes went

[1] The name Satan is also sometimes spelled Sathan in this pamphlet.

[2] Interestingly, Elizabeth’s grandmother was referred to as Mother Eve. While this is most likely the grandmother’s true name, it is interesting that it is specifically written in the account even though her grandmother was not on trial. Considering that the clerk writing the pamphlet had the license to omit superfluous information, the presence of Mother Eve’s name gives the impression that the clerk could have been attempting to show a connection between the name Eve and the concepts of witchcraft, temptation, heresy, and animals.

[3] Phillips, *The examination and confession of certaine Wytches* (1566).

[4] Phillips, *The examination and confession of certaine Wytches* (1566). This seems to be merely the life expectancy of a cat. It is therefore not that surprising, if we assume that the familiar is an animal in which the identity of a familiar spirit is veiled over, that Satan changes form soon after this under the care of Agnes.

[5] Phillips, *The examination and confession of certaine Wytches* (1566). The connection of Latin with

on to describe various forms of maleficium that she asked Satan to perform, giving him a reward of a chicken and blood after each. She then described how she turned the cat into a toad:

> [S]he kept the cat a great while in wool in a pot, and at length being moved by poverty to occupy the wool, she prayed in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost that it would turn it into a toad, and forthwith it was turned into a toad, and so [she] kept it in the pot without wool.[6]

Her daughter, Joan Waterhouse, later testified against her mother and confessed herself. She stated that she had seen her mother with the toad and after having alms denied to her, 'she going home did as she had seen her mother do, calling Satan, which came to her (as she said) she thought out of her mother's shoe from under the bed in the likeness of a great dog.'[7] This pamphlet account is very interesting because from the first case of familiars we have an established pattern that lasts throughout the period: firstly, the familiar takes the form of an animal, secondly, it speaks to the accused and witnesses, and thirdly, it requires a payment in blood to seal a pact, a topic that will be further discussed in the later chapters.

In order to analyse how the concept of the familiar is used by trial participants and thus to reveal and allude to other cultural beliefs, we need to look at how the familiar is represented in early modern witchcraft trials and how these representations add to our understanding of the threat of witches in early modern society. As we see above, one of the most distinguishing features about familiars is their animal form. These creatures would eat and move like animals, often giving the impression that either the witness or confessing witch was placing a personality over a real animal. In this chapter, the familiar spirit, presented by trial participants as an animal, or at least as something with animal-like characteristics, within pamphlets, will be examined so as to interpret the motivation and allusions of contemporaries and to understand why the familiar was assigned these animal characteristics. There are a few key questions that must be asked to analyse familiars in their animal capacity. How does being in an animal form add to the threat of the familiar? Where does this concept of an animal form come from, given it is quite different from what we find in documents

witchcraft is considered in Chapter 3 of this thesis.

[6] Phillips, *The examination and confession of certaine Wytches* (1566).

[7] Phillips, *The examination and confession of certaine Wytches* (1566).

describing the appearance of spirits that magicians conjured? Where did contemporaries, including witches, get their ideas about the connection between witchcraft and animals? Is the familiar-witch relationship merely an owner-pet relationship that was turned sinister by the expectations of society? Why were certain animals chosen? How does exploring the familiar spirit as an animal contribute to the historiography of considering the familiar as a malefic or diabolic being? Looking at the familiar as an animal offers up an analysis that can help define what the familiar meant to early modern popular culture. The features surrounding the familiar are prevalent from the very first known witchcraft trial pamphlet in 1566, suggesting themes that appeared repetitively throughout the early modern period. While the familiar's characteristics became increasingly diabolic, its animal shape, along with some of its more animal behaviours, continued to be a necessary feature.

As we see in the 1566 case, the familiar could inhabit many animal forms. Satan the familiar was presented as a cat, a toad, and a dog. Why would a witch, or the accusing parties, choose these forms specifically for a familiar to be? Why was the animal, as opposed to some more imaginative, diabolic creature chosen? Serpell states that '[a]lthough familiars occurred in a variety of different forms, the range of species represented was limited, and may provide further clues concerning the origins of the concept.'[8] In his work, Serpell categorises familiars mentioned in early modern English witchcraft trial records by animal type, name, and year of appearance. He notes that the most common animal forms were the cat, toad, dog, and mouse—all animals that would commonly be found around an early modern English village. Other familiar forms such as birds, poultry, moles and rats also occur, though less often than the previous four categories.

As we saw above, familiars were often solely referred to as their animal description.[9] However, even when they were not, they were often described in animal forms. In my own research I have found that out of the 297 familiars in the analysis, 204 are described with animal shapes, with only 12 shapeshifting in between these.[10] Most

[8] Serpell, "Guardian Spirits", 167.
[9] See Chapter 1 in this work.
[10] When a familiar is reported to have shapeshifted, it is counted as two separate data points in the animal count. For example, if a familiar is reported to have turned into a toad when previously a cat, it would be entered as one cat and one toad.

categories are self-explanatory, but in this study I included types of rabbits, hares, and coneys under the blanket term of "Rabbit" and mice and rats under the blanket term of "Rodent". Additionally, those familiar spirits that are described as polecats or ferrets are under the category of "Ferret". As seen below in Figure 5, the largest category of familiar spirits is "unknown," meaning familiars whose forms are simply left out of descriptions. It comprises 30.99% of the total forms— mainly occurring when a witch confessed to having a long set of familiars during larger trials. For example, in 1599 near London, a young child named Joan was haunted by a nondescript spirit. The lack of description is surprising given the detail given in other parts of the trial including a vivid description of some counter-magic measures that were taken and the description of Joan's fits of possession.[11] In the trials that Matthew Hopkins involved himself in in 1645-1647, there are several cases of nondescript familiars. Meribell Bedford of Rattlesden described her familiar spirit as a black thing (named Meribell[12] as well), but gives no animal form for the familiar.[13]

There are several reasons why the detail of the familiar's animal shape may not have been offered in pamphlet material covering larger trials, which open up inquiries into the editing process of trial participants. The lack of description has often been associated with the eagerness of magistrates to convict as well as the expectation that the witch would have familiar spirits, even without her ability to provide details. Serpell comments that '[t]he relative overrepresentation of nondescript familiars in the Hopkins and Stearne trials is also to be expected, given the evident zeal with which the witch finders gathered evidence of the possession and use of familiars.'[14] He hypothesises that the lack of detail occurred when witches were pressed to confirm themselves as witches and the witch-finders expected familiar spirits to make an appearance. Simply, the witch was pressured to admit to having familiars because she was seen as a witch and that is what witches do. Her lack of detail could be read as a fulfilment of expectation, rather than something she truly believed in, especially when coupled with the use of psychological torture. Details could also

[11] *The triall of Maist. Dorrell, or A collection of defences against allegations not yet suffered to receiue convenient answere Tending to cleare him from the imputation of teaching Sommers and others to counterfeit possession of divells.* (1599).

[12] This is an interesting narrative choice that adds further to the theory that familiars could be seen as an expansion of the conscience of the witch.

[13] John Stearne, *A Confirmation and Discovery of Witches* (London: 1648), 26.

[14] Serpell, "Guardian Spirits", 168.

have been left out by those pressuring the witch, satisfied with any form of familiar spirit that she confesses to, rather than finding the need to get to the 'truth' of the matter. Witnesses could also be pressured into providing details of nondescript familiars as it would be easier to provide broad details that could prove easier for other witnesses to confirm and were less likely to contradict the witch's statements. Nondescript familiars support such evidence by allowing the witch to be placed in situations that she could be caught in, whether that was talking to an animal assumed to be a familiar spirit, having close contact with an animal assumed to be a familiar, or a mark left by a familiar on the skin of a witch which is assumed to be left when the familiar spirit sucks her blood. Leaving the familiar spirit undescribed would allow evidence that fits the crime to come forward as it was only too common for domesticated animals to be prevalent in an early modern English village.[15] It was convenient for magistrates and accusers (whether consciously or subconsciously remains to be seen) for the familiar spirit to remain undescribed, as it would allow mere coincidences to become solid evidence against the witch.

The lack of this detail also could be explained by pamphleteers enjoying the luxury of their readers' prior knowledge of familiars. Already by 1645, when use of non-descript familiars increases, there was almost a century long tradition of familiars with animal shapes being described throughout the country. Perhaps pamphleteers, with their limited space, were able to assume that their readers already knew that these familiar spirits' names, or at least mentions, would be accompanied by an animal shape, but not one that the pamphleteer thought to include. This could also be attributed to the rise in concern over diabolical rather than malefic details in witchcraft trials. Animal shapes might have merely not been important anymore because the larger threat was the familiar's demonic attributes rather than its earthly ones.

The most common animal form for a familiar spirit to be presented as was the rodent, predominantly popular in the Hopkins and Stearne trials. Rodents appeared throughout the period, but gained more popularity after these trials than they had enjoyed previous to them. Other categories such as amphibians,[16] canines, felines,

[15] The commonality of the domestic animal will be further discussed later.
[16] This category includes both toads and frogs.

and insects also had substantial popularity within the period.[17] Serpell explains that the 'dearth of livestock is scarcely surprising. Identifying farm animals as familiars would have had the undesirable effect of potentially incriminating most of the farmers in England.'[18] The oddest form (placed in the "Other" category) was from 1646 when Elizabeth Chandler claimed her imps were a wood log and a stick.[19] It is the only case of inanimate objects as familiars that I have been able to find. Approaching the familiar spirit from its most obvious form—an animal—may show why certain characteristics were chosen for the familiar by different parts of society over time.

[17] More analysis on why these specific forms saw frequency can be found in Chapter 2 below.

[18] Serpell, "Guardian Spirts", 170. However, we do see few instances of farm animals below, although the overwhelming amount of identified animal forms are small, domestic animals.

[19] *The witches of Huntingdon, their examinations and confessions; exactly taken by his Majesties justices of peace for that county. Whereby will appeare haw craftily and dangerously the devill tempteth and seizeth on poore soules. The reader may make use hereof against hypocrisie, anger, malice, swearing, idolatry, lust, covetousnesse, and other grievous sins, which occasioned this their downfall* (London: W. Wilson, 1646).

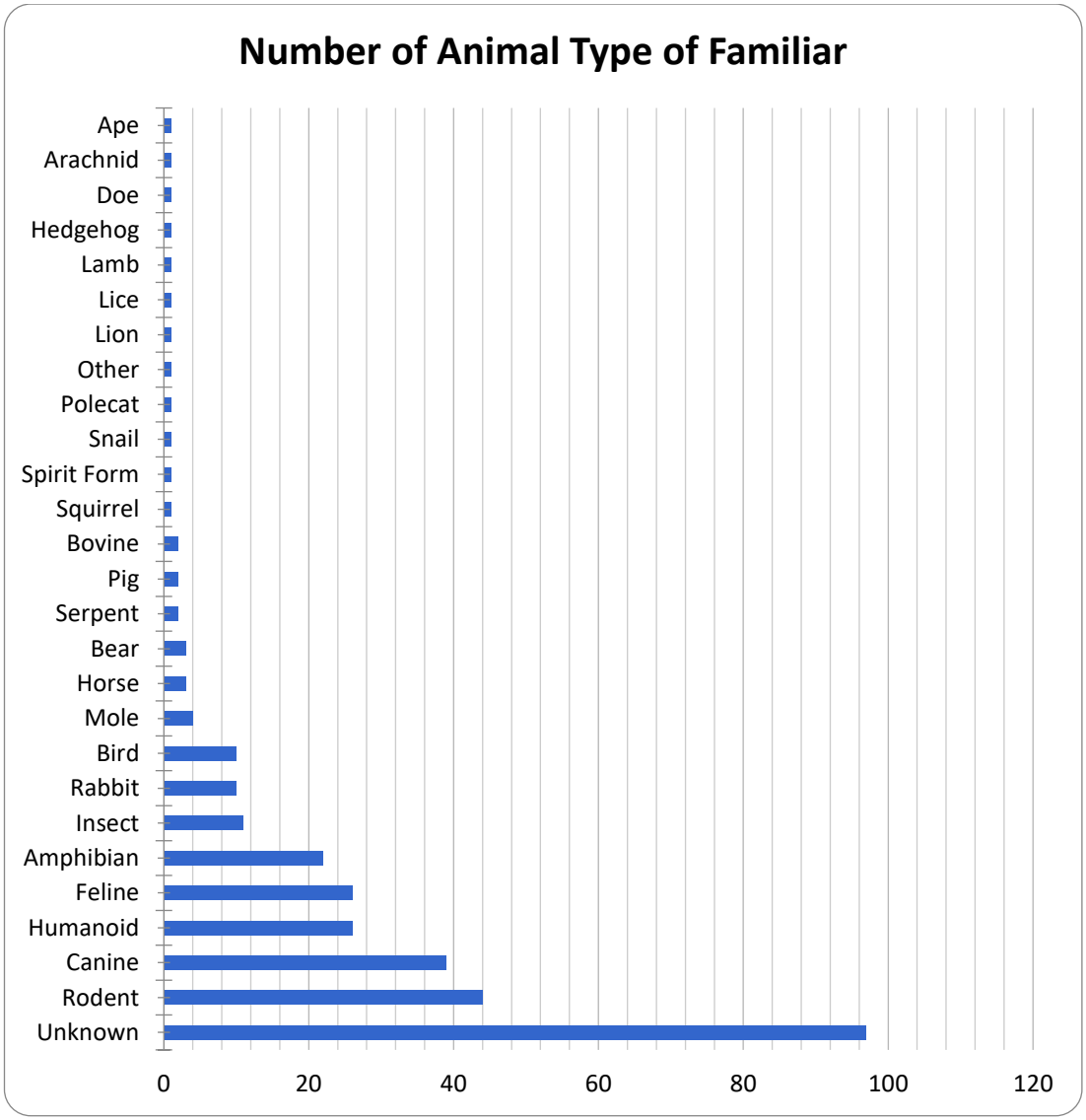

Figure 5: Number of Animal Type of Familiar by Frequency

Why would contemporaries choose to have the familiar spirit be in an animal shape? Having a familiar in an animal shape agreed with contemporary demonology. As Stuart Clark explains, '[d]emonology was the study of a *natural* order in which the existence of demonic actions was, largely, presupposed.'[20] Satan and his demons worked within the natural world. As John Cotta, a seventeenth-century English medical writer, explained, 'For nature is nothing else but the ordinary power of God in al things created, among which the Devill being a creature, is contained, and therefore subject to that universall power.'[21] The concept that Satan was contained

[20] Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons,* 151. Italics are my own.
[21] John Cotta, *The triall of vvitch-craft shewing the true and right methode of the discouery: with a confutation of erroneous wayes. By Iohn Cotta, Doctor in Physicke* (London : George Purslowe, 1616),

within God's creation was a standard belief among contemporaries. Satan and his minions were confined to work within nature and only seemed miraculous to contemporaries through lack of understanding the wonders (or science) of their world or through demonic manipulation of natural occurrences.[22] As Stuart Clark explains, demonic magic 'was thought to exceed nature but was in fact worked entirely through the natural powers of demons, and only seemed miraculous by comparison to the natural powers of men and women.'[23] Aquinas, 'endlessly elaborated in the demonology of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries,' explained the difference between *mira* or wonders in which Satan worked and the miracles (*miracula)* that only God could perform.[24] The domestic animal provided a good medium through which demons could come into the world. This initial analysis hints that from the start, the choosing of the form of a familiar spirit as a domestic animal has a certain diabolic element, or at least is made to comply with the contemporary theory about the work of Satan being limited to the natural realm. It also allowed trial participants to ground unexplainable events in familiar environments and situations as well as allow them to add subtext to their words through the features they chose to give to a familiar spirit.

Since the familiar spirit was usually presented as a domestic animal, it allowed trial participants to expose parts of their lives and beliefs of human-animal interaction. Domestic animals became popular in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and were unique creatures which infiltrated both domestic and public life, going in and out of the village house. In 1933, C. L'Estrange Ewen suggested that familiar spirits originated in the pet-keeping customs of women who were already isolated in their communities.[25] As he explains, 'Scorned and shunned by their neighbours, the unhappy women were the more inclined to make friends with animals as cat or dog or more unusual pet, as chicken, ferret, rat, or toad. No doubt they were often heard talking to their favourites, and on the principle that birds of a feather flock together, the animals soon came to be looked upon as devils or familiars by the ignorant

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[22] Clark, *Thinking with Demons,* 153.

[23] Clark, *Thinking with Demons,* 153.

[24] Clark, *Thinking with Demons,* 153.

[25] C. L'Estrange Ewen, *Witchcraft and Demonianism,* 69.

demonophobes.'[26] Keith Thomas also wrote that these were most likely companion-type animals, once again citing the witch's isolated state.[27] Interestingly, he suggests that this identification of non-traditional pets such as toads, ferrets, and mice as witches' familiar spirits stemmed from the unease at the blurring of boundaries between animal and human that pet-keeping was believed to perpetuate.[28] As we can see from both Ewen and Thomas's work, historians have traditionally identified the familiar spirit with domestic animals, mainly pets, and have suggested that this should be considered as a possible explanation for familiars.

The Familiar as a Pet

As stated above, pets were common enough in English villages. As Edwards puts it, '[u]pper-class households in the Middle Ages regularly contained pets, mostly cats and dogs, but they only spread widely when the middling orders adopted the practice in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.'[29] Before this, animals for farming or food were the only ones considered private property.[30] However, 'it was in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that pets seemed to have really established themselves as a normal feature of the middle-class household, especially in the towns, where animals were less likely to be functional necessities and where an increasing number of people could afford to support creatures lacking any productive value.'[31] For example, in 1791, when the tax on owning dogs was introduced, it was estimated that the total dog population was approaching one million, with most kept for pleasure, and that there was hardly a villager who did not own a dog.[32] While this tax was implemented at the end of the period in question, it does show that dog-keeping was so popular that it became a problem which needed to be controlled (albeit financially) through the state. Going back to Thomas's theory that pets blurred the

[26] Ewen, *Witchcraft and Demonianism,* 69.
[27] Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic,* 525.
[28] Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural World: Changing Attitudes in England, 1500-1800* (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1983), 39-40.
[29] Peter Edwards, "Domesticated Animals in Renaissance England," in *A Cultural History of Animals in the Renaissance* (London: Berg Publishers, 2009), 92.
[30] Thomas, *Man and the Natural World,* 56.
[31] Thomas, *Man and the Natural World,* 110.
[32] G. Clark, *An Address to Both Houses of Parliament: containing Reasons for a Tax Upon Dogs* (1791), 6, 13.

human-animal boundary of the period, the prevalence of the pet animal no doubt pushed concerns about the over-familiarity between animals and humans to the forefront of contemporary thought about animals.

Contemporaries were aware of the confusion, whether intentional or not, of the familiar spirit with the domestic animal. In 1646, arguing against the Hopkins trials, Rev. John Gaule, as Serpell observed, 'clearly alluded to pet-keeping among elderly women' when he commented that '[e]very old woman with a wrinkled face, a furred brow, a hairy lip, a gobber tooth, a squint eye, a squeaking voice, or a scolding tongue, having a rugged coat on her back, a skull cap on her head, a spindle in her hand, and a dog or cat by her side, is not only suspected, but pronounced for a witch.'[33] Gaule was showing how animals could be defined as a familiar spirit according to its context in relation to a person who appeared like the stereotype of a witch. Thomas Ady, a witchcraft sceptic, in 1655 stated this more directly, but the woman is seen as a witch because she was placed in context with an animal:

> …for it is lawful to keep a Rat, or Mouse, or Dormouse, or any Creature tame, as to keep a tame Rabbit, or Bird; and one may be an Imp as well as another, and so may a Flea or Louse by the same reason; and so the Devil need not go far for a bodily shape to appear in, or to suck mens or womens flesh in; and if these were material Oathes, who then may not be proved a Witch? And yet there was an honest woman (so always formerly reputed) executed in Cambridge in the year 1645 for keeping a tame Frogge in a Box for sport and Phantasie, which Phantasie of keeping things tame of several species is both lawful and common among very innocent and harmless people, as Mice, Dormice, Grashoppers, Caterpillers, Snakes; yea a Gentleman, to please his Phantasie in trying conclusions, did once keep in a Box a Maggot that came out of a Nut, till it grew to an incredible bigness.[34]

While there are obvious arguments against assuming that the pets of women who met the stereotypes of the witch were familiars, the assumption still thrived. We will see later how this assumption was held among women who talked to animals and how specific animals were a threat to early modern society, even without the demonic or malefic characteristics of the familiar spirit.

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[33] Gaule, qtd. in Serpell, "Guardian Spirits", 164.

[34] Thomas Ady, *A Candle in the Dark: Shewing the Divine Cause of the Distractions of the Whole Nation of England, and of the Christian World* (London: 1655), 135.

There is one glaring problem with Ewen's argument that the familiar spirit stemmed from pet keeping—familiars primarily occurred in England. Pets were common throughout Europe, yet the familiar spirit in this form (as an animal-like, pact-making demon who performed maleficium for witches) is seen only in England. James Serpell believes that this phenomenon occurs because on the Continent there was no room or niche for the familiar spirit 'within the official version of witchcraft that emerged from the various episodes of European persecution.'[35] However, this assumes that there are only two modes of witchcraft in the early modern period— the Continental version and the English one. Yet within the Continent, and even within England, there were various forms of witchcraft that differ widely within a malefic-diabolic scale. Regions and even specific communities have their own details that were different from the general narrative of witchcraft while still fitting within it. Perhaps, the familiar spirit was just an English variation on European early modern witchcraft, rather than English witchcraft being culturally inconsistent with Europe in this regard.

To test Ewen's claim, let us look further at what the term 'pet' entailed and if a familiar spirit met these criteria. What if Satan the cat is merely an animal? Why would a witch or a magistrate pick an animal form as the representation of magic? Familiars, especially in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, seem to take on the role of pet more than any other identifiable relationship. In his book, Thomas defines an early modern pet using three criteria.[36] Firstly, the animal must not be eaten. Secondly, the animal must have a name. Finally, a pet must be allowed into the house. Agricultural animals, such as oxen, pigs, or cattle, would have met some but not all of these conditions. Within these centuries, farm animals were beginning to be placed into separate accommodation rather than dwelling in the houses of their owners.[37] Thomas actually points out that '[b]y the sixteenth century it had become customary for the English to boast that they kept their domestic stock at a distance; they despised the Irish, the Welsh and the Scots because many of them ate and slept under the same roof as their cattle.'[38] There was already the stigma that those who

[35] Serpell, "Guardian Spirits", 182.
[36] Thomas, *Man and the Natural World,* 40, 112-114.
[37] Thomas, *Man and the Natural World,* 40.
[38] Thomas, *Man and the Natural World,* 94.

were physically close to animals were considered lower than those who saw and enforced the literal separation between human and animal. Then why were pets popular within England? Pets were considered a special category, raised in the hierarchy imposed by man above mere "brutes". That is not to say there was not scepticism. As Thomas points out, '[i]n early modern England even animal pets were morally suspect, especially if admitted to the table and fed better than servants.'[39] However, they were still allowed despite the uneasiness of the close relationship between owner and pet. Sometimes, these tensions between servant and pet could take a violent turn as we see in Robert Darnton's work on the murder of a print master's cat by his servants in eighteenth-century France. As Darnton explains, '[b]y assaulting her pet, the workers ravished the mistress symbolically. At the same time, they delivered the supreme insult to their master.'[40] The domestic animal and the symbolism of it as something beyond a normal animal was identified.

Fudge points out that '[t]he range of animals owned as pets seems to have been broad in this period: not only are the obvious animals such as dogs kept as pets, squirrels, apes and singing birds also enter the domestic arena.'[41] Early modern England was in this sense 'pet friendly', and it should be noted that it was not just a few select animals that were considered worthy of more-than-brute status, but a wide variety. Theoretically, the popularity of pet-keeping gave trial participants of all classes more options of animal forms that they were conversant with to assign to the familiar spirit in their testimonies. Pet-keeping allowed an intimacy with animals' behavioural patterns, which gave trial participants material from which to draw on when constructing narratives either consciously or sub-consciously. As we will see, the familiar meets all of the criteria Thomas proposes for the definition of a pet, even to a point that in some instances, it threatens the boundaries between human and animal.

[39] Thomas, *Man and the Natural World,* 40.
[40] Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History* (London: Penguin Books, 1984), 98.
[41] Erica Fudge, *Perceiving Animals: Humans and Beasts in Early Modern English Culture* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 2000), 133.

The familiar spirit was not only not eaten, but economic resources were used to feed it. Most of the feeding seems to be normal animal behaviour and gives the impression of a pet and owner relationship. As Elizabeth Francis stated, she was taught to feed and provide shelter for the animal, as one would expect of a pet owner.[42] As discussed earlier, cats were not uncommon domestic pets in this century. As Edwards points out, '[m]ost people who kept dogs and cats did so for utilitarian purposes. Cats' traditional role was to keep down vermin and patrol the house and yard. Indeed, in order to encourage them to hunt many householders did not feed their cats properly.'[43] Many confessions and testimonies (usually by the children of witches) attest to the feeding of their familiar spirits. For example, in 1579 'one mother Deuell dwelling in Windsore by the pounde, keepeth a black Cat which shee nameth Iyll, [and] vseth to carrie it in her lappe, and feedeth it with blood and milke.'[44] Elizabeth Sawyer was asked pointedly 'What were those two ferrets that you were feeding on a fourme with white-bread and milke, when diuers children came, and saw you feeding of them?'[45] It is interesting that these familiar spirits were fed with actual food at the beginning of the period in question, giving the impression that these were living things that needed sustenance. The practice seems to have declined later in the early modern period, although there are a few cases in which witches admit to feeding their familiar spirits with food.[46] If we apply this to the idea that the Devil can only manipulate the natural world, then it would logically

[42] Phillips, *The examination and confession of certaine Wytches* (1566).

[43] Edwards, "Domesticated Animals", 91.

[44] *A Rehersall both straung and true, of heinous and horrible actes committed by Elizabeth Stile, Alias Rockingham, Mother Dutten, Mother Devell, Mother Margaret, Fower notorious Witches, apprehended at winsore in the Countie of Barks. And at Abbington arraigned, condemned, and executed on the 26 daye of Februarie last Anno. 1579* (London, 1579), 86.

[45] Henry Goodcole, *The wonderfull discoverie of Elizabeth Sawyer a Witch, late of Edmonton, her conviction and condemnation and Death. Together with the relation of the Devils accesse to her, and their conference together* (London: 1621).

[46] Hellen Clark, Margaret Moone, Rose Hallybread, and Rebecca Jones all admitted to feeding their familiar spirits with food in H.F., *A true and exact relation of the severall informations, examinations, and confessions of the late witches, arraigned and executed in the county of Essex. Who were arraigned and condemned at the late sessions, holden at Chelmesford before the Right Honorable Robert, Earle of Warwicke, and severall of his Majesties justices of peace, the 29 of July, 1645. Wherein the severall murthers, and devillish witchcrafts, committed on the bodies of men, women, and children, and divers cattell, are fully discovered. Published by authoritie* (London: M.S, 1645).

follow that these familiars needed to eat. The familiar spirit as a feeding animal might seem normal; nevertheless, this could have led to village tensions. As both Macfarlane and Thomas have shown through their charity-refused model of English witchcraft, many witches were poor in their communities and often begged for alms.[47] If some of those alms were going to feed an animal that was for vain, not the intended agricultural, purposes, it could be read that neighbours might be upset that their resources were being used in a non-necessary manner. It seems that the familiar spirit just being an animal without economic use and requiring feeding would have caused tensions between the witch and her neighbours.

Named

A name was also a requirement of a pet. From the very first mention of a familiar spirit we have on record, the 1566 case of Satan the cat, a certain sense of diabolism is present. Immediately we are struck with the ominous name of the creature. However, this is not as straightforward as it seems. Although the cat shares the same name as the portentous being of Judeo-Christian tradition, Satan in this confession is always referred to as a cat:

> 'she willed sathan her Cat to kyll the childe'
> 'shee had kept this Cat, by the space of .xv. to xvi. yeare.'[48]

It is only later in the trial in the confessions and testimonies of other women that Satan starts to not be defined as a cat (he was apparently transformed or transformed himself into other animal forms later in the trial), but always as an animal. He becomes a toad and a dog, and changes back and forth between animal shapes and colours, but is always referred to as "Satan" or "the toad" or "the dog" when not referred to as a cat. The key here is that he is not called a spirit, an imp, or a devil as we see familiar spirits are called in later trials. Even the magistrate when questioning Mother Waterhouse asks 'when dyd thyne *Cat* suck of thy bloud?'[49] It seems that the implied diabolism was not as prevalent as first assumed. Charlotte Rose Millar uses

[47] Macfarlane, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England;* Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic.*
[48] Phillips, *The examination and confession of certaine Wytches* (1566), A7v-A8; A8.
[49] Phillips, *The examination and confession of certaine Wytches* (1566), C3v.

the name as definite proof of the preoccupation with diabolism by the magistrates from the very beginning of the records we have on early modern witchcraft trials.[50] While I generally agree with Millar that there were some diabolic elements present in pamphlet material from the very beginning, whether this diabolism was apparent to all trial participants is questionable. Satan the familiar spirit seems to be treated as some kind of being that can shape shift that is merely named Satan. If a true sense of diabolism was the preoccupation of the magistrate, would we have not seen it referred to as something other than animal names? Perhaps the trial participants did see the connection between the familiar's name and Satan the Antagonist, but were not as concerned about the diabolic elements. As is discussed in Chapter 3, Lucifer was seen as part of a larger stratum of preternatural creatures who meddled in human affairs and only developed into Satan the Antagonist later in the period. Therefore, the naming of Satan the familiar spirit might be a reference to Satan the Antagonist, but was not considered a primary threat because Satan the Antagonist was one of many preternatural threats instead of a crucial one among the lower classes.

As Thomas points out, non-pet animals were not given names, or at least, not names used endearingly. As he states, '[s]heep or pigs were not usually given individual names, but cows always were; not human ones, for distance had to be preserved, but flower names, like Marigold or Lily, or descriptive epithets, often suggestive of an affectionate attitude on the owner's part.'[51] Naming implies ownership and dominance. As Erica Fudge points out, 'Adam's naming of the beasts is an exercise of human power over the animals of huge theological importance.'[52] By naming a pet, the owner accepted responsibility and ownership over the animal and its actions. Also by naming, the animal is given a sense of identity by its owner. Not only is the animal identified by being named, but the animal is distinguished from other animals, especially those without personal names. Giving an animal a name is a promise between owner and pet of providing sustenance and shelter in exchange for company and amusement. Already, with just the name, a connection of responsibility was formed between the witch and her familiar spirit. Given that names were given

[50] Charlotte Rose Millar, "The Witch's Familiar".

[51] Thomas, *Man and the Natural World,* 96. Thomas uses wills and trial records concerning animals to determine this.

[52] Fudge, *Perceiving Animals*, 103

to most familiars, were witches trying to achieve anything beyond a reference-name or ownership by naming their familiar spirits? Were they unconsciously asserting dominance over the animal or was it merely a representation of affection and connection? Thomas points out that '[t]he more the animal was doted on by its owner, the more likely was it to bear a human name.'[53] Thomas, according to his research into the care of animals being a matter of economic and written concern, determines this through the trend towards the use of more human-like names in the eighteenth century when pets became a more common phenomenon and affections between pet and owner grew.[54] As Serpell points out, '[f]amiliars also acquired a variety of interesting names, many suggestive of pet names. Sometimes these names were bestowed by the witches themselves, but in other cases the Devil assigned a name, or the familiar spirit chose its own name.[55]' In my research I have found that 119 out of 297 familiars are named explicitly in the sources. There are 82 unique names (Table 1);[56] the most common names given are Tom, Robin, and Jack.[57] Serpell points out that 'Claude Lévi-Strauss once suggested, the kinds of names people give to animals are often an expression of their relation to human society. As objects of economic production, cows and other livestock animals tend to be given descriptive, impersonal names. Pets, on the contrary, tend to acquire either personal "pet" names, or human names and nicknames.'[58] Naming familiar spirits was a trend that was popular over time as well as over location. As can be seen in Figure 6, there is a steady percentage of familiars that are named throughout the period, with an average of 40.07%.

[53] Thomas, *Man and the Natural World,* 114.
[54] Thomas, *Man and the Natural World,* 114.
[55] Serpell, "Guardian Spirits", 158.
[56] I have grouped some names together when the same name is spelled differently, such as Robbin and Robin, and when a descriptor is added before a name, such as Great Browning and Little Browning.
[57] The name Robin is given more discussion in Chapter 4.
[58] Serpell, "Guardian Spirits", 173, referencing Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1966), 205-207.

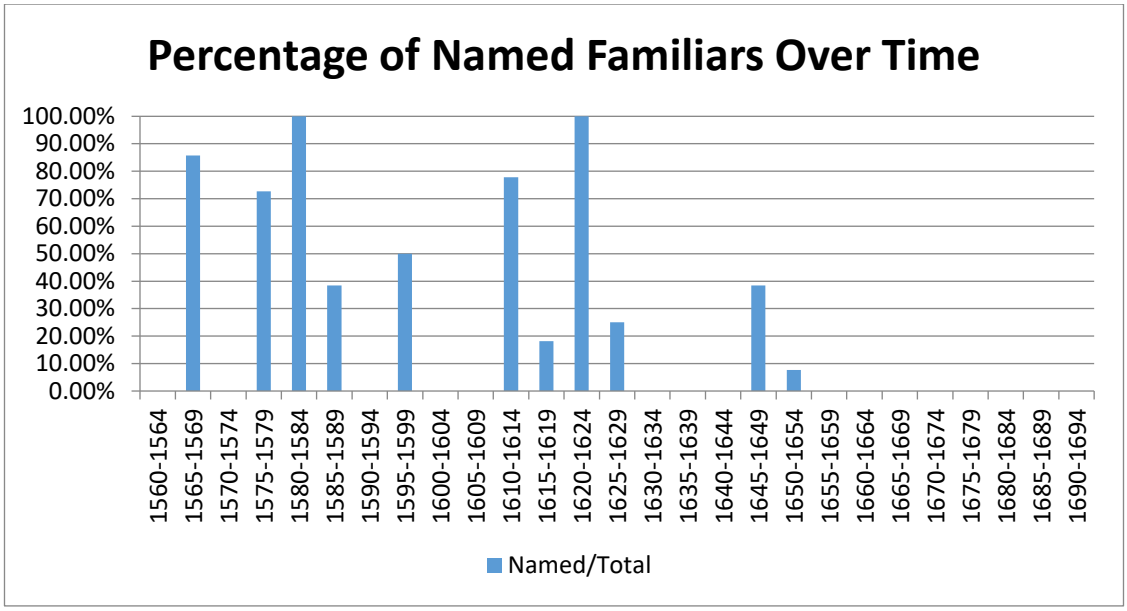

Figure 6: Percentage of Named Familiars Over Time

When we break this down by county, we can see that some counties have a much higher percentage of named familiars, but generally the practice of naming familiar spirits seems to have been practiced throughout the country. There are a few counties stand out especially in this as 100% of the familiar spirits mentioned have names assigned to them, although this is probably due to the small sample size.

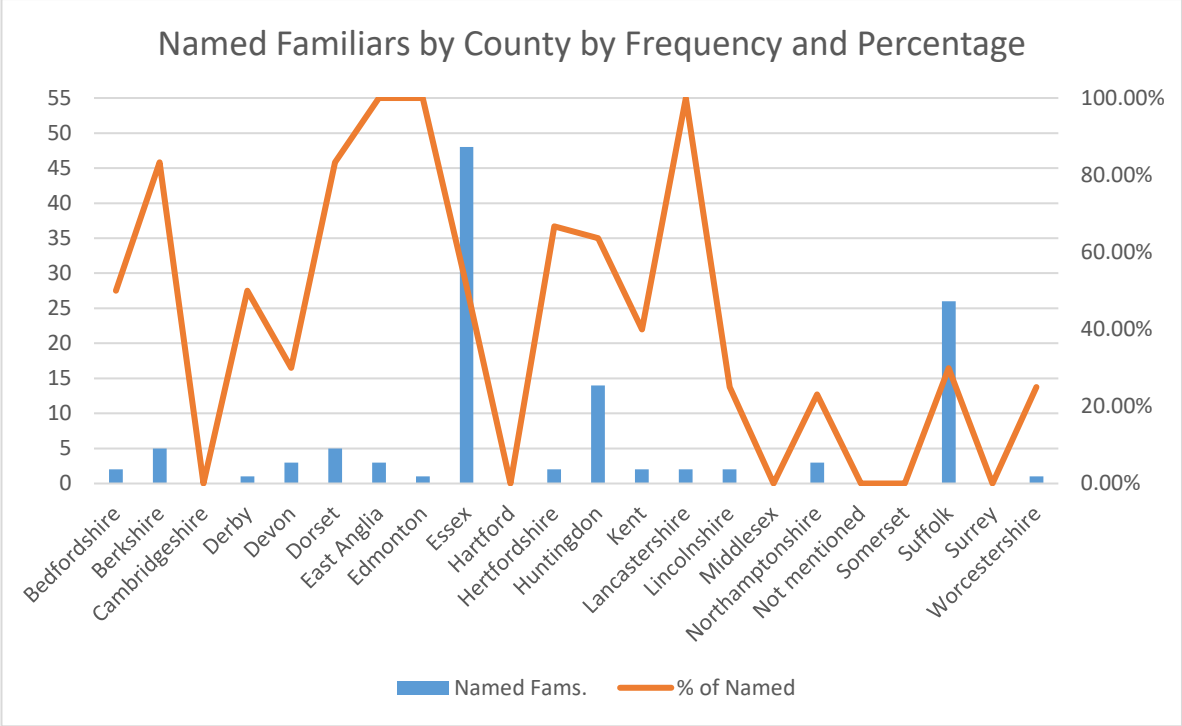

Figure 7: Named Familiars by County by Frequency and Percentage

Most familiars have standard contemporary animal names or diminutives— Bun,[59] Little Dick,[60] Jack,[61] Pretty.[62] There are few exceptions such as Rutterkin[63]. In the Hopkins/Stearne trials, some quite extreme names are given and Hopkins uses these names as proof of diabolical involvement. Names like Beezlebub,[64] Trullibub,[65] and

[59] *A Rehearsall both straung and true* (1579).
[60] *A Detection of damnable driftes, practiced by three Witches arraigned at Chelmisforde in Essex, at the last Assises there holden, which were executed in Aprill 1579. Set forthe to discouer the ambushementes of Sathan, whereby he would surprise vs lulled in securitie, and hardened with contempte of Gods vengeance threatened for our offences* (London: [J. Kingston], 1579).
[61] *The Witches of Northamptonshire: Agnes Browne, Arthur Bill, Joane Vaughan, Hellen Jenkenson, Mary Barber, Witches. Who were all executed at Northampton the 22. Of July last. 1612.* (London, 1612).
[62] *The wonderful Discoverie of the Witchcraftes of Margaret and Phillip Flower, daughters of Joan Flower neere Bever Castle: Executed at Lincolne, March 11, 1618 [/1619]. Who were specially arraigned and condemned before Sir Henry Hobart, and Sir Edward Bromley, Judges of Assise, for confessing themselves actors in the destruction of Henry Lord Rosse, with their damnable practices against others the Children of Right Honourable Francis Early of Rutland. Together with the severall Examinations and Confessions of Anne Baker, Joan Willimot, and Ellen Greene, Witches in Leicestershire. (London,1619).*
[63] *The Wonderful Discoverie of the Witchcrafts of Margaret and Philip Flower* (1619).
[64] *The Witches of Huntingdon (1646).*
[65] *The Witches of Huntingdon (1646).*

Elimanzer[66] occur alongside names like James,[67] Vinegar Tom,[68] Rug,[69] and Nanne,[70] giving the impression that when a common name was not provided by the confessing witch, a more extreme name was given by trial participants. However, after the 1645-1647 trials, there seems to be a trend of mass mentioning familiar spirits without naming them, causing the average named to drop. When they were named they tended to have more fantastical names, such as Beezlebub and Rutterkin. As Serpell explains, 'Hopkins and Stearne displayed particular inventiveness when it came to the names of familiars…. In his own 1647 account of the Essex witchcraft discoveries at Manningtree, Hopkins uses the exotic sounding names of the witches' familiars as further evidence of diabolical involvement, claiming that 'no mortal could invent' names as bizarre as "Elemauzer, Pyewacket, Peck in the Crown, Griezal Greedigut, etc."'[71] Before 1645, 55.56% of familiar spirits were named, and in 1645-1649 and 1650-1654 the percentage drops to 38.43% and 7.69% respectively. After this there are no occurrences of familiars being named by trial participants. As discussed earlier in the chapter, there are several reasons beyond a change in interest by magistrates why this decline occurred. The decline in the presentation of names could have also come from pamphleteers. Perhaps, with the increasing of diabolic elements in English witchcraft trials as well as the long established practice of familiar spirits having names, printing the names became a detail that was considered space-wasting and unnecessary when more text could be dedicated to moralising features.

Allowed in the House

Continuing Thomas's description of the pet, the familiar spirit was allowed into the most intimate spaces in a person's life, of which bedrooms and chambers are the most noteworthy. Familiars were kept within the house, usually within earthen pots

[66] H.F., *A true and exact Relation of the several Informations (1645).*
[67] H.F., *A true and exact Relation of the several Informations (1645).*
[68] H.F., *A true and exact Relation of the several Informations (1645).*
[69] H.F., *A true and exact Relation of the several Informations (1645).*
[70] Stearne, *A Confirmation and Discovery of Witchcraft (1648).*
[71] Serpell, "Guardian Spirits", 174. Serpell has further evidence here that Hopkins might have invented the names.

with wool.[72] For example, Elizabeth Francis was given instructions to keep her Satan in a basket with wool.[73] The dedicated space given to the familiar spirit may have cued magistrates and justices that an implicit pact occurred between familiar spirit and witch, with the exchange of shelter for something. This also signified a level of intimacy, although not necessarily of the sexual persuasion, between the witch and her imp. The fact that these animals were allowed in and out of the private domain of the house might have added to their threat. These pets also threatened the perceived responsibility of females and the more Puritan belief that everything needed a purpose—i.e. that nothing should exist for vanity's sake. The keeping of lap dogs, with no purpose beyond companionship and fashion, became popular among upper-class women and later trickled down to the lower classes during the period. Thomas provides examples of these: 'a toy spaniel in the early sixteenth century and a pug in the seventeenth.'[74] As Edwards points out, these dogs were 'the antithesis of hunting hounds because fashion dictated that they should be very small,' and therefore it infringes on the usefulness of hunting dogs.[75] They served no purpose to society and only benefited the owner. This trend was not wholly accepted though and 'preachers lamented that fashionable ladies neglected their children, preferring to "embrace a whelp or a puppy".'[76] Here we see the hint of the problem with ladies' pets— they undermine the perceived purpose of women: to be mothers. An example of this underlying fear of the threat of pets to the home and womb is seen in Phillip Stubbs' discourse about the piety of his deceased wife. He tells of the moments before her death in the birthing bed:

> The childe being taken away, she espyed a little Puppye or Bitch (which in her life she loved well) lying upon her bed, she had no sooner espied her, but she beate her away, calling her husband to her, said: good Husband, you and I have offended God grievously in receiving this bitch many a time into our bed, we wold have been loath to have received a Christian soule, purchased with the precious blood of Jesus Christ into our bed, & to have nourished

[72] Phillips, *The examination and confession of certaine Wytches* (1566), 74. See Chapter 4 for more on contemporary issues with the familiar spirit being indoors.

[73] Phillips, *The examination and confession of certaine Wytches* (1566).

[74] Thomas, *Man and the Natural World,* 107.

[75] Edwards, "Domesticated Animals", 92.

[76] Thomas, *Man and the Natural World,* 108. This view was given by Samson Price in *The Two Twins of Birth and Death* (1624). For more examples see Bartholomew Batty, *The Christian Mans Closet,* trans. William Lowth (1581).

> him in our bosomes & to have fed him at our Table, as we have done this filthy cur many times, the Lord give us grace to repent it, and al other banities. And afterward could she never looke uppon the Bitch any more.[77]

As Fudge points out, '[t]he relationship is based on women's "corrupted concupiscences;" the animals are not presented as wild beasts requiring taming but as substitute humans.'[78] Women, as will be discussed later in the chapter, were considered closer to beasts than men and therefore easily corruptible. As Fudge explains:

> Attacks on female pet-keeping implied a number of things: that without a firm (male) hand the woman would make such a mental descent that she would disregard the differences between the species and show herself to be close to the beast; that she might, perhaps even more subversively, misrecognise the role of the man to such an extent that an animal is felt to be able to fill his place; and that, instead of reclaiming perfection, she would re-enact Eve's temptation by the Devil and make the animals not merely wild, but satanic.[79]

This is possibly one of the best examples of the type of thought process that contemporaries could have used to place familiars as demonic or evil in nature (diverting to a physical, animal perspective, rather than a spiritual one). Although the witch as a perverse type of mother (and perverse type of pet owner) will be discussed in later chapters, the threat of the familiar spirit *as a pet* taking a woman away from the patriarchal system of motherhood and marriage was exacerbated because of this tension between woman and pet and the attention that these animals no doubt required.

This 'sexualisation of the relationship with the pet'[80] is present in many witch confessions, with descriptions of the familiar-witch relationship not only being described as a mother-child relationship, but shifting to a more sexualised one later in the period. Schiesari gives a good example of how pet-owning can be sexualised

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[77] Phillip Stubbs, *A Christall Glaasse for Christian Women, Containing A moste excellent Discourse, of the Godly life and Christian death of Mistress Katherine Stubbes* (London: 1606), A4-A5.
[78] Fudge, *Perceiving Animals*, 134.
[79] Fudge, *Perceiving Animals*, 134.
[80] Fudge, *Perceiving Animals*, 124. Fudge also points out that this sexualisation was also present in the male form. However, the pet (usually in hawking) is placed as a female role being tamed and seduced by the male owner.

in her article on France's Henri III.[81] She states that, '[t]he great are permitted to indulge in the pleasures of pet keeping as long as they do not allow for any change in the hierarchy of domestication: animals must be their servants, not the other way around.'[82] This could be applied to gender as well, allowing women to own pets as long as they remember to whom they are sexually subjected. As Thomas points out, '[p]ets were company for the lonely, relaxation for the tired, a compensation for the childless. They manifested those virtues which humans so often proved to lack… [and] were valued because they were either idealised servants who never complained or model children who never grew up.'[83] Many witchcraft confessions describe familiars as almost a mix between pets and children, providing company and requiring resources, often sleeping in the same bed or near the bed of their owner. Familiar spirits were often fed bread and milk, kept in a warm pot with wool, and allowed free reign over what space they occupied. This close contact with pets allowed views concerning animal intelligence and individual character to emerge, giving the animal almost, to borrow the term from Boehrer, a type of "honorary humanity".[84] While still holding the form of an animal, pets could ascend in the minds of their owners to human status in all but shape, which could be a threat to the social order. Thomas's argument then that pets were under threat because they were often fed better than the servants is relevant again in this regard.[85] Though this interpretation is for an elite household, the threat remains the same. The familiar spirit as pet was fed food that could have been fed to a human, specifically a child. Satan the familiar was also kept inside in a basket, having a sort of honorary humanity. Perhaps the real threat of the familiar spirit as an animal was that the witch might replace her familial relationships and obligations with the pet, disregarding the differences between the species and placing the familiar spirit on the same plane as the human. Such actions would go directly against the God-given dominion of man over beasts that occurs in Genesis, ultimately challenging the notion that humans were unique and highest among God's creations. When coupled

[81] Juliana Schiesari, "'Bitches and Queens': Pets and Perversion at the Court of France's Henri III," in *Renaissance Beasts,* ed. Erica Fudge (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2004).
[82] Schiesari, "Bitches and Queens," 40.
[83] Thomas, *Man and the Natural World,* 118.
[84] For more on concepts of honorary humanity, see Bruce Boehrer, *Parrot Culture: Our 2500 –Year-Long Fascination with the World's Most Talkative Bird* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010).
[85] Thomas, *Man and the Natural World,* 40.

with the strong enforcement of Protestant ideas in the mid and late sixteenth century, a threat to the God-given dominion of man would be of primary distress to a society that already had apocalyptic concerns. As Fudge explains:

> Owning an animal would seem to be an exercise of dominion without question: the animal becomes merely an object, like a table or a chair. A close examination of the status of animals as property in the law reveals, however, that to own an animal the owner has to know the animal, and in knowing the animal the owner not only exercises his mental power he also gives the animal a character. Asserting that the animal is a possession does not objectify it, rather it entails recognising the individuality and mental capacity of the animal. This recognition narrows the gap between owner and owned and destroys the function of these categories to make human difference and superiority.[86]

By acknowledging the pet as special and separate from the rest of the animal kingdom, the pet is raised above the animal into the area between animal and human, gaining an individual personality. Therefore, when the familiar spirit was represented as an animal from the pet-animal category, the witch (or other invested party) gave the role to an animal that was already threatening the boundaries between human and animal. By ascending to this 'honorary humanity', the familiar spirit threatens nature's order.

Threatening Dominion

In the early modern period in England, 'the long-established view was that the world had been created for man's sake and that the other species were meant to be subordinate to his wishes and needs.'[87] Animals were thought to be on Earth for the purpose of humans and it was 'with human needs in mind that the animals had been carefully designed and distributed.'[88] As Sir Matthew Hale, the seventeenth-century lawyer who was regarded within his time as being a major figure in the English common law tradition, stated, '[o]f the Faculties of the humane Nature to the visible Universe, especially the vegetable and animals Natures, which by means of the

[86] Fudge, *Perceiving Animals*, 117.
[87] Thomas, *Man and the Natural World.* 17.
[88] Thomas, *Man and the Natural World,* 19.

admirable advantage of his Intellect, and that singular Engin of the Hand, he hath skill and power to subdue and bring under, whereby he exerciseth dominion over them and protection of them.'[89] He goes on to explain the uses animals were meant to provide, stating that 'some serving for his food, some for his clothing; some for his labour and travel; some for his delight; the whole compass of Nature affording infinite variety of Instances of this kind.'[90] This was justified by the notion of God-given dominion in Genesis of humans over the plants and animals of the world, and 'theologians and intellectuals who felt the need to justify it could readily appeal to the classical philosophers and the Bible.'[91] In a time troubled with religious turmoil and the constant threat of "evil," man's dominion over the Earth needed to be reasserted in order to justify the superiority of man and humans (although with varying definitions) having the favour of God over all other beings. As Fudge explains, '[t]he power to enact salvation for the self—the Pelagian position—had gone, and what remained was the Augustinian position: the powerless human. But at the heart of human frailty there was still one site of human power. In the creation Adam was given absolute rule over the animals.'[92] The perceived natural order of the world must be maintained. Fudge points out that '[t]he prelapsarian authority of human over animal was a figure of God's authority over humanity.'[93] Therefore, if the dominion of men was destroyed, it threatened the very core of Christian beliefs. The witch was a direct threat to God-given dominion. By the end of the period, she was seen as a follower of Satan, who was usually described as something pertaining to animals or as an animal. This can be seen in the names that Satan and the Antichrist are called in the Bible: the Bear,[94] the Beast,[95] Beezlebub (the Lord of Flies),[96] an unclean bird,[97] the Serpent,[98] the Dragon,[99] a frog,[100] the fox,[101] the

[89] Matthew Hale, *The Primitive Origination of Mankind, considered and examined according to the light of nature* (London: 1677), 68.
[90] Hale, *The Primitive Origination of Mankind,* 68.
[91] Thomas, *Man and the Natural World.* 17.
[92] Fudge, *Perceiving Animals*, 37.
[93] Fudge, *Perceiving Animals,* 102.
[94] Revelations 13:2. All scriptural versus are from King James Version.
[95] Revelations 14:9-10; Revelations 16:10.
[96] Matthew 12:24, 27.
[97] Revelations 18:2.
[98] Isaiah 14:20, 30:6; Numbers 21:8, Deuteronomy 8:15.
[99] Revelations 12:7, 9.
[100] Revelations 16:13
[101] Luke 13:32.

goat,[102] the Leviathan (serpent monster of Babylon),[103] and a lion.[104] This practice was carried on in the demonological and religiously instructive texts of the period. From these we can see a clear connection between Satan and animals. Therefore, having Satan's followers be animals would follow this connection. For a witch to be ruled by Satan (seen as animalistic, much like sin itself) and to be in the company of familiar spirits as animals, often treated like humans, she would be directly threatening God-given dominion.

The familiar spirit itself as a talking animal could also threaten dominion. In order to maintain dominion, the boundaries between what was human and what was animal had to be determined and agreed upon. As Keith Thomas states in *Man and the Natural World*, possibly one of the most comprehensive works on the topic, 'consciously or unconsciously, the fundamental distinction between man and animal underlay everyone's behaviour.'[105] According to early modern thought, in order to have the ability to speak, a being must have the capacity to reason; to reason, one must have a soul. 'According to Aristotle,' Thomas summarises, 'the soul comprised three elements: the nutritive soul, which was shared by man with vegetables; the sensitive soul, which was shared by animals; and the intellectual or rational soul, which was peculiar to man.'[106] Medieval scholastics such as Augustine and Aquinas blended this notion with 'the Judaeo-Christian teaching that man was made in the image of God.'[107] Both of these scholars justified the fact that humans had no direct duties to animals on grounds of this theory of inferior souls.[108] As Thomas points out, '[i]nstead of representing man as merely a superior animal, it elevated him to a wholly different status, halfway between the beasts and the angels.'[109]

If familiars were tangible, real creatures, then the question of whether they had souls would have prime importance to determine whether Satan could corrupt them. There

[102] Leviticus 17:7; 2 Corinthians 11:15.
[103] Isaiah 27:1.
[104] Revelations 13:2.
[105] Thomas, *Man and the Natural World,* 36.
[106] Thomas, *Man and the Natural World,* 30.
[107] (Genesis I:27) Thomas, *Man and the Natural World,* 31.
[108] Peter Harrison, 'Animal Souls, Metamorphosis, and Theodicy in Seventeenth-Century English Thought,' *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 31, no.4 (2001), 519.
[109] Thomas, *Man and the Natural World,* 31.

were several different philosophical and theological approaches to the issue of human uniqueness. Throughout time, as Thomas argues, 'man has been described as a political animal (Aristotle); a laughing animal (Thomas Willis); a tool-making animal (Benjamin Franklin); a religious animal (Edmund Burke); and a cooking animal (James Boswell, anticipating Lévi-Strauss).'[110] 'What all such definitions have in common,' Thomas continues, 'is that they assume a polarity between the categories "man" and "animal" and that they invariable regard the animal as the inferior.'[111] The primary and possibly most common argument trying to define animal versus human dealt with the question of animal souls. In the medieval period, '[c]hurch Fathers considered the relationship between humans and animals and decided the two had nothing in common.'[112] There was really no consideration that humans could possibly be animals. For example, Fudge points out that '[i]n *Summa Contra Gentiles*, on the other hand, Aquinas argued that the animal was all body and no soul.'[113] Thus at a very early point we see the soul being the distinguishing factor to differentiate the human from the animal. This develops more in the early modern period with Descartes' declaration that animals did not have a soul. He postulated that the soul was located in the pineal gland and that '[t]o discover, to see the soul is out of the question, because it would entail opening up, vivisecting the human— a moral impossibility. A human can only be dissected when dead, by which time the soul has left the body, so the soul remains unseen.'[114] This of course makes his differentiation unprovable, but at the same time, impossible to disprove, therefore giving advantages to the theologians who wanted to maintain the concept of human uniqueness. Thomas points out that Cartesianism allowed a way of safe-guarding religion.[115] Thomas explains the problem with opposing this view:

> Its opponents, by contrast, could be made to seem theologically suspect, for when they conceded to beasts the powers of perception, memory and reflection, they were implicitly attributing to animals all the ingredients of an immortal soul,

[110] Thomas, *Man and the Natural World,* 31.
[111] Thomas, *Man and the Natural World,* 31.
[112] Joyce E. Salisbury, 'Human Beasts and Bestial Humans in the Middle Ages," in *Animal Acts: Configuring the Human in Western History,* ed. Jennifer Ham and Matthew Senior (New York: Routledge, 1997), 9.
[113] Fudge, *Perceiving Animals*, 38.
[114] Erica Fudge, "Introduction," in *Renaissance Beasts,* ed. Erica Fudge (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 3.
[115] Thomas, *Man and the Natural World,* 34.

> which was absurd; and if they denied that they had an immortal soul, even though they had such powers, the were by implication questioning whether man had an immortal soul either.[116]

The Cartesian view of animal souls was a popular theory and was widely discussed. Thomas states that 'it is no exaggeration to describe it as a central preoccupation of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century European intellectuals.'[117] However, it would perhaps be too much to assume that that ordinary people were actively engaged in these detailed debates.[118] In fact, 'in the later seventeenth century many otherwise orthodox clergy regarded the issue of animal immortality as entirely open.'[119] Thomas theorises that these arguments against Cartestian theory were more accepted in England than other parts of Europe and that this was due to England's development of a pet culture.[120]

If an animal could have a soul, then it would have the ability to reason, one of the requirements of speaking. This would call into question the uniqueness of man and therefore make the familiar spirit, a talking animal, even more of a threat. This can best be seen in a deeper examination of the 1582 Chelmsford case. In 1582, Ursula Kemp stood trial in Essex charged with the crime of witchcraft. Many testified against her, even her own son. In her confession, she first claimed to be merely a cunning woman, a healer through natural magic. But Brian Darcy, the Justice of the Peace interrogating her, promised 'that if shee would deale plainely and confesse the trueth, that shee should have favour.'[121] After this promise, Ursula began to weave a tale, admitting to employing four spirits. When asked, she provided names and descriptions of these, saying that her imps resembled two cats, a toad, and a lamb—all animals. She continued to explain the misfortunes in others' lives through her employment of these familiars. The next day she came back and confessed more.

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[116] *Thomas, Man and the Natural World, 34.*
[117] Thomas, *Man and the Natural World,* 35.
[118] Thomas, *Man and the Natural World,* 38.
[119] Thomas, *Man and the Natural World,* 139.
[120] Thomas, *Man and the Natural World,* 140.
[121] W.W., *A true and just Recorde, of the Information, Examination and Confession of all Witches, taken at S. Oses in the countie of Essex; whereof some were executed, and other some entreated according to the determination of lawe. Wherein all men may see what a pestilent people Witches are, and how unworthy to lyve in a Christian Commonwealth. Written orderly, as the cases were tried by evidence, By W.W.* (1582), B2v.

She told Darcy that her familiar spirits had told her of the workings of other witches and their familiars. Three days later she continued to inform on other witches and their malefic dealings.

The first question we must ask is how a talking animal like those described by Ursula was even considered possible, let alone as evidence for witchcraft. There was debate in the early modern period about whether animals had the capacity to speak. It was almost universally held among contemporary philosophers that humans were the only earthly beings capable of speech and they followed the ancients in this position. Aristotle wrote that man is the only animal that has the gift of speech.[122] Cicero stated that 'Men most excel the beasts in this, that they can speak.'[123] Underlying this is the core belief in the uniqueness of man, an idea further proven by contemporaries through the concept that humans alone were made "in God's image" which led to an anthropocentric worldview that presupposes that it was only humans who have reason and therefore the capability to truly speak. This view was also supported by the notion that only humans had the physical anatomy to be able to speak. However, as we shall see, both in Scripture and in the popular literature of the time, the existence of talking animals was nevertheless challenged by contemporaries.

The Bible makes reference to talking animals. There is the incident of Balaam's ass in Numbers, and more importantly for this work, Eve speaking with the serpent in the Garden of Eden.[124] As Anne Cline Kelley points out in her work on early modern discussions on these two events: 'The Serpent and Balaam's ass create anxieties because not only species boundaries but also generic boundaries are transgressed. Talking animals…seem anomalous in a text [which] claimed to contain Divine Truth.'[125] This was not as much of an issue before the Protestant Reformation, because the interpretation of Scripture was mostly left to the priesthood. However, with the emergence of the personal experience with scripture as a core necessity

[122] Aristotle, *Politics.*

[123] Aristotle, *De invention.*

[124] Numbers 22:21-38; Genesis 3:1-5.

[125] Anne Cline Kelley, "Talking Animals in the Bible: Paratexts as Symptoms of Cultural Anxiety in Restoration and Early Eighteenth-Century England" *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies,* 33, No, 4 (2010).

among Protestants, there lay the possibility of a divergent interpretation from official theology. Misinterpretation by the masses was still a concern of Protestant divines. We see this tension between official and individual interpretation through the publishing of Biblical commentaries and paratexts throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[126] If the Lapsarian event was to be read as literal, then the occurrence of animals speaking was feasible and therefore, questions of reason and the dominance and uniqueness of man would be raised. However, if theologians interpreted these events as metaphorical then they were in danger of calling the Bible merely a work of fiction.

How then do contemporaries grapple with this? Most contemporary theologians attribute the ability of speech in animals to Satan, through divine permission though much to the annoyance of Calvin and other theologians, Satan was not specifically mentioned in Genesis and therefore had to be retroactively given the task of possessing the serpent in order to allow it to speak.[127] It is only when an outside *preternatural* agent was held responsible that the Divine Truth can be reconciled with speaking animals. This also fits with the demonological theory of the period that Satan and his minions were not supernatural beings, but worked within nature, manipulating it to an extreme that humans perceived their actions and abilities as supernatural. The German angelographer Otto Casmann attributed eight areas where demons acted directly on the world including making animals speak like men and assuming various shapes.[128] However, he placed demons outside the realm of supernatural, a categorisation that according to Stuart Clark 'was utterly typical of demonological opinion, both Protestant and Catholic, and was repeated many times' in demonology of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries throughout Europe.[129] Therefore, the taking on of animal forms complements this, since animals were seen as beings of natural occurrence and therefore within Satan's realm to manipulate. It was this key connection, both Biblical and demonological, that was used to associate the talking animal with evil, temptation, and witchcraft.

[126] See Chapter 3 of this work for more on this.

[127] Revelations 12:9.

[128] Otto Casmann, *Angelographia* (Frankfurt: 1597), 542-3, qtd. in Clark, *Thinking with Demons,* 163.

[129] Clark, *Thinking with Demons,* 165.

There was a connection in the minds of the literate and illiterate alike between the familiar spirit and the serpent of Eden. We even see Alice Goodridge, a woman accused in 1596 in Staffordshire, calling her familiar, described by her as being a dog, saying 'come out thou foul serpent.'[130] This theological affirmation of the serpent as Satan, coupled with the religious fervour of the time that saw evil as a real, physical threat, helped contemporaries to start associating talking (and possibly more importantly, reasoning) animals with evil or at least preternatural intervention. As Rosen says, commenting on the upheaval of the Reformation in England, 'Frightened people see shadows in candle-light as unnatural animals; they translate dogs into devils seeking to destroy them and all their troubles are projected onto the outside world in the pictures they know, deprived of the system that made sense of these.'[131] To pull an example from the trial records, in 1579, 'Webbe espied (as she thought) a thyng like to a blacke Dogge goe out at her doore, and presently at the sight thereof, she fell distraught of her wittes.'[132] She immediately connected a black dog to something evil, no doubt a fear that was intensified when rumours of witchcraft and other apocalyptic ideas were spreading throughout the country.

The Fluidity of Humanness

Sometimes what seemed to be a familiar spirit turned out to be a witch that shape-shifted into an animal form. For example, in 1649, John Palmer was said to have transformed himself into a toad.[133] In the same year in Tewkesbury, there was a case of a cat that was maimed by pitchfork by a local man. Later, a local woman known to be a witch was seen bleeding from the leg.[134] In 1653, Anne Bodenham was

[130] I.D., *The most wonderful and true storie, of a certaine Witch named Alse Gooderige of Stapen hill, who was arraigned and convicted at Darbie at the Assises there. As also a true report of the strange torments of Thomas Darling, a boy of thirteene yeres of age, that was possessed by the Devill, with his horrible fittes and terrible Apparitions by him uttered at Burton upon Trent in the Countie of Stafford, and of his marvellous deliverance* (LondonL 1597), 26.
[131] Barbara Rosen, *Witchcraft in England* (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 1969), 40.
[132] *A detection of damnable driftes,* A7.
[133] *The Divel's Delusions; or A faithful relation of John Palmer and Elizabeth Knott, two notorious Witches, lately condemned at the Sessions of Oyer and Terminer in St Albans, Together with the Confession of the aforesaid John Palmer and Elizabeth Knott, executed July 16* (London,1649).
[134] *A Collection of Modern Relations of Matter of Fact concerning Witches & Witchcraft upon Persons of People (*London: 1649), 51-52.

witnessed transforming herself into a large black cat.[135] Margaret Murray, traditionally greatly debunked by witchcraft historians on her theory of a pre-Christian cult within England, believed that '[i]n many cases it is very certain that the transformation was ritual and not actual; that is to say the witches did not attempt to change their actual forms but called themselves cats, hares, or other animals.'[136] Cohen stated that this choice to disguise as an animal was a statement of identity, not a loss of one and functioned within society because of the rich symbolism surrounding animals.[137]

However, the evidence Cohen puts forth does not seem to apply to the events described in witchcraft pamphlets. If metamorphosis happened this way, in which a witch would merely don the fur or costume of an animal, why would there not be more note of this in the pamphlet material? Why would witnesses as well as witches attest to this metamorphosis? Possibly the most convincing argument against this is that no evidence of costume was sought for in trial records. In a system that was grasping for any kind of evidence of the secretive crime of witchcraft, it would seem that if it was merely women dressing up as animals the costumes would be sought after and used as evidence against the witch. What is more likely, as we have seen with familiars, is that an animal was seen within the vicinity or circumstance of where a witch appeared when the animal disappeared and an immediate connection was made. This fluidity between human and animal would have been easy to conceptualise in a society that, as we have seen earlier with the case of monstrous births, believed the lines between human and beast could be transgressed. This concept was probably further emphasised by the contemporary comparison of both the poor and women with the bestial. The presence of metamorphosis emphasises the nature of the familiar spirit as a being of animal form that transformed into human-like. The witch, seen through metamorphosis as a creature that could subvert nature in order to descend into more bestial forms could easily be replaced by a familiar

[135] *Doctor Lamb's Darling or Strange and terrible News from Salisbury being a true, exact, and perfect Relation, of the great and wonderful Contract and Engagement made between the Devil, and Mistriss Anne Bodenham* (London: 1653).
[136] Margaret Alice Murray, *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe*, 233.
[137] Ester Cohen, "Animals in Medieval Perceptions: The image of the ubiquitous other," in *Animals and Human Society: Changing Perspectives,* eds. Aubery Mannig and James Serpell (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 68.

which subverted nature in order to ascend to human forms; both characteristically, and, as we have seen, physically (and vice-versa).

This was considered within the realm of contemporary reason because the line between human and animal was a contested category in which some humans could be considered barely above animals. Early modern thinkers grappled with an all-encompassing rule that separated the species, but struggled with certain populations that were beyond the humanist definition of "civilised man". Possessing a human body could not be used as a rule because 'theology taught that human form was no guarantee of humanity when angels or devils might take that shape; when, under certain circumstances—as in the case of children, the mad, the colonised other—creatures that appeared to be human might also be understood to be closely associated with the animal.'[138] Fudge explains that 'who is human and who is not is never clear, some are human in one place and not human in another.'[139] Being human was therefore more of a scale—consisting of fully humanist idea of a human on one end and mindless and moral-less brute on the other—than a separate category. Women, the poor, and negroes were considered more in touch with their animalistic side and their characteristics were often compared to animals. For '[i]n each constructed world of nature the contrast between man and not-man provides an analogy for the contrast between the member of the human society and the outsider.'[140] Some humans were simply less human than others. Typically, the humanity of 'savages', the poor, and women was questioned. As Fudge states, '[t]hose who are strange, different, or other can be exploited because they are represented as not human.'[141] For example, '[t]he seventeenth and eighteenth centuries saw many discourses on the animal nature of negroes, their beastlike sexuality and their brutish nature.'[142] The common and uneducated were also described as being subhuman. They were 'repeatedly portrayed as animals who needed to be forcibly restrained if they were not to break out and become dangerous.'[143] As Thomas points out, '[o]ver many centuries theologians had debated, half frivolously, half seriously, whether or not the female sex had souls, a

[138] Fudge, "Introduction", 3.
[139] Fudge, *Perceiving Animals*, 28.
[140] Mary Douglas, *Implicit Meanings* (1975), 289. Quoted in Thomas, *Man and the Natural World,* 41.
[141] Fudge, *Perceiving Animals,* 28.
[142] Thomas, *Man and the Natural World,* 42.
[143] Thomas, *Man and the Natural World,* 45.

discussion which closely paralleled the debate about animals and was sometimes echoed at a popular level.'[144] In Ray's *Collection of English Proverbs*, there are several examples of proverbs that liken women to animals:

> 'A womans tongue wags like a lambs tail.'[145]
> 'A spaniel, a woman and a walnut tree, The more they're beaten the better still they be.'[146]
> 'A grunting horse and a groaning wife seldom fail their master.'[147]
> 'Where there are women and geese there wants no noise.'[148]
> 'A whore. She's like a cat, she'll play with her tail.'[149]

However, it should be noted that these proverbs were collected from various regions and it is hard to establish the popularity and acceptability of the lessons of the proverbs. Along with the notions that women were more likely to fall to the bestial sins such as lust and lying and that the poor were barely above the livestock which they managed, these witches, a majority of which were poor women, were already seen as inclined toward the brutish part of humanity before even being accused. However, when they were tried as witches, they were considered even less human because '[t]he human knows the law and lives within the law because it represents a standard of reasonableness, and a failure of this knowledge on the part of the human creates a loss of status.'[150] Why would the witch then confess, telling what she perceived to happen?[151] As Fudge explains, '[t]elling your own story is symbolic of being in society.'[152] Ultimately, the accused tells his/her story to be considered human but it has the opposite effect. The witch gains the label of criminal, adding another dehumanising layer to justify the violence enacted against her. The witch becomes the epitome of the "human-gone-brute": unable to control her actions, committing boundary-defying acts with animals, and threatening the God-given

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[144] Thomas, *Man and the Natural World,* 43.
[145] John Ray, A *Collection of English Proverbs* (London: 1678), 59.
[146] Ray, *Collection of English Proverbs,* 59. While this not only is a display of placing women on the same level with animals and plants, it also hints at the accepted violence towards animals and women. They, along with plant life, are placed as equals under threat of violence.
[147] Ray, *Collection of English Proverbs,* 61.
[148] Ray, *Collection of English Proverbs,* 64.
[149] Ray, *Collection of English Proverbs,* 90.
[150] Fudge, *Perceiving Animals,* 139.
[151] Or, as argued by some historians, tell what the interviewer/audience would like to hear.
[152] Fudge, *Perceiving Animals,* 60. For how this is constructed in witchcraft, see Roper, *Witch-Craze,* pp.44-45 and below.

dominion of man over his world.

We can further see this potential of the human falling to the level of beasts in the threat of bestiality and the possibility of monstrous births. Being human was a conditional circumstance. Hassig states that 'the prohibition on sex between humans and animals was originally based on Jewish law' (Ex. 22:19, Lev. 20:13-16).[153] As Thomas points out, '[t]he frequency with which bestiality was denounced by contemporary moralists suggests that the temptation could be a real one,' but 'assize records do not suggest that bestiality was a common event.'[154] For example, in the Essex assize records from 1563 to 1595 there were only seven cases of bestiality, with mares and heifers seeming to be the local favourites.[155] The threat was real, but the actual practice was rare. Bestiality was considered a rural crime, once again connecting witches, often hailing from small villages, to the sexualisation of the relationship between human and animal. [156] However, bestiality encompassed a greater threat than the sexualisation of animals and was a concern of contemporary legal and clerical minds, despite it not being commonplace.[157] As Thomas points out, '[i]t was also widely believed that offspring could be engendered by sexual unions between man and beast.'[158] This usually took the form of some monstrous birth or hybrid offspring. In the medieval period, '[c]lassical tales of metamorphosis were declared impossible, and the permeable boundary that seemed to exist between people and animals in the Greco-Roman period was sealed.'[159] However, as stated above, this did not quell the belief that hybrid offspring were possible. For example, there is the peculiar case in Leicestershire in 1569 of Agnes Bower. It was a scandal that 'attracted popular, clerical, and political attention.'[160] Bower was said to give birth to a hairless cat, covered in blood. The event was witnessed by several women

[153] Debra Hassig, "Sex in the Bestiaries," in *The Mark of the Beast,* ed. Debra Hassig (New York: Routledge, 1999), 74-75.
[154] Thomas, *Man and the Natural World,* 118-119.
[155] *Calendar of Assize Records. Essex Indictments.* Edited by J.S. Cockburn, 26-43.
[156] See Alan MacFarlane's work *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England*.
[157] J.A. Sharpe, *Crime in Seventeenth-Century England: A county study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 65-66.
[158] Thomas, *Man and the Natural World,* 134-135.
[159] Salisbury, 'Human Beasts,' 10.
[160] David Cressy, *Travesties and Transgressions in Tudor and Stuart England: Tales of Discord and Dissension* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 10.

including a midwife. As Cressy points out, '[b]y the lights of sixteenth-century science, such things were not impossible.'[161] Katheryn Brammall, concentrating on the changing nature of what was considered monstrous in the early modern period, states, '[m]onsters were thought to be signs from God and, therefore, commentators might postulate a link between sin and monstrosity.'[162] Bower's story, and many others like hers, was broadcast across England through the medium of broadside ballads and pamphlets, as with cases of witchcraft. Like witchcraft pamphlets, monstrous birth pamphlets' 'settings and circumstances were local and specific, but their meaning and manner was global and generic.'[163] Monstrous births were attributed to a variety of causes. They were believed to occur because of having intercourse when the woman was on her period, contaminating the man's seed.[164] The imagination of the pregnant woman could transform the foetus either by seeing an animal or interacting with one in reality or in their dreams could lead to a monstrous birth. It was also said to have occurred because of bestiality, whether in actuality (physically) or over-intimacy (emotionally) between woman and pet.[165] Perhaps it is this connection of close contact with animals and the presupposed infanticide that witchcraft entails that makes the familiar spirit so threatening. There was some kind of connection in the early modern mind between women's blood, childbirth, witchcraft, and the animal. Also, it was believed that a bestialist was more a threat to society than their offspring. As Thomas points out, '[t]he hideous stories, and there were many like them, show that, in popular estimation at least, man was not so distinct a species that he could not breed with beasts. It was because the separateness of the human race was thought so precarious, so easily lost, that the boundary had been so tightly guarded.'[166] Bestiality was perceived to destroy human institutions such as marriage, but also destroyed the human itself 'against the ordinance of the Creator, and order of nature', placing it on the same level as the beast.[167] And, to take an issue more related to witchcraft, '[s]ex with animals was

[161] Cressy, *Travesties and Transgressions,* 14.
[162] Katheryn Brammall, "Monstrous Metamorphosis: Nature, Morality, and the Rhetoric of Monstrosity in Tudor England," *Sixteenth Century Journal,* 27, No.1 (1996), 5.
[163] Cressy, *Travesties and Transgressions,* 32.
[164] This is another instance of giving power to women's blood, a topic that will be explored in a later chapter.
[165] Cressy, *Travesties and Trangressions,* 37-38.
[166] Thomas, *Man and the Natural World,* 135.
[167] Fudge, *Perceiving Animals,* 68. Quote from Blackstone, quoted in Sharpe, *Crime in Seventeenth-*

also linked to the idea of demonic intercourse, as the devil was believed to transform himself for sexual purposes into an animal, commonly a serpent, dog, or goat.'[168] The connection between the animalistic and the supernatural was not only present, but quite common throughout the period.

Meaning in Animal Forms

Cats

To further explore the connections between witchcraft, women, Satan, sin, pets and animals, an exploration of the specific animals that were chosen as familiar spirits should prove advantageous. As Mary A. Fissell explains, drawing from Mary Douglas, '[c]ategories of animals can function as a means through which a particular social group articulates its sense of self.'[169] What about the fact that Satan the familiar was a cat? Is there symbolism or at least a hint of it in this? Can a sense of diabolism be connected to this? The cat was a common creature in both medieval and early modern villages. However, it was not until the late fifteenth century that they became affectionally owned as domestic pets. Edwards says that 'One of the reasons why cats were slower than dogs to rise in public estimation was the notion that because of their diet, their breath alone caused disease.'[170] This has an interesting connection to witchcraft as many of the early cases of maleficium are related to neighbours, especially children, falling sick and dying. Did Elizabeth Francis assign her familiar spirit (in the form of a cat) to physically explain the murders she claimed to have ordered? There are several trials which have the familiar breathing on or kissing the victim, such as a cat in Suffolk in 1599 that 'clapped the maid on the cheeks about a half score times as to awake her…kissed her three or four times, and slavered on her.'[171] Breath, touching, and kissing seems to be a peculiar way that familiars could create maleficium.

Cats also have considerable symbolism attached to them, some of which directly link

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Century England, 66.

[168] Hassig, 'Sex in the Bestiaries', 72.

[169] Fissell, "Imagining Vermin in Early Modern England", 78.

[170] Edwards, "Domesticated Animals," 93.

[171] *The Triall of Maist. Dorrell,* (1599).

them to the devil. For example in Caxton's *Royal Book*, published in 1484, it is stated that 'The devil playeth often with the sinner, like as the cat doth with the mouse.'[172] Malcolm Jones on his work on late medieval cat iconography states that to the late medieval mind, the 'relationship of the cat with the mouse or rat is one of those paradigmatic relations that function as unconscious measures of normality, of the immutable order of the natural world, the reversal of such a natural power-relation being unthinkable.'[173] The cat playing with a human, as is the impression one gets from a cat such as Satan telling a human what to do, playing with her life, seems to disrupt the natural order of world. Even the idiom of '*cat's-paw,'* which derives from the late fifteenth century, refers to 'a person used as a tool by another to accomplish a purpose.'[174] Although at first this seems more of a folkloric idea, the concept of a cat playing with a mouse was adapted to symbolise the Devil playing with the human. Malcolm Jones considers that 'this potential for Devilish interpretation may account for the oft-rehearsed allegation that a heretical sect such as the Waldensians and Paterini paid homage to their god in the form of a monstrous black cat by administering an anal kiss.'[175] We can see by the descriptions provided in these heresy cases that similar ideas of conspiracy and the worship of magical animals were reflected in witchcraft cases. In their monumental work *Heresies of the Middle Ages: Selected Sources Translated and Annotated*, Walter L. Wakefield and Austin P. Evans cited a twelfth-century case involving the Publicans (also known as the Paterines) that related heresy to the black cat:

> [A]bout the first watch of the night, when gates, doors, and windows have closed, the groups sit waiting in silence in their respective synagogues,[176] and a black cat of marvellous size climbs down a rope which hangs in their midst. On seeing it, they put out the lights. They do not sing hymns or repeat them distinctly, but hum through clenched teeth and pantingly feel their

[172] Malcolm Jones, "The Cat in the Badge—the iconography of late medieval bicaudal and other felines," in *Beyond Pilgrim Souvenirs and Secular Badges: Essays in Honour of Brian Spencer* , ed. Sarah Blick (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2007), 158. Spelling is modernized.
[173] Jones, "The Cat in the Badge", 159.
[174] "Cat's-paw. n.". OED Online. March 2012. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/2F29026 (accessed March, 2012).
[175] Jones, "The Cat in the Badge", 160.
[176] Wakefield and Evans explain that this term was used in the Middle Ages to reference heretical assembles not the Judaic place of worship. Walter L. Wakefield and Austin P. Evans, *Heresies of the Middle Ages: Selected Sources Translated and Annotated* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 728 n.19.

> way toward the place where they saw their lord. When they have found him they kiss him, each the more humbly as he is the more inflamed with frenzy—some the feet, more under the tail, most the private parts. And, as if drawing license for lasciviousness from the place of foulness, each seizes the man or woman next to him and they commingle as long as each is able to prolong the wantonness.[177]

These heretics were recorded to be active in England, on record as being beaten and branded under order of Henry II.[178] These associations of the cat with heretical acts entered the public conscience.[179] Although this was a case of heresy, when one looks at how heresy was treated one can see how similar the response to medieval heresy was to the early modern response to witchcraft, especially from authoritative bodies. Rumours were the motivating factor for accusations and neighbours reporting on each other provided a platform for village conflicts to escalate to widespread conspiracy and government involvement. There was also a need from investigators to record all of the details of the alleged crime. Rumours of secret assemblies, demon worship, and lewd behaviour dominated and 'tales of magic prowess derived from the powers of darkness are commonplace in reports.'[180]

We see this again in the papal bull *Vox in Rama,* issued on 13 June 1233. Pope Gregory IX issued a decree showing support for Conrad of Marburg, an inquisitor, claiming to discover a Lucifer and cult worshiping a black cat after torturing heretics. There are some interesting connections throughout the bull to both witchcraft and the earlier cases of heresy described above. The bull describes in vivid detail the initiation process of a new postulant into the cult. Firstly, '[a] kind of frog appears, which some are accustomed to call a toad. Some kiss it on its rear end and others give the damnable kiss on the mouth, receiving the tongue and saliva of the beast in their mouth. Along with the frog, sometimes a number of other animals are present.'[181] Then, after a cold and frigid kiss with a person described as a 'thin

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[177] Walter Map, 'Courtier's Trifles. *De nugis curialium I.xxx*' in Wakefield, *Heresies of the Middle Ages,* 254-255.
[178] Wakefield and Evans, *Heresies of the Middle Ages,* 255.
[179] See Norman Cohn, *Europe's Inner Demons: An Enquiry Inspired by the Great Witch-Hunt* (London: Sussex University Press, 1975), 21-22.
[180] Wakefield and Evans, *Heresies of the Middle Ages,* 39.
[181] *Vox in Rama*, translated in Donald Engles, *Classical Cats: the rise and fall of the sacred cat* (London: Routledge, 2001), 183.

pallid man' and a meal, 'a black cat (*gattus niger*), the size of a small dog, with an upright tail descends backwards down a statue which is usually at the meeting.'[182] Then the anal kiss was performed, hailing 'the master' who received the cult members, performing what seems to be a mock mass.[183] As Engles points out, 'The *Vox in Rama* is the first official church document that condemns the black cat as an incarnation of Satan, and consequently it was the death warrant for the animal.'[184] He also notes that 'Pope Innocent VIII officially excommunicated all cats and decreed that any that were found in the possession of "witches" should be burnt along with them.'[185] Here we have an explicit tradition connecting the cat, especially the black cat, with Satan. It is possible that trial participants presenting the familiar spirit as a cat were tapping into a long narrative of cats associated with heresy, bestiality (through the reading of the anal kiss), and diabolic elements. In these heresy records there are also some elements of the types of activities that would be present in the continental sabbat.[186] The association between cats and sabbat-like preternaturally-filled events strengthens the narrative of cats being associated with the destabilizing of nature's order and counter-Christian activities. Although concrete proof of this connection is lacking, this might also be a reason why the familiar spirit was portrayed as a cat. Considering the medieval Inquisitional idea of a cult of witches as a heretical group aiming to overthrow Christianity, the link between heretical groups and the witch strengthened a shared symbolism that persecutors believed of the cat as the idol of worship or at least a servant of these heretics and witches. Perhaps Elizabeth Francis (as well as other witches and witnesses that chose a cat as a familiar) was making this association of the cat as some sort of agent of the devil or at least a heretical figure in her mind when she confessed, with the naming of Satan her familiar spirit emphasising this. It would not be assuming too much to believe that others who were reading the pamphlet later,

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[182] *Vox in Rama,* 184.

[183] *Vox in Rama,* 185.

[184] Engles, *Classical Cats,* 184.

[185] Engles, *Classical Cats,* 188. Engles cites A, Lantaker and B. De Cupre, "Domestication of the Cat and Reflections of the Scarcity of Finds in Archaelogical Contexts," in *Des animaux introduits par l'homme dans la faune de Europe,* ed. L. Bodson (Liège: Université de Liège, 1994), 73.

[186] Interestingly, there is also a connection binding those who worship cats with serpents, further perpetuating the idea that the witch was somehow related to Eve in the medieval and early modern mind. Pope Gregory IX, refers to these heretics as 'vipers [who] lacerate the womb of their mother when they are born, so her own children strive to destroy her.' *Vox in Rama,* 183.

especially those of the more worldly-wise and literate class, would at least subconsciously make these associations. This would then lead to some sort of connection, through a multi-variant symbol, in the mind of an animal that the witch associated with and the devil playing with the sinner.

Toads

Toads were another of the more common forms of familiar spirits and were present early in the pamphlet material. In our first example from 1566, Agnes Waterhouse prayed to convert Satan from a cat into a toad.[187] Toads have some interesting links to witchcraft in the medieval and early modern period which might explain why trial participants presented familiar spirits as toads. As Serpell explains, 'a wealth of literature suggests that the toad occupied a special place in ideas concerning witchcraft and traditional healing throughout Europe during this period.'[188] To prove this he cites cases of vampirish toads in the fifteenth century and '[t]he diabolical association between toads and the consecrated Host [that] resurfaced in the Normandy witch trials of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.'[189] Shakespeare makes this connection in *Macbeth* as well:

> Toad, that under cold stone,
> Days and nights hast thirty-one
> Swelter'd venom sleeping got,
> Boil thou first i' the charmed pot.[190]

Thoughts such as these were probably inspired by the common medicinal or at least toxic properties of European-native species of toads. In another 1566 trial, John Walsh, under ecclesiastical examination for being a sorcerer, tried to distinguish himself from witches. He explained that the local witches had three toads and 'Which Todes being called, the Witches strike with. ii. withie sperres on both sydes of y^{e} head, and saith to the Spirit their Pater noster backward, beginning at the ende of the Pater noster, but they wyll neuer say their Creede' to perform maleficium.[191] It

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[187] Phillips, *The Examination and confession of certaine wytches* (1566), B2.
[188] Serpell, "Guardian Spirits", 171.
[189] Serpell, "Guardian Sprits", 171.
[190] William Shakespeare, *Macbeth,* Act IV, Scene I.
[191] *The Examination of John Walsh, before Maister Thomas Williams, Commissary to the Reverend*

is by hitting a toad on the head causing its defensive instincts to trigger that these medicinal substances are extracted and '[t]he description of toads swelling or puffing themselves up when struck on the head is entirely consistent with the defensive behaviour of real toads.'[192] A definite connection of the toad to witchcraft was prevalent in the early modern mind. However, unlike the cat, these ideas stem more from the toad's biological characteristics rather than any diabolic assumptions. In fact, it was the toad's God-given power that makes it useful to the witch. Yet, this does not absolve the witch's sins. The witch works within nature, much like Satan, to harm others and perform acts of maleficium.

Dogs

Following Satan the familiar spirit's transformation, he was described as appearing as most of the common animal forms given to a familiar that trended throughout the period. Joan Waterhouse in 1566 said that Satan the familiar came to her as dog.[193] Dogs were very popular pets within early modern society and were distributed, often by breed or function, throughout the socio-economic spectrum. Like the cat, the dog was allowed in and out of the house and would easily have interactions with neighbours. Similar to the cat, the dog had some tradition of diabolic symbolism within medieval heresy. In *An Exposure of the heresy of the Cathars, Made before the People of Milan by Bonacursus, Who Formerly Was One of Their Masters,* Bonacursus, a convert from the Cathars, made a statement about the Cathars' belief on the creation of the dog when being questioned in Milan.[194] His confession served as 'the nucleus from which a tract against heresy grew.'[195] He explained that Satan as the Serpent in the Garden of Eden had sexual relations with Eve, of which Cain was conceived.[196] He continued, '[o]n discovering this, Adam came to know Eve and she bore Abel, whom Cain killed; and of the latter's blood, they declare dogs are born, and are, for that reason, so faithful to men. The union of Adam and Eve was, in their words, the forbidden fruit.'[197] In their belief system, dogs were meant to be the

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Father in God William bishop of Excester, upon certayne Interrogatories touchying Wytchcrafte and Sorcerye, in the presence of divers gentlemen and others, the XX of August, 1566, A8.

[192] Serpell, "Guardian Spirits", 172.

[193] Phillips, *The Examination and confession of certaine wytches* (1566), B2v.

[194] Wakefield, *Heresies of the Middle Ages,* 170.

[195] Wakefield, *Heresies of the Middle Ages,* 170.

[196] Wakefield, *Heresies of the Middle Ages,* 171.

[197] Wakefield, *Heresies of the Middle Ages,* 171-172.

product of murder and corpses. Although this was not an official view, it seems that there was a popular or at least folkloric belief in the dog's nefarious origins. It is too speculative to place this within the early modern English mind; however, it could give some inclination of a folkloric belief placing the dog as a product of murder and the cultural placement of dogs as scavengers and corpse-eaters. Edwards points out that notwithstanding the popularity of dogs as pets in the late medieval period, 'the old image of dogs as filthy scavengers did not completely disappear, continuing to exist in literary metaphors and popular proverbs.'[198] Jenner points out that there was a mass slaughtering of dogs during the plague outbreaks.[199] According to him, the slaughters were beyond hygienic reasoning and had a deep cultural logic to them. Dogs were visible, common, and symbols of disorder and disease. Most importantly, the roaming dog that was targeted in the slaughter was a visible symbol of the master-less being. A bestial creature that was not fixed in the patriarchal system was the symbol of chaos and pestilence. It is no surprise then that often the atheist was portrayed as a barking dog, the term often used as a term of abuse.[200] Perhaps it is this reason that dogs were also chosen to be familiar spirits. Like the roaming stray dog, the witch was outside the accepted patriarchal system, often widowed, and gave anxieties with her ability to create disease and disorder. However, this should also be tempered with the fact that dogs were very common creatures in early modern villages and therefore a trial participant picking a familiar spirit to be a dog would have been a logical choice given the amount of dogs. This choice of animal form was a convenience of circumstance for trial participants, for dogs were often going in and out of multiple locals' properties.

Mice & Rats

As Serpell points out, mice were the most common type of familiar spirit. Most of the occurrences of mice as familiars appeared during the Hopkins and Stearne trials: they made few previous appearances. Joan Willimot, for example, testified that a fellow witch, Gamaliel Greete, owned a familiar 'Spirit like a white Mouse put into

[198] Edwards, "Domesticated Animals," 94.
[199] Mark S.R. Jenner, "The Great Dog Massacre" in *Fear in Early Modern Society,* ed. G. Naphy and Penny Roberts (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997).
[200] Fudge gives several examples of this in *Perceiving Animals,* 49.

him in his swearing; and that if hee did looke vpon any thing with an intent to hurt, it should be hurt, and that hee had a marke on his left arme, which was cut away; and that her own spirit did tell her all this before it went from her.'[201] As stated earlier in this chapter, Serpell points out 'the unusually high frequency of mice in the Hopkins trials may again be attributable to the unorthodox methods the witch finders employed to obtain evidence against those accused of witchcraft.'[202] Mice could have been a form of convenience. During this episode, witches were often watched while in gaol, kept awake for days on end, with the intention of catching them being visited by their familiar spirits. It was assumed that the familiars would become hungry and visit the witch. Mice and rats would have been common residents of early modern gaols and it is no surprise that witches were often spotted in the same room as a mouse or rat, usually said to be under the skirts of the witch, no doubt looking for warmth or food. This practice could have established mice as a major form of the familiar spirit within the general narrative of early modern witchcraft, and the instances of mice as familiars greatly increases after 1645.

As Mary E. Fissell has shown in her work, the ways in which vermin in early modern England 'were imagined and represented suggest that, as well as being a threat to material survival, these animals were problematic because they called into question some of the social relations which humans had built around themselves and animals.'[203] Because they stole human food, could communicate with each other, and were seen as fairly clever, vermin were used often in discourse as a 'disturbing mirror image of human society.'[204] Her work has shown that vermin were seen more as a threat to humans because of their ability to poach human food, rather than an issue of dirt and disgust. These vermin were controlled in Elizabethan and Henrician statutes, responding to a larger economic crisis of increases in food prices and population, that paid for the killing of mice, rats, and other vermin.[205] In literature, vermin were portrayed as greedy, and 'that description carried with it a set of associations which created distance between vermin and human society' thus

[201] *The wonderfull Discoverie of the Witchcrafts,* F1.
[202] Serpell, "Guardian Spirits", 169.
[203] Mary E. Fissell, "Imagining Vermin in Early Modern England," in *The Animal-Human Boundary: Historical Perspectives*, ed.Angela N.H. Creager and William Chester Jorden (Rochester, N.Y.: University of Rochester Press, 2002), 77.
[204] Fissell, "Imagining Vermin", 77.
[205] Fissell, "Imagining Vermin", 79.

justifying their mass extermination.[206] Vermin were also inedible, therefore taking meat but never giving it, like humans. This then allows for them to be seen as troubling in the natural order, subverting nature's law. As Fissell sumamrises, '[v]ermin, who appear to have access to the tools which make that order [of animal hierarchy], seem potentially disruptive of the categories made by humans to contain animals.'[207] When familiar spirits were represented as mice and rats, trial participants could be accessing this language of greed and disorder. By being associated with the familiar spirit as vermin, the witch was placed by trial participants as complicit, if not representative, of the cultural projections placed on vermin.

Animalism in Witchcraft

Possession

As established earlier there was a connection between the animal and the supernatural. This can be seen in the various explorations into the folklore surrounding the common animal forms of familiars above. However, within early modern English witchcraft there was also a connection between the animal and witchcraft. We can see this both in possession cases of the period and the witch mark—the identifying mark witches had, given by the Devil or where the familiar spirit sucked on her. The line between human and animal was transgressed in possession. As Clark points out, '[i]n 1703… Friedrich Hoffmann published Bueching's doctoral dissertation *De potentia diaboli in corpora,* which explained that the devil acted on the "animal spirits" in the human body, thus interfering with the imagination, other mental functions, and the motor activities, and inducing illusions, trances, and convulsions.'[208] There are several cases of those who are possessed making animal-like noises or seeing animals. Margaret Cooper, in 1584, raved of a headless bear, which she believed was the Devil, that her husband later saw over her bed.[209] A boy possessed in 1596 complained of seeing a green cat and a

[206] Fissell, "Imagining Vermin", 81.

[207] Fissell, "Imagining Vermin," 101.

[208] Clark, *Thinking with Demons,* 188.

[209] *A true and most dreadfull discourse of a woman possessed with the Deuill who in the likenesse of a headlesse beare fetched her out of her bedd, and in the presence of seuen persons, most straungely*

great bear.[210] There are also several cases of people barking and howling when possessed. It seems that in witchcraft, people used animals as a means of expressing a break from the natural world. When magic was occurring, i.e. when the natural course of the world was being manipulated, early modern culture dictated that the animal represented the contested bridge between the two realms of magic and nature.

Witch Mark

We can see this again in the witch mark. The mark, meant to be where the familiar spirit sucked blood from the witch (as a form of feeding or reward), was searched for on the bodies of the accused. When found, an *immediate* assumption of contact with familiars was assumed and therefore the person was "proven" a witch. For example, in 1579, Elizabeth Francis stated that 'she knew Mother Osborne of Hatfield to be a witch, having a mark in the end of one of her fingers like a pit… believed to be plucked out by her spirit.' [211] This example also shows that ideas about the witch mark were circulating, with beliefs about the witch mark being similar and common throughout different regions.

As briefly mentioned earlier, marks and teats were used as identifiers of witches' diabolical deeds. They were the physical evidence that could be used against a witch for a mostly invisible crime. In Figure 8, we can see that witch marks and witch teats were known concepts before 1645, being associated with a high percentage of reported witches that had familiar spirits.

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roulled her thorow three chambers, and doune a high paire of staiers, on the fower and twentie of May last. 1584. At Dichet in Sommersetshire. A matter as miraculous as euer was seen in our time. (London: J. Kingston, 1584).

[210] *I.D., The most wonderful and true storie* (1597).

[211] *A Detection of damnable driftes* (1579).

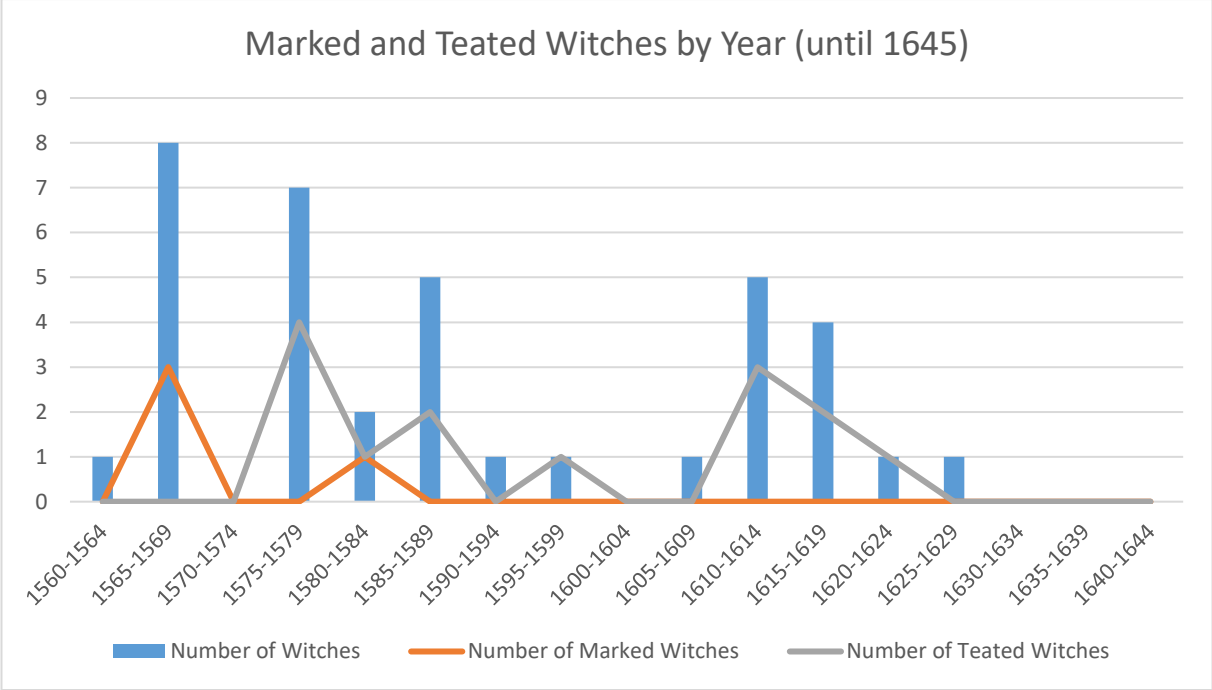

Figure 8: Prevalence of Marks or Teats by Year until 1645

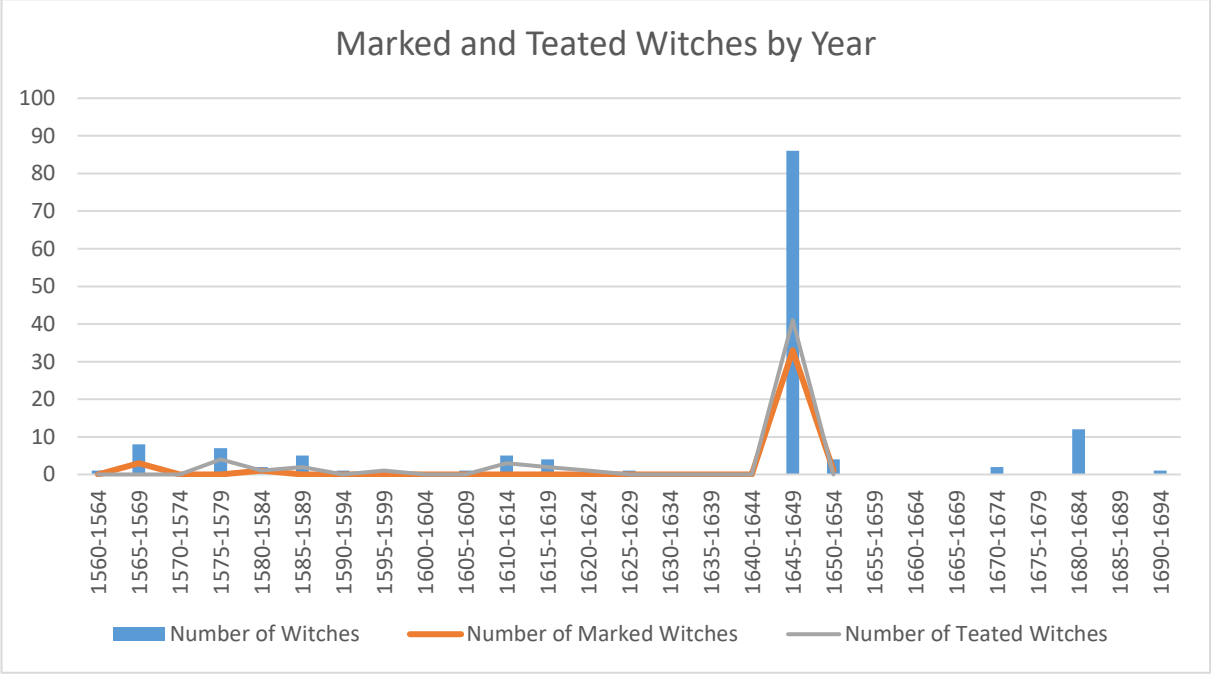

Figure 9: Marked and Teated Witches by Year

As we can see above in Figure 9, there was a massive increase in the categories of marked witches and teated witches in 1645-49, which can be expected with the increase in the amount of total witches that were associated with familiar spirits. However, looking at the overall percentages compared to those in this half decade,

we see marks and teats were mentioned disproportionally more frequently by trial participants. Overall, 26.76% of witches were likely to have marks, compared to the 38.37% in 1645-49. Furthermore, trial participants associated these witches with having teats 42.96% of the time, with a small increase to 47.67% in the half decade in question. Overall, trial participants reported 69.72% of witches as having a mark or a teat on their bodies. The difference in these measurements is interesting as marks go up such a large amount, while teats still increase, but by not as much. This shows a preoccupation of trial participants with the witch mark in these trials, probably related to the blood seal portion of the covenant. However, since teats also increases, there was more interest in blood feeding as well, but not with the same fervour. This demonstrates that marks and teats were not opposing concepts in the minds of contemporaries, which would lead the rise of one to inversely reflect the popularity of the other, but rather overall interest in both rose and fell together, with one or the other becoming of primary interest in different decades.

The witch mark also bestialised the witch, linking her to a more animal-like creature. This witch's teat moved from first being able to be located anywhere on the witch to being located primarily around the fundament. As Sharpe points out, 'In early pamphlet accounts the place where the witch was sucked varied: face, nose, chin and forefinger, but also thigh, shoulder and wrist. By the end of James I's reign, however, the mark was most often thought to be located on the genitalia or near the rectum of the witch.'[212] The evidence concurs with this. On average for the whole data set, 23.24% of witches were reported to have a teat on their fundament, accounting for 54.10% of all witches reported to have teats. For 1645-49, 33.72% of witches were reported to have teats on their fundament, making up 70.73% of all teated witches. There was a substantial increase in the percentage of witches who were witnessed as having a teat on their fundament, which alludes to a more sexualised and feminine-leaning nature of association with familiars. This movement to a more private location had 'echo[s] of that sexual prurience which was so manifest in some Continental accounts of the witch's relations with the devil.'[213]

[212] Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness,* 73. James VI/I actually mentions this in his work on demonology stating that the devil 'gives them his marke upon some screit place of their bodie.' James VI/I, *Daemonologie* (Edinburgh, 1603), 33.

[213] James Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness*, 73-74.

This movement in testimonies of the location of the witch-teat to the fundament blurred the distinction between animal and human and called into question where the witch fit in with the dominion of humans over animals. We can see this with a reading of Aristotle's work *On the Parts of Animals.* He explains firstly that 'the nature of the mammae is not burdensome' on humans, and therefore on the chest, away from the legs.'[214] In contrast, on other animals the mammae or breasts are located in other places. The witch mark, moving towards the fundament and away from the chest, further makes the witch more bestial. Therefore, we can see how when a witch has a breast or nutrient-supplying nipple not on her chest, she is defined according to this as not human or another animal. This is not surprising; the appearance of animal-like characteristics when bewitched is a common trope in the sources.

Using animals

There is no doubt accusers were looking for familiar spirits in testimonies and confessions and that animals were seen as suspicious for the reasons discussed above, but why would a witch *condemn* herself by admitting to owning one? As shown above, to a certain extent witches used familiars for various purposes in their narratives. Witches manipulated their stories using familiar spirits to place themselves as separate from their anti-social acts. Elizabeth Francis explained her major sins and transgressions, blaming her familiar, Satan the cat. She stated that 'she desired to have one Andrew Byles to her husband…and the cat did promise she should, but that he said she must first consent that this Andrew abuse her [that is have carnal relations], and so she did.'[215] She also confessed that she acquired her late husband the same way and it was by the cat's urging that she conceived her daughter out of wedlock, and later killed her.[216] Like a physical manifestation of the witch's guilt, the familiar spirit became a villain, trickster, tattle-tale, and a hopeful token for favour throughout confessions and, to a certain extent, testimonies.

[214] Aristotle, *On the Parts of Animals I-IV,* trans, James G. Lennox (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001), 101.
[215] Phillips, *The examination and confession of certain Wytches* (1566).
[216] Phillips, *The examination and confession of certain Wytches* (1566).

Before the Witchcraft Act of 1604, merely feeding or rewarding a familiar was not a felony, but it was criminal to conjure and invoke them, usually cited with using spirits to find treasure.[217] However, unofficially, even having a reputation as a witch and talking to an animal, or what could be perceived to be a familiar, would be a case of guilty by association. Witnesses that talked to or interacted with what was perceived to be a familiar spirit were not charged. It was only when a person conjured or commanded a familiar that a crime occurred. However, talking to what could be seen (or heard) as a familiar spirit would be assumed to be criminal and worth reporting when the woman was already suspected of being a witch. For example, in 1582, during the St. Osyth trials, Alice Hunt testified that 'she heard the said Joan [the accused] to say 'Yea, are you so saucy? Are ye so bold?' … And saith [Alice] is assured that there was no *Christian* creature with her at the time, but that she used those speeches unto her imps.'[218] Some witches admitted that they dismissed their familiars, no doubt with the hope of gaining favour with the judge and jury. A great example comes from the 1579 trial in Windsor where Elizabeth Stile said specifically: 'her Bun[219] or familiar came to her in the likeness of a black cat … but she banished him, hoping for favour.'[220] Interestingly, Sharpe points out another case of a witch using the term 'bun' to refer to her familiar spirit, also occurring in Berkshire, possibly indicating 'bun' as a regional term to describe a familiar. Anne Gunter, in examinations in the Star Chamber, 'told [her father] that Elizabeth Gregory had taken the hairs to put them on the chin of her 'bun', or familiar spirit, and that it was 'a pretty sight.'[221] While it is unclear if Anne was replacing the identifier 'bun' for familiar spirit or if her familiar was named Bun, this demonstrates an interesting connection between the term 'bun' and a familiar spirit, and implies a semi-known status in the public sphere.

If we look more closely at the case of Ursula Kemp[222] it could be argued that she

[217] A.D. 1563. 5 Eliz., c.16; A.D. 1604. 1 Jas. I, c.12 makes it a felony to 'consult convenant with entertaine employ feede or rewarde any evill and wicked Spirit to or for any intent or purpose'. Both acts are transcribed in Ewen, *Witchcraft and Demonaism*, 15-21.
[218] W.W., *A true and just Recorde* (1582), 111.
[219] The name she gave her familiar.
[220] *A Rehearsal both straung and true* (1579).
[221] James Sharpe, *The Bewitching of Anne Gunter: A horrible and true story of football, witchcraft, murder and the King of England* (London: Profile Books Ltd., 2000), 162.
[222] Described earlier in this chapter.

used her familiars with the hope of gaining lenience. It was only when she was promised favour that she began to reveal her relationship with them, continuing through the three separate confessions, and used these relationships with familiars to both give information of others and to explain the events around her, while also indirectly condemning herself. It seems that once the accused accepted the role of witch given to them by society, they accepted the general narrative along with it. This would then add more evidence to support the general narrative and help it evolve into a more elaborate stereotype. But from the perspective of the accused, when she accepted she was a witch she also must accept what that implied. For example, Alice Goodridge in 1597 stated that 'the Devell appeared to me in the likenesse of a little partie-coloured dog red and white, and I called him Minny, seeing that everie boy calleth mee witch.'[223] It seems that when a person was accused for so long to be a witch, he or she actually started to question themselves and eventually accepted that they were one.

Trial participants used familiar spirits in order to appease social pressures that they were under as being part of the investigation and to rectify in their minds unexplainable events in their lives. Historians have seen this through close examination of witches' confessions. As Rosen explains, 'She sees her life as others see it and confesses its unfamiliarity in their terms.'[224] Even the clerk writing the report of Ursula's confession knows this. He writes: 'Note it is to be considered that the said Ursula Kemp in this her confession hath uttered many things well approved and confessed to be most true; and that she was brought there unto by hope of favour.'[225] Lyndal Roper's work seems to illuminate the strife of the woman accused. She explains:

> …the woman's 'confession' was gained by breaking her will through pain, to the point that she renounced her own individuality along with her wish to live and agreed to confess anything at all. She was forced to use another woman's script because she had no idea what she needed to tell her interrogators to get them to stop. Yet her interrogators would not have been content with a recitation of another woman's story of

[223] I.D., *The most wonderful and true storie* (1597), 26.
[224] Rosen, *Witchcraft,* 49.
[225] W.W., *A true and just Recorde,* 120.

witchcraft.[226]

Although torture was not strictly allowed in England, as discussed earlier there were methods used in England, especially during the Hopkins-Stearne trials, which would be classified as torture today. Therefore, although torture was not officially allowed in England, witches were under some of the same psychological pressure to tell the interrogators what they wanted to hear in order to gain some kind of respite from their harsh conditions, even if that respite came in death.

Witches knew that to gain possible favour or at least to avoid further torturous discomfort at the hands of the gaolers their confessions needed to have elements from the prescribed narrative that interested parties wanted to hear. Margery Sammon claimed that she let her familiars go, not even admitting to owning them until 'her sister, taking her aside by the arm, whispered in her ear.'[227] Could this have been some advice to admit to having familiar spirits and letting them go, resisting temptation, in order to look innocent but still comply with her sister's earlier confession? Perhaps Margery was trying to make her sister's confession true while still making her own experience, that of not being a witch, true as well. Confessions not only needed to make sense internally, but they needed to fit with the confessions of the other witches in the trial while also fitting with the presumptions of the person in authority to whom the confession was being made. Certain elements needed to be present for the accounts to be taken as true. This would include a certain element of diabolism, an explanation of all or at least most of the unfavourable events that had happened in the area, and how the witch fell from God's grace to a life of sin. Familiar spirits could fulfil all of these requirements.

As we saw earlier in the Biblical examples, there was already a model for the accused to use the talking animal in storytelling. The story of Eve and the Serpent would have been well known, even among the illiterate in remote villages, as the fall of man featured heavily in contemporary sermons, plays and artwork. There was also a well-known literary genre that was experienced at a popular level and featured

[226] Roper, *Witch-craze*, 45.
[227] W.W., *A true and just Recorde,* 138.

talking animals as a main plot mechanic—the fable. Aesop's fables, for example, were both popular and traditional. Aesop's fables were read for pleasure, used as schoolbooks, and also appeared as copybooks for the lower classes to practice handwriting.[228] As R.T. Lenaghan explains, 'Perhaps just because the fable is so rudimentary a combination of the basic literary functions, it was an extremely popular literary form during the Middle Ages, and perhaps for the same reason fables were freely altered and recast throughout the [early modern] period.'[229] In Caxton's *Aesop,* printed in the late fifteenth century and still very popular throughout the sixteenth, we can see similarities between the fable and a witchcraft confession. Animals are used as the main characters in most of the fables to instruct the relevant moral and many of the animals which Aesop exploits are the same that are found to be familiar spirits—for example, the cat, the rat, and the dog. By using animal stereotypes that were well known because of the popularity of this type of literature, trial participants consciously or subconsciously added layers of meaning behind their narrative choices through their use of the cultural tropes that fables circulated.

Importantly, the structure is also quite similar. Most of these fables start with a statement setting out the moral of the story, then they go on to use animals as a literary device to tell a story that explains the moral in a practical and memorable manner, and finally the moral is repeated and clarified. For example, in Book 4 of Caxton's *Aesop*, the fable of the hawk and the other birds starts with 'The hypocrytes maken to god a bed of strawe' and then goes on to tell a story of how a hawk holds a holy feast in the Temple, luring the other birds with the promise of worship and feasting, ultimately locking the gate after they all enter and devouring them.[230] The tale quickly ends stating 'And therefore this fable sheweth to us / how we must kepe ourself from all them/ which under fayre semynge have a fals herte / and that ben ypocrites and deceptours of god and of the world.'[231]

Witchcraft pamphlets are often set up similarly. Many witchcraft pamphlets have a preface addressed to the reader or patron explaining the evilness of sorcery and

[228] Fissell, "Imagining Vermin," 80.
[229] Robert T. Lenaghan, *Caxton's Aesop* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1968)*,* 9.
[230] Aesop, in Lenaghan*, Caxton's Aesop,* 130.
[231] Aesop, in Lenaghan, *Caxton's Aesop,* 130.

witchcraft and how the Bible calls good Christians to put witches to death. Sometimes pamphlet authors also pleaded readers to turn away from the desires that called people to witchcraft. If we look at the 1589 pamphlet *The Apprehension and confession of three notorious Witches*, at the beginning of the pamphlet, the author asks 'what Christian is so blinded with ignorance or overcome with the illusions of Sathan, but he would tremble to think upon the judgements of the Almightie.'[232] This preamble is followed by the testimonies surrounding the case, which we have already discovered involved animals in order to explain events. Then, usually at the end, there is some kind of redemption or realisation for the witch, emphasising that Satan is the master of trickery and deception. At the end of this same pamphlet is written 'Note, that Mother Upney being inwardlye pricked and having some inward feeling in conference cryed out saying: that she had grievously sinned, that the Devill had deceived her, … yet by the meanes of Gods spirite working in her, … she seemed very sorry for the same, and died very penitent, asking God and the world forgiveness.'[233] It is this confession and repentance that contemporaries wanted to see with criminals. As Sharpe points out, '[t]he recurrent theme of the pamphlet and chapbook accounts of executions was the expectation that the condemned would be brought to accept the deservedness of their execution, should attain a full awareness of the wickedness of the past life which had brought them to their unhappy fate, and that they should die reconciled to that fate.'[234] Like the fable, the trial pamphlet laid out the moral, told a story that showed the moral in a practical and memorable way (using talking animals), and then reiterated the moral, showing witches asking for repentance, 'dying well' and gaining forgiveness, (or not, in which they were condemned).

Through the example of familiars, witches used concepts that were already entrenched in early modern culture, such as the evil and tricking talking animal, in

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[232] *The apprehension and confession of three notorious witches. Arreigned and by iustice condemned and executed at Chelmes-forde, in the Countye of Essex, the 5. day of Iulye, last past. 1589 With the manner of their diuelish practices and keeping of thier spirits, whose fourmes are heerein truelye proportioned. 1589,* A3.

[233] *The Apprehension and confession of three notorious witches,* B3-B3v.

[234] J.A. Sharpe, "'Last Dying Speeches': Religion, Ideology and Public Execution in Seventeenth-Century England," *Past and Present* 107(1985), 152.

order to form narratives that not only met the expectation of the other co-authors but explained the unexplainable events and wonders in their area or life. Confessions were a construction of reality meeting certain story types. As Edward Bever explains, '[w]itchcraft was a discourse, in other words, a way of talking about, and thus organising, relationships and experiences.'[235] This is not to say that witches were unable to tell their own stories as well as the stories of their accusers and the magistrates. As Eve was tempted by the talking animal and Aesop's birds were tricked by the hawk, the witch used the familiar to convey a story of the fall of one person into sin and how they were tricked into the service of a preternatural being. Witches used familiars to weave these elements together, creating a confession that was co-authored by all interested parties, ultimately combining a variety of cultural tropes and allusions. Witnesses did similar, conveying meaning in presentation of familiar spirits in certain lights, leading magistrates and jurists to understand the allusions that strengthened ties between the witch's actions and diabolic or malefic elements. Magistrates also conducted interviews in ways that show an understanding of these wider cultural connections. Finally, if we consider the pamphleteer, and the choices of editing that were made, such as the inclusion of names and descriptions, we can hypothesise that there was a larger shared cultural subtext to familiar spirit narratives that thrived on the connections readers could make between familiars and animal/human boundaries, pet-keeping, the folklore or cultural belief around specific animal forms, or the long-standing tradition of using animals as a way of moralising explanations. By examining the familiar spirit as an animal, these layers of authorship start to show that trial participants meant more with their language of talking about familiars that what was presented at the surface level.

[235] Edward W.M. Bever, "Witchcraft, Female Aggression, and Power in the Early Modern Community," *Journal of Social History* 35, No.4 (2002), 65.

Chapter 3. ‘Demanded of me my soule and body’: Demonising the Familiar Spirit

Joan Prentice, a witch accused in 1589, had a peculiar twist on what seems like a standard familiar-witch introductory meeting. She confessed:

> [T]he deuill appeered vnto her in the Almes house aforesaide: about ten of the Clock in the night time, beeing in the shape and proportion of a dunnish culloured Ferrit, hauing fiery eyes, and the saide Examinate beeing alone in her Chamber, and sitting vpon a low stoole, preparing her selfe to bedward: the Ferrit standing with his hinder legs vpon the ground, and his fore legs setled vpon her lappe, and setling his fiery eyes vpon her eyes, spake and pronounced vnto her these woords following, namelye: Ioan Prentice giue me thy soule, to whome this Examinate being greatly amazed, answered and said: In the name of god what art thou The Ferrit answered, I am satan, feare me not mycomming vnto thee is to doo thee no hurt but to obtaine thy soule, which I must and wil haue before I departe from thee to whome the saide examinate answered and said, *that he demaunded that of her which is none of hers to giue, saying: that her soule appertained onely vnto Iesus Christ, by whose precious blood shedding, it was bought and purchased. To whomethe saide Ferret replyed and saide, I must then haue some of thy blood,* which she willingly graunting, offered him the forefinger of her left hand, the which the Ferrit tooke into his mouth, and setting his former feete vpon that hand, suckt blood therout, in so much that her finger did smart exceedingye: and the saide examinate demaunding againe of the Ferrit what his name was: It answered Bidd. and then presently the said Ferrit vanished out of her sight sodainly.[1]

As opposed to the general narrative of witch meets familiar, promises her body and soul, has blood sucked from her, and then performs acts of maleficium through the familiar, here we have something a bit different. The motifs of the familiar narrative were present in the confession, but the manner and wording she employed to deny the spirit her soul holds the modern reader’s attention. Joan attempted, or at least was portrayed to attempt, some sort of negotiation with the

[1] *The apprehension and confession of three notorious witches.* (1589), B1-B1v. Italics are my own for emphasis.

ferret, pointing out the complications of giving one's soul. From her explanation, it seems that the giving of blood was somehow tied to the soul.

A witch promising her soul to a familiar spirit was a common feature in pamphlets. Witches were often approached by familiars when they were angry at their neighbours after some altercation. It would commonly appear as a feature, especially in the earlier trials and placed the familiar spirit firmly within a narrative of temptation into a life of sin. In the 1566 Chelmsford pamphlet highlighted in the previous chapter, the appearance of two separate 'payments' that need to be made to familiar spirits was described by Agnes Waterhouse. Questioned on what she would give to scare Agnes Browne, she confessed 'she saide she wolde geve hym a red kocke, and he said he wolde have none of that, and shee asked him what he wolde have then, [and] he sayde he wold have her body and soule, and so upon requeste and feare together she gave him her body and soule.'[2] Waterhouse first offers the sacrifice, which one would often find in magician's narratives, of a living animal, but then the agreement turns more sinister to the negotiation of the soul. Elizabeth Sowtherns (alias Demdike) confessed that:

> as she was comming homeward from begging, there met her this Examinate neere vnto a Stonepit in *Gouldshey*, in the sayd Forrest of *Pendle*, a Spirit or Deuill in the shape of a Boy, the one halfe of his Coate blacke, and the other browne, who bade this Examinate stay, saying to her, that if she would giue him her Soule, she should haue any thing that she would request. Wherevpon this Examinat demaunded his name? and the Spirit answered, his name was *Tibb*: and so this Examinate in hope of such gaine as was promised by the sayd Deuill or *Tibb*, was contented to giue her Soule to the said Spirit.[3]

Her confession shows the explicit negotiation of a familiar spirit's favour in exchange for her soul. Her grandson, James Device, experienced a similar outcome when, as he testified, he was approached by a dog, 'who asked this Examinate to giue him his Soule, and he should be reuenged of any whom hee

[2] Phillips, *The Examination and Confession of Certaine Witches,* A3-A3v.

[3] Thomas Potts, *The Wonderfull Discoverie of Witches in the Countie of Lancaster. With the Arraignment and Triall of Nineteen notorious witches, at the Assizes and general Gaole deliverie, holden at the Castle of Lancaster, upon Munday, the seventeenth of August last, 1612. Before Sir James Altham, and Sir Edward Bromley….Published and set forth by commandement of his Majesties Justices of Assize in North Parts. By Thomas Potts, Esq. (London, 1613)*, B2v.

would: whereunto this Examinate answered, that his Soule was not his to giue, but was his *Sauiour Jesus Christs*, but as much as was in him this Examinate to giue, he was contented he should haue it.'[4] James seems to place his soul in the eschatological struggle between Christ and Satan, much like Joan Prentice above. In a pamphlet written about Elizabeth Sawyer, of Edmonton, which was transformed into a successful play, the interview process of the witch was shown, giving us insight into the prompting of interrogators, whether magistrates or justices, of some kind of exchange. The pamphlet reads:

> Question.
>
> What talk had the Devel and you together when that he appeared to you, and what did he aske of you, and what did you desire of him?
>
> Answer.
>
> He asked of me, when hee came unto me, how I did, and what he should doe for mee, and demanded of me my soule and body; threatening then to teare me in peeces, if that I did not grant unto him my soule and my body which he asked of me.[5]

It was expected that some kind of exchange happen. However, if we read Elizabeth's words as her own, she understood that giving up one's soul was something undesirable, even in exchange for something. Devils asking for one's soul continued to be a theme in pamphlets. Strangely echoing Joan Prentice above, one pamphlet described a boy suffering from bewitchment. He saw:

> a spirit in the likeness of a great black man, with no head, in the room souffling with the maid… and told her she must go with him, he was come for her soul, she had given it to him: But the maid answered, *that her soul was none of her own to give, it belonged to her Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who had purchased it with his own precious blood; and although he had got her blood, yet he should never have her soul:* Whereupon after tumbling and throwing the maid about the Devil vanished in a flame of fire.[6]

The passage gives the impression that the maid had repented her decision to give her soul to the spirit. These cases show, that it was established in the mind of

[4] Potts, *The Wonderfull Discoverie of Witches*, H3v.

[5] Goodcole, *The Wonderfull Discoverie of Elizabeth Sawyer* (1621), C2v-C3.

[6] *Doctor Lambs darling: or, strange and terrible news from Salisbury* (1653), 6.

contemporaries that familiar spirits would ask for one's soul in exchange for whatever help they were to offer and that there was some semblance of knowledge that the soul would belong to God or Satan. The soul exchange was an idea that was pushed by reformers, but was present from the earliest pamphlets. This indicates that the concept was either born out of the same folkloric elements that were outlined in the previous chapter, or more likely, the concept of the familiar as being part of a larger discussion on Satan's role in the everyday lives of Christians was already established by 1566, to be reaffirmed and refined through the period. From the perspective of reformers, witchcraft became more about the eschatological battle for human souls between God and the Devil, than the maleficium that threatened the witches' neighbours.

The presence of this exchange, labelled as a pact or covenant by contemporaries, shifted the threat of the familiar spirit, into a threat against Christianity, rather than just against everyday life. Witchcraft was already considered a prime concern in its own right and the finding and executing of witches was justified within the context of this greater apocalyptic struggle. In the 1616 tract *Triall of Witch-Craft*, John Cotta stated, 'Unto the advancing of the worship of the true God, the extirpation of Witches and Witch-craft (because it is the most abominable kinde of Idolatry) is a special service, and acceptable duty unto God, expressly commanded by himself.'[7] This call to arms is just one example of many that called English Protestants to fight against witchcraft in order to achieve a truly Christian nation. However, this was an uphill battle. Not only witchcraft, but also superstitions and traditional religious practices were on the firing line. As many historians and contemporary reformers observed, by 'the end of the sixteenth century ordinary people still had ideas about misfortune, about magic and witchcraft, and (ultimately) about the sources of good and evil in the world which could be radically at odds with those of their reformers.'[8] Trial participants used familiar spirits as a tool to negotiate these beliefs in a way that benefitted, absolved, or condemned others and/or themselves in order to express their beliefs within this changing system. In this chapter, I shall show how familiars show the

[7] John Cotta, *Tryall of Witch-craft* (1616), 126.
[8] Stuart Clark, "Protestant Demonology: Sin, Superstition, and Society (c.1520-c.1630)" in *New Perspectives on Witchcraft Magic and Demonology,* Vol.1, ed. Brian P. Levack (London: Routledge, 2001), 71-72.

anxieties of contemporaries about the nature of sin and temptation and how the familiar was changed by reformers to reflect their interests in Christianising the public. This can be seen in the presence of anti-popish language and motives in demonological tracts and trial pamphlets, when trial participants negotiated a spectrum of superstition, popery, and Protestantism. The chapter will also consider if the theory of acculturation can be successfully applied to familiars. The chapter will be placed in the larger context of the early modern use of interconnected categories in order to layer meaning. Features of familiars such as pact-making, their relation with the changing view of Satan, and the religious connotations of blood feeding will be analysed. Ultimately, the chapter will add to the main thesis of this work by exploring how trial participants used familiars as a way to break down and reinforce categories of identity. Trial participants used familiar spirits as a way of identifying and categorizing non-Christian behaviour.

Geoffrey Robert Quaife, in his work outlining how religion was the driving force behind witchcraft persecution, states, '[t]here was by the last quarter of the fifteenth century, general agreement on the shape of the witch image. Witches were heretics. Even if witchcraft were an illusion, to believe the illusion constituted heresy…. Familiars existed [in the sources] but they were not a significant feature of the model.'[9] Through this chapter I wish to challenge this notion that familiars do not belong in the debate about the effect of the Reformation on witchcraft beliefs. If they were not significant, why were they the topic of much discussion by clerics, demonologists, and trial participants? As Sharpe points out, '[a]lthough the presence of familiars may never have been a necessary element in an English witchcraft trial, the idea that a witch was usually assisted by a familiar in the shape of an animal constantly recurred in pamphlet accounts.'[10] The frequency and duality—with both theological and folkloric characteristics—of familiars demonstrations a concern and confusion by some trial participants of where these beings are placed in the changing categories of supernatural, folkloric, and Protestant beliefs. Familiars were the site of

[9] Geoffrey Robert Quaife, *Godly Zeal and Furious Rage: The Witch in Early Modern Europe* (London: Routledge, 1987), 23.
[10] Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness*, 71.

negotiation between reformist ideals and popular beliefs, used by reformers to justify the diabolic nature of the witch in England. By the 1580s, as Sharpe observes, '[t]he struggle for reformation on a parish by parish level, that struggle which above all marked the Reformation as a cultural process rather than event, was still going on, while the upper reaches of the church hierarchy were still anxious to see godliness spread. But what that godliness might consist of was being contested, and that contestation had massive consequences for the English church's attitude to witchcraft.'[11] Familiars show this cultural process as the role they played in the temptation narrative, as well as the adoption and re-appropriation of their features, changed with the process of reforming. Protestants' emphasis on divine providence increased concern over heresy, idolatry, superstition, and apostasy. Bever states that '[o]fficial Christianity supplied the authorized understanding of broad cosmological issues and the major rituals mediating human interaction with the spirit world, … provided a comprehensive guide to the morally correct conduct critical for eternal salvation, along with some coping mechanisms for afflictions attributed to occult as well as material forces in this life.'[12] However, understanding this correctly, according to reformers, was a different matter.

The fight against witchcraft was important to English Reformers as a way to combat superstition, idolatry, and popish ideas. The English church sought to reform popular beliefs by 'depriving ordinary folk of the preternatural weapons they had traditionally used against magical and demonic assault in favour of approved religious practices' such as prayer and penance.[13] As Wrightson and Levine point out in their in-depth work on early modern Terling, 'Catholicism was not the fundamental problem faced by the Anglican Church; nor, for that matter, was Puritanism… This was the task of transforming the devotional habits of the rural population as inherited from the medieval church: of replacing the

[11] James *Sharpe*, "*State Formation* and Witch Hunting in Early Modern England", in *Hexenprozess und Staatsbildung*, ed. Johannes Dillinger, Jürgen Michael Schmidt, and Dieter R. Bauer (Bielefeld: Verlag für Regionalgeschichte, 2008), 66

[12] Edward W. M. Bever, "Popular Witch Beliefs and Magical Practices", in *The Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe and Colonial America,* ed. Brian P. Levack (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 51-52.

[13] Gary Waite, *Heresy, Magic and Witchcraft in early modern Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan*,* 2003), 489.

performance of ritual duties with the internalization of specific theological beliefs, of substituting doctrinal affirmation for ingrained observances as the hallmark of a Christian.'[14] This more rigorous standard of religious belief was reflected by a more clearly defined orthodoxy. However, there was not a complete lack of understanding by the peasantry of theological concepts, and elite preoccupations were not wholly centred on diabolic-only features of witchcraft. As we will see, there was considerable negotiation and two-way compromise between these two seemingly-separated cultures. This can be seen in the manner in which features of the familiar developed. Before unpacking these features, however, a brief exploration of the interaction between witchcraft and the Reformation needs to be outlined in order to contextualize the familiar within these greater movements.

The traditional historiographical narrative puts the emphasis on elite reformers educating an uneducated and illiterate populace, filled with superstition and clinging to the old faith. However, as Sharpe reminds us, although at first these cultures seem to be opposites, '[t]he gulf between learned theory and popular practice was, in fact, filled with a shifting and developing body of ideas of considerable richness,' as we saw earlier.[15] However, by linking the battle against witchcraft with the greater need to Christianize, reformers found a new medium to preach to other reformers as well as the populace at large what a true Protestant should believe and practice. There has been a notable amount of work written on the interaction of witchcraft trials and the reformations that spread across Europe during the early modern period. Hugh Trevor-Roper argued that the Protestant and Catholic Reformations were the direct cause of the intensive witch-hunts beginning in the 1560s.[16] Scholars such as Joseph Klaits, Willian Monter, Gary Waite, and Wolfgang Behringer have all pointed out ways in which the Reformation shaped the movement of malefic magic to diabolic magic.[17]

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[14] Keith Wrightson and David Levine, *Poverty and Piety in an English Village: Terling, 1525-1700* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 11.
[15] Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness*, 71.
[16] Hugh Trevor-Roper, *The European WitchCraze of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (London: Penguin Press, 1990).
[17] Joseph Klaits, *Servants of Satan: The Age of the Witch-Hunts* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1985) ; *William Monter*, '*Witchcraft*', in The *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation, ed.* Hans J. Hillerbrand, (*Oxford*: Oxford University Press,

However, there has been some dissent. Williams, taking a more confessional approach states that '[w]hile the Catholic Church, in concert with the lay authorities, played an important role in the evolution of demonologies, the onset of the Reformation did not significantly change the witch debate.'[18] However, if we consider that reform was taking place throughout Europe (even before the Protestant Reformation) for several generations, as a long process centring on lay beliefs convalescing with Christian doctrine, this process then helped produce witches, focusing on superstition, idolatry, and demonic concerns. As several historians have pointed out, including Gary Waite, witchcraft accusations and prosecutions increased during the first four decades of the Reformation and 'intensified greatly after 1560, precisely at the time when confessional divisions throughout Europe hardened.'[19] These changes were not just caused by one movement or event, but rather a combination of social, religious, political and economic factors, a point that has a rich and varied historiography. Demonological tracts, along with the more popular medium of trial pamphlets were used as a tool by reformers in an *attempt* to Christianize the masses. These were not just anti-Catholic in nature but also contained ideas on new ways of thinking about the devil and temptation. Familiars, then, fit into this larger process with their features negotiated by trial participants to convey beliefs about these hardening categories and allowing those who wanted to negotiate these categories in order to express their own experiences within the accepted language of religious experience and expectations.

By the negotiation and display of terms of identity (i.e. a witch, Catholic, idolater, foreigner, and/or superstitious person), trial participants could then define themselves as Protestants and Englishmen. As Elmer in his study of the political ties of witch hunting and state building observes, '[t]he punishment of witches, for example, could on occasion promote cohesion and unity in a community, reinforcing in the process the dominant political values of the ruling group. But equally, it might serve as a vehicle for criticism and complaint, thus providing a

1996); *Gary* K. *Waite*, *Heresy*, *Magic, and Witchcraft*; Wolgang Behringer, *Witches and Witch-hunts: A Global History* (New York: Wiley, 2004).

[18] Gerhild Scholz Williams, "Demonologies" in *The Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe and Colonial America,* ed. Brian P. Levack (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 75.

[19] Waite, *Heresy, Magic and Witchcraft,* 486.

valuable opportunity for malcontents to vent their dissatisfaction with, and opposition to, the ruling elite.'[20] While focusing on the political factors, Elmer does state that concerning the role of witchcraft as both a culture-confirming and culture-destabilizing force, 'the witch constitutes a sign of divine disapproval, though how this sign is to be construed ultimately depends on a variety of factors which have little to do with the authenticity of the particular accusation levelled against the witch.'[21] In trials and demonology in England, the image of the witch was placed as the foil for the good Protestant citizen. It should be noted that this strategy was not just implemented by reformers in the Anglican Church. While both churches held a 'common missionary determination to impose the fundamentals of Christian belief and practice on ordinary people,' these attempts were not exactly uniform.[22] Catholic reformers had to be more careful with the process of de-ritualizing popular beliefs as this process caused friction with the rituals of the Church, so heavily criticised by Protestant antagonists.[23] Protestant clergymen could lump superstitious beliefs and ritual together—often under the umbrella term of papist—restricting their Catholic brethren, as they had to be more circumspect when drawing the line between superstition and ritual.

Demonologies and Reform

Nearly all English demonologies were written by members of the clergy, or those who influenced the education of the Protestant ministry. Because of this, English demonologies tend to be much more uniform, had a limited demonological range, and as Stuart Clark puts it, they are 'a truer expression of the Protestant version of religious reform.'[24] Due to this, the tone of demonologies is evangelical and homiletic, often directed at correcting beliefs and addressing those parts of popular beliefs that they found to be falling short of the true faith.[25] Sharpe agrees with this stating that 'it would seem that the authors of the big English works of

[20] Peter Elmer, "Towards a Politics of Witchcraft", in *Languages of Witchcraft: Narrative, Ideology and Meaning in Early Modern Culture,* ed. Stuart Clark (Basingstone: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), 104.
[21] Elmer, "Towards a Politics of Witchcraft", 104-105.
[22] Clark, "Protestant Demonology," 46.
[23] Clark, *Thinking with Demons*, 528.
[24] Clark, "Protestant Demonology," 54-55.
[25] Clark, "Protestant Demonology", 56.

demonology were writing from the perspective of a broader set of Protestant concerns about the nature of sin, the nature of true godliness and the need to attack what they described as "superstition".'[26] As we will see, this definition of superstition included folklore, counter-measures to magic that were outside of the official theology, and Catholicism. As Stuart Clark points out it is important to see the 'formative period of witchcraft theory in England … against a university background. Henry and Robert Holland, George Gifford, and above all, William Perkins were all trying to translate into practical, pastoral terms the Calvinism of Elizabethan Cambridge, and their views about witchcraft are inseparable from this wider campaign.'[27] This campaign continued throughout the period as we see Richard Bernard a generation later connecting demonological ideas with witchcraft trials.[28] These authors were not only demonological writers but produced a 'wide-ranging oeuvre of theological and pastoral works.'[29]

Unlike works such as the Inquisitorial guide of *Malleus Maleficarum*, Protestant demonologists focused on Biblicism, stressing the moral implications of magic and witchcraft, rather than the abilities of witches or manifestations of demons. One of the chief complaints against Catholicism was the dependence on tradition rather than scripture, leading the Roman Church away from the original teachings of Christ to a more man-made religion. In order to combat this, reformers depended on scripture in order to fight against the old faith and other enemies of the Protestant cause, such as superstition and witchcraft. Their goal was to instruct their flocks to turn away from their perceived ignorance and superstition in order to see the error and supreme sinfulness of magic and blessing beyond what the tenants of true faith could provide. Protestant reformers derived their arguments 'naturally from Protestant theology itself, notably its providentialism

[26] Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness*, 81.
[27] Clark, "Protestant Demonology", 55.
[28] Richard Bernard, *A guide to grand-iury men diuided into two bookes: in the first, is the authors best aduice to them what to doe, before they bring in a billa vera in cases of witchcraft, with a Christian direction to such as are too much giuen vpon euery crosse to thinke themselues bewitched. In the second, is a treatise touching witches good and bad, how they may be knowne, euicted, condemned, with many particulars tending thereunto. By Rich. Bernard.* (London : Felix Kingston, 1627). For specific passages of where this is connected to familiars, see pp. 109-114, 156-158.

[29] Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness*, 81.

and … its heightened sensitivity to any hint of dualism.'[30] Demonologies were often based on Mosaic Law concerning witches and sorcery, or commenting on the endurance of Job against the temptations of the devil, once again reinforcing the tenant of *sola scriptura*. The works of Henry Holland, arguing against Scot's *Discoverie of Witchcraft* from a Calvinist perspective, and Lodowick Muggleton, non-conformist, for example, were mostly based in Mosaic Law and had little discussion of current witchcraft practices.[31] This went beyond merely using scripture as proof, influencing structure to help convey the message. Robert Filmer, for example, uses the last half of his sceptical tract *An Advertisement to the Jury-Men of England* to break down the eight different forms of witchcraft as outlined in Deuteronomy 18. He discusses what each of these magical practitioners do and how to identify them, turning demonology back on itself in order to provide a sceptical view point. Later in this chapter we will see how the influence of this scripture passage changed the nature of witchcraft as a crime. Clark points out that demonologists' 'uniformity across many texts would suggest mental structures profoundly unsympathetic to the new ethic, as well as a shared awareness in the authors of what, given their missionary experience, they were up against. Uniformity may, on the other hand, only betray rhetorical habit, and a traditional way of misrepresenting popular rationality so as to facilitate its

[30] Clark, "Protestant Demonology", 61.

[31] Henry Holland, *A treatise against vvitchcraft: or A dialogue, wherein the greatest doubts concerning that sinne, are briefly answered a Sathanicall operation in the witchcraft of all times is truly prooued: the moste precious preseruatiues against such euils are shewed: very needful to be knowen of all men, but chiefly of the masters and fathers of families, that they may learn the best meanes to purge their houses of all vnclean spirits, and wisely to auoide the dreadfull impieties and greate daungers which come by such abhominations. Hereunto is also added a short discourse, containing the most certen meanes ordained of God, to discouer, expell, and to confound all the Sathanicall inuentions of witchcraft and sorcerie.* , (Cambridge : Iohn Legatt, 1590); Reginald Scot, *The discouerie of witchcraft vvherein the lewde dealing of witches and witchmongers is notablie detected, the knauerie of coniurors, the impietie of inchantors, the follie of soothsaiers, the impudent falshood of cousenors, the infidelitie of atheists, the pestilent practises of pythonists, the curiositie of figurecasters, the vanitie of dreamers, the beggerlie art of alcumystrie, the abhomination of idolatrie, the horrible art of poisoning, the vertue and power of naturall magike, and all the conueiances of legierdemaine and iuggling are deciphered: and many other things opened, which have long lien hidden, howbeit verie necessarie to be knowne. Heerevnto is added a treatise vpon the nature and substance of spirits and diuels, &c: all latelie written by Reginald Scot Esquire*, (London : Henry Denham, 1584); Lodowidk Muggleton, *A True Interpretation of the VVitch of Endor spoken of in I Sam. 28, begin. at the ll. verse ...* (London: 1724).

suppression.'[32] The demonologies were merely part of the larger, more ambitious programme of reformation instruction. They allowed reformers to attempt to influence magistrates, jurymen, preachers, lawmakers, and the reading public with their programme of divine providence and spiritual inflection. Used along with demonologies, as Levack puts it, '[s]ermons preached at the times of the trials provided one means of instructing the broader population in the diabolical dimension of witchcraft, but the trials themselves proved to be even more instrumental in this cultural exchange.'[33] Trial pamphlets were another level of this program, offering newsworthy, sensationalist examples of sinners who did not heed the Scriptures and a mode of expression that showed the clash between the reformist ideas of demonologists and the perceived erroneous beliefs of the populace.

In order to analyse this further, I would like to focus on where blood appears in witchcraft narratives and explore how witch marks were part of a language of inversion. As Clark elucidates, 'Demonology in all its manifestations was not merely saturated with religious values; it was inconceivable without them. They lay deep in its conceptual structure and, more overtly, in the patterns of thought and language of those who wrote about witchcraft. Demonic activities were defined in contrast to divine ones and the vices of (female) witches in contrast to the virtues of their godly (male) contemporaries.'[34] These inversions are all over witchcraft and its historiography. Matteoni contrasts the Eucharist to the sabbat's food, one meant to provide sustenance of the soul while the other allowed decay and sin to enter the soul.[35] Crawford also agrees with this conclusion, highlighting the interaction between popular and elite ideas, stating '[w]itchcraft beliefs arose partly from various practices which called upon supernatural aid. Such appeals to maleficent powers were closely related in the minds of many to orthodox Christian beliefs; that is, belief in God logically implied a belief in the devil. The witch was the opposite of the saint: instead of using her power for

[32] Clark, *Thinking with Demons,* 514.
[33] Levack, "Introduction", 7-8.
[34] Clark, *Thinking with Demons*, 437. For an earlier working of Clark's ideas on inversion, see Stuart Clark, 'Inversion, misrule and the meaning of witchcraft,' *Past & Present,* 87 (1980): 98-127.
[35] Matteoni, "Blood Beliefs in Early Modern Europe", 36.

good, she used it for harm, for maleficarum.'[36] In order to further explore this, the blood-using features of mystics and witches will be compared.

Familiars and the Bible

In order to understand how the familiar was reinterpreted by clerics, we must first look at how much the familiar originated in the theological, as opposed to folkloric, realm and how clerics and demonological writers explained the existence of familiars. There are a few biblical references to the familiar. The most discussed example in contemporary works on witchcraft is the Witch of Endor found in 1 Samuel 28. The relevant passage here reads 'Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hat a familiar spirit that I may go to her, and inquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor.'[37] Here we have a very specific reference to a familiar spirit and a witch being tied together conceptually, from a source in which contemporaries would consider to the ultimate truth. This would be the proof contemporaries would use if there was any doubt that familiars were a feature of witchcraft. The witch then holds audience with Saul, summoning what appears to be the spirit of Samuel that talks to Saul.[38] As has been shown by many studies, it was common for the populace to seek magical assistance in cases of stolen property, bewitchment, and healing.[39] The frustrations of clerics towards their flock for seeking magical assistance in the form of visits to cunning folk, whom they saw as drawing their power from the demonic, 'is why Saul—the Saul who, on the eve of his fatal battle with the Philistines, asked a woman with a familiar spirit to summon up the dead Samuel for divination—also became a relevant Old Testament exemplar.'[40] Gifford referenced Saul, claiming that he had allowed the devil, through interacting with the witch, to take the place of

[36] Crawford, *Women and Religion*, 103.
[37] 1 Samuel 28:7.
[38] 1 Samuel 28:11.

[39] See Ronald Hutton, *The Triumph of the Moon: A History of Modern Pagan Witchcraft* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Owen Davies, *Popular Magic: Cunning-folk in English History* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2007); and Emma Wilby, *Cunning Folk and Familiar Spirits.*

[40] In addition to Job. Clark, *Thinking With Demons*, 457.

God.[41] While the passage was mainly used to validate the evilness of cunning folk, it serves as a point to discuss what a familiar was in the Biblical sense and what role it played in the eschatological struggle. It only complicates things that the Witch of Endor was left as a morally ambiguous character, not placed as good or evil. This absence was made up for by early modern clerics who pointed out the evils of wise women such as these.

Familiars are also mentioned in Deuteronomy. Here, familiars hold a position that is less ambiguous than in the Witch of Endor passage and gives justification for those that have familiar spirits to be prosecuted. While the most popular phrase to fight witchcraft as a whole was probably 'Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live,' this only called Christians to identify the witch and destroy him or her.[42] It did not actually provide instruction on how to identify the witch. Luckily, or perhaps unluckily, Deuteronomy provided eight[43] seemingly clear-cut categories of those who practice magic and their evil tendencies. Deuteronomy 18:10-12 was used often in order to categorize magic users, as we see with Robert Filmer's sceptical work. The passage reads:

> [10] There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch. [11] Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. [12] For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord: and because of these abominations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee.[44]

Clark writes that this verse 'was the text which furnished the pastors with their demonological categories, or, if we prefer, into which they "translated" their own vocabulary and terms. It was continuously relied on for inspiration and support… demonologies were organized according to the types of magic [the verse] distinguished.'[45] It provides us with a firm reference to familiars, although it is

[41] George Gifford, *A Dialogue Concerning Witches and Witchcraftes. In which is laide open how craftily the Divell decieveth not only the Witches but many others and so leadeth them awarie into many great errors* (London: 1593), sig. F2v.
[42] Exodus 22:18.
[43] The number is dependent on both translation and interpretation, although by many contemporary accounts in demonological tracts and sermons read them as eight categories were identified.
[44] Deuteronomy 18:10-12.
[45] Clark, "Protestant Demonology", 63. In *Thinking with Demons*, Clark gives the examples of Henry Holland's *Treatise against witchcraft* and Mason's *Anatomie of sorcerie*, 462.

unclear on whether it refers to those familiars in animal form that witches were consulting or those that magicians summoned. However, it does provide a connection with familiars in any form with outlawed forms of magic. The ambiguity let contemporaries interpret this to fit both scenarios. It is interesting that these verses have a specific mention of familiar spirits, possibly giving a clue as to why familiars occur in Protestant England, a country in which Protestantism was enforced from the top-down in all sectors of government, as opposed to confessionally-torn countries on the continent. Because England was technically Protestant from crown to toe, with all court systems working in parallel to create a Protestant state, the court, pulpit, and law worked with a common mission. This mission was biblically-based and had a clear message regarding the evilness of familiars. The reinforcement of scripture in demonologies and pamphlets would provide rhetoric and concepts for those conducting the interrogations in the courtroom to influence trial participants into including the familiar in their narratives.

Leviticus 20:6 was also used occasionally, as we see in the 1592 Middlesex trial pamphlet, once again emphasizing the working with familiar spirits: 'And the soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits, and after wizards, to go a whoring after them, I will even set my face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people.'[46] Clark uses this dependence on scripture to show how Protestant priests distinguished themselves from their Catholic counterparts, deriving their demonology 'naturally from Protestant theology itself, notably its providentialism … also more readily supportable from the Bible than the scholastic demonology favoured by many of the great Catholic experts.'[47] Meanwhile, Lake comments that '[p]opery with its alleged preference for human as against divine authority in the church, had always had a special part to play in the Puritan campaign to base the government and structure of the Church directly

[46] G. B., *A most vvicked worke of a wretched witch (the like whereof none can record these manie yeeres in England.) Wrought on the person of one Richard Burt, seruant to maister Edling of Woodhall in the parrish of Pinner in the Countie of Myddlesex, a myle beyond Harrow. Latelie committed in March last, An. 1592 and newly recognised according to the truth. by G.B. maister of Arts* (London: R. B[ourne], 1592)*;* Leviticus 20:6 KJV. Here again we have quite hostile language, as well as a connection between wizards and familiar spirits.
[47] Clark, "Protestant Demonology", 61.

on the warrant of scripture and the divine authority it embodied.'[48] For example, John Phillips in his prologue for the Chelmsford 1566 trial pamphlets emphasized the use of scripture in order to combat evil doers, although he does not distinguish whether he means papists or witches, even though the pamphlet, was critical of both. He stated, 'Sin death and hell did spreade their flagge, in them they bare the sway: His worde was yrkesome to their hartes, they walked farre astray…. Not so I iudge, why shoulde we then, his lawe and worde contemne: The scripture doth rebellious folke, euerlastingly condemne. I meane such as his worde detest, his lawe condemneth playne: To talke with him whom they do serue, in hell eternall payne.'[49] Pamphlet literature was used as a means to convey the thoughts of the elite on popery, temptation, and demonology to the populace, while simultaneously highlighting the voices of the common person.

The Process of Christianising

Some historians have attributed this whole process of Christianisation that I have been describing as acculturation, that is the repression of the culture of one group by a dominant group—in this case, the domination of the elite, puritan reformer over the ignorant, uneducated villager and customer of magical practitioners. Generally, the theory states that more hard-line Protestant (and sometimes Puritan) elites and clerics changed the beliefs of the populace, causing them to turn away from their perceived superstition and dependence on power sources outside of the Church, through a program of religious instruction. For example, this narrative would place the familiar spirit in a popular, folkloric culture with correlating characteristics. Their confessions and witness statements would be coached by elites and reformers to fit in with the larger solidifying of Protestant beliefs—taking the little critter of preternatural curiosity and turning it into a demon and a participant in Satan's war on God and humanity. Robert Muchembled is possibly the most recognisable proponent of this theory when applied to witchcraft.[50] Supporters of this theory point to how demonologists

[48]Peter Lake, "Anti-popery: the structure of a prejudice," *English Civil War (*1997), 95.
[49] Phillips, *The examination and confession of certaine Wytches* (1566), A3v.
[50] Robert Muchembled, *Popular and Elite Culture in France 1400-1750* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1985). This hypothesis was later redacted.

regarded the "failings" of popular culture, disheartened by the stubborn pagan concepts that the populace adhered to.[51] While there is no doubt that these clergymen, committed to showing the laity the wrongness of their ways, impacted the nature of witch-hunts, it would be overstating it to say that these reformers caused the whole movement. Using the acculturation theory too uncritically would imply that there was a distinct separation between elite and popular culture and a uniformity within these groups that was uncompromising, with influence always moving downwards.[52] Assessing this theory, Stuart Clark concludes that demonologies, 'reveal next to nothing of the progress and fortunes of acculturation in its actual impact on real communities.'[53] Bever postulates that the communication was a two-way mutually exchanging system and that '[t]he recognition that members of the elite participated in "popular" culture in their everyday lives, that demonologists drew heavily on stories they heard from common people, and that 'popular culture', including magical beliefs, had absorbed innumerable "elite" influences over the course of centuries, therefore serves as a salutary corrective.'[54] This was where the familiar lay; it consisted of the negotiation of beliefs and a non-uniform amalgamation of elite and popular cultures to produce an entity that changes over time and has features the ideas of both cultures.

As we have seen earlier, several historians have written about the process of the turn of witchcraft accusations from malefic, folkloric, and popular to diabolic and fitting the Protestant view of divine providence. However, this exchange of ideas was not just one way and was not complete. Demonologists drew heavily on stories and testimonies, incorporating beliefs such as familiars (which were mentioned in the Bible, yet given folkloric qualities in accusations and confessions), and making them fit the reformists' beliefs. Trial pamphlets were the collaboration of this integration. Testimonies and confessions were by the protestant reformers analysed, commented on, absorbed, and then returned to the populace through popular print. These beliefs were then revisited and integrated

[51] Clark, "Protestant Demonology," 72-73.
[52] Bever, "Popular Witch Beliefs", 58.
[53] Clark, *Thinking with Demons*, 512
[54] Bever, "Popular Witch Beliefs", 58.

causing a continuous cycle.[55] As Williams postulates, '[t]o add intellectual and legal substance to their arguments, witchcraft theorists made use of theological and philosophical sources, trial records, and manuals produced for and by magistrates charged with prosecuting suspected witches.'[56] During this process, the features given to familiars by the lower orders are absorbed and re-appropriated by reformers to fit their motives of Christianization. However, there was some resistance to this. There was an *attempt* by elites to dominate the masses by applying and preaching their ideas of what was truly Christian, specifically truly Protestant. The act is there in intention, though not necessarily successful in practice. Although this concept of christianizing has its criticizers, and rightly so:

> there is scarcely any doubt that 'Christianizing' was what reformers of all the major churches *thought* they were doing, and that what the meant by this was, in part, the spiritualization of misfortune, the abolition of magic, and the discrediting and eradication of a wide range of popular cultural forms as 'superstitions'. Seen in this light, demonology comes to have a crucial bearing on the impetus to reform, while evangelism makes better sense of clerical hostility to witchcraft.[57]

Demonology was used as a sort of guide for the laity to understand greater concepts in reform. These theories laid out in demonology about Protestantism are seen in trial pamphlets, sometimes using the familiar as a catalyst to convey this message, but was only partially effective. There was a greater movement towards diabolic thinking applied to witchcraft. Familiars were seen less as pet-like animals and more like the blood thirsty demons described in demonologies, showing the incomplete progress of fashioning the familiar as the Devil. Accusations turned away from folklore and malefic threats and towards theologically-focused problems and spiritual threats. The familiar was positioned as a figure that paralleled the changing views about Satan from playful trickster, to supreme evil, to an internal agent that tempts all. However, as Peter Burke has pointed out, 'The dominant culture may misinterpret, but it has the power to make its misinterpretation stick.'[58] While the 'misinterpretation' of the familiar was

[55] Bever associates this process with only demonology. Bever, "Popular Witch Beliefs", 60.
[56] Williams, "Demonologies", 70.
[57] Clark, *Thinking with Demons*, 530.
[58] Burke, "A Question of Acculturation", 201.

more of a conscious choice of reformers than a mistake in understanding, there was still negotiation between these ideas in demonologies and trial pamphlets. Although the beliefs may vary, trial participants placed the witch and her familiar as a threat that different classes could work together to eliminate.[59]

Idolatry

While this connection to demons originating from pre-Christian deities has been hypothesised by some historians as proof that witches were dealing with pagan idols and had ties to pre-Christian pagan cults, this was not observed by contemporaries and seems somewhat exaggerated. Margaret Murray, who has been generally debunked by most witchcraft historians, states that, 'The evidence proves that underlying the Christian religion was a cult practiced by many classes of the community, chiefly, however, by the more ignorant or those in the less thickly inhabited parts of the country. It can be traced back to pre-Christian times, and appears to be the ancient religion of Western Europe.'[60] She goes on to associate familiars with the goddess Diana and tries to prove that the figure of Satan was prescribed onto the god of those accused of witchcraft by reformers.[61] However, as Quaife points out, '[a]lthough the populace was ignorant of much of Christianity and retained many customary beliefs woven into a Christian framework, they had long forgotten the paganism of their ancestors.'[62] These connections between pagan gods and familiars have been widely debunked, yet is useful to explore the connection between the familiar and idolatry, providing a method to understand what the familiar was to the early modern mind from a religious perspective.

In trials, the familiar and the Devil were often confused by trial participants, giving the impression that at least in minds of the populace, both the familiar spirits and Satan were seen as just a few of many kinds of evil in the world, rather than Satan being placed as the ruler and performer of all evil. For example, Temperance Floyd was recorded in one of the three pamphlets written about her,

[59] Dolan, *Dangerous Familiars,* 179.
[60] Murray, *Witch-Cult*, 12.
[61] Murray, *Witch-Cult*, 9.
[62] Quaife, *Godly Zeal*, 68-69.

as describing how the Devil 'used to be with them on nights in several shapes, sometimes like a Hound, who Hunted before them (but without a doubt he Hunted for Souls.'[63] Clerics tried to fight against this—most by showing how familiars were placed under the Devil and he was subsequently under God, while a few tried to show how Satan was these familiars themselves, just in a variety of forms. Ewen's analysis, while slightly dated, provides some preliminary examination to the limited historiography around familiars, stating that '[i]n English narratives there is a good deal of confusion between the Devil, who first appears and negotiates the apostacy, and the lesser spirits, who are placed at the disposal of the witch to obey her commands, and the difficulty is added to by the first Satan sometimes appearing in the similitude of a beast (1645), and the familiar adopting the resemblance of a human being (1566).'[64] Sharpe agrees with this saying, '[t]here was, as might be expected, a certain conflation in the confessions of witches between the devil proper and the familiar spirit (the devil's custom of appearing in animal shapes helped confuse matters here).'[65] In a 1574 London trial, a confessing witch describes Satan as 'sometimes as a man with a gray beard, sometimes lyke five cattes, sometimes to ravens and crowes, &c.'[66] Joan Cunny, in 1586, confuses the roles each play confessing that:

> [T]here making a Circle as she was taught, and kneeling on her knees, said the praier now forgotten, and inuocating vpon Sathan: Two Sprites did appeere vnto her within the said Circle, in the similitude and likenes of two black Frogges, and there demaunded of her what she would haue, beeing readye to doo for her what she would desire,

[63] *The tryal, condemnation, and execution of three vvitches viz. Temperace [sic] Floyd, Mary Floyd, and Susanna Edwards. Who were arraigned at Exeter on the 18th. of August, 1682. And being prov'd guilty of witch-craft, were condemn'd to be hang'd, which was accordingly executed in the view of many spectators, whose strange and much to be lamented impudence, is never to be forgotten. Also, how they confessed what mischiefs they had done, by the assistance of the devil, who lay with the above-named Temperence Floyd nine nights together. Also, how they squeezed one Hannah Thomas to death in their arms; how they also caused several ships to be cast away, causing a boy to fall from the top of a main-mast into the sea. With many wonderful things, worth your reading*, (London: J. Deacon, 1682), 5.

[64] Ewen, *Witchcraft and Demonaism,* 50.

[65] Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness,* 74.

[66] John Chrysostom, *The disclosing of a late counterfeyted possession by the deuyl in two maydens within the citie of London* (London: Richard Watkins, 1574).

> so yet she would promise to giue them her soule for their trauaile, for otherwise: they would doo nothing for her.[67]

Interestingly, Cunny described the process magicians were described as using to summon her familiar. Cunny seems to have knowledge of the understanding of how magicians would summon spirits, mixing up the types of spirits. However, the identification of the Devil as separate and more powerful than his devils seems to have entrenched itself in public conciousness. Joan Cunny still acknowledged that 'Sathan [was] the cheefe of devils.'[68] It is a bit difficult to tell when this separation happened. Bernard in 1627, declared that '[a]ll these Witches haue Diuels and familiar spirits, as is euident by the confession of a multitude of Witches; those in Lancashire, Leicestershire, Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire… These spirits appeare in sundry shapes, yea the same spirit to the same party in diuers forms, as *Chattox* Diuell called *Fansie*, would be sometimes to her, like a browne Dog, sometimes like a Man, and sometimes like a Beare, as shee confessed.'[69] Here, the familiar is discussed without any reference to Satan, which can be determined because of the plural form of the word devil, as opposed to the more ambiguous single term. He goes on to describe the multiple ways familiars are obtained by witches, not mentioning any instance of Satan giving one to the witch.[70] It seems that Satan could easily take on forms similar to a familiar (or several of them). However, he then goes on to describe Satan, stating:

> Wee may in reading finde, that hee varyeth in his appearances, according to the nature, quality and condition of the persons to whom hee presents himselfe. To base sordid filthy, nasty and blockish, more beast like then Christian people, hee commeth in the baser formes and more abhorred shapes: to some of them in the shape of Toads, as you haue heard, to be loathed, euen of nature it selfe, if they had not lost it.[71]

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[67] *The apprehension and confession of three notorious witches* (1589), A7.

[68] *The apprehension and confession of three notorious witches* (1589), A7.

[69] Bernard, *A guide to grand-jury men* (1627), 156-157.

[70] Bernard, *A guide to grand-jury men* (1627), 157-158. This text also shows the influence of trials setting the agenda for demonologists to discuss. This will be discussed further below.

[71] Bernard, *A guide to grand-jury men* (1627), 105-108. Bernard references Del Rio often.

Bernard, it seems, integrated the beliefs of the trial participants by including familiars in the witchcraft narrative, yet also wanted to bring in the diabolical aspects of a reformed believer.

To some, the devil and familiar were quite separate. For example, Mother Lakeland, described as 'a professour of Religion, a constant hearer of the Word for these many years, and yet a *Witch* (as she confessed) for the space of near twenty years,' describes how she was recruited.[72] According to the pamphlet she stated that, '[t]he *Devil* came to her first between sleeping and waking, and spake to her in a hollow voyce, telling her, that if she would serve him she should want nothing. After often sollicitation she consented to him; then he stroke his claw (as she confessed) into her hand, and with her blood wrote the Covenants…Then he furnished her with three Imps, two little Dogs and a Mole (as she confessed) which she imployed in her services.'[73] John Stearne, infamous witch-finder involved the mass trials of 1645-1647, noted Elizabeth Finch's confession that 'the Devill appeared to her in the likenesse of a smoaky coloured Dog, which asked her to deny God and Christ, which she said, upon his promises she did, and let him have bloud to seal, or confirme the Covenant or agreement; and soon after that, there came two *more*,…which sucked on her two or three times a week.'[74] While the spirit was described as 'the Devill' the presence of the word 'more' shows that at least in the recorder's mind, this being was considered another familiar spirit, rather that the Devil.

There does not seem to be any clear consensus on whether familiars were Satan in animal form. Thomas Cooper, for example, pointed out that 'Sathans cunning in appearing in these forms euen of familiar Creatures, which if they can hurt, It is but onely the body*'* and goes on to describe why he would do this, claiming that Satan wishes to 'nourish this conceipt by these appearances, that his power is limited by that creature, and so not to bee feared, so to bee lightly regarded and

[72] *The lawes against vvitches, and conivration And some brief notes and observations for the discovery of witches. Being very usefull for these times, wherein the Devil reignes and prevailes over the soules of poore creatures, in drawing them to that crying sin of witch-craft. Also, the confession of Mother Lakeland, who was arraigned and condemned for a witch, at Ipswich in Suffolke. Published by authority* (London: 1645), 7.
[73] The lawes against vvitches, and conivration (1645), 7.
[74] Stearne, *A Confirmation and Discovery of Witchcraft,* 16. Italics are my own.

despised of vs.'[75] This viewpoint was not limited to demonological tracts. In *The wonderful discouerie of the vvitchcrafts of Margaret and Phillip Flower* (1619), which seems more demonologically informed than most pamphlets, the Devil:

> …not onely sheweth them the way, but prescribeth the manner of effecting the same, with facility and easinesse, assuring that hee himselfe will attend them in some familiar shape of Rat, Cat, Toad, Bird, Cricket, &c: yea effectuate whatsoeuer they shall demaund or desire, and for their better assurance and corroboration of their credulity, they shall haue palpable and forcible touches of sucking, pinching, kissing, closing, colling and such like.[76]

Here again, the lines between Satan and the familiar are blurred. Again, in 1635 we see Satan specifically being called a familiar spirit: 'But then steppeth forth the Devill, and not onely sheweth them the way, but prescribeth the manner of effecting the same, with facility and easinesse, assuring that bee himselfe Will *attend them in some familiar shape* of Rat, Cat, Toad, Bird, Cricket, &c. yea effectuate whatsoever they shal demand or desire.'[77] As we saw earlier, by 1645, the Devil was very much an aspect of confessions, 'conflating the devil of the learned demonologists with the neo-diabolical familiars of the English witchcraft tradition, thus demonstrating a rather more complex situation than a straightforward imposition of learned beliefs on the populace.'[78] The way trial participants talked about Satan and the way they talked about familiars had intermingled, leaving reformers the chance to push for change in beliefs that was more centralized with their reform aspirations and gave trial participants the language to describe their religious experiences within the culture of witchcraft. Because of the confusion, reformers could use the familiar spirit as a way to educate the public about their ideas about the nature of temptation, the role of the Devil, and true Christian behaviour.

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[75] Thomas Cooper, *The mystery of witch-craft Discouering, the truth, nature, occasions, growth and power thereof. Together with the detection and punishment of the same. As also, the seuerall stratagems of Sathan, ensnaring the poore soule by this desperate practize of annoying the bodie: with the seuerall vses therof to the Church of Christ. Very necessary for the redeeming of these atheisticall and secure times. By Thomas Cooper* (London: Nicholas Okes, 1617),79-80.
[76] *The wonderful discouerie of the vvitchcrafts of Margaret and Phillip Flower* (1619), B3-B3v.
[77] *Witchcrafts, strange and wonderfull: discovering the damnable practices of seven witches, against the lives of certaine noble personages, and others of this kingdome, as shall appeare in this lamentable history. ; With an approved triall how to finde out either witch or any apprentice to witch-craft* (London: 1635), A3. Italics are my own.
[78] Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness,* 137.

Demonising the Familiar Spirit

The familiar was confused with Satan because of the approach reformers had, and to a certain extent the Catholic Church before that, to demonizing those things that reflected power that did not come from God. As Larner explains, '[a]ll supernatural power not sanctioned by the church was defined by the authorities as demonic, but this ecclesiastical view found some support in peasant experience.'[79] This was the process in which 'the authorities had created a set of rules to deal with a non-existent secret activity' and 'they had criminalized a set of magical activities and performances common to all pre-industrial societies and in some cases regarded them as indicators of demonic pacts and witches' meetings.'[80] Bever points out that '[t]he Church held all of these [fairies, elves, Greek gods, etc.] to be subordinate to the devil in a rigid hierarchy, but the people talked of them as relatively autonomous.'[81] We see this in early witchcraft trial pamphlets, where familiars and the Devil are often interchangeable and are given less than diabolic properties. For example, the 1566 Chelmsford trial in which a cat named Satan appears, discussed at length in Chapter 2, shows the mixing of familiar and satanic features. While playing the role of the tempter, Satan the familiar in 1566 appeared as a dangerous trickster, yet his diabolic nature was still implicitly stated in his name.[82] Reformers wanted their flocks to see Satan as a real threat, beyond playful trickster, boogie-man, or mythological being, but more as a real threat that could affect any man or woman. They wanted to show how Satan's influence was working everywhere, especially in the realm of magic and superstition. As George Gifford, preacher and reformer, declared, 'And what is that, but that Satan shall seduce, illude and bewitch their minds, to make them believe that they worshippe and follow God, when they worship and follow him?'[83] It seems that this translated to a certain extent to the lower classes. In 1582, Joan Pechey was accused of talking to her imps by her next door neighbour. Curiously enough, the neighbour described the scene of her

[79] Christina Larner, *Witchcraft and Religion*: *The Politics of Popular Belief* (London: Basil Blackwell, 1984), 38.
[80] Larner, *Witchcraft and Religion*, 38.
[81] Bever, "Popular Witch Beliefs", 57.
[82] Phillips, *The examination and confession of certaine Wytches* (1566).
[83] Gifford, *Dialogue*, B4.

overhearing Joan talking next door, 'assured that there was no christian creature with her at that time, but that she vsed those speeches vnto her Imps.'[84] The familiars or imps are explicitly put outside the spectrum of Christian creatures. While this may seem at first to be indicating that they were not human, as discussed in the previous chapter on animals, all animals were seen as part of the Christian narrative and were seen as creatures under Christ's dominion, although without souls. In his study, James Sharpe established that of the corpus of '110 narratives, [in the Hopkins and Stearne 1645-1647 trials] sixty-three involve accounts of the witch's meeting with the devil in one form or another.'[85] This was due to the more established role of the Devil and heightened religiosity. He determines that '[t]his evidence obviously challenges the accepted view that English witchcraft, on a popular level, was non-diabolical and hence merits serious analysis.'[86] Larner, writing on witchcraft in a country which experienced a rather different Reformation, reached similar findings, stating, '[t]he element of demonology gradually increased, and although at the height of the persecution the demonological element was at its most prominent, the actual details of diabolic belief remained substantially unchanged until the end.'[87] With familiars, I think, as Larner postulates, the details did not change, yet the stakes were raised from folkloric superstitions to idolatry.

The perception that both the Devil and familiar spirits were both in the hierarchy of evil and were gaining power acerbated the confusions between the two conceptually. As Quaife explains, 'Satan changed from a rebellious tempter into the manifestation of the principle of Evil—immanent, powerful, approachable and willing to assist mankind for his own ends.'[88] He sees this as part of the Church's process of fighting heresy stretching back several centuries. Quaife speculates that 'The role of the Devil was increased within Christian orthodoxy to rival that of the Cathars and, secondly the very success of the Cathars popularised

[84] W.W. *A true and just recorde* (1582), A4v.

[85] Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness,* 134.

[86] Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness,* 134.

[87] Larner, *Witchcraft and Religion*, 44.
[88] Quaife, *Godly Zeal*, 52.

satanic power. The church's elevation of diabolic power could not arrest the popular slide into Manicheism.'[89] Sharpe acknowledges that this process was 'a complex one, but it seems in the centuries that followed the early Christian era the concept of the devil and of diabolic powers slowly changed. By the early fourteenth century… the devil, with his battalions of lesser demon assistants, was becoming clearly identified as a threat to Christendom.'[90] With this process, the Church took steps to convey the seriousness and terror of Satan for Christians. By abolishing mystery plays and festivities, the Church attempted to control the comic devil often portrayed by peasants.[91]

Johnstone expands upon this, stating reformers' desire to show the Devil's influence in the commonplace of life. He states that emotions and desires that were seen as sinful 'were within the experience of all men and women. If a blanket interpretation of diabolism could be placed upon them, Satan could be brought convincingly into the most intimate aspects of people's lives, and the norm of his agency could be made insidious through the sheer banality of the sinful thoughts he was credited with introducing into the mind.'[92] Reformers called for their flocks to look at their inward sin, realizing that anyone can be tempted; no one was beyond the Devil's reach. We see this reflected in familiars. At the beginning of the period, familiars were described as not being able to hurt the godly, as we see with Joan Cunny in 1589, but later, this distinction was no longer made.[93] As Clark puts simply, 'The remedy was to transfer attention not merely from the devil to God, but from witch to victim, throwing the burden of responsibility on the latter's individual conscience.'[94] Educating their flock on the nature of misfortune, reformers turned to scripture, specifically Job in order to convey the need to attribute misfortunes to God's will and to endure them with faith and prayer.[95] As Clark points out, reformers wanted to point out the 'real

[89] Quaife, *Godly Zeal*, 54.
[90] Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness,* 18-19.

[91] Quaife, *Godly Zeal*, 56.
[92] Nathan Johnstone, "The Protestant Devil: The Experience of Temptation in Early Modern England", *Journal of British Studies* 43, No.2 (2004), 188.
[93] *The Apprehension and confession of three notorious witches* (1589).

[94] Clark, "Protestant Demonology", 60.
[95] Clark, *Thinking with Demons*, 70, 520.

significance of the events attributed to witchcraft was that, like all cases of affliction, they offered an opportunity for introspection and spiritual betterment; sin, not sorcery was the cause of misfortune.'[96] This campaign was continued in witchcraft trial pamphlets, where both Satan and familiars were increasingly made culpable. This was both part of the greater Christianizing process and a response from reformers to correct the view that temptation only came from physical demons.[97] With this programme of change, familiars became less errand-running demons and more outward reflections of the inner struggle of temptation with sin. We see this in the stressing of the pact over acts of maleficium as the important aspects that trial participants emphasize in confessions.

There were some cases in which the familiar was portrayed as a trickster, acting without the order of the witch they are associated with. For example, the confession of Elizabeth Bennet described how her familiar:

> Tolde this Examinate, it had plagued the said Byets wife to the death. She this Examinate saying it was done by the spirite, but not by the sending of this Examinate. The sayde spirite sayeing· I knowe that Byet and his wife haue wronged thee greatly, and doone thee seuerall hurtes, and beaten thy swyne, and thrust a pytchforke in one of them, the which the spirite sayde to haue doone, to winne credit with this Examinate.[98]

What is particularly interesting here is that is that Elizabeth knows that familiars are ordered to do maleficium by witches, but insists that this one worked outside of authority. She also claimed that these familiars teased her, threatening to throw her into her cooking fire. This familiar encounter seems to nod to the trickster nature of fairies and other preternatural beings, as opposed to the tempter that we see especially in later trials.

This association with the Devil helped demonologists place familiars within the divine hierarchy. Placed as below Satan, but still preternatural, familiars allowed demonologists to discuss the actual power a witch had—which, according to most demonologists, was none. Gifford points out that this 'doeth not cleare the witches at all; for their sinne is in dealing with devils, and that they imagine that

[96] Clark, "Protestant Demonology", 60.
[97] Johnstone, "The Protestant Devil", 188.
[98] W.W. *A true and just recorde* (1582), C1.

their spirits do those harmes, requested and hired by them.'[99] Clark highlights how Brenz, replying to Johann Weyer, stated that these witches, although they be powerless must still be punished, 'because they are without fear of God, lead a godless and un-Christian life, give themselves entirely to the devil to corrupt and harm mankind, and not because they actually cause any harm, as they think they do; for they cannot harm.'[100] With this logic, the familiar was placed as a source of idolatry, a place where worship of the spirit supplanted worship towards God.

In order to turn the populace towards the true faith, reformers had to provide the populace with a moral compass of which they could orient the sins and misfortunes of the world to the appropriate source. As Peter Elmer states 'in describing and attesting to the feats of witches and demons, demonologists were in the same breath seeking to reinforce the faith of their fellow Christians in God and the church, the existence of the former logically proven by that of the latter, and vice versa.'[101] Once again demonology and the actions of witches are tied into the broader process of Christianisation. The misattribution of sin and misfortune was especially prevalent in witchcraft cases. Most witchcraft accusations were brought to the courts because the accuser believed the witch had performed some kind of act of maleficium against them. Ursula Kemp, for example, accused in St. Osyth in 1582, was said to 'unwitch' on occasion but was only brought to court when local children started suffering ailments. It was only when she deviates into a bad witch that the village turns against her.[102] However, for demonologists, the reason they were so opposed to witchcraft was not the physical threat of curses or physical pains, but rather the greater *spiritual* threat of violating God's most sacred law—the first commandment. Martin Luther in 'A Short Exposition of the Decalogue' explained how the First Commandment was broken:

> By taking to witchcraft, magic, or the black arts when in difficulty… By using prayers and adjurations to the evil spirits to protect oneself, one's cattle, house, children, and all else, from wolves, war, fire, flood, and other kinds of harm… By attributing misfortune and difficulties to

[99] Gifford, *Dialogue,* 22.

[100] Brenz, *On Hailstorms,* 217. Qtd Clark, *Thinking with Demons,* 520.
[101] Peter Elmer, "Towards a Politics of Witchcraft", 103-104.
[102] W. W., *A true and iust recorde,* (1582), A7-A7v.

> the devil, or to the wickedness of men; and by not accepting hardships with love and gratitude, whether pleasant or unpleasant, as from God alone; and by not acknowledging them to Him with thanks and ready submissiveness.[103]

These sentiments were repeated by English demonologists. William Perkins, for example, believed that witches should be eradicated 'not because they killed or harmed people but because they were in league with the devil, because they were traitors who had renounced God and formed a pact with the devil.'[104] It was not their intention to harm, but rather their allegiances which were the problem.

Both witchcraft and popery were fashioned as idolatry by reformers, perceived as despicable crimes caused by lack of religious education. This stemmed, as Williams comments, from Martin Luther's 'convictions and teachings about the reality of evil in the form of Satan and his demons…He specifically and vigorously condemned the witch's apostasy as the most serious crime against God and the Christian faith.'[105] Williams further explains, 'Luther's thinking on demons inspired two contrasting strands of Protestant reaction to the witch phenomenon. On the one hand, there emerged the call for severe punishment for those who entered into commerce with the demon; on the other, his advice on moderation and faith in the healing power of prayer was also heeded.'[106] Following this guidance, the priority of clerics was to instil the concepts of the first Commandment into popular thought. It was seen as prime importance that the populace worships the true God, in the right way—alluding to the failings in the Catholic Church and the accusations of idolatry against it. They did this mostly through catechism training, which by the mid-seventeenth century became household practice and was seen as the way to prevent magical occurrences.[107] John Bossy's work on the shift from concern about the Seven Deadly Sins to an emphasis on the Ten Commandments gives us some clue as to why this emphasis

[103] Martin Luther, 'A Short Decalogue, the Apostles' Creed and the Lord's Prayer' (1520), qtd. in Clark, *Thinking with Demons,* 490.

[104] Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness*, 88.
[105] Williams, "Demonologies", 75.
[106] Williams, "Demonologies", 76.
[107] Clark, *Thinking with Demons*, 508.

on idolatry suddenly came more into light.[108] As witchcraft was one of the visual depictions (as in the depictions that were placed in churches to offer visual aid to remembering religious doctrine) of the breaking of the first commandment, Bossy concludes that '[t]he more the Commandments became established as the reigning system of Christian ethics, the more persuasive the spell of the witch-syndrome proved.'[109] Clark agrees with him stating that 'once the obligation to worship God correctly was put at the summit of Christian ethics, and idolatry was made the prime offence, witchcraft became, at least for clerics, a far more serious matter than it had been when still subsumed under one or other of the Deadly Sins.'[110] Reformers fashioned the familiar as an idol for worship, diverging from its roots as the medium of maleficium. It is almost as if the familiar is 'gentrified', taken out of the context of the folklore and popular culture in which it was presented and then repurposed into the demon that clerics needed. The maleficium-creating familiar did not help reformers establish Protestantism in popular culture until it was accepted and modified to fit the concerns of superstition, idolatry, and temptation that reformers wanted their flock to fear. The familiar spirit was a much more useful tool when it was placed in a demonic light, which needed to be emphasized.

In a theological sense, familiars were a threat because of their demonic origins. Demons were spiritually disruptive while the familiars of the earlier pamphlets, best representing the popular view, were physically disruptive creatures. In Scripture, demons were thought to embody the idols of the gods that the Hebrews worshipped. In Deuteronomy 32:17, describing the Hebrews' false worship, the King James Bible states, 'They sacrificed unto devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new *gods* that came newly up, whom your fathers feared not.'[111] This was often linked by contemporaries to 1 Corinthians 10:20-21 which states, 'But *I say*, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be

[108] John Bossy, 'Moral Arithmetic: seven sins into ten commandments' in *Conscience and Casuistry in Early Modern Europe,* ed. Edmund Leites, p. 214-234 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

[109] Bossy, "Moral Arithmetic", 230.
[110] Clark, *Thinking with Demons*, 503.
[111] Deuteronomy 32:17.

partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils.'[112] That this construction was connected to familiar spirits in particular can be seen in Thomas Wilson's (expanded and completed by John Bagwell) Christian dictionary. In the entry on familiar spirits, Wilson writes:

> …signifieth a *lottle,* Job 32. 19. Because *Magicians* who are possessed with an evil spirit, speak with hollow voices, as out of a bottle, and (as some say) with swollen bellies… But the holy Ghost in Act. 16. 16. expoundeth it more fully, the Spirit of *Python,* (or of *divination*) meaning of the *Devill,* whose answers were given to the Heathen by these means, the chief whereof was called *Pythius Apollo,* and his Temple *Pythion,* and his Feast *Pythia,* kept to his honour, who was faigned to kill the serpent *Python*….This was *Saul'*s sin, that he sought to a woman which had a familiar spirit, the voice whereof he heard, 1 Sam. 28. 7 -15. for which transgression the Lord killed him, 1 Chr. 10. 13. and hath threatned to cut off all from among his people, that do require of such, Lev. 20. 6.[113]

Here Wilson connects some of the themes of the Biblical origins of the familiar—idolatry, paganism, the witch of Endor and Saul, and the tradition of magicians using spirits.[114] We also see some of these features spread in trial participants' views of familiars—such as speaking in hollow voices and being held in bottles. These show that popular and elite beliefs were not rigid; popular beliefs could be influenced by elite ideas of diabolism and were influenced even before the accepted shift of familiar beliefs occurring around 1645.

Keeping popery out of England was linked to the threat of the Antichrist. Since the Pope or at least the Roman Catholic Church was positioned as the Antichrist, the rise of the threats of popery and witchcraft helped strengthen the adoption of the provincialism in England and fulfilled the millennial expectations of the reformed. The combination of apocalypticism and witchcraft set the scene for familiars to be just one sign of many that Satan was trying to take over and the

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[112] 1 Corinthians 10:20-21. For examples of this connection see Robert Jenisen's sermon transcript *Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils* (Cambridge, 1621) and James Mason's tract *The anatomie of sorcerie VVherein the wicked impietie of charmers, inchanters, and such like, is discouered and confuted* (London, 1612).

[113] Thomas Wilson and John Bagwell, *A complete Christian dictionary wherein the significations and several acceptations of all the words mentioned in the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are fully opened, expressed, explained*. (London, 1661), 213. Italics are the authors'.

[114] The lines between the spirit magicians contacted and familiar spirits as we have been discussing them is blurred here, giving notion to the sense that contemporaries by this point considered them the same or at least in the same category of spirits.

final days were near. As Clark points out '[t]he activities of demons and witches were apocalyptic both because they could be matched with descriptions of the last times lying encoded in the prophetic texts of scripture, and because, in their turn, they too were texts which, when suitably analysed, might reveal truths about the nature and nearness of the world's end.'[115] Cooper captures the charisma and almost excitement of contemporaries looking the signs of the second coming, stating:

> O are we also to blesse his *Maiestie* for that further Courage and Conscience of our *true Christian and renowned King*, that hath also iustified the *kingdome of Christ against that vsurped Hierarchie of the Roman Antichrist*, being that *Arch-conjurer, &* deceiuer of the world: O how hath he bin displayed and liuely painted out by the Pen of a ready Writer! And shall not the Lord preserue his Anoynted *to burne the whore with fire*, and make her desolate? O that the Lord would make vs· worthy of such a blessing; that our eyes might beholde the *falt of Antichrist!*[116]

Because the rise of demons was a sign of the coming of the Antichrist and '[t]he advent of the Antichrist was taken as the surest of many signs that the struggles of the English Reformation were part of the last and decisive confrontation between good and evil described in Revelation,' the existence and flourishing of interactions with familiars merely reaffirmed that England was God's land and that Protestantism was the true faith.[117]

Protestant reform and Protestant stress on providence is not just a focus of reformers in the Church but within the government as well. With the establishment of the Protestant state under Elizabeth and James, bringing relative peace to the country in a continent that was deeply divided by confessional debates seemed to 'to prove God's providential care for the English.'[118] The English government set itself on becoming the ideal Christian nation—the City on the Hill. However, this providential land was not without its enemies. As Lake points out, '[w]hile it was certain that ultimately Antichrist would lose and Christ would win, it was still an open question whether England would triumph with

[115] Clark, *Thinking with Demons,* 335.

[116] Thomas Cooper, *The mystery of witch-craft* (1617), 288.

[117] Clark, *Thinking with Demons,* 339.

[118] Lake, "Anti-popery," 79.

Christ or be destroyed with Antichrist.'[119] With the threat of Catholic tyranny coming from outside of England's borders, popery could be set as an outside source of anxiety and fear. This viewpoint left 'the basic structure of the English political system and church pure and unsullied.'[120] However, the Catholic threat was not just from the outside, it was from within, absolutely proven in the exposure of the Gunpowder Plot. The lack of conformity was '[s]uch a basic failure on the part of the political system to produce the goods for which it was supposedly designed [that it] called not only for disappointment, it called also for explanation.'[121] Peter Lake shows how both the Catholic and populist Puritan plot, calling them 'interchangeable models of deviance,' were used at moments when unification or division was needed, especially as an explanation of things that were going wrong (such as witch panics and famine) in the country.[122] Both the papist and the witch were seen throughout the period with apprehension and fear. These enemies of the faith and State were tied together, with anxieties about each showing up in pamphlet material.

Legal Backing

Familiar spirits became a concern to a point that laws needed to enacted in order to fight witchcraft. While the Elizabethan witchcraft act showed concern for the threat of a familiar, it was not until the Witchcraft Act of 1604 that having a relationship, or any evidence of such as a witch mark, was explicitly a crime.[123] As Thomas points out, the addition of interacting with familiar spirits as a felony in the 1604 Act 'meant that evidence of relationship with evil spirits or animal familiars was technically sufficient to secure the judicial condemnation of an accused person, regardless of whether or not he or she harmed anyone.'[124] Officialdom was pushed to align with the popular culture concerning the

[119] Lake, "Anti-popery", 82.
[120] Lake, "Anti-popery", 82.
[121] Lake, "Anti-popery", 81.
[122] Lake, "Anti-popery", 92.
[123] A.D. 1604 1 Jas. I, c.12. As stated earlier, the act read that it was a felony to 'consult covenant with entertaine employ feede or rewarde any evill and wicked Spirit to or for any intent or purpose.' A.D. 1563. 5 Eliz., c.16 was less explicit stating that the crime laid in 'Conjurations and Invocations of evill Spirites'.

[124] Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, 443.

existence of familiars. Familiars were made part of the larger struggle of not only eradicating superstition, but also protecting England from the reign of the Antichrist through a programme of reform.

In a 1645 pamphlet, the evidence that was all but required to condemn a witch was firmly established. The call to record the evidence '[t]hat the Witch (or party suspected) hath used invocation of some Spirit. That they have consulted or covenanted with their Spirit. That they imployed their Spirit. That they fed or rewarded their Spirit. That they have killed, or lamed, &c. some person, &c, And not to indict them generally for being Witches &c.' reflects the concerns and trial evidence of the century before.[125] This guidance highlights interactions with familiars as evidence for maleficium, idolatry, and apostasy. By expanding on the law, reformers could include more in the language of what constituted a witch, giving credence to the language describing familiars that was already being used by trial participants. the inclusion of familiars in the 1604 Witchcraft Act helped institute the appearance of familiars this pamphlet and was used as a main source of evidence for both trial participants and reformers to employ. As Clark explains, '[i]n England Gifford and other Elizabethan divines demanded greater not less severity in the laws. It was precisely because the 1563 statute dealt mainly with the actual harms wrought by witches that it missed the heinousness of their demonic allegiance, an omission only partly remedied by the legislation of 1604.'[126] The passages in 1 Samuel, Exodus, Deuteronomy, and Leviticus all provided contemporaries with the justification they needed in order to have the laws of man reflect the laws of God. It was also accepted by the populace because of the threat the witch posed. The law, like sermons, demonology and the cases themselves, lined up with the push for greater Christianisation in England. Nevertheless, there were some discrepancies. Reformers and law makers were not always in agreement on what the punishment for interactions with a familiar should be. The best example to show this is of a case in Kent in 1586. Jone (Joan) Cason was acquitted of accusations of maleficium and witchcraft, but was found guilty of dealings with familiar spirits. For this the jury wanted to give her a minor punishment, 'but a lawyer in the court the informed the mayor and the

[125] *The lawes against vvitches, and conivration (1645)*, 6.
[126] Clark, *Thinking with Demons*, 521.

others present that, contrary to their wish and expectation, the charge on which she was found guilty was in fact capital;' the woman was hanged.[127] While this shows wide-spread, non-class-specific concern about familiars, the severity of the punishment of interacting with them was inhomogeneous, where the law was too severe for the common belief. This concern from the top was reinstated and strengthened by the 1604 statute, showing that there was something about the familiar spirit that was more threatening to those of the learned classes than those of the populace on a spiritual level. However, as we have seen, accusations and witness statements concerning familiars still came from the lower orders, focused on the physical aspects of the familiar's power.

Anti-Catholic Rhetoric

This is interesting as the same approach was taken with English Catholics in the period. The problem was that Catholics were seen by reformers and lawmakers as having to make a choice to respect the power of the English or the papal crown that made them unacceptable from a socio-political standpoint. However, just like witches, Catholics' ability to harm (through rebellions and plots) was used to rally the populace to help assert the nationalistic and Protestant cause. As Clark points out, specifically talking about witchcraft and superstition:

> The very broad extent of the popular beliefs and practices that the reformers hoped to eradicate, or drastically modify, also indicated the proscription of a whole culture, rather than piecemeal or narrowly focused change. And the methods chosen for the task, including surveillance, forcible conversion, repression, and punishment, as well as huge educational programmes, suggested the imposition of cultural superiority by dominant elites on subject populations.[128]

This was the same approach that was used to convert the masses back and forth from Catholicism to Protestantism and back again twice over during the religiously-aggressive reigns of the Tudors. In these regimes, the gentry, the yeomen and craftsmen of the villages, the merchants, tradesmen and artisans of the town were the positively responsive audience of Protestant reformers. As

[127] Ralph Holinshed, *Chronicles of England, Scotlande, and Irelande* (London, 1587), Vol. 3, p.1560; Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness,* 218.

[128] Clark, *Thinking with Demons*, 509.

Wrightson and Levine point out, '[t]hese were above all those who possessed the education necessary to appreciate the significance of theological niceties and the contrast between biblical precept and popular custom' in order to 'establish greater order and higher standards of obedience and conformity in the localities of the period.'[129] Familiars provided an external agent to place temptation upon, linking witches with diabolism because of the classification of familiars as demons, and allowing a popular element to be controlled and used by the elite for elite means. The witch could use familiars as representative actors to remove herself, albeit only slightly, from anti-social behaviour, but also allowed witches to keep themselves in the narrative of a tempted soul, rather than an outright evil one. Pamphleteers could use the familiar spirit as a way to sensationalise their subject because of the familiar's fairly compelling presence and visual appeal in woodcuts as a way to draw in readers and sell more material. Reformers could point to the familiar spirit as a sign of the impending apocalypse, hoping to make their flock concerned about the state of their souls, and as a way to eradicate the remaining influences of popish superstitions.

The 1612 Lancashire witchcraft cases are an excellent example of this association of popery, superstition, and witchcraft, and it takes place in an area in which we already saw anti-Catholic tensions in the trial of 1594.[130] One of the most detailed witch pamphlets we have available, Thomas Potts's pamphlet provides us with explicit connections between anti-popish concepts and witchcraft. As Hasted states, 'Potts clearly understood that many Lancashire people still followed the old faith, and that the county offered haven for outlawed Catholic priests smuggled over from Europe "who by reason of the generall entertainment they find, and great maintenance they have, resort hither, being fairre from the Eye of Justice, and therefore, Procul a fulmine…".'[131] Perhaps one of the most obvious examples from this case comes from the confession of Anne Whittle, a cunningwoman who confessed to saying a prayer that contained 'Avies' and 'Pater Nosters' when her services were called on.[132] While Whittle called it a

[129] Wrightson and Levine, *Piety and Poverty,* 13, 115.
[130] See Thomas Potts, *The vvonderful discoverie of witches in the countie of Lancaster* (1612).

[131] Rachel A.C. Hasted, *The Pendle Witch-Trial, 1612* (Lancaster: Lancashire County Books, 1993), 50.
[132] Potts, *The vvonderfull discouerie of witches in the countie of Lancaster* (1612), E2v.

prayer, Potts called it a 'Charme'. Interestingly, the relabelling here casts Anne's portrayal the hand of God healing her as a more magical and presumably demonic force. Potts was making a statement here about how the old ways are now the evil ways. As Sharpe discusses, 'In Lancashire, perceived by contemporaries and many later writers as one of the "dark corners of the realm", where both religious ignorance and popery could flourish, the problems may have been especially astute.'[133] The witchcraft trial would have been very effective, especially considering that the court room for proceedings would have been crammed with onlookers and the news accounts, including Potts's pamphlet were widely distributed. This would have given the impression to observers that those who clung to the old faith might be identified as the worst kind of sinner. As Sharpe comments, 'The county was one of Catholicism's strongholds in the Elizabethan and Stuart periods, while from the 1590s there obviously existed a self-conscious grouping of Puritan or at least relatively advanced Protestant clergymen and gentry who were anxious to advance right religion and dispel both popery and the ignorance which they thought helped foster it.'[134] In other words, 'The Pendle witch-trial itself was an object lesson for the more conservative people of Lancashire in the dangers of clinging to traditional ways no longer acceptable to those in power.'[135] Potts's work was widely publicised, and even in its details was promoting the reformists' cause. As Pumfrey points out, this pamphlet was 'England's first example of the intrusion into popular testimony of a widespread elite ideology of witchcraft, one strongly promoted by the Jacobean administration.'[136]

The Lancashire witch trials were so well publicised because of their link with events that spoke of conspiracy and treason in the country. As Hasted observes, 'Episodes such as the Gunpowder Plot, whatever its origins, did much to liken the

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[133] James Sharpe, 'Introduction: the Lancashire witches in historical context', in *The Lancashire Witches: Histories and Stories,* ed. Robert Poole (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 6.

[134] James Sharpe, 'Introduction: the Lancashire witches', 6.

[135] Hasted, *The Pendle Witch-Trial*, 57.

[136] Stephen Pumfrey, 'Potts, plots and politics: James I's *Daemonologie* and *The Wonderfull Discoverie of Witches,'* in *The Lancashire Witches: Histories and Stories,* ed. Robert Poole (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 29.

idea of Catholicism with treason in people's minds. … Lancashire was implicated; the plotters were fleeting towards the county when they were arrested.'[137] The repeating of these sentiments in the trial, under the veil of witchcraft, did further to push the Catholic-conspiracy paranoia since the anxieties of magistrates, seen in their petition, coupled with the overt connection of conspiracy in the county. The exposure of the Gunpowder Plot could have brought these accusations and rumours, no doubt circulating for years, to a head.[138] Many of the accused, as well as one particularly interesting witness, were linked to Catholic ties in one way or another. Hasted points out Alice Nutter, one of the accused, had been suggested to be 'a secret Catholic, and was associated with the other women in observing the "old religion".'[139] When recounting the trial of Samlesbury (1612), Potts attributes the leaders of the supposed coven to 'such a subtill practice and conspiracie of a Seminarie Priest, or, as the best in this Honorable Assembly thinke, a Jesuite, whereof this Countie of Lancaster hath good store' and states that it 'must be the Act of God that must be the means to discover their Practices and Murthers.'[140]

However, it was not just the details provided in the trial that linked this occurrence of witchcraft to popery, but this was also extended to those who were involved in other aspects of the trial pamphlet. Sir Thomas Gerard of Bryn, the key magistrate for the accusations against Isobel Robey, had some suspect relatives that could have been motivation for his hard-line on witchcraft, and therefore popery. His father was a well-known Catholic recusant, implicated in the Babington Plot, although he later conformed to the English Church.[141] Thomas's brother also was Jesuit priest, preaching secretly in England and a person of interest to the monarchy.[142] The dedication of the pamphlet is even more overt in its support for the anti-popish cause. The pamphlet was dedicated to Lord Thomas Knyvet, who both arrested and tortured Guy Fawkes to reveal

[137] Hasted, *The Pendle Witch-Trial*, 6.
[138] Hasted, *The Pendle Witch-Trial*, 11.
[139] Hasted, *The Pendle Witch-Trial*, 33. Although it should be noted that Hasted does not believe Nutter would associate so openly with women on the fringes of society such as these, due to her respectable and elite background.
[140] Potts, *The vvonderfull discouerie of witches in the countie of Lancaster* (1612), K3v.
[141] Hasted, *The Pendle Witch-Trial,* 33.
[142] Hasted, *The Pendle Witch-Trial,* 33.

the Gunpowder plot and Potts attributes Knyvet's hard line in which he calls a 'safe harbour' on witchcraft to Knyvet's influence. [143] The connection between popery and witchcraft was cemented in popular print. However, the law itself reflected these ideas about keeping popery out of England and Christianising the masses.

From the perspective of Protestantising reformers, the remaining vestiges of Catholic misbelief and superstition connected the themes of familiars, the law, acculturation, eschatology that we have been grappling with. Popery was one of the key threats to the Reformation, imaged as the religion for the fallen man. As Lake points out, the Protestant cause 'explained and labelled as popish and undesirable the continuing appeal of ritual and symbol and visual imagery in a society …spoke to and helped to account for the pronounced religious conservatism of the English provinces; and thirdly it keyed in with the Protestants' own very pessimistic view of human nature after the fall.'[144] It was through press and pulpit that reformers wanted to spread the word of the gospel in order to combat popery and create a more cohesive and unified society. Popery was smeared as a 'religion based on illusion and trickery,' alluding to the presence of witchcraft in popery.[145] As Johnstone explains, for reformers, 'Catholicism was a highly convincing fake precisely because its ceremonies were so carefully attuned to man's corrupted religiosity, and its diabolism was so subtly hidden that a special degree of perception was required to discern it.'[146] While debunking Catholic beliefs and rituals, the Protestant clergymen went a step further by placing the Catholic as a sinner, a foreigner, and an other. As Lake explains, 'Arguably the power of anti-popery as a source of ideological leverage and explanatory power was based on the capacity of the image of popery to express, contain and, to an extent, control the anxieties and tensions at the very centre of the experience and outlook of English Protestants.'[147] However, this

[143] Mariod Gibson, 'Thomas Potts's "dusty memory": reconstructing justice in *The Wonderful Discoverie of Witches'*, in *The Lancashire Witches: Histories and Stories,* ed. Robert Poole (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 53; Potts, *The vvonderfull discouerie of witches in the countie of Lancaster* (1612), A.

[144] Lake, "Anti-popery", 80.
[145] Lake, "Anti-popery", 75.
[146] Johnstone, "The Protestant Devil", 182.
[147] Lake, "Anti-popery", 80.

also brought on a certain sense of anxiety. As Carol Z. Weiner contends, 'the very hatred of Catholicism which gave the Elizabethans direction imbued them with a sense of tension and fear both out of proportion to and longer lasting than any real danger.'[148] Lake also points out how anti-popery statements labelled and externalised Catholics, reaffirming the borders of Englishness and Protestantism.[149] He states that anti-popery was 'a way of dividing up the world between positive and negative characteristics, a symbolic means of labelling and expelling trends and tendencies which seemed to those doing the labelling, at least, to threaten the integrity of a Protestant England.'[150] Ultimately, popery was aligned with the ultimate other, the ultimate enemy—the Antichrist. The struggle between Protestant and Catholic was pitched as a fight between Christ and Antichrist, good and evil.[151] Witchcraft was also a feature in this battle, imaged not only as a sign of the Last Days, but also as the weapons of the Devil. Once again Gifford speaking through his character of Daniel highlighted this connection:

> S. Paul speaketh there indeed of the coming of the great Antichrist in the power of the Devill. Nowe, those which are seduced and worship Antichrist, think they worship God: but marke what S. John sayth, 'All the world wondred, and followed the beast, and worshipped the dragon which gave power to the beast: & they worshipped the beast. Revelat.13.' And look in the 12. Chapter of the Revelation, and you shall find that the Dragon, which the Popery doth worship in stead of God; is the Devill.[152]

It was through this programme of discrediting, distancing 'the other', and finally aligning with the ultimate evil that both popery and witchcraft were connected. Kai Ericson in his work on New England's witch craze and puritan deviance showed how witches were placed as stereotypes of otherness.[153] As Clark states, '[a]ctual [witchcraft] prosecutions, in reflecting, say, Protestant zeal, were reflecting what that zeal meant, and it meant anti-Catholicism; thus witch-hunting

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[148] Carol Z. Weiner, 'The Beleaguered Isle: A study of Elizabethan and Early Jacobean Anti-Catholicism,' *Past and Present,* 51 (1971), 28.

[149] Lake, "Anti-popery", 81.
[150] Lake, "Anti-popery", 74.
[151] Lake, "Anti-popery", 82.
[152] Gifford, *Dialogue*, B4.
[153] Kai Ericson, *Wayward Puritans: A Study in the Sociology of Deviance,* Rev. Ed. edition (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2004).

could have been directed against things that were defined in terms of their anti-Catholicism, even if it was not necessarily directed against Catholic individuals.'[154] Popery and idolatry were also linked. The jump from popery to idolatry was simple, as Lake describes it, '[t]hat the worship of the one true God had been supplanted and subverted by the worship of idols and images, their use of the saints as intercessors and their virtual deification of the Virgin Mary.'[155] Through criticisms of the Catholic Church as one that worshiped false idols (saints) and then the placing of the familiar as a false-god, or at least, demonic agent, the fight against witchcraft was tied to the fight against Catholicism. For example Clark gives us the example of 'Alexander Nowell, dean of St. Paul's, [who] wrote official approved catechisms that went through at least fifty-six editions between 1570 and 1645… pupils were expected to know that sinners against the first Commandment included "All Idoloters… all Soothsayers, conjurers, sorcers, witches, Charmers, and all that seeke unto them."'[156] Reformers such as George Gifford and John Downame taught the same.[157] Williams points out how the witchcraft was an even greater threat than heresy or apostasy because the witch 'not only endangered her/his own soul, but more significantly, through her/his evil doings (*maleficia*) also threatened the well-being of the Christian community.'[158] We can see further instruction on the relationship between the breaking of the most important commandment and witchcraft in pamphlet literature, no doubt helping the masses see witchcraft as more of a spiritual threat rather than a physical one. In 1612, a pamphlet on the Northampton trials was published in which the author wrote:

> Amongest the rest of sinnes where-with the perfection of God is most of all displeased in the corruption of man, There is none (I suppose) more distastfull or detestable to his Purity, then this damnable and Deuillish sinne of Witchcraft; For that it seemes to make an eternall separation, and an irreconciliable diuorce betwixt the pure Mercies of God, and the tainted soules of such miserable people: Who for the most part, as they are of the meanest, and the basest sort both in birth and

[154] Clark, *Thinking with Demons*, 536.
[155] Lake, "Anti-popery", 74.
[156] Clark, *Thinking with Demons*, 496; Alexander Nowell, *A catechisme, or first instruction and learning of Christian religion. Translated out of Latine into Englishe* (London: Iohn Daye, 1570).
[157] Gifford, *Dialogue* (1593); John Downame, *The Christian Warfare wherein is first generally shewed the maloce, power and politike strategems of the spiritual enemies of our salvation* (1604).

[158] Williams, "Demonologies", 74.

> breeding, so are they the most vncapeable of any instruction to the contrary, and of all good meanes to reclaime them.[159]

No doubt attempting to turn the reading (and listening) public away from using magical practitioners while simultaneously placing ideas in the minds of the populace to identify a witch in their village, the author of this pamphlet stresses that witches were already lost souls, meant to be either eradicated or saved. The occupation with the witch committing idolatry centred on the witch's alignment with Satan and/or a familiar. By allying with the Devil, the witch was a heretic, denying Christianity. This was symbolised in the demonic pact, the contract-like relationship and was seen as the first and most damning step to becoming a witch. However, it is also possible that demonologists saw it as removal of the baptismal seal and 'the sign through which the satanic imitation and inversion of the Christian principles worked, common people interpreted it in terms of sympathetic magic as a transmission of abilities.'[160] Associating with familiars would not only be categorised as idolatry by putting something else above God in one's heart, but the action of placing the blame of misfortune and sin on familiars or Satan was another idolatrous problem.

Making the witch the enemy that all Englishmen could identify was a multi-step process which combined variety of threats to the populace into one threat—the witch. Johnstone explains that reformers 'concluded that his most dangerous agency lay hidden in the commonplace—the apparently harmless and even superficially pious. This combined with their sense of personal struggle with the diabolic to make the Devil's power to enter directly into the consciousness the archetype of his agency.'[161] Catholic rituals and relics were attacked as superstitious and demonic. The logic of reformers was that these superstitions led to false worship and therefore to Satanic worship, threatening England's place in the providential order of things. In *Religion and the Decline of Witchcraft*, Keith Thomas quotes James Calfill in a summary of what contemporaries were aiming it. Calfill states 'the vilest witchers and sorcorceres of the earth [are] the priests that consecrate crosses and ashes, water and salt, oil and cream, …that conjure

[159] *The witches of Northamptonshire* (1612), A3.
[160] Matteoni, "Blood beliefs in Early Modern Europe", 51; Cooper, *The Mystery of Witchcraft* (1617) p88-92; Bernard, A guide to *Grand-jury men*, (1630): 258-265.
[161] Johnstone, "The Protestant Devil", 177.

worms that creep in the field …'[162] The use of the word conjure is interesting here and relates to some of the charges brought against various popes that are discussed below.

The concern of reformers throughout the early modern period was what they labelled as the popish beliefs of the laity. Henry Holland compared Catholicism to 'heathen' magic. He claimed the 'witches' of Rome were 'more wicked then the Heathen Witches, for these abuse the Worde and Sacraments of God.'[163] Bernard in his *Guide to Grand-jury Men* thought that those who were 'popishly affected' were more likely to blame witches for misfortune and witches were the most 'superstitious and idolatrous, as all Papists be.' For, according to him, sorcery was 'the practice of that Whore, the Romish Synagogue.'[164] Perkins stated that saints' miracles were 'Satanical impostures', exorcisms 'meere inchantments', genuflection 'carrieth the very nature of a Charme, and the use of it in this manner, a practice of Inchantment.'[165] Catholic demonologists often returned the same sentiments and accusations. It seemed that the term 'witch' was used by these religious enemies to identify themselves by what they are not, using insults 'so offensive about enemy faiths… evoking the sense of an unbridgeable distance between them.'[166] We see these anti-Catholic tensions in trial pamphlets as well.

In the earliest known trial pamphlet, occurring in 1566, Mother Waterhouse confessed 'that when she would will him [here she was referring to Sathan, her cat-like familiar] to do any thing for her, she would say her Pater Noster in Latin.'[167] As Malcolm Gaskill points out, 'Whether or not these conversations really happened, it is significant that the pamphleteer made them his finale. Popery and witchcraft were fused, and Protestant godliness endorsed.

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[162] James Calfill. *An answer to John Martiall's Treatise of the Cross*, qtd in Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Witchcraft,* 52.
[163] Holland, *Treatise*, E1r.
[164] Bernard, *Guide to Grand-jury men*, 73-74, 95-97.
[165] William Perkins, *A discourse of the damned art of witchcraft so farre forth as it is reuealed in the Scriptures, and manifest by true experience. Framed and deliuered by M. William Perkins, in his ordinarie course of preaching, and now published by Tho. Pickering Batchelour of Diuinitie, and minister of Finchingfield in Essex. Whereunto is adioyned a twofold table; one of the order and heades of the treatise; another of the texts of Scripture explaned, or vindicated from the corrupt interpretation of the aduersarie* (Cambridge: 1610), 25-26, 150, 152.
[166] Clark, *Thinking with Demons*, 532.
[167] Phillips, *The Examination an dconfession of certaine Wytches* (1566), B2. English is updated.

Waterhouse's wickedness was mitigated by her pious end, demonstrating the redeeming power of grace.'[168] Later that year, there was the trial of John Walsh, who claimed that he learned his trade of sorcery from a Catholic priest. The author of the pamphlet does not hide his thoughts on this point. The introduction has a massive anti-papal slant to it, which does not necessarily hold throughout the descriptions of what Walsh does. He writes, 'Wherein thou mayest see the fruits of Papistes and papistry, and their ill exercises of their idle lives, which hath been no small hurt to all common wheels. For hereby not only the simple people have bene falsely seduced and superstitiously lead: but all estates have been sore grieved and troubled by these their practises of Sorcery and Witchcraft.'[169] Then he goes on to outline the ties between Catholicism and the black arts including accusing Pope Alexander VI of 'having society with wicked Spirits and Devils, gave himself body and soul unto them,' Pope Gregory VII also had a familiar, and the author associates various other popes with sorcery and the dark arts.[170] Just in case there was still any doubt to the bias of this pamphlet the author also mentions Pope Clement VIII in which he calls a 'bastard, perjurer, whoremaster, necromancer, church robber, and a practiser of all kind of wickedness.'[171] While this was an unusual case in its breadth of anti-Catholicism, the presence of such inflammatory language shows how the connection of the papacy with witchcraft, corruption and conjuration was solidified among the reformed and spread through popular print. There is even the interesting case in Lancashire in 1597 in which six bewitched victims were cured after a witch was executed, but the Roman Catholic woman who was bewitched as well took a whole day more to recover.[172] The fight against the Roman Catholic Church was still so delicate that it re-emerged repetitively in witchcraft trials, far after accusations against witches had Catholic themes. Catholicism and witchcraft were irreversibly tied.

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[168] Malcolm Gaskill, "Witchcraft Trials in England", in *The Oxford Handbook for Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe and Colonial America,* ed, Brian P. Levack (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 291.
[169] *The examination of John Walsh* (1566).
[170] *The examination of John Walsh* (1566).
[171] *The examination of John Walsh* (1566).
[172] I.D., *The most wonderfull and true storie,* (1597).

Blood Act Narratives

Returning to the example of Joan Prentice, the reasons for Joan's concern about giving her soul to a demonic being have been explored above. However, I would like to consider the concerns over her blood as well. The second part of this chapter will explore specific features of familiars in order to understand how trial participants used cultural language in order to convey their religious experiences, bringing together some of the themes of idolatry and fears of popish superstition that run through this chapter. By reading the use of blood as a way for the human to meet the super- or preternatural—as Joan points out by stating that her soul was connected to the blood of Jesus Christ—as well as the establishment of familiar spirits demanding blood, we see a pattern of shared concerns by trial participants surrounding blood and humans' power to wield it outside of church-sanctioned divine and demonic activities.[173]

Many witches were reported as exchanging blood with their familiars or the Devil. These blood acts usually were described one of two ways: blood feeding or blood giving. Witches were said to feed their familiars blood from their bodies from a teat, found somewhere on her body. Describing this as 'sucking' or 'to give suck', witches were reported as giving blood in exchange for services, whether through a pact or malefic act. The shift from the entertaining of familiar spirits to entering a pact with the Devil was not constant; confessions often contained a bit of both elements. Elizabeth Hubbard, for example, gave a confession that had familiar spirits (interestingly in the form of children), yet sealed a covenant with her blood.[174] However, as we can see by Stearne's emphasis on mentioning the pact and by the writings of demonologists, the covenant became central to witchcraft trials. Perkins described the importance stating that '[t]he ground of all the practices of witchcraft is a league or covenant made betweene the witch and the [D]evill; wherein they doe mutually bind themselves to each other.'[175] During the early modern period, the

[173] Francesca Matteoni has written an in-depth look at blood in the early modern period, which I highly suggest for a more thorough look at blood as a whole in the culture. However, for this work, I will just be focusing on how it relates to witchcraft, with special attention to familiars.
[174] Stearne, *A Confirmation and Discovery of Witch Craft,* 26.
[175] Perkins, A *Discourse of the damned Art,* 41-2 in Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness,* 85.

respecting and binding attitude of covenants, of both spiritual and political, increased.[176] Malcolm Gaskill comments that it 'was perhaps inevitable that the puritan covenant of grace, coupled with the public ritual of swearing oaths of allegiance (principally the Protestation Oath and the Solemn League and Covenant), would be thought of and spoken of in a reversed form to describe the witch's pact, or 'covenant' as it became known.'[177] The rise of Puritanism--and most importantly the concept of covenant-- led to a form of dualism, placing the moment of salvation opposite of the witch's moment of damnation. Sharpe calls the pact with the Devil 'the natural inversion of the covenant between the Almighty and the Christian.'[178] The popularity of the pact among the populace, including all of the details involved, was quite known, especially among the elite. As Gaskill points out, '[a]s early as 1640, in a sermon to the House of Commons, Dr Cornelius Burges illustrated ... "There is not a Witch that hath the Devil at her beck," he feared, "but she must seale a Covenant to him, sometimes with her blood, sometimes by other rites and devices, and perhaps he must suck her too."'[179] One of the other devices used was the contract, signed with the witch's blood or signature.

In his tract, Stearne wrote about Alice Marsh who 'made a covenant with the devil, and sealed it with her blood, and set a round O to the paper the [D]evil brought before her.'[180] Signing with blood was a key indicator of a pact and stemmed from the exchange of blood with familiars discussed earlier. The introduction of a piece of paper is an interesting development. Ewen states that the 'very old belief that written contracts were signed and sealed was familiar with Englishmen, certainly before the Norman conquest,' and it is not until 'the advent of Master Hopkins that we get sworn testimony of the use of parchment or paper and the signing and sealing in blood.'[181] Unlike the familiar, this concept was not just limited to English witchcraft. Roper, in her study of German witchcraft mentions Regina Schiller in Augsburg who claimed she made a pact with the Devil and 'could even produce copies of the document signed in her own blood.'[182] It is possible that these Continental ideas

[176] Gaskill, *Witchfinders,* 47.
[177] Gaskill, *Witchfinders,* 47.
[178] Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness,* 85.
[179] Gaskill, *Witchfinders,* 47-48.
[180] Stearne, *A Confirmation and Discovery,* 27.
[181] Ewen, *Witchcraft and Demonaism,* 62.
[182] Roper, *Witch Craze,* 35.

were brought over from the elite demonologists, including the emphasis on blood. The need for a pact to be sealed with blood (much like the agreement with familiars included the feeding of blood) was essential and 'Richard Bernard, in his *Guide to Grand-Jury Men*, 1627, … refers to the bond signed in blood.'[183] Why is blood the key?

It became a popular belief, especially in and after 1645-1649 (as can be seen in Figure 12), that the witch would seal her pact with blood.[184] Therefore, I have included both explicit statements of blood giving and mentions of making a blood seal in this category. I do not include witches who had marks without mentions of blood-giving or pack-making because the witch mark could also be given as a form of branding, not explicitly requiring blood giving. These concepts were often confused among contemporaries. It is possible, and even popular, that witches who engaged in one of these acts engaged in the other, especially during and after the Hopkins and Stearne trials. Before these, witches usually fell in one category or the other.

Forming a pact or covenant with a familiar or the Devil was a common form of evidence in early modern witchcraft trial pamphlets. Out of the 142 witches recorded as having dealings witch familiars, 70 were reported to have had a pact or covenant (49.30%). While this is definitely affected by the Hopkins and Stearne trials—having 62.79% of witches reporting pacts—it was a belief that was not started at that time, occurring as early as 1589.

[183] Ewen, *Witchcraft and Demonaism,* 62.

[184] In my analysis I have not only included those witches who stated that they had familiars suck upon some part of their body, but also those who were reported to have a witch teat, as its assumed function was to feed the familiar. Blood giving, on the other hand, is categorized as when a witch gave her blood, usually from a prick of the skin, to a familiar or the Devil.

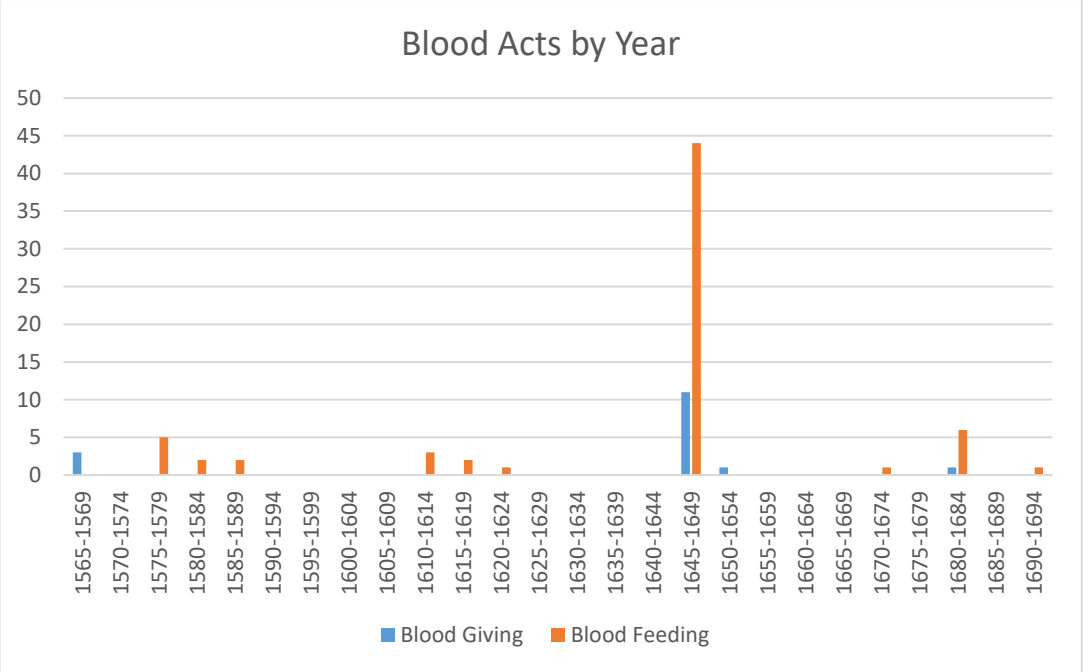

Figure 10: Blood Acts by Year

As we can see from Figure 8, more than half of witches engaged in blood acts—either blood-giving or pact-making (54.92%). Blood feeding was far more popular than blood giving, encompassing 47.18% of the total witches that had familiars compared to 11.27% of the total giving blood. As can be expected because of the 'advanced tactics' that the witch finders performed on their prisoners, the 1645-1649 trials had higher percentages than the average, finding that 58.14% of witches engaged in blood acts (12.79% in blood giving and 51.16% in blood feeding).[185]

As briefly mentioned earlier, marks and teats were used as identifiers of witches' diabolical deeds. They were the physical evidence that could be used against a witch for a mostly invisible crime. If we return to our findings about witches that were said to have marks or teats seen in Chapter 2 (See Figure 9), 26.76% of witches were

[185] We see here that the use of advanced interrogation methods, while not technically under the contemporary definition of torture, might influence the fantastical elements of confessions, leading those accused to fulfil the information wishes of their interrogators and the apparent success of these methods to be more prominently reported, inflating effectiveness. Perhaps Hopkins and Stearne, seeing greater results using these methods, saw to spread awareness of their methods through publishing massive accounts and were successful in convincing the populace of the necessity of them in the war on witchcraft, not receiving mass disagreement with these methods until much later in the period.

likely to have marks, compared to the 38.37% in 1645-1649. Furthermore, 42.96% of witches were associated with having teats, not as much of change of 47.67% in the half decade in question. This shows a preoccupation of trial participants with the witch mark in these trials, related to the blood-seal portion of the pact. However, since the frequency of witch teats also increased, there was more interest in blood feeding as well, but by not as much. This shows that marks and teats were not opposing concepts in the minds of contemporaries. The rise of one category was not inversely reflective of the popularity of the other, but rather overall frequency of both marks and teats rose and fell together, with one or the other becoming of primary interest in different decades—no doubt because the two terms were sometimes conflated by contemporaries. As was discussed in Chapter 2, this period also saw an increase in the location of the witch teat being placed in the fundament, alluding to a more sexualised and feminine-leaning nature of the association with familiars.[186]

Blood could hold many meanings simultaneously and was seen as symbolic in both popular and elite cultures. Caroline Walker Bynum, in her work on late medieval northern German religious life, showed that blood embodied many contrasting themes, specifically the blood of Christ being both the means for salvation and what pours out of his wounds.[187] As we will see below, these themes were still prevalent in Protestant England. Patricia Crawford points out that '[b]lood had powerful symbolic meanings as both sacrifice and pollutant. When blood was shed, and crossed the margins of the body, its power depended on the context.'[188] This was both in popular and elite cultures. For example, in another work, Crawford points out that it was a common cure for warts to rub the wart with the blood of a decapitated eel, then bury the head. When the head rotted, the warts would fall off.[189] This use of blood as sympathetic magic gives some idea of this connection point. However, most of what we know about the

[186] Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness,* 73. See also Chapter 2 above.

[187] Caroline Walker Bynum, *Wonderful Blood: Theology and Practice in Late Medieval Northern Germany and Beyond* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).
[188] Patricia Crawford, *Blood, Bodies and Families in Early Modern England* (Harlow, England: Pearson Education Limited, 2004), 2.
[189] Patricia Crawford, *Women and Religion in England 1500-1720* (London: Routledge, 1993), 101.

symbolism of blood in the early modern period comes from theological debates. Blood was seen theologically as the exchanging point between humans and super- or preter-natural beings. It was the medium in which salvation or damnation could be achieved. As we will see, this fits into the larger topic of Christianisation which is of central importance for this chapter. This access to the supernatural was attempted to be controlled, limited, and monopolised by the clergy to be distributed when needed. Francesca Matteoni states that water and blood played a vital role in early modern thought stating that, 'both bring vital force, they are both connected with Christian beliefs… In Christian religious terms, water is after all just the symbol of Salvation, while blood, being the symbol of the Passion and of Christ's sacrifice, entails both death and resurrection.'[190] Both of these liquids play a key role in witchcraft. Water's power was present in the fact that witches supposedly cannot cry and are discovered by swimming tests. Witch's bodies are rejected by the water, the sign of salvation used in the baptism ritual and the sign of nature.

John C. Hirsh points out that blood was linked with the Passion, quoting the Last Supper in Matthew 26:38 'my blood of the new testament, which shall be shed for many unto the remission of sins' and how Paul related it to Hebrews 9:19-22 in which Moses sprinkles the book, tabernacle, and vessels of ministry as well as his people with the blood of the sacrificed calves and goats.[191] He continues stating, 'Another attitude, though related, was likewise present in the Hebrew Scriptures, but which focused more on the physical reality of blood as a purifying agent which involves both suffering and rebirth. It retained a sense of allegory, but did not stop there, and emphasised the importance of blood as a life-giving force, one which, shed by Christ, would lead to atonement.'[192] Christ's blood and life were linked in the early modern mind. Matteoni pairs this to the establishment of the doctrine of transubstantiation in the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, in which 'The belief in the real presence of the Holy Body in the wafer was accentuated by the diffused idea of the physical apparition of Christ child

[190] Matteoni, "Blood Beliefs in Early Modern Europe", 47.
[191] John C. Hirsh, *The Boundaries of Faith: the development and transmission of medieval spirituality* (Köln: Brill, 1996), 91.

[192] Hirsh, *The Boundaries of Faith,* 95.

inside it, linking, … the Nativity to the Passion, the moment of birth to that of death, and locating in the blood the channel for this communication.'[193] If we apply this outlook to the familiar, the passing of blood from human to demon or animal inverts the order of nature. It seals the spiritual death of the witch, while inverting her spiritual birth in baptism. Hirsh points out the abundance of writings about Christ's blood in mystical writing, lyric poetry, devotions and devotional tracts.[194] Most of the symbolism surrounding blood centred on the connecting point between human and divine. It is here that I wish to place the familiar.

Blood was the medium of which humans could interact with and tap into the power of the divine or demonic. The most obvious example is the Eucharist. Through the shedding Christ's blood, a feature of a human, salvation is achieved for all. The ceremony of the Last Supper reminded contemporaries of this transaction by re-enacting Christ's words and actions that proclaimed that a new covenant would be sealed with his blood. In the Roman Catholic Church, the sacrament of transubstantiation confirmed blood as an access point to the divine, but even the symbolic communion of the Protestant Church alluded to this. The Eucharist was important to puritans and was seen as an assurance of salvation, independent of, but not more important than the Word.[195] The receiving of the Eucharist was of central importance to reformed thinking and was considered a crucial part of the faith. As Arnold Hunt in his study of the observation of the Last Supper tradition in puritan England points out, '[b]ecause transubstantiation was widely regarded as the key doctrinal error of the Church of Rome, the adoption of a reformed doctrine of the sacraments was crucial in establishing the Church of England's Protestant identity. Receiving the sacrament of the Lord's Supper became the signifier of orthodoxy, the test of conformity.'[196] He argues that reformers were concerned with the Eucharist only slightly less than they were concerned with scripture as a marking of true faith and that it was

[193] Matteoni, "Blood Beliefs", 37.

[194] Hirsh, *The Boundaries of Faith*, 93-94.
[195] Arnold Hunt, "The Lord's Supper in Early Modern England" *Past & Present*, No, 161 (1998), 55-57.
[196] Hunt, "The Lord's Supper", 40.

imperative. Blood must be controlled and understood in the proper theology to avoid falling into the sin of heresy.

There was plenty of symbolism of Christ's blood that was known in both popular and elite circles. For example, Hirsh points out that the seven sheddings of Christ's blood (at his circumcision, in the Garden of Gethsemane, during his flagellation, when the crown of thorns is placed, when his hands were nailed to the cross, and then his feet, and when the spear was thrust into his side and heart) was a commonly discussed teaching method and even 'frequently linked to the seven deadly sins and sometimes as well to the seven works of mercy, corporal or spiritual.'[197] The fact that the sheddings were important enough to count and teach about says much about how blood was a concern among contemporaries. To then link it to other parts of the catechism such as the deadly sins and mysteries shows the folding of blood symbolism into the greater Christianisation process. This stems from what Matteoni describes as the 'late medieval Christian idea of purification and freedom from sin through a corporeal sufferance, expressed in the emission of blood.'[198] Christ's blood was believed to cleanse the human soul of mortal sin and it seems that reformers accessed this cleansing ability, using the Eucharist to cleanse the Church of popery. This brings to light a few questions we must ask about familiars. How far did these ideas of cleansing penetrate the masses? Were witches trying to gain access to this purifying process through corporeal sufferance by blaming their sins and burdens on the familiar through the physical act of blood-feeding?

Hunt points out that there were significant differences between popular and elite beliefs about the sacrament, and while usually these were not conflicting, the education of the populace was key to allowing this compromise to happen.[199] As he states, '[o]ne aspect of the sacrament that was firmly rooted in popular culture was its function as an instrument of reconciliation.'[200] Neighbours would settle any disputes between each other before going to annual communion.[201] While

[197] Hirsh, *The Boundaries of Faith,* 99.
[198] Matteoni, "Blood Beliefs in Early Modern Europe", 52.
[199] Hunt, "The Lord's Supper", 60.
[200] Hunt, "The Lord's Supper", 47.
[201] Conversely, by committing the act of giving one's blood to the familiar, the witch achieved the opposite of this reconciliation—conflict and dispute.

this community reconciliation was the only prerequisite necessary the populace, the clergy had different ideas on what kind of person could participate in the sacrament of communion. Some reformers argued that to receive the Eucharist while in ignorance of the theology or while still having conflict with one's neighbours would be worse than just having it with these infractions. As Hunt explains, '[t]his could be used to justify suspending the administration of the sacrament until there had been sufficient preaching and catechising to ensure adequate knowledge. However, some ministers saw the communion service as an opportunity to combat popular ignorance more directly, by organising a programme of religious instruction in preparation for receiving the sacrament.'[202] If blood/the Eucharist was read as a way to access the divine, by limiting this, reformers placed themselves in the same situation that Protestants criticised about the Catholic Church—keeping some people from accessing God—although, education systems did help combat it. There was insecurity about the power of blood, a commodity that needed to be limited and have proper instruction to use correctly. Hunt also picks up on this insecurity, but with the frequency in which communion was offered. He states, '[i]nfrequent communion was simply another device of the papists to keep the laity in ignorance and darkness. … The infrequency of communion in the Church of England was therefore a source of acute embarrassment,' as the populace was kept from divine access.[203] However, even with infrequent opportunities for sacramental rites, there was this sense of the limiting of popular admittance by the reformers. Hunt gives a great example in that '[t]he Prayer Book required the minister to exclude anyone living in "open and notorious evil" and any persons "betwixt whom he perceiveth malice and hatred to reign", but it [was] clear that some puritan ministers would have liked to have gone considerably further.'[204] Only those that fit the mould of morality deemed by elite reformers were allowed to participate in the sacrament meant to connect them further with Christ and receive the assurance of salvation. However, this limiting did not always come from the clergy. Hunt's work highlights that 'there is clear evidence that, in some cases, parishioners actually expected their

[202] Hunt, "The Lord's Supper", 53.
[203] Hunt, "The Lord's Supper", 52.
[204] Hunt, "The Lord's Supper", 63-64.

minister to apply the sanction of exclusion from communion.'[205] While attributing this mostly to those of the upper echelons of society, it seems as there was at least some popular concern over the limiting of access to the divine through blood, showing that this power of blood was somewhat believed in the wider population.

The main problem with the use of blood and its symbolism to gain access to the divine and demonic was that it lay outside of orthodox control. This was due to 'the instability and the porosity of the body were due to the capacity of its fluid to more through and beyond it, becoming powerful and mortally dangerous, according to the people who shed or employed it.'[206] While '[d]eep spirituality, visions and mysticism developed out of an intense search for the divine, from a longing for oneness with God,' we find several cases of mystics whom clergy were concerned with and censured.[207] As Crawford observes, 'if women sought a more intense relationship with God, or turned to alternative sources of divine aid, they found themselves in dangerous areas where they could be suspected as enthusiasts, prophets or witches.'[208] The concept of a woman outside of clerical and social control as a threat is a common occurrence in the historiography of witchcraft. As we will see in the following chapter, the stereotype of witches as women who did not conform to feminine behaviour, often independent, were placed as bad housewives and bad mothers. However, unlike mystics, witches did not abase and abnegate themselves in order to limit her connection with a preter/supernatural being. This was because there was no negotiation that this connection was forbidden. As Matteoni explains, '[o]n the one side these were the blood-spoilers, with their defective bodies and their feelings, on the other the community, cleansed and persevered by the divine blood of the Saviour.'[209] How people employed blood determined their identification as Christian or witch. Reformers attempted to control both the access to blood and its symbols, as we saw with the censorship of mystics and the limiting of communion, or shaped it to fit their needs, as we saw with the demonising of the familiar through the

[205] Hunt, "The Lord's Supper"", 67-68.
[206] Matteoni, "Blood Beliefs in Early Modern Europe", 12.
[207] Crawford, *Women and Religion*, 100.
[208] Crawford, *Women and Religion*, 115.
[209] Matteoni, "Blood Beliefs in Early Modern Europe", 33.

connection of blood-feeding and demonic features. As Matteoni postulates, '[t]he dichotomy between existence and death, divine and diabolical was then resolved in the same corporeal substance, and therefore communal margins and bodily ones had to be sealed in order to prevent its dangerous dispersion.'[210]

While there was a plethora of other examples of the use of Christ's blood to access the divine: what was it about human blood which was so powerful and threatening that we see traces of it all over not only religious situations, such as mystics, but also witchcraft? In the next chapter I show how blood from a gendered perspective made the familiar threatening, but in this section I want to show how from a religious perspective it could even be more so, helped perpetuate the demonic elements of witchcraft and specifically the characteristics of familiars. As Matteoni puts it, theologians and philosophers believed that by '[b]eing washed by Christ's own sacrificial blood, the Christian soul represented spiritual life, the only one that needed to be preserved, and which the devil assaulted through the compact of witches.'[211] In Hippocratic theories of the body in three parts (flesh, humours, and spirits), the soul was placed within the blood, as a sort of physical embodiment. The scripture on which this is based on, Leviticus 17:11, states that 'Because the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you, that you may make atonement with it upon the alter for your souls, and the blood may be an expiation of the soul.'[212] Matteoni uses this as proof of why accusations against Jews and later witches of stealing the blood of children (with their souls purest and newly sealed with Christ's blood) were so popular throughout Christian Europe.[213] If the saved soul was sealed in the blood by the shedding of Christ's blood, the witch's flowing of blood can be read as an inverse of this covenant. This may point to why the pact was of such concern to reformers and magistrates as it represents the betrayal of the Christian soul by the witch and the giving of Christ's own blood (which was said to be intermingled with the Christian's blood) to a demonic being. From the perspective of the witch, she was using the medium of blood to access a super- or preter-natural being and

[210] Matteoni, "Blood Beliefs in Early Modern Europe", 33.
[211] Matteoni, "Blood Beliefs in Early Modern Europe", 10.

[212] Leviticus 17:11.

[213] Matteoni, "Blood Beliefs in Early Modern Europe", 32.

its power.

The witch feeding her familiar blood was a particularly English aspect of witchcraft. As discussed in depth in the previous chapter, the witch was meant to feed the familiar blood from a special teat, which was incidentally the mark. This ritual crossed the lines between sexual activity, pact-making and sustenance giving. As Margaret Flower confessed, 'Shee confesseth, that she hath two familiar Spirits sucking on her, the one white, the other black spotted; the white sucked vnder her left brest, and the blacke spotted within the inward parts of her secrets. When shee first entertained them she promised them her soule, and they couenanted to doe all things which she commanded them· &c.'[214] Cecil L'Estrange Ewen stated that 'ancient philosophers supposed that demons entered into beasts because they were desirous of bodily warmth and that, revelling in the smell of blood, they in return for the gratification of their senses, willingly destroyed persons as desired by the sacrificants.'[215] This may indicate why familiars described in animal forms would seek blood, giving the ritual a more folkloric, rather than religious meaning. However, as Matteoni explains, this tradition was made Christian as '[i]n the Greek-Roman tradition blood was offered to spirits and to the dead to give them corporeal strength they lacked, while since late antiquity Neoplatonic thinkers, such as Porphyry, and early Christian writers, discussed the offering of animal blood as a means to obtain the help of wicked demons.'[216] This is exactly what was found in late medieval interactions between magicians and demons. This ritual also appeared in early modern witchcraft tracts, for example the case of John Walsh in 1566, discussed earlier in Chapter 2. Matteoni states regarding this that '[t]hough it is impossible to prove it conclusively, we can infer that, in the earlier narratives, the feeding relation with a spirit belonged to a popular belief in the supernatural, manifested in the physical forms of animals, which did not necessarily imply blood as the principal token.'[217] However, I have to partially disagree because we do have some intrinsic connection between the soul and blood very early in trial records. While most actual feeding was described as giving milk and bread in the early

[214] *The wonderful discouerie of the vvitchcrafts ,* G.
[215] Ewen, *Witchcraft and Demonianism*, 72-73.
[216] Matteoni, "Blood Beliefs in Early Modern Europe", 153.
[217] Matteoni, "Blood Beliefs in Early Modern Europe", 169-70.

pamphlets, there was still an emphasis on blood. Also, as opposed to magicians which only used blood as a means of obtaining the demon, witches employed their blood to access and interact with their familiar or the Devil, as seeing blood or bleeding from spectral wounds would be a sign of a mystic becoming closer to Christ, and receiving the body and blood of Christ through Eucharistic practices would be a method for the populace to gain access to the divine.

Considering this point of the early connections made between souls and blood parallel to the interaction of this connection in witchcraft, this point might have some merit. One of the most prominent features of witchcraft involving blood was the signing or making of the pact. In this, witches admitted to either giving a drop of blood to their familiar in exchange for goods and services, usually with a promise of their souls, or signed their soul to the devil with their blood. This concurs with the theory of using blood to access the divine and demonic, but in a very literal sense. Also, it reinforces the idea that the Devil and his minions asked for blood in order to obtain the soul of the person and that even in popular belief, the soul was tied with blood. As Matteoni explains, 'Christian blood was considered powerful and healthy because it contained the soul that had been washed by the sacrifice of Christ, who was still present in the host. Henceforth Satan, deprived of the eternal life, desired the blood to share the divine salvation.'[218] However, not everyone believed this. Matthew Hopkins stated that the Devil was not after blood, but merely to seal the pact 'employing the bodily fluid to convince witches of the reality of their powers.'[219] While this initially seems to contradict my point, the fact that Hopkins pointed this out shows that it was a popular belief that he found the need to correct as a witch-finding 'expert'.

The Witch Mark Revisited

The witch mark could also be read as an inversion of the stigmata. Matteoni points out that saints 'actualised in their own flesh the passion of Christ, receiving the stigmata, bleeding abundantly from their nostrils.'[220] Mary Magdalene was portrayed as adoring the blood that poured from Christ's wounds in the Passion,

[218] Matteoni, "Blood Beliefs in Early Modern Europe", 33.
[219] Matteoni, "Blood Beliefs in Early Modern Europe", 174.
[220] Matteoni, "Blood Beliefs in Early Modern Europe", 52.

which was the inversion of witchcraft as 'blood served to seal the demonic pact and to waste the soul instead of rescuing it.'[221] Both Catherine of Sienna and Teresa de Avila had visions of suckling the blood from the wound of Christ from the spear. Many mystics and other saints were marked with the *sainta stigmata*, a mark which differentiated them from others as one close to God. Mystics also had visions of blood and were often described as bleeding during their visions. These concepts will be compared to the witch mark, pact, blood feeding of familiars, and both groups' realm outside of church authority, as both groups functioned in both Catholic and Protestant realms.

Like the stigmata, the mark, 'encapsulated the secret of identity in which moral qualities were reflected in the bodily ones.'[222] Stressing the relationship between spiritual and physical, the mark and stigmata held the same symbolism as blood, both simultaneously physical and spiritual, holding the soul. The mark has several links to blood. It was the mark that was left when a familiar sucked from a witch. Also, the mark was said to be insensible to pricking and said not to bleed. There was also a connection between water, so closely related to blood religiously, and the mark. As Larner explains, the 'pricking for the mark [was] an ordeal which meant nothing except in the context of belief in an activity which was the inverse of the specifically Christian ritual of baptism.'[223] It seems that through blood (or the lack thereof in this case) witchcraft counteracted two of the most important sacraments of Christianity—baptism and communion. The marking of the skin by demonic proceedings broke the baptismal seal and the uses of Christ's blood for demonic means inversed the use of Christ's Passion to save to a means of falling to demonic temptation. Matteoni comments that the location of the mark had to do with the soul as well. She states, '[t]hough the extra-teat on the chest primarily indicates the maternal attitude of the witch towards familiars, it also suggests the heart, the seat of human passions. Similarly the head is the place where imagination was contained and both the head and the heart were the bodily parts in which the activity of the soul was stronger.'[224] There are several examples of

[221] Matteoni, "Blood Beliefs in Early Modern Europe", 66.
[222] Matteoni, "Blood Beliefs in Early Modern Europe", 45.
[223] Larner, *Witchcraft and Religion*, 55. James I also considered the covenant as the inversion of baptism. See James VI/I, *Daemonologie,* 36.
[224] Matteoni, "Blood Beliefs in Early Modern Europe", 173.

marks that were placed near the head and neck.[225] In 1619, Joan Flower had marks on her ear and neck; in 1645, John Wynnick had marks on the side of the head.[226] The famous Bury St. Edmonds witches of 1645 had marks on their privy parts, tongue, and crown of the head.[227]

Like the stigmata, the mark was the outward sign of one's inner dedication, the pact one makes with the Devil or familiar spirit. As Larner explains, 'Witchcraft was a private arrangement between a human being and the Devil and was also a conspiracy of humans who had made this pact with the Devil to work against God and against human society.'[228] The mark branded a witch as an outcast, both socially and religiously, but one of her own choosing. It was the choice that makes witchcraft such a betrayal of Christian values. As Alexander Roberts put it:

> [T]he formall tearmes of this couenant, as they bee set downe by some, are most dreadfull: and the seuerall poynts these. To renounce God his Creation and that promise made in Baptisme. To deny Iesus Christ, and refuse the benefites of his obedience, yea to blaspheme his glorious and holy name. To worship the Deuill, & repose all confidence and trust in him. To execute his commaundements. To vse things created of God for no end, but to the hurt and destruction of others. And lastly, to giue himselfe soule and body to that deceitfull and infernall spirit, who on the other part appeareth to them in the shape of a man (which is most common) or some other creature, conferreth familiarly, … And this is that which the Prophet *Esay* speaketh, *chap.* 28. 15. to make a couenant with death, and an agreement with hell.[229]

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[225] A wider analysis of mark locations can be found in Chapter 4.

[226] *The Wonderful Discoverie of the Witchcrafts of Margaret and Philip Flower* (1619); Stearne, *A Confirmation and Discovery of Witchcraft* (1648), 21.

[227] *A true relation of the araignment of eighteene vvitches. that were tried, convicted, and condemned, at a sessions holden at St. Edmunds-bury in Suffolke, and there by the iudge and iustices of the said sessions condemned to die, and so were executed the 27. day of August 1645. As also a list of the names of those that were executed, and their severall confessions before their executions. VVith a true relation of the manner how they find them out. The names of those that were executed. Mr. Lowes parson of Branson. Thomas Evered a cooper with Mary his wife. Mary Bacon. Anne Alderman. Rebecca Morris. Mary Fuller. Mary Clowes. Margery Sparham Katherine Tooley. Sarah Spinlow. Iane Limstead. Anne Wright. Mary Smith. Iane Rivert. Susan Manners. Mary Skipper. Anne Leech.* (London: I.H., 1645).

[228] Larner, *Witchcraft and Religion*, 38.

[229] Alexander Roberts, *A treatise of witchcraft VVherein sundry propositions are laid downe, plainely discouering the wickednesse of that damnable art, with diuerse other speciall points annexed, not*

Roberts raises some of the main issues with the covenant. By being placed as the inversion of the covenant one makes with God when one converts to Christianity, the pact, which initially is sealed with blood, whether from blood feeding or blood giving, is placed as the inversion of baptism as well. Just as we saw blood feeding to hold apprehensions of the Eucharist, here we see pact-making to also identify with another sacrament. By ascribing these allusions to the rejection of baptism and the inversion of the Eucharist, the bringing of the pact and blood-feeding and therefore the familiar into the framework of reformed Christianity shows us how changing attitudes towards individual responsibility of sin was being translated to the populace. Quaife agrees stating, '[t]he pact reflected the changing mode of religious behaviour. The witch entered into an agreement with the Devil of her own free will—recognition that religious commitment involved personal responsibility,' reflecting the wider trends of the Reformation.[230] While this interpretation is interesting, it must remain speculative because of the lack of a concrete connection between the witch mark as an inversion of the stigmata.

The Familiar Spirit and the Imagination

But there is a further aspect of demonological theory to be considered. For some demonologists, especially later in the witchcraft trials, the familiar was seen as a figment of their (and witnesses') imagination. Probably the most dedicated contemporary work on this subject is written by Lodowick Muggleton, who in *A True Interpretation of the VVitch of Endor,* set out to prove that the familiar spirit was the embodiment of the imagination and was rooted in the reason of man. His thesis states '[t]he belief of this lying principle, it did proceed out of the imagination of reason, the devil—the Imagination that doth arise or proceed from the seed of reason in man, is that familiar spirit that Witches deal with, and that familiar spirit it proceedeth from no spirit or devil without a man, but from the

*impertinent to the same, such as ought diligently of euery Christian to be considered. With a true narration of the witchcrafts which Mary Smith, wife of Henry Smith glouer, did practise: of her contract vocally made between the Deuill and her, in solemne termes, by whose meanes she hurt sundry persons whom she enuied: which is confirmed by her owne confession, and also from the publique records of the examination of diuerse vpon their oathes: and lastly, of her death and execution, for the same; which was on the twelfth day of Ianuarie last past. By Alexander Roberts B.D. and preacher of Gods Word at Kings-Linne in Norffolke (*London: N[icholas] O[kes], 1616), 28-29.

[230] Quaife, *Godly Zeal*, 56.

seed of reason within man.'[231] He explains that there are no other demons that Witches deal with or work with except those of their own imagination and 'there the familiar spirit is produced from whence it came; and there it ceases to be when they are put to death.'[232] He interprets the temptation of Eve as the place where this 'seed of reason' first spawned, connecting the points raised my previous chapters of gender, pre-Lapsarian ideas, and temptation.[233] He also analyses Saul's interaction with the Witch of Endor in this light. He states that:

> This familiar spirit the Witch of Endor and other Witches have, whereby they do such things, it is the imagination of reason, the devil themselves; that is they set themselves apart with the thoughts of the imaginations of their hearts, to give into the diabolical power, that is, that they might know the depths. Of Satan, their imagination conceiving that the devil is a spirit flying in the air, and that this spirit can be affirme or take up any shape it please.[234]

Although this does not quite explain how Samuel was seen by Saul, Muggleton explains that:

> the Witch had full power over Saul, so that he did really believe the Witch, that she had indeed raised up Samuel, though he saw nothing—yet the fear of being destroyed by the Philistines, and the belief of the womans words, Samuel began to speak in Sauls conscience … so that there was no speaking to Saul by Samuel, but the reasonings of Sauls own heart.[235]

He proposed how the familiar spirit that Saul saw was out of his own guilt. However, as opposed to what Reginald Scot proposes, Muggleton believed that the spirit was out of the imagination of the witch, but can be seen by others. As he explains, 'what did visually appear unto the Witch, which was a meer shadow which she could produce by her Witchcraft Act to all those that were more ignorant then her self, or had faith in her power.'[236] Like other religiously-

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[231] Lodowidk Muggleton, *A True Interpretation of the VVitch of Endor spoken of in I Sam. 28, begin. at the ll. verse ...* (London: 1724), 2.

[232] Muggleton, *A True Interpretation of the VVitch of Endor,* 2.

[233] Muggleton, *A True Interpretation of the VVitch of Endor,* 3.

[234] Muggleton, *A True Interpretation of the VVitch of Endor,* 3-4.

[235] Muggleton, *A True Interpretation of the VVitch of Endor,* 8.

[236] Muggleton, *A True Interpretation of the VVitch of Endor,* 9.

concerned writers we have seen he ultimately believed that witches should be put to death because they 'causeth the people to believe in a mere fiction or shadow without a body, and so they forsake the living God, who hath a body of his own.'[237] It seems that the categorisation of the familiar spirit as an extension of the consciousness and reflection of internal sin was more prevalent later in the period when the Devil was securely placed as the ultimate tempter and usurper and the emphasis for reformers was inward speculation and grappling with inner sins.

Thomas makes the important comment that, '[l]ike everyone else, the witches had been taught to personify their evil thoughts as the intrusion of Satan. By succumbing to temptation they had, symbolically, joined the Devil's army. A few may even have thought that he heard their prayers and granted their wishes.'[238] Rosen postulates that 'Satan' was 'the only explanation open to people who cannot understand the mental blocks which prevent them from following socially approved custom.'[239] Maybe claiming to be approached by Satan was a cry for help or a solution in their lonely world. It was well known that Satan would approach the downtrodden, therefore, witches were placing themselves as victims, approached and tempted, rather than seekers of evil, intent on hurting others. However, what was different about Muggleton's work was that he placed the temptation as wholly internal. As opposed to the witch being a woman of guilt and anger, then approached by a familiar, then led astray, Muggleton proposes that in actuality, the familiar was a product of that guilt and anger, becoming physically manifest as if a sliver of the witch's personality had become its own entity outside of the body of the witch. While we can postulate that most of these preternatural experiences were the witch's way of explaining her life, the pamphlet material does not reflect this interpretation, which one can expect since Muggleton was a non-conformist who was detained for his religious preachings.

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[237] Muggleton, *A True Interpretation of the VVitch of Endor,* 11. Muggleton seems to be very concerned about the differences about bodies and spirits. He specifically emphasizes that Christ's body ascended with him and was not separated from his spirit, which is why when people have visions of Christ they are not the same as these spirits out of imagination.

[238] Thomas, *Religion,* 524.

[239] Rosen, *Witchcraft,* 82 n7.

Those accused continued to regard familiars as external beings which approached them, and not as figures of the accused's imagination.

As Clark states, '[i]t will be abundantly clear from what has gone before that in early modern demonology the perceptions of an educated male minority concerning the shortcomings of general lay culture were recorded in an especially direct and vivid form.'[240] With familiars, we see this to be true. There were three main beliefs that reformers combated: the perceived ritualistic nature of magic which demonologists (especially the more Puritan ones) claimed as popish; the dependence of the populace on cunning folk; and most importantly, the crediting of Satan or the witch to misfortunes instead of God's will. These contestations were reflected in trial pamphlets, often spoken about in the prefaces and epilogues. As Larner states:

> Just as popular witch beliefs are an inversion of positive cultural values, so educated demonology is an inversion of official theology on the nature of God. The mutual learning of popular and educated inversion was a process which was greatly accelerated in the courts, both ecclesiastical and secular. In those courts, lawyer and peasant confronted each other and finally emerged, through accusation, boasting, torture and confession with an agreed story acceptable to both.[241]

It was through this negotiation that the familiar figure was formed. Reformers were concerned with the shortcomings of a general lay culture and recorded these concerns in their sermons, theological tracts, and demonologies.[242] Witchcraft was a key barrier of the Protestantising process and when fashioned into an enemy of this process, the witch was also made more demonic to fulfil these needs. Beliefs about familiars and their features were ultimately accepted, reformed, and adapted to meet the motives and needs of the clergy and elite in order to attempt to Christianise the masses. However, as discussed throughout this chapter, it was more of an attempt than a successful mission and the influence between elite and popular beliefs about familiars went both ways. Familiars were

[240] Clark, *Thinking with Demons*, 511.
[241] Larner, *Witchcraft and Religion*, 55.
[242] Clark, *Thinking with Demons*, 511.

used by all trial participants throughout the period in order to reinforce, challenge, and negotiate their beliefs with those the Reformation.

Chapter 4. 'Blood instead of Milk': The Familiar Spirit and Gender

One of the dominant features of witchcraft, and familiar spirit narratives, is the high percentage of those accused of witchcraft or keeping a familiar being women. In my research, I have found that throughout the period in question, a little over 85% of witches who were said to have familiars were women. Pre-1645 levels were closer to 90%, while the presence of men as familiar-associated witches increased to 16% from 1645-49. These numbers reflected the changes in gendered portrayals of the witch during this period.[1] It is safe to say there was a dominant cultural assumption that witches would be women. As Carol F. Karlsen comments, '[t]he history of witchcraft is primarily a history of women.'[2] This central trait opens up our next line of inquiry: how did familiars fit into the larger culture of gender and witchcraft and did they help trial participants to express their beliefs about gender? In this chapter I want to explore this issue, hypothesising that familiars were part of a system—encompassing the information that was recorded, disseminated, and reinforced through witchcraft trials and pamphlets—to express gender beliefs and spread gender norms. To do this, I looked closely at how the familiar interacted with women's lives, affecting the areas (both physically and spiritually) that they were culturally prescribed to. This was mostly concentrated around housewifery and maternity. The anxieties about boundary-keeping, cleanliness, and proper, Christian housewifery was expressed through the use of familiars by trial participants and pamphleteers. This same system was used to position the witch as the anti-mother, following a theory postulated by Diane Purkiss and others.[3] My objectives, however, are to add further analysis about how the familiar and by extension the witch teat were part of this positioning of the witch as the anti-mother, while also exploring how anxieties

[1] James Sharpe estimates that the number lies around 90% women, higher than the 80% he estimates throughout Europe. Sharpe, *Instruments,* 169.

[2] Carol F. Karlsen, *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman: Witchcraft in Colonial New England* (London: Peter Smith Publisher, Incorporated, 1987), xiii.

[3] Purkiss, *The Witch in History;* Willis, *Malevolent Nurture.*

around the house, the female body, and the childbirth bed might be read alongside anxieties about familiars. The question of masculinity and the familiar as well as the phenomenon of familiars being assigned genders in the pamphlet material will also be considered briefly. Ultimately, I will show how the familiar helped contemporaries explain seemingly private events that were heavy with public concerns, and also rigidify their polarised characterisations of gender norms.

These themes can be explored through the example of Mary Smith, a woman accused of witchcraft in 1616 in Norfolk.[4] The tract describing the case begins with a knowledgeable history of witchcraft including Biblical examples and other citations and an expansive discussion of demonology. There is also an outline of the contemporary arguments surrounding punishment and confessions, highlighting the Christianising aspect of witchcraft pamphlets, discussed in the previous chapter of this thesis. It is not until forty-five pages into the tract that the narrative of Mary Smith actually began, leading to the impression that this work was supposed to be informative of the events of the trial as well as instructive about the theoretical and practical ways to combat and understand witchcraft. Mary was said to have been 'possessed with a wrathfull indignation against some of her neighbours, in regard that they made gaine of their buying and selling Cheese, which shee (using the same trade) could not doe, or they better (at least in her opinion) then she did, often times cursed them….'[5] It seems that her domestic economy was very important to her as she was also said to have cursed a neighbour with the pox over an argument about a chicken. Every few days, she would stand in her doorway and curse the witness, causing the victim of the scolding to fall into fits.[6]

Mary was also associated with a number of preternatural events involving a cat. For example, some of her victims claimed that 'a great Cat which kept with this Witch… frequented their house' and when the husband tried to stab the cat with a sword and drag it away, the cat seemed to never cease to be within the perimeter of the house.[7]

[4] Roberts, *A treatise of witchcraft* (1616).

[5] Roberts, *A treatise of witchcraft,* 45.

[6] Roberts, *A treatise of witchcraft,* 51-52.

[7] Roberts, *A treatise of witchcraft,* 54.

Then, with great frustration, the husband and his son managed to capture the cat in a sack, leaving it within its confines until morning when they could dispose of it, but in the morning, the cat 'could not be found, though all the doors that night were locked.'[8] Mary was then connected to this event, described as taking revenge for the harming of her cat. Roberts writes that '[n]ot long after, this Witch came-forth with a Birchin broome, and threatened to lay it upon the head of Elizabeth Scot, and defiled her cloathes therewith, as she swept the street before her shop doore.'[9] Once again we see Mary's conflict with her neighbours taking place in the setting of the doorway with domestic elements such as the broom and clothes. A third victim described her interaction with Mary Smith within a similar setting, 'Creely Balye…sweeping the street before her maisters doore upon a Saturday in the evening, Mary Smith began to pick a quarrell about the manner of sweeping' and insulting her.[10] The cat mentioned previously was connected again to this event, coming to Creely in the following night, where it 'sate upon her breast, with which she was grievously tormented, and so oppressed, that she could not without great difficulty draw her breath.'[11] Creely then claimed to see the cat on the lap of Mary Smith in her bedroom. The cat was not Mary's only familiar, however. She 'sent her Impes, a Toad, and Crabs crawling about the house' and reportedly there was a servant who threw the toad into the hearth in attempt to kill it.[12] Another man claimed that before having a horrific accident, 'a great Water-dogge[13] ranne over his bed, the doore of the chamber where he lay being shut, no such one knowne (for carefull enquiry was made) either to have been in that house where hee lodged, or in the whole Towne at any time.'[14] The invasion of familiars into the house, especially

[8] Roberts, *A treatise of witchcraft,* 54.

[9] Roberts, *A treatise of witchcraft,* 54-55.

[10] Roberts, *A treatise of witchcraft,* 55.

[11] Roberts, *A treatise of witchcraft,* 56. For more on chest-sitting familiars within the bedroom setting, see the upcoming work of Charlotte-Rose Millar.

[12] Roberts, *A treatise of witchcraft,* 58.

[13] A breed of working dog, commonly for retrieving in wet environments.

[14] Roberts, *A treatise of witchcraft,* 59.

the bedroom, was a common theme in many familiar narratives and is a central theme of this chapter.

Throughout this thesis, we have been building on the concept that early modern people used witches as a way to explain the events in their lives, their belief systems, and also as a means of instruction. Trial participants constructed witchcraft narratives as a means to explore their fantasies and establish or maintain their identity within the community. As we have seen time and time again, contemporaries were following a long tradition when using familiars in these witchcraft narratives to explain the events in their lives. As Clark explains, '[i]n classic demonology, devils made good the casual lacunae that opened up whenever the intentions of human agents exceeded the limits of natural efficacy.'[15] The use of the familiar is no exception to this and follows in the tradition that Purkiss and Roper have pointed out—witchcraft narratives displayed anxieties and beliefs about the female body, its permeability both physically and spiritually, and about tensions between women in the community.[16] Furthermore, we see a real fear of maleficium as the "common currency" of witchcraft rather than the devil or sabbats.[17] This is specially marked in English witchcraft historiography. The familiar then helped expose this fear of maleficium further; trial participants were worried about what familiars were *doing* (specifically in their houses) rather than where they fit in the demonic hierarchy or what they represented. Considering these two branches of thinking of how trial participants used witchcraft narratives, I will explore the familiar as an apparatus in the firming of gender expectations taking on board both these perspectives on the role of the familiar.

The characteristics and expression of gender have been considered a number of ways in the historiography of European witchcraft. They have, quite often, been the subject of debate and criticism, but also misinterpretation and exaggeration. While the social changes of the early modern period have provided historians with the necessary explanations of why women would be accused more than men, the

[15] Clark, *Thinking with Demons,* 186.

[16] Purkiss, *The Witch in History,* 111. See also Roper, *Witch-Craze.*

[17] Briggs, *Witches and Neighbours, passim.*

'culture-specific links between witchcraft and feminine behaviour articulated at the time' have had a relative lack of analysis dedicated to them.[18] These social changes have been analysed in many ways including tracking population, economic, or marriage patterns in order to explain why more women would be living alone, denied charity, or be involuntarily challenging the property system, for example.[19] As Diane Purkiss bluntly summarises, '[t]he prevailing view of the English witch derived from their work sees witches as harmless old beggars who had the misfortune to be caught in a changing social system and this to arouse the guilt of their neighbours.'[20] While Purkiss goes on to criticise that studies such as those of Macfarlane and Thomas take the witch out of the community and domestic sphere, leading to a 'collapse women's stories about these events into a generalised and putatively ungendered body of evidence,' I argue that the witch, and in this case the familiar, must be analysed as a member of the domestic sphere (as Purkiss emphasises) but also within the wider aspects of the culture, along lines pioneered by Macfarlane and Thomas. [21]

As Clark rightly points out, '[a]rguments of [the feminist] kind suggest how groups of woman became (or were thought to have become) so anomalous in relation to contemporary (largely male) social norms that they readily attracted accusations...' but are less successful in answering 'why accusations should have concerned *witchcraft*, rather than some other crime.'[22] This seems to question the view that witch-hunting was women-hunting which was put forth by feminist historians who were pointing to the risk of losing cultural specificity. While conceding that the period does hold a gender rivalry, this could be manifested in the accusation of any crime, so the accusation of witchcraft specifically must have some other cultural

[18] Clark, *Thinking with Demons,* 107.

[19] See H.C. Erik Midelfort, *Witch Hunting in Southwestern Germany, 1562-1684* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1972), Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, Macfarlane, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England;* Carolyn Matalene, 'Women as Witches', *International Journal of Women's Studies,* 1 (1978), Karlsen, *Devil in the Shape of a Woman* (1987).

[20] Purkiss, *The Witch in History,* 66.

[21] Purkiss, *The Witch in History,* 67. See also Clive Holmes, "Popular Culture? Witches, Magistrates, and Divines in Early Modern England" in *Understanding Popular Culture: Europe from the Middle Ages to the Nineteenth Century,* ed. Steven L. Kaplan (Berlin: Mouton Publishers, 1984), 95.

[22] Clark, *Thinking with Demons,* 108. Italics are the author's.

associations with it beyond women-hunting.[23] Contemporaries did use biblical and philosophical evidence in order to justify the assigning of witchcraft features to women. [24] As Clive Holmes explains, 'while witchcraft accusations might be employed to uphold the values of patriarchal society in early modern England, the fundamental sex-linkage, which attributed dangerous powers predominantly to women, was not an invention of the sixteenth century.'[25] Beyond biblical examples such as the witch of Endor, this philosophy 'incorporated traditional Aristotelian notions regarding the innate imperfections of women as "deformed" males, and the even more deeply entrenched Christian hostility to women as originators of sin.'[26] These, however, were topics that were debated outside of witchcraft arguments, often discussed in sermons and legal manuals in England and throughout Europe.[27] It was translated into popular culture through language that was accessible to the masses.

This placement of the witch as a protofeminist in the twentieth century has been challenged in the past few decades. While many feminist historians have relied on *Malleus Malificarum* to argue against this point, the 'over-reliance on this one text has obscured the almost mechanical nature of its arguments, citations, and illustrative tales.'[28] Clark has shown this lack of witch-specific misogyny by outlining how demonologists were not debating gender in relation to witchcraft—why the woman was a witch, rather the prevalence for witches to be women were

[23] For thesis of witch-hunting as women-hunting see Mary Daly, *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism,* (London: Beacon Press, 1978); Sheila Rowbotham, *Hidden from History* (London: Northwestern University Press, 1973); Marianne Hester, *Lewd Women and Wicked Witches: A Study of the Dynamics of Male Domination* (London: Routledge, 1992); Joan Kelly, 'Early Feminist Theory and the *Querelle des Femmes,* 1400-1789", *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 8 (1982).

[24] Holmes, "Popular Culture?", 95. Holmes points out that Norman Cohn in *Europe's Inner Demons* (p.251) reaches a similar conclusion with medieval evidence.

[25] Holmes, "Popular Culture?", 95.

[26] Clark, *Thinking with Demons,* 114.

[27] See Linda Woodbridge, *Women and the English Renaissance: literature and nature of woman kind, 1540 to 1620* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1984).

[28] Clark, *Thinking with Demons,* 115. This is also expressed in J.A. Sharpe, "Witchcraft and Women in seventeenth-century England: some Northern evidence", *Continuity and Change* 6, no.02 (1991), 180.

just assumed to be truth.[29] Several studies have pointed out that accusations often came from other women and many women participated within the trial process as both witnesses and searchers.[30] These were more trial participants who placed their preconceived notions on the witch and her body. Purkiss points out that 'feminist historians have sometimes seen women witnesses as mere mouthpieces of patriarchal elite. It is true that elite and popular tellers of stories of witchcraft borrow from each other, absorbing new materials and views, but reinscribing and modifying them to form idiosyncratic negotiations of particular desires and fears.'[31] Instead, this chapter argues that the language of gender in witchcraft trials should not be abandoned, but rather posed in ways that move beyond these global narratives of male domination to a more nuanced view that places women as the agents of their own lives and words, able to convey meanings of femininity and gender normative behaviour.

Witchcraft has a cultural identity as a crime 'with specific meanings and implying specific kinds of behaviour in those accused of it… [and as] a specific label signifies to those who employ it in a particular linguistic setting.'[32] As Christina Larner has pointed out, witches were accused because they had characteristics (physical, cultural, and emotional) specific to witchcraft, not merely because they were (mostly) women.[33] The rise of witchcraft accusations in the period was 'not necessarily because women were more accusable in this period but because witches were—for reasons intrinsic to cultures who saw things this way.'[34] Familiars work within this signifying system in order to enhance and explain these behaviours, helping mediate the expectations of both elite and popular cultures.

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[29] Clark, *Thinking with Demons*, 115-117.

[30] See J.A. Sharpe, "Witchcraft and Women"; and Clive Holmes "Women: Witnesses and Witches"; and David Harley, "Historians as demonologists", *Journal of the Society for the Social History of Medicine*, 3 (1990), 1-26.

[31] Purkiss, *The Witch in History,* 91.

[32] Clark, *Thinking with Demons,* 109.

[33] Christina Larner, *Enemies of God: The Witch-hunt in Scotland* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press,1981), 102.

[34] Clark, *Thinking with Demons,* 111.

Women as witches

The position of women as the default gender for witches was not out of some specific misogyny but was rather rooted in the cultural beliefs of the period about the nature of women and their presumed weaknesses, coupled with a greater push for moral purity and social order that created deviants. Familiars were a tool that trial participants could use to emphasise these weaknesses as well as criticise the gender-affirming shortfalls of the witch. As Katherine Rogers states, demonologists 'did not exploit witchcraft as a means of expressing misogyny; their witches… are seen as witches rather than as wicked women.'[35] Therefore, the question of how this process of associating witches as being primarily women remains unanswered. While some feminist historians have placed the witch as the product of misogyny or as a wider social weakening of the woman outside of patriarchal or pastoral care, I find convincing—especially with the analysis of the familiar as a tool of it—the argument of the witch being spoken of and categorised as a product of inversion. The witch, seen as the inverse of the good Christian neighbour, is placed in the category of evil, inverse, and odd. The woman, as the inverse of man, who is placed highest among earthly beings, must also be associated with these categories. While this does not make all women evil or witches, it does place the woman in a compromised position where she must overcome her natural urges in order to ascend to a higher plane. The man is placed there by default.[36] As Clarke puts it, 'it was assumed as a general principle that women were by nature weaker than men in respect to fundamental intellectual and psychological qualities, and, hence, had what one author called a "greater facility to fall".'[37] The woman, seen as the morally weaker species, was then open to the temptations of the Devil. William Perkins, Protestant divine, explained,

[35] Katherine Rogers, *The Troublesome Helpmate: A History of Misogyny in Literature* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1968), 148 n.16.

[36] This does not mean that the man was seen as infallible. However, he was less likely to be tempted by the Devil into sin, especially more secretive sins such as poisoning or witchcraft.

[37] Clark, *Thinking with Demons,* 112 qtg. Alexander Roberts, *A treatise on witchcraft* (1616), 43. *Malleus maleficarum* also puts forth this position: 111-25.

referring to the Devil, '[w]here he findeth easiest entrance, and best entertainment thither will he oftenest resort.'[38]

Once again, with gender, witches are placed in the category of inversion. Witches were believed to invert and subvert nature. John Gaule called for the punishment of witches 'because they abuse [nature's] order.'[39] We saw this with the witch being placed as an inversion of the human, with their relationship with familiars dehumanising them. The witch was also placed as a bad Christian and anti-Protestant, with the familiar facilitating dialogue in order to achieve this inversion. As Stuart Clark points out, 'Witches are also characterised and, hence, experienced in terms of a limited number of features. Morally, they are classified by strict polar opposition and from what is right; physically, by the spatial metaphor of inversion.'[40] Witchcraft was a phenomenon in which contemporaries altered their perspective from a more endemic misfortune in the medieval period to a hierarchical, systemic, and polarised problem in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Educated European early moderns often wrote and thought in polarities, which were 'inheritances from the past and contemporary developments in linguistic taste and religious sensibilities, and were especially distinctive for the age.'[41] The witch, through the testimonies of trial participants, was placed as the anti-housewife and anti-mother, which was helped and facilitated by the use of the familiar within pamphlets.

Religious beliefs, popular folklore, and social expectations were assembled together to make up what it was to be a witch. These were expressed through opposites; the witch was the opposite of a good married Christian woman who kept the house and raised pious children. She was held to expectations of behaviour that was the inverse of normal behaviour and gender standards. As Clark explains, '[w]hatever its influence over representational systems as a whole, the gender relation is

[38] Perkins, *Discourse,* 169.

[39] John Gaule, *Select cases of conscience touching vvitches and vvitchcrafts. By Iohn Gaule, preacher of the Word at Great Staughton in the county of Huntington* (London W. Wilson, 1646), 172.

[40] Clark, *Thinking with Demons,* 33.

[41] Clark, *Thinking with Demons,* 35.

hierarchically weighted so that, once the processes of interchangeability, reinforcement, and correlation have had their effect, men are symbolically associated with a range of other positive items and categories, and women with their negative counterparts.'[42] Ian Maclean outlines this type of thinking by explaining that there existed a polarised classification system in which the male or masculine was associated with the good, light, and straight, while women were left with the inverse of these—evil, dark, and ill-formed.[43] As Maclean points out, this way of thinking has roots in Aristotle who classified gender in 'dualities in which one element is superior and the other inferior,' which early modernists inherited as a way of grouping hierarchical positives together (patriarchy, goodness, strength) and by default grouped the inverse of these (femininity, evilness, weakness).[44] Joseph Swetnam, for example, wrote that a woman was 'nothing else but a contrary unto man.'[45] Although Swetnam was a misogynist—a bias that was not absent from witchcraft but merely inflated to the point of obscuring other influences of gender on the topic—the sentiment of inversion was reflected in many thoughts of contemporaries in less explicit ways.

This 'dependence on antithesis as a rhetorical figure' is a theme that can be seen throughout this thesis (human/animal, Christian/witch) and was used by contemporaries particularly to discuss gender norms, placing the witch as the anti-housewife and anti-mother.[46] The central figures in this inversion process is the Virgin Mary being placed in juxtaposition to Eve, the first sinner and often associated with witchcraft.[47] John Gaule spoke of this in *Cases of conscience* when he stated that 'it is whispered that our Grandmame Eve was a little guilty of such a

[42] Clark, *Thinking with Demons,* 119.

[43] Ian Maclean, *The Renaissance Notion of Woman,* 2-3.

[44] Maclean, *The Renaissance Notion of Woman,* 37-38.

[45] Joseph Swetnam, [under the pseud. Thomas Tel-troth,] *The araignment of leuud, idle, froward, and vnconstant women or the vanitie of them, choose you whether : with a commendation of wise, vertuous and honest women : pleasant for married men, profitable for young men, and hurtfull to none* (London: George, 1615), 33.

[46] Clark, *Thinking with Demons,* 124.

[47] Clark, *Thinking with Demons,* 113.

kind of sorcery.'[48] Robert Southwell's poem 'The Virgins Salutation' provides another example of this avowing, 'Spell *Eva* backe and *Ave* shall you finde, The first began, the last reverst our harmes… Death first by womans weakenes entred in, In womans virtue life doth now begin.'[49] This traditional gender link was relied upon to place women and their behaviour on a spectrum with Eve, the ultimate sinner, on one side and Mary, the virginal, faithful mother on the other—William Monter has summarised this as a polarity between the 'pedestal and stake'.[50] Both genders were liable to be compared to the relevant moral absolutes for their situation and '[although daily life may not have been lived in self-conscious relation to such fixed ideas, conflict was likely to sharpen perceptions and make individuals hyper-sensitive to moralised readings of everyday situations.'[51] The witch then was placed within this, ultimately associated not with some middle ground of ordinary sinner that many women were no doubt considered to be, but an example of the worst kind of sinner, one associated with the illicitness of the first sin, and inverter of the natural order.

Demonologists and pamphleteers were not discussing the witch in a system outside of early modern culture, but were working within a culture of language and classification system of the properties of femininity. The witch was a category like the shrew, the whore, or the saint—not as the starting point of a spectrum but rather a categorised subject within a system. Throughout witchcraft trials we see the placement of the witch as opposite to women who conformed to gender expectations. For example, we see this categorisation of women within a spectrum in witchcraft trials with the use of searchers. Women were selected to search based on their character more than their medical or technical expertise. As Sharpe points out, 'women selected to search suspected women for the witch's mark were described as

[48] Gaule, *Cases of Conscience,*10-11.

[49] Robert Southwell, "The Virgins Salutation", in *The Poems of Robert Southwell, S.J.,* ed. J.H. McDonald and N. Pollard Brown (Oxford: 1967).

[50]E. William Monter, "The Pedestal and the Stake: Courtly Love and Witchcraft", in *Becoming Visible: Women in European History,* ed. R. Bridenthal and C. Koonz (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977), 119-136.

[51] Catherine Richardson, *Domestic life and domestic tragedy in early modern England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), 30.

"honest matrons", "women of credit", "a widdow of honest reputation", "two grave matrons", "some sober women".'[52] Accusers were often women as well, describing women's issues as we shall see below. As Sharpe comments, '[e]ven when men were involved in witchcraft accusations, it is evident that many of them saw such accusations not as a means of repressing women but rather as something which was most likely to operate within the female sphere, something more or less peculiar to women.'[53] Therefore, witchcraft must be analysed within that system because it drew from it to culturally construct the witch and placed features of witchcraft that came from the populace into that system. The familiar was used as a tool in order to position the witch within this system of opposition, sometimes in situations where evidence to place her in this category was lacking.

There was an association of language when accusing someone of being a witch. We have seen throughout that when called a witch, the assumption of having a familiar also follows, as do cultural associations with the bestial, anti-Christian, and anti-Protestant. Stuart Clark points out that this does not stop with gender; in fact, this word association is even more prevalent. He states that 'the most pressing issue raised by the gender of witches concerns the relationship between what it meant, inside witch-accusing cultures themselves, to accuse someone of being a witch, and the wider conditions—let us call them "social" for the moment—that, from an external perspective, seem to have produced "accusable" people.'[54] These terms used in the pamphlets were not fixed, as we have seen with the changing meaning of the familiar and its features. They were unstable terms, carriers of cultural meanings, and were negotiated within the space of witchcraft accusations in order to convey anxieties and expectations within early modern life.

The Witch as the Anti-Housewife

As stated earlier, it was assumed and shown by many historians that witchcraft was often a medium for the airing of local disputes and anxieties, often within the female

[52] Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness,* 183.

[53] Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness,* 181.

[54] Clark, *Thinking with Demons,* 107. See also Purkiss, *The Witch in History,* 93.

sphere. Much of the threat that the witch held was against the household, with acts of maleficium ruining household production, the killing of children, and the invading the home. While much of this was localised, even affecting only one household, problem, the attack on the home was threatening on a larger level because of what it culturally represented. As Clark explains, '[t]he wider implications of attacks on the family, and of the fact that they were promoted largely by women, could hardly have been missed in a culture that accepted the patriarchal household as both the actual source and analogical representation of good government.'[55] The witch as a woman was perfectly situated to corrupt the house, both physically and metaphorically, from within. As Catherine Richardson, in her research into representations of early modern domestic crime on the stage and in media has pointed out, '[a]rguably, these stories of true crime fundamentally altered the relationship between the general and the particular in didactic literature by elevating the grubbily topical to a position of active significance.' [56] Her work concludes that the threat lies in the representation more than (but as well as) the reality of the situation. Within the realm of the household, the opposing categories of good and bad were used in order to delineate normal behaviour as well as used by contemporaries to justify monitoring their neighbours' behaviour even beyond the bounds of privacy. The cultural construction of the ideal housewife provided a baseline for feminine behaviour both in the perceived privacy of the house and in public, when she was required to venture into it. As Richardson explains, '[t]his "baseline" of normality is an important way of characterising immoral behaviour, particularly noisy public disturbances, as an aberration which breaks out of the smoothness of communal routine.'[57] Transgressions in normal behaviour then become the concern of a whole community, giving cause to monitor and prosecute those who commit these private-made-public sins. Therefore, we must consider the familiar as part of the domestic sphere and if (or how) it was threatening to contemporaries. Considering that '[h]ousehold spaces tie individuals together in ways which are both stabilising and troubling, implicating

[55] Clark, *Thinking with Demons,* 91. Catherine Richardson through her research has found that the 'meaning of the household were ideologically prominent and still broadly similar across different social groups in this period." Richardson, *Domestic Life,* 199.

[56] Richardson, *Domestic life*, 14.

[57] Richardson, *Domestic life,* 35.

them in endless permutations of interconnection… connections, for all their visceral closeness, are always conditioned by the shaping effects of gender and status upon the power dynamics of spatial control,' we can see how the familiar was used by contemporaries as a mechanism in which to place their anxieties upon as well as a means for witches to threaten the very foundation of the community through attacking the metaphor of the well-ordered household.[58]

Throughout this work, many consistencies, rather than large shifts, have been shown with the characteristics of the familiar pre- and post-1645. One of these was the familiar's ability to infiltrate the home, as we saw in the earlier example of Mary Smith's familiars in 1616. We see these same anxieties about boundaries in 1652 in the case of Joan Peterson, also known as the Witch of Wapping. The disturbing nature of Joan's familiar held a main role in the pamphlet, outlined clearly on the title page as 'Shewing, How she Bewitch'd a child, and rock'd the Cradle in the likeness of a Cat; how she frightened a Baker; and how the Devil often came to suck her, sometimes in the likeness of a Dog, and at other times like a squirrel.'[59] Described as a wise woman, Joan was connected to a series of events that seem disjointed until the narrative of Joan as a witch was placed within it, allowing reputation to connect circumstance and piece together a wider conspiracy. The pamphlet begins with neighbours who were watching over a sick child in order to give the parents of the child relief from the child's crying. These neighbours (described as female) were invited into the home when 'about midnight, they espied (to their thinking) a great black cat come to the cradles side, and rock the cradle, whereupon one of the women took up the fire-fork to strike at it, and it immediately vanished, about an hour after the cat came again to the cradle side, whereupon the

[58] Richardson, *Domestic life,* 56.

[59] *The witch of Wapping, Or An exact and perfect relation, of the life and devilish practises of Joan Peterson, that dwelt in Spruce Island, near Wapping; who was condemned for practising witch-craft, and sentenced to be hanged at Tyburn, on Munday the 11th. of April, 1652. Shewing, how she bewitch'd a child, and rock'd the cradle in the likenesse of a cat; how she frighted a baker; and how the devil often came to suck her, sometimes in the likeness of a dog, and other times like a squirrel. Together, with the confession of Prudence Lee, who was burnt in Smithfield on Saturday the 10th. of this instant for the murthering her husband: and her admonition and counsel to all her sex in general* (London: 1652), Title page. Interestingly, it seems that either the pamphleteer or some shadow author in the printing process decided that the cat was indeed the witch herself and that the dog and squirrel were the Devil. The testimony itself does not reflect this in the pamphlet.

other woman kicked at it, but it presently vanished.'[60] Curiously, these women seem to have automatically assumed that this cat was a threat, using hearth fire, a common counter-magic element, to dispel it. There was something about this scenario that connected harmful, preternatural fears; whether it was the time of night, the cat entering the space itself, or the cat being near the child is yet to be made clear.

This incident was then connected to one when they left the house of the child. As the pamphlet describes it, 'as they [the women] were going to their own homes they met a Baker, who was likewise a neighbours servant, who told them that he saw a great black cat that had so frightened him that his hair stood on end.'[61] Once again we see nefarious assumptions of the preternatural being present with the invasion of space (or sight) by the cat, whether on the street or in a house. It was something about the setting rather than just the animal that caused the baker's fear as he was said to explain, it 'was demanded whether he had not at other times as well as that been afraid of a cat, who answered no, and that he never saw such a cat before, and hoped in God he should never see the like again.'[62] These events were only connected to Joan when a third event came forth; her maid-servant testified that she was present when a squirrel came into her mistress's bedroom to talk with her, and she felt frightened.[63] Another neighbour also explains that he was by the fireside with Joan when a dog came up to them and 'he [the neighbour] ran out of the house as if he had been frightened out of his wits.'[64] It is interesting here that there is such a strong connection between fearful intuition and the identification of the preternatural. It was through their fear that the witnesses identified the being was a familiar and therefore a threat. The testimony describing Joan's familiars crossing boundaries is exceptional in quantity, but not in content. While most trials show one or two examples (per witch) of familiars approaching witches or witnesses in domestic or

[60] *The Witch of Wapping* (1652), 5.

[61] *The Witch of Wapping* (1652), 6.

[62] *The Witch of Wapping* (1652), 6.

[63] *The Witch of Wapping* (1652), *6.*

[64] *The Witch of Wapping* (1652), 7.

liminal spaces, in Joan's case there is a wide variety, showcasing many of the typical scenarios that we see in earlier cases.

Physical space was a subtle, yet persistent theme in the narratives about familiars. As shown above, Joan's familiars invaded people's spaces in the bedroom, the street outside her neighbours' houses, and the hearth. In the typical example of Mary Smith described above, conflict and invasion was associated with doorways, bedrooms, and the street with the narratives of Mary Smith's apparent witchcraft and struggle with her neighbours. Setting plays such a role in witchcraft trials that it seems that witnesses and witches alike understood that there were certain places where threat, whether physical, mental, or spiritual, loomed.

Witches were believed to send their familiars into their neighbours' houses, disrupting the household by causing damage to economic goods and disturbing its inhabitants with potentially lethal force. These beliefs were spread and reinforced through a large network of pamphlet material, claiming to report real events from around the country and abroad. In 1599, a woman named Doll Bartham was reported to have sent three toads and something in the likeness of a cat to her neighbour Joan Jorden in the middle of the night after 'falling out with the said Ioane Iorden for refusing to giue her of her maisters goods.'[65] The three toads were first sent to 'trouble her in her bed, not suffering her to rest.'[66] Her three toads invaded the house, threatening its boundaries. As the text states:

> The first, being thrown out into the middest of the chamber, returned, and sat croaking on her beds side: which being thrown out of the window; another within fewe dayes after came and vexed her againe; which was taken and burnt. After that within a while came the 3d. whichIoane was counselled to burne her selfe; and going downe stayres to doe so, she was violently thrown to the stayers foot, there lying (a while) for dead. And when this Toade began to burne, (which Simon Fox had put into the fire,) a flame arose at the stayers foote where the toade lay when Ioane fell, & grew so great, that it seemed to them to indanger the house, yet no hurt was don.[67]

It was explicitly stated that the last toad threatened the house, although this was a result of the counter-magic. However, this threat still gives some hint of the familiar

[65] *The triall of Maist. Dorrel* (1599), 92.

[66] *The triall of Maist. Dorrel* (1599), 92.

[67] *The triall of Maist. Dorrel* (1599), 92-93.

being a way in which witches can invade and threaten household life. The cat familiar, named Gyles, was reported to have made strange noises in the night, pinning her down, kissing her, and talking to her all night. The pamphleteer describes the scene, filling the reader's mind with the noise of the threat, painting a scene of horror:

> …that he came down the chimney in the likenes of a cat) came nowe againe about eleven a clock at night; first scraping on the wals, then knocking, after that shufling in the rushes: and then (as his vsuall maner was) he clapped the maide on the cheekes about halfe a skore times as to awake her; and, (as oft times els he did) he kissed her 3. or 4. times and slauered on her: and, (lying on her brest) he pressed her so sore that she could not speake; at other times hee held her handes that she could not stirre, and restrayned her voice that she could not answer.[68]

His disturbance of Joan's sleep was apparently so bad that she could not perform her household duties for the following three days because of exhaustion. Doll Bartham was reported to have been executed for witchcraft.[69] Through looking at the cultural assumptions about familiars present in witchcraft pamphlets, the familiar was placed by contemporaries as a tool to highlight issues of the early modern home, such as the permeability of the household, in a way that placed the witch as the anti-housewife. Familiars become a way to explore the domestic space of the English village and a way for women to express their anxieties about housekeeping—such as cleanliness and security. So quickly returning to Gyles, we see a familiar that is sent by a witch to disrupt the household, tormenting Joan until she cannot perform her work and invading the domestic space.

Many familiars are reported to reside in witch's houses and invade their neighbours' houses. Familiars such as those of Ursula Kempe enter the house through the chimney or are reported to be by the doorway like Joan Upney's toad.[70] We saw earlier how Gyles came into the victim's bedroom and the toads invaded the house. Purkiss explains how John Gaule commented that 'witches often worked by leaving something of theirs in the victim's house, or getting something of hers into the

[68] *The triall of Maist. Dorrel* (1599), 93.

[69] *The triall of Maist. Dorrel* (1599), 92.

[70] W.W., *A true and just Recorde, of the Information* (1582); *The Apprehension and Confession of three notorious witches* (1589).

house, and he advised that a witch loitering near the house should be warned off…'[71] He saw the trend among witchcraft beliefs that connected invasion with the witch and how the traversed boundaries of the household could be a sign of maleficium—a threat that was to be combated with constant vigilance by the housewife. In witchcraft pamphlets, there was a trend of two types of invasion that occurred—invasion into the victim's house and invasion into the witch's—both of which place the early modern house as a permeable place that must be guarded from preternatural influence.

The first type of invasion, that of the victim's house, is less prevalent in the trial material due to the fact that in most familiar narratives victims were not sure how the maleficium occurred, but only that they were somehow invaded and also suspected who did it. However, we do have some interesting examples in the latter half of the period. In Essex in 1645, Mary Johnson was said to have been seen putting a rat into a hole in the victim's door and used these means to kill a child. Elizabeth Otley testified that 'the said Mary Johnson did carry an Impe in her pocket to this Informants house, and put the said Impe into the house, at an hole in the doore, bidding it go rock the Cradle, and do the businesse she sent it about, and return to her again.'[72] In 1682, it was reported that Amy Denny visited a sick child while the mother of said child was out of the house. When the mother returned, Denny was forcibly shoved out. A toad, belonging to Denny was then found in the blanket of the child.[73] In one of the pamphlets covering the trial of Temperance Floyd (also referred to as Temperance Lloyd), a witness was said to have seen a magpie at the chamber window of the betwitched Grace Thomas. When Temperance was asked if it was hers, she stated that it was the black man described earlier in the shape of a bird.[74] In

[71] Purkiss, *The Witch in History,* 98.

[72] H.F., *A true and exact Relation of the severall Informations* (1645), 17.

[73] *A tryal of witches at the assizes held at Bury St. Edmonds for the count of Suffolk on the tenth day of March, 1664 [i.e 1665] before Sir Matthew Hale, Kt., then Lord Chief Baron of His Majesties Court of Exchequer / taken by a person then attending the court* (London: 1682). This was actually a case from 1664 that was only later printed. The fact that these details were left in provides some evidence that these themes were still relevant enough to include in the later printing.

[74] *A True and impartial relation of the informations against three witches, viz., Temperance Lloyd, Mary Trembles, and Susanna Edwards, who were indicted, arraigned and convicted at the assizes holden for the county of Devon, at the castle of Exon, Aug. 14, 1682 with their several confessions, taken before Thomas Gist, Mayor, and John Davie, alderman, of Biddiford, in the said county, where*

England, the threat could not be contained in just the body of the witch. Familiars, in the form of small domestic animals could infiltrate the home, either physically crossing boundary areas appear magically in areas that would be normally beyond the uninvited guest.

Many witches confessed to having familiars first approach them at their house, or other problematic places. In the first witch-trial pamphlet dating from 1566, Satan the familiar was said to have come into the bedroom and was seen in the boundaries of the yard.[75] Joan Prentice confessed that Bidd the ferret approached her in her bedroom.[76] Mother Lakeland confessed that the Devil approached her in her bedroom, giving Lakeland her familiars. This pamphlet even explicitly states that witches should 'especially [be] forbidden inside of the house.'[77] The 1646 Huntington pamphlet has many instances of witches being approached in detail.[78] Elizabeth Weed, Anne Desborough, and Jane Wallis all state that they were approached in their respective bedrooms at night. Anne Desborough described how a mouse named Tib came to her in the night and nipped at her breast while she slept. Ellen Shepheard, also in this pamphlet, said she was approached by three rats while cursing and blaspheming in a field, which was seen as a liminal space.

Diane Purkiss comments that '[t]he witch, usually a woman, had the power of extending herself into and thus overpowering the controls governing the households and bodies of others. Her magic itself represented her as formless, able to go through what was supposed to be marked off or contained.'[79] This sense of the domestic as a scene of incursion was not limited to witchcraft and was particularly tied to gender ideals. The household and its resulting boundaries as a possible location for invasion can be seen in the housewives role as boundary keeper as well as the larger metaphor of the household as the reflection of Christian purity. The housewife was placed in charge of this boundary keeping because of the cultural belief that female honour

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they were inhabitants : as also, their speeches, confessions and behaviour at the time and place of execution on the twenty fifth of the said month (London: Freeman Collins, 1682), 11-12.

[75] Phillips, *Examination and Confession of certaine Wytches at Chensforde* (1566).

[76] *The Apprehension and Confession of three notorious Witches* (1589).

[77] *The Lawes against Witches and Coniuration* (1645), 5.

[78] *The Witches of Huntington* (1646).

[79] Purkiss, *The Witch in History,* 122.

was tied with private spaces and public invisibility. Purkiss points out that, '[i]n early modern communities, one of the principal ways of representing the border of nature or culture was the boundary of the house. Within its walls, women carried out the transformative processes which sustain family life. Moreover, the boundaries of the house were invested with ideological significance for the woman's own identity as chaste.'[80] As Edmund Tilney commented, '[t]he chiefest way for a woman to preserve and maintain this good fame, is to be resident in her owne house. For an honest woman in soberness keeping well hir house, gayneth thereby great reputation, and if she be evill, it [keeping there] driveth away many evill occasions, and stoppeth the mouthes of the people.'[81] The housewife was juxtaposed by the whore, who was seen as unsettled, outdoor, and without boundary. For example Robert Cleaver wrote, 'And therefore Salomon depainting, and describing the qualities of a whore, setteth her at the doore, now sitting upon her stall, now walking in the streetes, now looking out the window.'[82] The association of the witch, sometimes by extension through the familiar, with these liminal spaces once again places her in the sinister category, this time placing her as anti-housewife and therefore whorish. By being an invading source, the witch is by association related to the whore and the scold, being too nosy and too invasive to be considered anything beyond the extreme negative examples of womanhood. As Purkiss also agrees, 'By contrast, women who were not virtuously enclosed were associated with sexual availability, economic profligacy and political disorder. The physical boundaries of property become identified with the social boundaries of propriety.'[83]The familiar, as an invading being, was used as a tool to degrade those accused of witchcraft and victims by entering their space, publicising the private, especially when documented in pamphlets for public consumption.

Breaking cultural conventions of proper outdoor behaviour of women, Mary Smith, as we saw earlier, through her impertinent behaviour, placed herself as in the realm

[80] Purkiss, *The Witch in History,* 97-98.

[81] Edmund Tilney, *A briefe and pleasant discourse of duties in mariage, called the flower of friendship,* (London: Henrie Denha[m], 1568), E2v-E3v.

[82] Robert Cleaver, *A godlie forme of householde government,* (London: Thomas Creede, 1598), 223.

[83] Purkiss, *The Witch in History,* 98.

of the interrelated classifications of witch, whore, and suspect. As Richardson explains, 'Her behaviour has the power to unmake the physical confines of the domestic, and the choice to perform good or bad actions constructs space as either house or whorehouse. Whately's 'unhuswifelines' and 'unwifelike behaviour' carry a similar sense of deconstructing identity.'[84] Therefore, witches, being unhousewifely and not respecting the sanctified domestic space, not only fall well below the expectations of their gender, but through familiars, can endanger the status of their fellow female neighbours.

Guarding Resources

Through their disruption of household errands, the familiar helped contemporaries define the witch as the anti-housewife, once again commenting on gender ideals by placing the witch as the inverse of the desired character. We can see this in the example of Agnes Browne, who seemed to use the familiar as a way to explain why she was falling short of the ideal. In 1566, Agnes Browne, a child-witness, testified that Elizabeth Francis's familiar in the form of a dog was playfully teasing the young girl around her family's milk-house, disrupting her chores and causing mischief.[85] Browne, age 12, attested that:

> … that at suche a day naming the daye certayne that shee was chirning of butter and there came to her a thynge lyke a blacke dogge with a face like an ape a short [tail] and a syluer whystle (to her thinking) about his neck… in his mouth the keye of the milkehouse doore.[86]

The familiar is disrupting Agnes's chores and it cannot be helped to think that this may be the young girl's explanation of why her work was not done. She explains that:

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[84] Richardson, *Domestic Life,* 32. Quoting William Whately, *A Bride-Bush: Or, a Direction for Married Persons*, (London: Felix Kyngston for Thomas Man, 1619), 178, 211.

[85] Phillips, *The examination and confession of certaine Wytches* (1566). Agnes Browne, the twelve-year-old mentioned here, testified that the dog which teased her by her family's milk house, A4v-A5v.

[86] Philips, *The examination and confession of certaine Wytches* (1566), A4v-A5.

> I was a fearde, for he skypped and leaped to and fro, and sate on the toppe of a neddle, and then … he dyd run to put the keye into the locke of the mylkehouse dore, and I sayde he should haue none, and he sayde he wolde haue some, and then he opened the dore and went vppon the shelfe, and there vpon anew chese laid downe the key, and being a whyle within he came out againe, and locked the dore and said that he had made butter for mee.[87]

The familiar's trickster nature continues as Agnes comes back with her aunt later, finding a print on the cheese. The demon-dog fully controls and dismantles several days of chores, probably setting back the family financially with its destruction of both the cheese and butter in the milk house. Willis states that the disruption of these domestic chores not only 'relate to the mother's role in feeding, they also suggestively parallel the transformative powers of the mother's body—that is, the power of her body to produce life within it and to transform (as early modern belief would have it) blood into mother's milk.'[88] This is seen in the information given by Felice Okey against Elizabeth Eustace, where her 'kine gave down blood instead of milk.'[89] This reversal of the process of breastfeeding shows how the witch symbolically turned the world around her upside-down, introducing a world where blood was for demonic children and women had agency over men and beasts.

Diane Purkiss states that the witch 'who causes pollution where there should be order, who disrupts food supplies which must be ordered and preserved, who wastes what is necessary,' was a threat specifically to the housewife who was 'involv[ed in] maintaining boundaries, boundaries between nature and culture, between inside and outside, pollution and purity.'[90] The familiar, as the agent of this disruption must be considered as an extension of this. In 1645, Thomas and Mary Evered were said to have used a familiar to poison one of their neighbour's beer.[91] In 1674, in two separate pamphlets describing a case in Northamptonshire, the witch was said to

[87] Philips, *The examination and confession of certaine Wytches* (1566), A4v-A5.

[88] Willis, *Malevolent Nurture*, 52.

[89] W.W., *A true and just Recorde,* (1582), C7v.

[90] Purkiss, *The Witch in History,* 97.

[91] *A true Relation of the Arraignment of eighteene Witches* (1645).

have burned houses and killed sheep.[92] As Matteoni comments, contrasting familiars to the sabbat, familiars 'exhibited the features of ordinary domestic life, and [were] located in the routine of the everyday world.'[93] With the economic decline of the sixteenth century, '[m]uch of the pressure from this scarcity and marginality fell on the housewife, exhorted to manage frugally from every pulpit, and responsible for dairying and for the survival of herself and her household.'[94] Witnesses and victims could use the familiar to place the blame for household misfortunes and mismanagement on an outside figure. Through this interpretation, disruptions are not the product of Godly zeal or human-animal conflict on the part of testifiers but are a product of the want to preserve the fortress of the household from economic and moral ruin.

If we consider Richardson's findings that '[t]he routines of food production and consumption… central to the household tasks assigned to women, were used by deponents as a way of identifying the particularly insidious nature of moral lapses within the household,'[95] then the threat that many familiars and witches specifically attacked the food-producing sectors of the household such as the hearth and stores which had not only a physical but also a spiritual status that needed to be defended;

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[92] *The Full and true relation of the tryal, condemnation, and execution of Ann Foster (who was arrained for a witch) on Saturday the 22th of this instant August, at the place of execution at Northampton : with the manner how she by her malice and vvitchcraft set all the barns and corn on fire belonging to one Joseph Weeden living in Eastcoat, and bewitched a whole flock of sheep in a most lamentable manner ... : and also in what likeness the Devil appeared to her while she was in prison, and the manner of her department at her tryal.* (London: 1674) and *Relation of the most remarkable proceedings at the late assizes at Northampton Conteyning truely and fully, the tryals, confessions, and execution of a most mischievous vvitch, notorious high-way-man, barbarous murderess. The first being Mary Forster, who by witchcraft destroyed above 30 sheep belonging to one Joseph Weedon, and afterwards burned to the ground his dwelling-house, and two large barns, full of corn and hay: to his damage above 300l. VVith her confession of the fact, how, and why she did it: and askign him forgiveness for the same. And a wonderful experiment of her divelish skill shewed in the goal, after she was condemned. The second a high-way-man, who had been 14 times in goal, and before his death discovered several others. The third a young vvench that killed her child, with the strange means how the same was discovered, and her penitent behaviour at the execution. Who all suffered at Northampton aforesaid, Saturday, Aug. 22. 1674* (London: 1674). Interestingly, these two pamphlets describe the same trial, however the accused is named Anne Foster in one and Mary Forster in the latter.

[93] Francesca Matteoni, "Blood Beliefs in Early Modern Europe", 155.

[94] Purkiss, *The Witch in History,* 96.

[95] Richardson, *Domestic Life,* 47.

its threat is both moral and economic. Henry Holland advised that a well-ordered and holy household was a way to combat witchcraft.[96] If we consider that a holy household was defined within female power as a clean and impenetrable one, there is a connection between a woman being able to maintain boundaries and piety. The theme of witchcraft attacks on the household was not limited to a few pamphlets but seeped into other genres. For example, as Clark summarises, in the 1634 comedy *The late Lancashire witches,* '[a] well-ordered household is attacked (in a 'retrograde and preposterous way') by sorcery—the father kneels to the son, the wife obeys the daughter, and the children are overawed by the servants… a nephew comments that it is as if the house itself had been turned on its roof, while a neighbour protests that he might as well "stand upon my head, and kick my heels at the skies".'[97] By using familiars as a way to explain household misfortunes, other community women who were doing the accusing could distance suspicion of moral wantonness away from themselves onto an outside agent. Outside was seen as morally suspect as 'Open or closed, honest or privy, the permeability of the boundaries between the house and the community was always morally suggestive, because spatial opposites invited comparison with moral absolutes—if goodness was within, then iniquity must be outside, or vice versa.'[98] By having familiars and witches being associated as invasive, outside, and sinful, the combatants of that—privacy, the household, and the family, were placed as holy figures. Through this inversion process, familiars were used by accusers as a way to fit family values with the witch's ability to infiltrate physical and spiritual spaces. By looking at familiars as a tool of women in order to describe their daily struggles with female expectation, we open up new avenues about contemporaries' views on privacy, cleanliness, and housekeeping and what this means for the witch as a category.

As we can see from the examples above, the ideal household was not the reality. Purkiss explains this conflict between reality and ideal as stemming from the

[96] Holland, *Treatise,* sigs. H1r-H4r.

[97] Clark, *Thinking with Demons,* 89; *The Dramatic Works of Thomas Heywood,* ed. R.H. Shepherd (6 vols.; London, 1874), iv. 178 (Act I, Sc.i).

[98] Richardson, *Domestic Life,* 43.

paradox that 'the notion of the house as a closed container, with resolutely maintained boundaries presided over by the housewife, was at odds with the identity of the housewife as a member of the community.'[99] The house was opened up for childbirths, christenings, and marriages, as well as 'the everyday exchanges of news, gossip, utensils and food.'[100] These times leave the household and all it represented vulnerable. This can be seen, for example, in the practice of the gossip. When a woman sequestered herself into the bedroom for childbirth, trusted neighbours and family members of the female gender would come into the room and plug the holes and seams of the room with scraps of cloth.[101] The birthing chamber was a place of culpability and invasion, where threats could enter. Was this practice perhaps done with preternatural creatures in mind? Were familiars or fairies feared at a woman's most vulnerable time? Unfortunately, this can only be speculated upon at this time as research into this particular practice goes beyond the scope of this work. However, what can be postulated is that there was some inherent threat that was trying to be blocked out by this practice that was most likely tied with beliefs about boundary keeping.

Narratives about familiars help us as historians to understand the culture of the early modern community, its crowded nature, and situations when the confines of the home were justified in being broken. Richardson comments that 'The borders of the early modern house were problematic because the jurisdiction of its inhabitants technically ended there, despite a perceived area of 'personal space' around them which should prevent others from coming to close.'[102] However, we see this transgressed in many sources, including witchcraft pamphlets. In 1582, Alice Hunt testified against her neighbour stating that she heard Joan, the accused to be talking in her house next door although there was, at least by the assumption of the witness, no human in the building. She stated that 'she heard the said Joan to say "Yea, are you so saucy? Are ye so bold?" … And saith [Alice] is assured that there was no

[99] Purkiss, *The Witch in History,* 98.

[100] Purkiss, *The Witch in History,* 98.

[101] Adrian Wilson, 'The ceremony of childbirth and its interpretation' in *Women as Mothers in Pre-Industrial England,* ed. Valarie Fildes (London: Routledge, 1990), 73.

[102] Richardson, *Domestic Life,* 39.

Christian creature with her at the time, but that she used those speeches unto her imps.'[103] As Andrea Brady points out, 'modern notions of public and private spaces did not apply in early modern England.'[104] The house is constructed as the 'other' to the street, with a division of public and private being held on its boundaries, yet as we saw above with the entering of the house on occasions, this was not always the case.[105] Under the guise of protecting the household as a metaphor for the larger patriarchal system, fellow citizens were permitted to spy on their neighbours when the household was threatened. As Philip Julius, travelling around the country in 1602 observed, '[i]n England every citizen is bound by oath to keep a sharp eye at his neighbour's house, as to whether the married people live in harmony.'[106] It was not merely an excuse for observation but a mandate. As Richardson points out, 'Protestant notions of the right ordering of communities would succeed only if those communities regulated themselves internally, a goal which necessitated careful observation of neighbours' comings and goings.'[107] Therefore, the narrative of Alice Hunt being overheard by her neighbour can be read as not only driven by suspicion of Alice being a witch, but also using a larger code of language that encompasses this culture of observation and reporting. Sharpe has observed this infringing our modern notions of privacy as well, writing that '[d]ocumentation generated by the Hopkins trials also demonstrates that great invasion of personal privacy, the search for the witch's mark, was also of vital significance.'[108] While the stripping and semi-public examination of the nude body was no doubt an intrusion on one's privacy, the spatial invasion of the home seems to be more acceptable. We see this in the many examples of this prurience used as evidence in trial pamphlets. As Williamson explains, '[t]he lack of privacy meant witnesses were readily available, firmly

[103] W.W., *A true and iust recorde* (1582)*,* A4v.

[104] Andrea Brady, "'A share of sorrows': Death in the Early Modern English Household", in *Emotions in the Household, 1200-1900,* ed. Susan Broomhall (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 185.

[105] Richardson, *Domestic Life,* 41.

[106] Quote in Richardson, *Domestic Life,* 33. From Lena Cowen Orlin, *Private Matters and Public Culture in Post-Reformation England,* (London: Cornell University Press, 1994), 7.

[107] Richardson, *Domestic Life,* 33.

[108] Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness,* 143.

embedding the household in the community.'[109] Hearsay evidence has already been discussed, but we see plenty of it, like the example of Anne Bodenham in 1653. Her maid testified against her, detailing some of the ritual magic that Anne was said to perform, giving account of what happened in the house behind closed doors.[110] Evidence could also come in the form of observation by an uninvited watcher such as the witness who described that they saw Anne Desborough suckling her familiars in her bedroom or a witch by the name of Binkes who was seen suckling her imps in her yard.[111] As Richardson points out, 'Spatial proximity produced intimate knowledge, and the rhetoric of 'neighbourhood', meaning everyone's charge to ensure the moral uprightness of their local community, turned that knowledge into a currency with which to purchase local honesty.'[112] This allowed neighbourhoods to become 'schools for manners and behaviour, unofficial courts of local judgement, and stages on which neighbours created the performances that built reputation and identity,'[113] as we see in witchcraft trials in which a suspected person was under near-constant supervision. However, with witchcraft, this intrusion was believed to only reach so far since it was a crime that was considered private and requiring a confession. In *The Lawes against Witches and Coniuration* (1645), the proof of witches was outlined with '[t]heir own voluntary confession (which exeeds all other evidences) of the hurt they have done, or of the giving of their soules to the Devil, and of the Spirits which they have, how many, how they call them, and how they came by them,' as ideal for evidence.[114] As Laura Gowing points out, there was a different between 'public or private *issues* and *events* and public and private *spaces*.'

[109] Fiona Williamson, "Space in the City: Gender Identities in Seventeenth-Century Norwich," *Cultural and Social History* 9 (2012), 173.

[110] *Doctor Lamb's Darling or Strange and Terrible News* (1653), 5-6.
[111] *The Witches of Huntingdon* (1646); Stearne, *A Confirmation and Discovery of Witchcraft* (1648).
[112] Richardson, *Domestic Life,* 34.

[113] Pamela Allen Brown, *Better a Shrew Than a Sheep: Woman, Drama, and the Culture of Jest in Early Modern England,* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), 14.

[114] *The Lawes against Witches and Coniurations* (1645), 3.

[115] Witchcraft was considered a public issue that took place in private spaces, much like childbirth. This was widely accepted because as Richardson explains:

> When a wrongdoing has been identified, neighbours are legitimately allowed to look *in*, to use windows and doors intended for egress as a point of access, in order to make the domestic public. In the course of the normal routine, however, such unbidden proximity is an unwanted intimacy, and is read as an invasion akin to the twin sexual and spatial meanings of the verb 'to occupy'. These tropes of the penetration of household boundaries are at the heart of creation of a moral distance between deponent and accused: a hierarchized detachment in which the former takes the high ground on the latter because of their suspicious behaviour. It is this moral dynamic which keeps the household private, and prevents the penetration of its boundaries.[116]

The witch makes herself suspect by her actions and reputation, opening her domicile to scrutiny. When we return to the overhearing of Alice Hunt, we see that 'Sound is used here as a mediator which insists upon a dependence between the personal and the communal by invading the established space of the former with the concerns and preoccupations of the latter.'[117] The concept of the familiar allowed contemporaries the justification to invade their neighbours' houses, leaving every hole or shadowy entrance as an opportunity for observation and a space in which to place their narrative of their household experience.

Cleanliness

As familiar narratives could be used to describe apprehensions about boundaries of the household, they could also be used to show anxieties about the dirtiness caused when the housewife failed her duties, through her own slothfulness or nefarious means. Through associating the familiar with dirt, the witch was made the anti-housewife once again. As was seen in Chapter 1, the familiar often came in the form of small animals. While today, the presence of rats and mice as familiars would be seen as a connection to dirt, Jenner does point out that rats were not connected as

[115] Richardson, *Domestic Life,* 38. Gowing makes this comment in Laura Gowing, "'The freedom of the streets': women and social space, 1560-1640", *Londinopolis,* ed. Mark Jenner and Paul Griffiths (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 131.

[116] Richardson, *Domestic Life,* 40.

[117] Richardson, *Domestic Life,* 42.

much to filth as they are today, but were generally considered destructive, connecting to the idea that familiars were a threat to resources discussed above.[118] Jenner does, however, show that there was a connection between dogs, dirt, and disease, based in medical warnings that dogs could spread infections. He states, that 'when plague was feared English civic authorities gave order for the slaughter of large numbers of cats and (especially) dogs.'[119] Dogs that bothered their masters were especially singled out for execution, which emphasized the familiar in dog or cat form as especially suspect because of their ability to infiltrate and endanger (or annoy) contemporaries and their households.[120] Margaret Moore, bewitched a 'tydy and cleanly woman' with lice.[121] As Thomas points out, dirt was associated with visits from preternatural beings and maleficium, 'stinking utensils and living-quarters were conventially taken as evidence that animal familiars were present; and men were warned that it was dangerous to leave their excrement where their enemies might find it.'[122] As we saw earlier, maintaining the boundaries of the household was important and as is expanded here this was because of wider concerns about the sin of the street invading the holy of the hearth. The English were concerned with cleanliness and the appearance of it. As contemporary William Cowper stated, 'Wee can suffer no uncleannesse in our bodies, but incontinent we wash it away, neither can abide it in our garments, but without delay, we remedie it: yea, the smallest uncleannesse in the vessels that serve us for meate and drinke makes our very food loathsome unto us.'[123] Both dirty bodies and a dirty living space were seen to reflect a sinful nature. As Jonathan Edwards explained, 'Our streets are dirty and muddy, intimating that the world is full of that which tends to defile the soul, that worldly

[118] Jenner, 'The Great Dog Massacre', 47.

[119] Jenner, 'The Great Dog Massacre', 48. He cites this occurring in the summer of 1563 and May of 1603.

[120] Jenner, 'The Great Dog Massacre', 52-53.

[121] H.F., *A true and exact Relation of the severall Informations* (1645), 23.

[122] Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic,* 612.

[123] *The Workes of Mr. William Cowper* (1529), 732. Qtd in Keith Thomas, "Cleanliness and godliness in early Modern England", in *Religion, Culture and Society in Early Modern Britain,* ed. Anthony Fletcher and Peter Roberts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 56.

objects and worldly concerns and worldly company tend to pollute us.'[124] There was an expectation that householders were to clean their dwellings, remove their waste, and maintain the street in front of their house as a preservative against infection, which was seen to be a sign of the corruption of the soul.[125] These precautions were even more important within the house. As Thomas points out, 'Books on household management emphasised that it was the woman's duty to "keep all at home neat and cleane", and that "cleanness in houses, especially in beds", was "a great preserver of health". "Cleanlinesse be such an ornament to a housewife," thought Gervase Markham, "that if shee want any part thereof, shee loseth both that and all good names else."'[126] Therefore, we can see that there was some connection between the witch, with her unclean companions, that set her against and contrary to the housewife.

By having familiars, the witch may have also been associated with idleness, in this light. Dirtiness was seen as a reflection of slothfulness and laziness. For John Wesley, 'dirt [was] "a bad fruit of laziness", whereas cleanliness was "one great branch of frugality".'[127] As Thomas points out, 'In his *Characters* (1608) the Calvinist Joseph Hall described the "slothfull" man as 'a standing poole; [who] can not chuse but gather corruption: he is decried…by a drie and nastie hand…'.'[128] A clean body was also seen to be the outward sign of inward moral integrity.[129] As John Angier wrote, 'When we are to come to the house of God, we prepare our bodies, in regard of the company we come unto, we wash our selves, and change our

[124] Jonathan Edwards, *Images and Shadows of Divine Things,* ed. Perry Miller (New Haven, 1948), 94. Qtd in Thomas, "Cleanliness and godliness", 56.

[125] Thomas, "Cleanliness and godliness", 72.

[126] Thomas, "Cleanliness and godliness," 73. Qtg. Sir Thomas Smith, *De Rpublica Anglorum,* ed. Mary Dewar (Cambridge, 1982), 58; Tryon, *A Treatise on Cleanliness,* 5; G[ervase] M[arkham], *The English House-Wife* (1631), 196.

[127] Thomas, "Cleanliness and godliness", 79; *Letters of Wesley,* ed. Telford, V, 133; *Sermons on Several Occasions,* (Bristol, 1760), 149.

[128] Thomas, "Cleanliness and godliness", 79, quoting Jos[eph] Hall, *Characters of Vertues and Vices* (1608), 123-124.

[129] Thomas, "Cleanliness and godliness", 60., referencing Psalms 24:4; Matthew 15:20; Mark 7:1-23; Romans 14:14. William Burkitt, *Expository Notes… on the New Testament* (1703), sig. Ff2.

apparel, and see that it be clean.'[130] Francis Bacon stated, 'cleanliness of body was ever esteemed to proceed from a due reverence to God, to society, and to ourselves.'[131] It was supposed to reflect spiritual purity, following the washing away of sins of the baptismal ceremony.[132] The witch then was associated with the dirty, the morally unsound, and the anti-housewife, just by associating with vermin.

Fairies & Hobgoblins

The practice of contemporaries explaining household troubles was not by any means new, nor were such explanations limited to familiars. By attributing household misfortunes to the familiar, the spirit was often described as similar to fairies and hobgoblins, other preternatural beings that were associated in contemporary culture with housekeeping and domestic boundaries. Familiars and fairies were often described by contemporaries as related—distinctive from each other, but sharing many common features.[133] As Katherine Briggs explained, 'St. Augustine's tentative identification of the incubi and succubi as the Pans, fauns,… and satyrs of the heathen world pointed the way to a belief that we find widespread in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that fairies, pucks, and hobgoblins were downright devils.'[134] Fairy beliefs flourished particularly in Scotland, but could be found in remote parts of England.[135] James I, Reginald Scot, and Walter Scot all tediously tried to unravel the differences between these creatures and we actually see some confusions among witchcraft trial participants between fairies and familiars. Joan Willimont, for example, insisted that her familiar was 'no devil but a fairy.'[136] John

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[130] John Angier, *An helpe to better hearts for better times indeavoured in severall sermons, wherein the zeal and fervency required in Gods services is declared, severall hinderances discovered, and suitable helps provided : all out of Gods treasury,* (London: A.M., 1647), 220.
[131] Francis Bacon, *Works of Francis Bacon,* ed. James Spedding, Robert Leslie Ellis, and Douglas Denon Heath, (London: 1858), III, 377.

[132] Thomas, "Cleanliness and godliness," 61. Qt. Robert Horne, *Points of Instuction [sic] for the Ignorant in Life and Death* (1613), A6.

[133] See Purkiss, *The Witch in History,* 134-139; Sharpe, 'The Witch's Familiar', 229.

[134] Katherine Briggs, *The Anatomy of Puck: An Examination of Fairy Beliefs Among Shakespeare's Contemporaries and Successors* (London: Routledge, 2007), 169.

[135] Matteoni, "Blood Beliefs", 71.

[136] *The wonderful Discoverie of the Witchcrafts of Margaret and Philip Flower* (1619), E3.

Walsh described some of the spirits he was interacting with as fairy folk.[137] As Matteoni explains, 'according to the popular mind, the devil was just one extraordinary and feared creature among others, which manifested the presence of the superhuman dimension disquietly close to the known world.'[138] With the Reformation, Protestants read fairies as part of a larger demonic network that tempted people through their manipulation of the natural world.[139] Like familiars, fairies were said to pinch and nip people, but differed from familiars because they were concerned with the physical realm, not the soul. Matteoni hypothesises that 'the Devil's attempt to spoil the human soul through the satanic allegiance and the employment of witches' blood was transposed in the alleged longing of fairies for the human world.'[140] Like familiars and the Devil, fairies were encountered in boundary territories and times—doorways, between towns, midnight, etc.—as well as on liminal times of year.[141] As Purkiss points out, 'They could also be encountered at moments of social or physical transition: birth, copulation, and death, adolescence, betrothal, deflaration, and, of course, death and burial.'[142] Once again we are brought back to the gossip and their closing of the permeable parts of the birthing chamber. While we see many more examples of similarities between fairies and familiars, I wish to highlight here another folkloric being more particular to England that I think holds even more similarities and connections with the familiar—that is the hobgoblin known as Robin Goodfellow.

While Robin is most known for being the alias of the character of Puck in Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream,* he was a common figure in English oral and print culture, appearing in a variety of stories with features that changed over

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[137] *Examination of John Walsh* (1566), A5.

[138] Matteoni, "Blood Beliefs," 72.

[139] C.J.A. MacCulloch, "The Mingling of Fairy and Witch Beliefs in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century Scotland", *Folklore,* vol.32, no. 4 (1921).

[140] Matteoni, "Blood Beliefs", 74.

[141] Diane Purkiss, "Fairies and Incest in Scottish Witchcraft Stories", in *Languages of Witchcraft: Narrative, Ideology and Meaning in Early Modern Culture,* ed. Stuart Clark. (Basingstone: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), 83.

[142] Purkiss, "Fairies and Incest", 83.

time. Sometimes attached to evil, Robin was a descendant of agricultural deities, able to be beneficial and malevolent to housekeepers and servants. There are several overlaps of description between Robin Goodfellow and familiars. Robin was said to be a hybrid spirit, appearing as a man with goat legs and goat horns, concerned with housework, trickery, and as the period goes on, sexual conquest. He appears in this likeness on the feature woodcut for a 1629 pamphlet entitled *Robin Goodfellow: His Mad Pranks and Merry Jests*. Robin here is pictured in the centre, with a dancing fairy ring surrounding his feat. Broom in hand and member front and centre, Robin is also surrounded by dark flying figures. This image is reminiscent of described and pictured scenes of Satan at sabbats, with witches dancing as devils accompany the scene.[143]

The pamphlet also describes many features of Robin that echo what we find with familiars and tie him to other preternatural beings. The pamphlet opens with the description that '[o]nce upon a time… there was wont to walk many harmeless Spririts called Fayries, … [appearing] (sometime invisible) in divers shapes… [conducting] mad Pranks… pinching of sluts black and bluw, and misplacing of things in ill ordered houses.'[144] Robin was described as the son of one of these fairies and a maid. One day, he receives a letter from his father which says 'Thou hast power to change thy shape To horse, to hog, to dog, to ape,' which sounds reminiscent of what we see in familiar spirits.[145] Robin was often described as conducting revenge; however, differently from familiars, he was also mostly a benevolent spirit.

Interestingly, like familiars, one was supposed to leave out milk for him. The pamphlet states Robin's ire at a maid: 'Because tho lay'st me himpen, hampen, I will neither bolt, nor stampen: 'Tis not your garments new or old That Robin loves, I feel no cold: Had you left me milk, or creame, You should have had a pleasing dreame;

[143] *Robin Good-Fellovv, his mad prankes, and merry iests full of honest mirth, and is a fit medicine for melancholy* (London: 1628), Title page.

[144] *Robin Good-Fellow* (1628), 5.

[145] *Robin Good-Fellow* (1628), 9.

Because you left no drop, or crum, Robin never more will come.'[146] Housewives would appeal to the hobgoblin by offering him bread and milk so he would help or at least not hinder household work. Reginald Scot in *Discovery of Witchcraft* pairs Robin with the familiar stating 'In deede your grandams maides were woont to set a boll of milke before him and his cousine Robin good-fellow, for grinding of malt or mustard, and sweeping the house at midnight…his mess of white bread and milke, which was his standing fee.'[147] Just like Robin, familiars are often fed bread and milk for appeasement and favour. In 1579 'one Mother Deuell, dwellyng nigh the Ponde in Windesore aforesaied, beeyng a verie poore woman, hath a Spirite in the shape of a Blacke Catte, and calleth it Gille whereby she is aided in her Witchcrafte, and she daiely feedeth it with Milke.'[148] Elizabeth Sawyer was asked pointedly '[w]hat were those two ferrets that you were feeding on a fourme with white-bread and milke, when diuers children came, and saw you feeding of them?'[149]

Perhaps one of the most striking connections between these two spirits is the choice of names that witches, witnesses, or pamphleteers assign to familiars, often reflecting the connection to the household spirit. For example, in the 160 or so familiars mentioned in pamphlets in my research database, only about a third are given names in the sources. Out of these, three familiars are named Robin with an additional two that have diminutive forms of the name. There are also two that have the diminutive name of Puppet, another alias of Puck. It was the third most common name, behind Jack and Tom. My working theory on why these connections drop off in the seventeenth century is because of the increased diabolism present in witchcraft trials and the increase of more demonic names for familiars. While this caused Robin to be moved closer to demons in contemporary minds—for example William Warner, Puritan writer, in his *Albion's England* (1602), outright states that Robin Goodfellow is a devil[150] and Ben Johnson's Puck Hairy in *The Sad Shepherd* is both witch's

[146] *Robin Good-Fellow* (1628), 17.

[147] Scot, *Discoverie of Witchcraft,* 47. Scot actually wrote that he thought that eventually existence of witches would be placed in the same category of falsity that he placed the hobgoblin in. See Scot, *Discoverie of Witchcraft,* 73.

[148] *A Rehersall both straung and true (*1579), A5v.
[149] Goodcole, *The wonderfull discoverie of Elizabeth Sawyer (*1621), C4.
[150] Briggs, *The Anatomy of Puck,* 72.

familiar and diabolical hobgoblin[151] – it also moved familiars closer culturally to the Devil. This was reflected in the actions of familiars, but more importantly for this discussion in the names given to the spirits, such as Beezlebub and Nebecanzer which crop up in the 1645-1647 trials led by Matthew Hopkins in Essex and Sussex. Briggs comments that 'it was rather perhaps that the goblin became a devil than that the devil became a goblin' in the seventeenth century, which this diabolic shift seems to confirm.[152] However, as Robin became more blended with other spirits, moving away from his household-disrupting roots, the housewife was left with a gap in cultural language which conveyed her apprehensions of her housekeeping. The witch's familiar formed a suitable substitute, able to be imagined as household disrupter as we saw earlier, but also diabolic enough to suit the concerns of the Godly-minded in post-Reformation England.

Through describing familiars as disrupters of the household and malevolent cousins of the fairy and hobgoblin, women used the language of witchcraft in order to place the witch as not only the anti-mother, anti-man or anti-Church figure, all topics that have a rich and varied historiography, but also as an anti-housewife, against order, cleanliness and economy. This mechanism for explanation of misfortune was especially necessary because, as Wendy Wall has found in her work on domesticity on stage in early modern England, '[a]fter the Reformation, domesticity's importance as a structural model for social order was intensified. As scholars, have noted, the early seventeenth century witnessed the transformation of what was in effect a 'vaguely articulated societal theory into an intentional political ideology,' one so powerful that the family secured a place of importance in political debates for the next one hundred years.'[153] In her work, Wall highlights how 'texts nominat[ed] the housewife as the guardian of a national and Christian stewardship.'[154] And while the economic pressure of the early modern village housewife waned and waxed during the period, this intensifying of the household as a foundation stone for moral

[151] Briggs, *The Anatomy of Puck,* 80.

[152] Briggs, *The Anatomy of Puck,* 81.

[153] Wendy Wall, *Staging Domesticity: Household Work and English Identity in Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 7.

[154] Wall, *Staging Domesticity,* 5.

and social order made the household, as Purkiss describes it, 'circumscribed space [with] a rich and elaborate network of cultural meanings assigned to productive tasks, [which]…defined female identity.'[155] It is interesting then that the familiar's appearance in pamphlet records increases with the political instability of the seventeenth century, corrupting, with its destructive nature, what was described by William Perkins as the 'seminary of all other Societies… wherein are taught and learned the principles of authorities and subjection'—that is the family, and by extension, the household.[156]

The housewife was the maintainer of boundaries, her work as death bringer to eaten animals and life giver in the roles of child-bearer, food manager, and healer make her controller of life and death within her house. When the house is invaded or something goes with her responsibilities, she could suffer, as Peters describes, 'a terrible responsibility and loss of status both in the eyes of the individual concerned and those of her neighbours.'[157] The familiar, and through it the witch, were placed at the centre of this power struggle as invasive beings and '[W]omen's stories of witchcraft constituted a powerful *fantasy* which enabled women to negotiate the fears and anxieties of housekeeping.'[158] The familiar, as both diabolic agent and animal that could be found near or in the house was culturally aligned with the failings of the household, giving women (and sometimes men) the reference necessary to convey apprehensions of the household and its boundaries in a time when maintaining these boundaries was necessary as a foundation for a well-ordered, Godly society. Ultimately, this allows for a nuanced criticism of the Macfarlane-Thomas alms-denied model, extending witchcraft to be more of an economic and moral threat to household, rather than a guilt-driven model. It also challenges historiography which explains witchcraft as the product of misogynist motives and instead places the witch in the realm of female power.

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[155] Purkiss, *The Witch in History,* 94.

[156] Wall, *Staging Domesticity,* 1.

[157] Christine Peters, *Women in Early Modern Britain, 1450-1640* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 111.

[158] Purkiss, *The Witch in History,* 93.

The Witch Teat: The Witch as the Anti-Mother

The witch was not just seen as the anti-housewife, but also the anti-mother. Through examination of the witch mark, we see how the witch in association with the familiar was made to be an inverse mother figure. The witch mark in England took on different connotations from those attributed to it on the Continent because of the presence of the familiar. While the European norm was that the mark was given by the Devil as a brand, as we have seen, England regarded it as both a mark to know the witch by and the place for feeding the familiar blood. Ewen explains that with '[t]he doctrine of the satanic brand having for long been accepted and the practice of feeding or rewarding the familiars by allowing them to such blood becoming established, it was no great step to regard spots, which had the appearance of yielding blood, as the Devil's marks, and a certain sign of witchcraft.'[159] Witches were searched for 'any unusual spot bearing the slightest resemblance to a nipple' where it would be classified as 'devil's dung or big'.[160] Considered as the most important evidence in a witch trial, the witch teat was tangible physical evidence of an invisible, preternatural occurrence. Willis, pointing out that witch marks were often searched for near the end of investigations into witchcraft accusations, comments that '[o]nly then, in the presence of male authorities … and after a relative consensus about her danger to the community had been reached, could the ultimate source of conflict—the mother's breast—be confronted and allowed to become a target for aggression.'[161] The emphasised difference of the witch mark as a teat, rather than a brand, gives some validity to the concept that the witch mark—and through extension the familiar—was tied to concepts of motherhood and breastfeeding, as well as the religious implications that were outlined in the previous chapter. The witch was placed once again as an example of inversion—the demonic and perverse mother.

As we have seen, trial participants used the familiar in order to justify as well as show anxiety about gender ideals and gendered bodies. This was reflected in the

[159] Ewen, *Witchcraft and Demonaism,* 75.

[160] Ewen, *Witchcraft and Demonaism,* 75.

[161] Willis, *Malevolent Nurture,* 65.

narrative of feeding the familiar spirit blood through a teat which was a perversion of the woman's ability to breastfeed. The feeding of blood was closely tied with common perceptions of breastfeeding. It was believed that breastmilk came from blood from the uterus that was purified by the heart. Purkiss comments that '[t]he breast was a redeemed part of the open, dirty body of the childbearing woman, a part where her polluted blood was purified by the fires of maternal love so that it could become an expression of that love.'[162] This understanding was so entrenched in contemporary minds that '[e]ven when anatomical studies made it obvious that no vein ran from womb to heart or breast, medical writers clung to the idea of milk from blood.'[163] The cultural understanding of breastfeeding can be used to understand trial participant's use of familiar spirits' bloodfeeding as placing the witch once again in the gradient of polarity and inversion. Purkiss explains that '[t]he witch gives blood instead of milk; the purified blood that is milk, and hence the narrative of the female body as a source of nourishment rather than poison, does not exist as far as she is concerned. Her body is all poison.'[164] The witch can be positioned within the restrictions of prescribed gender roles because, like housekeeping, motherhood 'was no longer simply the many important tasks in a domestic economy but a woman's "special vocation," drawing upon her 'natural' virtues of compassion and pity and her biological capacity to breast-feed.'[165] Trial participants placed the witch as a perverse mother, given 'attributes of an invasive and malevolent mother, who used her powers to suckle, feed, and nurture child-like demonic 'imps' in order to bring sickness and death to the households of other mothers.'[166]

Familiars could be used by witches to provide the feeling of being needed, as we saw with pets earlier. The witch was both a mother, providing sustenance and shelter for her demonic children, but also a child, depending on them to provide protection and authority in a world where females, especially older, poor ones that are predominant

[162] Purkiss, *The Witch in History*, 131.

[163] Purkiss, *The Witch in History,* 131.

[164] Purkiss, *The Witch in History,* 134.

[165] Willis, *Malevolent Nurture,* 18.

[166] Willis, *Malevolent Nurture,* 14-15.

in witchcraft trials, were lacking power and authority. For example, in the case of Elizabeth Stile, her familiar takes care of her and 'prouided for her bothe Milke and Creame, againste her commyng home.'[167] In a few trials we can see where the concept of familiars as children directly impinges upon the early modern family. Purkiss explains, 'the familiar is not only a covert representation of a maternal wish to harm a child, but also the child's competitor, offering a better future than the child can, and voicing on behalf of the woman a sense of entitlement she cannot articulate.'[168] In a handful of the trials had the accused children testifying against their own mothers and fathers. These were considered the most 'doctored' of testimonies as children were usually commended by judges and magistrates for their evidence. The presence of these testimonies in pamphlets not only indicates the exceptionality of witchcraft accusations, as children were not normally allowed to testify in felony cases, but also helped spread ideas about the relationship between witch's familiars and witch's children. For example, Thomas Rabbet, age eight, base-born son of Ursula Kemp, testified against his mother, saying he saw her feeding familiars.[169] In the same trial, Phoebe Hunt, age eight, step-daughter of Alice Hunt, testified that her mother likewise had familiars and that she had seen them being fed by her.[170] It can be read that the children's focus on the familiar spirit in their testimonies could have stemmed from jealousy and the threat of another consuming maternal resources. Henry Sellys, age nine, gave a stirring testimony against both of his parents, stating that 'one night about midnight, there came to his brother Iohn a spirite, and tooke him by the left legge, and also by the litle Toe, which was like his sister, but that it was al blacke.'[171] After his brother screamed to his father for help, his father said to his mother 'why thou whore cannot you keepe *your* impes from *my* children.'[172] The use of 'your' and 'my' here is interesting as it

[167] *A Rehersall both straung and true* (1579), A8v.

[168] Purkiss, *The Witch,* 136.

[169] W.W., *A true and just Recorde,* (1582), A3v.

[170] W.W., *A true and just Recorde,* (1582), A4-A4v.

[171] W.W., *A true and just Recorde,* (1582), D1.

[172] W.W., *A true and just Recorde,* (1582), D1. [Italics are my own for emphasis.] This could also be a case of re-marriage for the husband, talking to his wife, the step-mother of his children.

seems to signify that the familiar spirit and the man's children were rivals and were placed as polar opposites. Elizabeth Frances placed the familiar spirit as a threat to familial structure asking her cat Satan to kill her unborn child.[173] Elizabeth also asked the familiar to kill her other daughter and paralyse her husband a few years following, completely breaking down the family structure and forming a new family with her and her familiar as the head of power.[174] Perhaps by creating a second family with the familiar, Elizabeth gained agency and power within it, placing it outside of the patriarchal structure. This latter point, however, could not be applied to later witches who were under the patriarchy of the Devil. The placing of the witch under the dominion of Satan allowed trial participants to express their discomfort with a woman who was outside of patriarchal control.

Feeding familiars seemed to be an idea that was passed through the generations by word of mouth. For example, Elizabeth Francis said that her grandmother taught her the craft and 'counseiled her to renounce GOD and his worde, and to geue of her bloudde to Sathan (as she termed it) whyche she delyuered her in the lykenesse of a whyte spotted Catte, and taughte her to feede the sayde Catte with breade and mylke and she dyd so.'[175] Like John Walsh, Elizabeth Francis participated in a reward system with her familiar as well. However, unlike John Walsh, who gave his familiar food for every task and blood only once, she gave food occasionally and blood as a reward for 'wolde wyl him to do any thinge for her.'[176] This change is important. For here we see that familiars are like animals in that they need 'normal' food such as bread and milk, but they are different in that they get rewarded for their activities with a drop of blood. This changes the witch into a provider, gaining the role of pet-owner, while paying for acts of *maleficium* with a drop of blood. When George Gifford wrote his tract *A Dialogue concerning Witches and Witchcrafts*, the change in popular beliefs from the familiar given a drop of blood for reward to a more constant contact of feeding blood similar to breastfeeding seems to have been established. Witches by this point were believed to let familiars 'sucke now and then

[173] Phillips, *The examination and confession of certaine Wytches* (1566), A7v.

[174] Phillips, *The examination and confession of certaine Wytches* (1566), A8.

[175] Phillips, *The examination and confession of certain Wytches (1566)* A6-A6v.

[176] Phillips, *The examination and confession of certain Wytches* (1566), B2.

a drop of blood.'[177] It is important to note that Elizabeth obtained this blood 'by prycking herselfe, sometime in one place & then in an other, and where she pricked her selfe there remayned a red spot, which was styl to be sene.'[178] Importantly the drawing of blood was done by the witch herself, the location changes, and possibly more importantly, the mark was made after the drawing of blood. She was the one that pricked herself and only after was a mark left, like a scar. The cause was the prick; the effect was the mark. This idea differs dramatically from the later conceived notion of the witch mark as a nipple to suckle familiars with, in which the familiar itself leaves the mark.

Elizabeth also passed on her knowledge when she passed on her familiar (now a toad) to Mother Waterhouse, a poor neighbour. She 'taught her as she was in structed before by her grandmother Eue, tellig her that she must cal him Sathan and geue him of her bloude and bread and milke as before.'[179] Familiars, and the feeding thereof, might provide for the witch 'with at least the illusion of control over a world in which she was largely powerless.'[180] Willis further claims that while witches might not have had 'a shared set of practices, at least [they had] a shared fantasy life, in which marginalised women dreamed of an 'oppositional' female network paralleling those female villagers who had come to exclude them.'[181] They did this by sharing familiars and giving them as gifts to one another, as well as meeting and helping each other on curses.

Mother (Agnes) Waterhouse also followed Elizabeth Francis's reward system, but changed it slightly. Along with the blood which she gave her familiar after every errand he did for her, she also gave him a chicken every time she used him.[182] This is more like what we see with Francis Coxe above—rewarding with food and blood—although multiple times. Mother Waterhouse described the way that she gave blood

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[177] George Gifford. *A Dialogue concerning Witches and Witchcrafts.,* 10.

[178] *The examination and confession of certaine Wytches at Chensforde* (1566) B7-B7v.

[179] *The examination and confession of certaine Wytches at Chensforde* (1566), A8v.

[180] Willis, *Malevolent Nurture,* 76.

[181] Willis, *Malevolent Nurture,* 77.

[182] *The examination and confession of certaine Wytches at Chensforde* (1566), B2.

to Satan that makes a contrast to the witch/familiar relationship to Elizabeth Francis. She is reported to have stated that she would give him blood 'pricking her hand or face & puttinge the bloud to hys mouth whyche he sucked.'[183] Here, we see the familiar actually sucking blood from a mark: however, it should be noted that the wound was still self-inflicted and not made by the familiar. It is Agnes Waterhouse who had her marks used against her as evidence for her witchcraft. This is interesting because already this early the magistrate overseeing the trial already knew that the mark was a sign of witchcraft. In her second examination, Agnes's "kercher"[184] on her head is lifted up revealing 'diuerse spottes in her face & one on her nose.'[185] Here we begin to see the starting of the practice of searching, although this is one of the few (possibly the only) cases where the accused was reported to be exposed in the courtroom by surprise.

The familiar, however, did not always suck the blood of a willing subject. Keith Thomas points out that '[t]he employment of vampirish familiars for magic purposes had been encountered in medieval legend.'[186] In fact, Ewen gives an example of how in the fourteenth century a chronicler wrote about a sorceress employed by Queen Eleanor who made toads suck the blood from Rosamond, the paramour of Henry II.[187] Margery Sammon was reported to have confessed that her mother told her that 'if thou doest not giue them mylke, they will sucke of thy blood.'[188] Here, the sucking of blood on a witch was not a reward or sustenance system but a threat. Like a negligent mother, if she did not take care of her demonic child it would turn on her and cause her harm. In the testimony of Agnes Dowsing against her mother Agnes Herd, it was reported that her mother's familiars drew blood from both her and her brother's bodies.[189] Joan Upney confessed that her familiar pinched Harold's wife

[183] *The examination and confession of certaine Wytches at Chensforde* (1566), B1.

[184] Kerchief

[185] *The examination and confession of certaine Wytches at Chensforde* (1566), C2v.

[186] Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic,* 446.

[187] Ewen, *Witchcraft and Demonianism,* 73.

[188] W.W., *A true and just Recorde,* (1582) B8v.

[189] W.W., *A true and just Recorde,* (1582) in Rosen, *Witchcraft,* 152.

and 'sucked her till she died.'[190] This woman seems to be confused with the concept that familiars were meant to suck the blood of their witch/providers rather than their victims, bringing into question of how established blood-feeding was in 1589 or was the mistake merely caused by a frightened, possibly senile woman. Ewen points out that 'some witches did not always pierce themselves, but allowed the imp itself to make an incision, or to draw blood from an open wound, and latterly to sooth the instinct of nutrition by sucking at any protuberance.'[191] We see this in the 1612 Lancashire trial where Alizon Davis testified that her grandmother advised her to let the devil appear and 'let him sucke at some part of her, and shee might haue, and doe what shee would.'[192]

Sucking also turns into a more sexual act, moving downwards towards the fundament. Sharpe points out that '[i]n the early pamphlet accounts the place where the witch was sucked varied: face, nose, chin and forefinger, but also thigh, shoulder, and wrist.'[193] It seems as though by James I's reign, the location of the mark in the fundament, that is on or near the genitalia or rectum of a witch, had been established as the site of where a witch mark could be found.[194] We can see this is Elizabeth Clarke's confession when she said two things 'came into her bed every night, or every other night, and sucked upon the lower parts of the body.'[195] In fact, we see the mark referred to in terms of 'teats' or 'paps' in the 1634 Lancashire trial.[196] Here, several of the women have their marks described as 'paps in her secrets'. It seems by 1634, the mark located in the fundament and their description as paps or teats was firmly established.

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[190] *The Apprehension and confession of three notorious Witches* (1589) B1v.

[191] Ewen, *Witchcraft and Demonianism,* 75.

[192] Potts, *The Wonderfull Discoverie of Witches in the Countie of Lancaster,* C1.

[193] Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness,* 73.

[194] Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness,* 73.

[195] H.F, *A true and exact Relation,* in *English Witchcraft,* 16.

[196] For a useful chart on which witches were said to have witch marks, see Ewen, *Witchcraft and Demonaism,* 216-217.

Limited Explorations

There are two aspects of gender concerning the familiar spirit that at this point can only be speculated on—male witches, and familiar spirits that are given gender. These are limited because of the small number of cases where they occur and therefore, the following is an exploration of some avenues of research that might see advancement with the inclusion of other source materials such as depositions, ballads, and broadsides. While this chapter has pointed out the dominance of the perception that witches were inherently feminine, the presence of the male witch cannot be ignored. In the pamphlets in question, there are nineteen male witches that are associated with familiars, making up 12.93% of the witches with familiars.[197] What is most interesting among these cases is that there does not seem to be a stark difference between female witches with familiars and male ones, except in the case of having 'carnal knowledge' with the Devil or familiars. Both male and female witches with familiars were found to have teats and marks and engage in blood feeding. Interestingly, thirteen out of the nineteen male witches found in this study engaged in blood feeding or giving. This percentage was surprisingly higher than female witches—52.85% compared to the 68.42% of male witches—that performed blood acts with their familiars. John Winnick, for example, confessed that his familiar 'suckt his body at the places where the marks are found.'[198] A male witch identified as Cherrie of Thrapston detailed an interesting perspective on blood feeding confessing that 'his Imps, the last time they sucked him, not long before he was searched, told him they would not suck him any more but that time, because he was an old man, and had but a little blood.'[199] Male witches with familiars are found to even follow the patterns of inheritance discussed above. Alexander Sussums, for example, was recorded to confess that he let familiars suck on him because he came from a line of witches.[200] It seems that to the early modern trial participant, while

[197] This jumps to 16.09% of the 87 witches in the 1645-9 period, which has been highlighted throughout for its high concentration of witches in a few short years.

[198] *The Witches of Huntingdon* (1646), 4.

[199] Stearne, *A Confirmation and Discovery of Witchcraft* (1646), 35.

[200] Stearne, *A Confirmation and Discovery of Witchcraft* (1646), 36.

there was a prejudice against women so they were accused more than men of being witches and having familiars, when a man was accused, the expectations of what the witch had done were similar. The higher percentage, although hard to confirm because of the small sample size, might even indicate a greater need to use familiars and blood feeding to prove that these men, exceptionally for their sex, were witches. However, even with a small sample size we can see how trial participants did not seem to place male witches and separate from female witches when describing the characteristics of a familiar spirit encounter.

Gender also plays a role within the characteristics of familiars. 13.47% of the 297 familiar spirits identified in this study were assigned a gender by trial participants either through explicit mentions of their gender or gender-assigned pronouns. If gender-specific names are included in this the percentage rises to 31.31% of all familiars.[201] Most of those that are given genders were identified as male (thirty-four out of the forty total) which is probably inflated because of the confusion between the familiar spirit and the Devil, discussed in the previous chapter.[202] While this is a very small detail in the scope of this study, it brings out interesting connections when one considers that familiars were sometimes also assigned tasks by confessing witches. Elizabeth Weed, for example, was reported to have confessed that 'b]eing demanded the name of her lesser Spirits, shee saith the name of the white one was Lilly, and the black one Priscill; and that the office of Lilly was to hurt man, woman, or childe; and the office of Priscell was to hurt Cattell when she desired.'[203] Lilly was identified by pronouns as male and Priscell, female. Perhaps there was some kind of correlation of the genders of familiars with the crimes they are reported to do. As we see in the example above, the male familiar was given the more aggressive crime, while the female familiar spirit was connected with a crime less violent than murder, conforming to the contemporary beliefs about crime and gender. While a thorough analysis of this is beyond the scope of this thesis,

[201] This includes only obviously gendered names, such as Tom or Richard, but does not include slightly ambiguous names like Robin or Hobb.

[202] If we include those with gendered names, about 75% of familiars that are assigned a gender are male, compared to the 85% excluding gendered-named familiars.

[203] *The Witches of Huntingdon* (1646), 2.

considering the use of gender ideals and expectations in trial participants' narratives that has been observed above, there may be more to read into the subject.

Gender was an influence in trial participants' testimonies about familiar spirits. Through the familiar's intrusion into household life, contemporaries could voice their anxieties, beliefs, and failings in maintaining gender ideals. The spirit also allowed trial participants to place the witch within a framework of inversion and categorisation emphasising family values and Christian womanhood while lumping dirtiness, idleness, bad mothers, and witches together. The witch mark was also brought into this narrative through the shift of the appearance of the witch mark into that of the witch teat, once again emphasising the gendered aspect of witch stereotypes. This chapter has allowed us to move analysis of witchcraft beyond the misogynist-centred theories of early feminist observers into a more nuanced viewpoint that argues that trial participants, who were mostly women, were able to convey meaning and explain their own lives through the familiar spirit, providing insights into early modern views of femininity and gender.

Chapter 5. Conclusion

Through the analysis of early modern English witchcraft pamphlets, it can be seen that trial participants co-authored testimonies about familiar spirits, revealing some of the beliefs and assumptions held by contemporaries about aspects of their culture outside of witchcraft. Additionally, when contemporaries discussed the familiar they shared a cultural subtext that strengthened the connection of witches to both demonological and folkloric beliefs. This comprehensive study considers much of the breadth of characteristics that were given to the familiar spirit with the goal of giving an intersectional analysis that considered not only witches' viewpoints but the perspectives of all trial participants. By analysing the 297 familiars described in English witchcraft pamphlets, the themes of the familiar as an animal, as a demonic agent, and as a being connected to gender has been explored to reveal that contemporaries used the familiar spirit to place the witch in a position of inversion and strengthened the connection of the category of witch with other, often negative, categories.

The division of this thesis into themes examined in its various chapters has allowed an exploration of the familiar spirit as a being that was seen as an animal, categorised as a demon, and entrenched in stereotypes and anxieties about gender. In Chapter 2, we saw how the familiar when analysed as an animal was composed of beliefs about pets, animals with an honorary humanity, anxieties about the boundaries between man and beast, certain historical and folkloric beliefs about specific animal forms, and a tradition of using animals in order to convey beliefs and narratives. In Chapter 3, the process of how the familiar spirit was transformed into a demonic being and connected to larger theological concerns was considered. It also outlined how the familiars of the Bible were incorporated into the public domain and how the witch, with the help of the use of the familiar, was made into a symbol of idolatry and rebellion. In Chapter 4, the familiar can be seen as a being that symbolised anxieties about maintaining gender ideals, seen specifically in the placement of the witch as both anti-housewife and anti-mother, adding to the historiography demonstrating that witches being women was a phenomenon beyond misogyny. While the thematic

approach shows the variety and complexity of the language and symbolism that trial participants used, the primary inquires that drove this analysis need to be answered as an amalgamation of several recurrent themes throughout all of the chapters.

Two of these main threads have been how did the notion of the familiar form within the minds of contemporaries as a concept within witchcraft and what elements of the familiar come from outside witchcraft beliefs. In other words, what characteristics of the familiar are within the traditional witchcraft belief system established in Judeo-Christian reading and which are from an organic, oral culture? Through analysis we have seen that characteristics of the familiar that came from elite cultures centred around demonising the spirit. We see this best in Chapter 3, where the process of demonising is conveyed through a greater movement of reformers attempting to place beliefs about preternatural spirits as either superstitious or within a larger demonic network. We can see this through the references to the familiar spirit in Scripture being used in larger conversations of Protestantism and inversion of the Christian. There was also top-down justification of the familiar spirit as a diabolic element once it was targeted as a specific threat in the Witchcraft Act of 1604.

Some characteristics of familiars came from below. The familiar appearing in animal form, talking, and being related to fairies and hobgoblins, highlights how pamphlet material showed the voices of everyday people who were either not familiar with, or at least not concerned with elite witchcraft beliefs. We can also see this in the emergence of blood feeding, contrasting with the Continental belief of the witch mark. However, as has been shown throughout the thesis, all of these characteristics, whether originating from above or below, were ultimately compromised to form a being that held elements of both not-so-distinct cultures. This can probably best be seen in the confusion by trial participants of the Devil and the familiar spirit. In the early pamphlets, it seems that the familiar could be categorised as a malefic-based, folkloric figure. However, there were diabolic elements from the beginning such as the familiar being named Satan and the disavowal of Christ. On the other hand, the connection of the familiar spirit to the Devil seems to be made by trial participants of the lower orders out of an inclination to downplay the severity of the latter rather to recognise the threat, as reformers would have it, of the former. This was only righted (in the eyes of reformers) when demonologists incorporated and analysed interactions between familiars and witches, placing the former within the larger

temptation narrative. This information was then redistributed through demonologies, informing magistrates and pamphleteers of features that should be highlighted about the familiar, either through questioning or printing. Then, as many historians have pointed out, those offering testimony or confession wove narratives that not only met the expectations of their questioners, but also added in their own thoughts and language. The negotiation process then starts again. Even in this, the divisions between these two cultures were not absolute, but rather formed as part of a spectrum in which the familiar was used by trial participants of all stations to achieve certain goals, driven by various motives.

One of the more encompassing and more difficult questions to answer is what purpose does the familiar serve within witchcraft narratives for different trial participants. Witches, witnesses, magistrates (and their influencers), and pamphleteers used the familiar for different reasons in order to achieve different goals. Witches and witnesses used the familiar spirit to narrate and explain events in their lives through an oral tradition of letting animals speak for them. Those accused of witchcraft used this to align themselves with a lesser threat, as opposed to the Devil, although this backfires when the familiar was demonised by demonologists. Witches used familiars to explain their failure to meet religious and gender ideals. Familiar spirits were used to show struggle to conform to Protestant pressures of changing prayer methods, thoughts about the Eucharist, and superstitions. They also could be used by those accused of witchcraft to express their failings as a woman—unable to live up to expectations of motherhood and housekeeping. Ultimately, the familiar spirit was used by witches to place their sins and troubles in an accepted framework of explanation, tapping into traditions of using talking animals to speak for them, last dying speeches to absolve them, temptation narratives to justify their weaknesses, and neighbourly disputes to instigate accusations.

For witnesses and accusers, the familiar spirit allowed them to place the witch as the 'other' through categorising her with supplementary 'others' such as beasts, Catholics, non-conformers, demons, and women who were outside gender expectations. The spirits were also used to convey the witnesses' own failings in this area, exposing and affirming their own anxieties about how rigid these categories were. Magistrates and their influencers (reformers, demonologists, and legal minds) used the familiar spirit to enforce the reforming process, placing the familiar within a

larger diabolic hierarchy and exposing the true threat of the familiar to be its affiliation with Satan. It was also used to make sense of the folkloric elements of witchcraft in a Protestant system. The familiar spirit also allowed for these participants to have proof of witchcraft, a crime for which there was difficulty in finding solid evidence, which was emphasised through the endorsement of the familiar as an enemy both religiously and legally through witchcraft acts. Finally, the familiar allowed magistrates and their influencers to reaffirm gender roles, which was important because of the belief that the Christian family was a cornerstone and reflection of the Christian nation. This, coupled with the presence of the demon as a sign of the apocalypse, was used to locate England's role within providentialism.

It is difficult to ascertain how the final two categories of trial participants used the familiar spirit. Pamphleteers no doubt were interested in the familiar because of its entertainment value. We can see this interest through the use of graphic and detailed woodcuts that caught the eye and sparked the imagination. As we can tell through the various prefaces that were religiously charged and calling for a greater internalisation of sin, pamphleteers, to a certain extent, were part of the reforming process and by choosing to include details about familiars helped with the process of demonising it. On a more basic level, witchcraft pamphlets were a medium that appealed to different audiences, flirting between the categories of crime, news about the everyday man, fascination with the superstitious, reforming texts, and larger national narratives. Readers could then use the process of reading about familiars to reaffirm their social norms, justify their concerns that the familiar represented or threatened, and ultimately, for entertainment.

The last major theme that runs through the thesis was the question of why was the familiar considered a threat to early modern English people. When considering the familiar spirit as an animal, its common shape allowed for it to be integrated into everyday life, yet this shape was threatening because it was too close. While treated like a pet, the familiar held an honorary humanity that threatened dominion and stressed the fluidity between man and beast. By association, the witch was seen as inverting God's dominion and going against the natural order. In the third chapter, the familiar was shown as a threat because, at first, it was a being of superstition and folklore. The public focus on maleficium obscured the familiar's status as a salvation-threatening entity thus reformers' concerns over the familiar included fears

that they would encourage Christians to fall into sin and create a covenant with the Devil out of ignorance. Cunning folk were also treated in this regard—not considered threatening by the everyday person, who often visited them, but were slowly villainised by reformers because of the white witches' assumed connection with demonic power.[1] Later in the period, the familiar was then established as a threat because of its connection with the Devil and role in the apocalypse, reflected in the confessions of witches being described as having greater contact with the Devil. In the final chapter, the familiar spirit was treated as a threat because it placed the witch's power outside of (Godly) patriarchal control. Narratives about the familiar also allowed the witch to push against gender norms and showed a threat to family life. Ultimately, the familiar spirit was a threat because it was the primary tool in the systematic "othering" and ostracising of certain undesirables in the culture. This was possible because the language and characterisations surrounding the familiar were filled with symbolism and meaning beyond the exact words provided in the pamphlet material.

Why do familiars only occur in England? This is one of the questions that continues to plague historians that try to analyse English witchcraft and familiar spirits. Unfortunately, this thesis can only provide a few hypotheses to further the debate rather than any concrete answers. The familiar spirit probably emerged in England because of a combination of a few key factors. Firstly, England had a court system operated in parallel with its religious system. Through both the presence of witchcraft trials in ecclesiastical and secular courts as well as laws that were implemented to be a direct reflection of Protestant ideals, England had an official (if not in practice), consistent stand on witchcraft from crown to lower courts. While scepticism was present throughout the period, there was a clear official standpoint on several elements of witchcraft including familiars and a cultural system, through demonological tracts, judicial commentaries, and pamphlets, to provide feedback to develop this standpoint as more folkloric elements were discovered and incorporated in trial participants' statements. This cyclical process of acculturation through printing allowed for familiars to be incorporated into both learned and common

[1] Owen Davies, *Popular Magic: Cunning Folk in English History* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2007), 29-65.

narratives about witchcraft. Because England maintained this system for most of the period, it created an environment for details of trials to be repeated and established rather than oddities within English witchcraft narratives. Folk beliefs that were possibly unique to the British Isles were able to enter through the fact that English courts had an accusatory system that allowed for trial participants to provide the initial content for a witchcraft accusation that could be refined by the learned, but not ultimately erased. The starting point was the voices of the common people with elaboration and moral context being added by magistrates, influencers, and pamphleteers, as opposed to the inquisitorial systems implemented in many Continental courts that started from a top-down approach. I hypothesise that this combination of elements allowed the familiar not only to appear, but thrive as a feature of English witchcraft.

This thesis and my approach opens up new avenues of possibility rather providing definitive conclusions. My analysis shows how the familiar spirit was used by trial participants to show meanings and beliefs beyond the surface level presented in trial pamphlets. The familiar was one element in a larger system of witchcraft that allowed contemporaries to categorise their lives, often in polarities and inversions, and reinforce behaviours among those who practiced and feared it. As Clark comments, '[w]itchcraft, after all, was a cultural artefact—a crime that signified certain things and implied certain kinds of behaviour in those suspected and accused of it.'[2] This thesis has demonstrated that the familiar spirit is a good avenue of analysis through which to examine wider cultural themes within and beyond witchcraft beliefs. Further, this analysis shows of the familiar was a feature of witchcraft that was beyond a fleeting detail in a testimony but rather a being that was debated, compromised, and experienced (at least mentally) by contemporaries. As a part of English witchcraft, it also shows that witchcraft was not an isolated intellectual system, but rather saturated with the experiences and cultural beliefs of those who participated in it.

However, this being said, the thesis does have its limitations. The approach adopted here, while always interesting and leading to unexpected avenues, is incredibly frustrating because of the lack of concrete and exclusionary conclusions which is so

[2] Clark, *Thinking with Demons,* 110.

common in cultural history. Due to the massive amounts of layering and editing in the source material, it hard to truly know what contemporaries thought and what they were alluding to when providing details to their witchcraft experiences. There is simply a lack of explained detail in the sources that only allows the historian to weigh the evidence and provide nuanced hypotheses rather than definite answers. This was further hindered by the mere lack of primary material available. Many pamphlets have been lost to the passage of time, through lack of preservation, disaster, and simply being thrown away as it was seen as uncultured, cheap print not worthy of archiving. Therefore, my analysis is inevitably 'self-selected' as there was probably some yet unknowable reason those pamphlets that were preserved were chosen among the mass amounts of print from the period.

This study is also limited because of breadth of its implications. It is simply too much at this stage to be an expert in all of the elements that went into witchcraft pamphlets and the endless possibilities of what contemporaries could be referring to when participating in witchcraft narratives. Therefore, a certain amount of dependence on others' interpretations in certain subjects, such as the acculturation process in the Protestant Reformation, for example, must be used. These interpretations were then applied and examined when concerning the familiar within witchcraft pamphlets. The thesis was also limited to pamphlet material, as opposed to incorporating manuscript and other archival material. However, projects such as Early English Books Online facilitate a mass analysis of the familiar spirit. This limitation encouraged an approach that was more focused on large data analysis, rather than a specific thematic or geographic approaches such we see in the upcoming works of Charlotte Rose Millar and Vicky Carr.[3] Finally, as all doctoral projects, this analysis is limited by constraints of time. The themes to be explored were forced to be limited since it was impossible to follow up every lead that trial participants presented. Additionally, exploring the presence of familiar-like spirits in other European nations or colonial territories was beyond the scope of possibility.

[3] Millar is currently working on a manuscript examining the familiar through the history of emotions and Carr has recently submitted a PhD thesis on the familiar spirit in the south-east of England (University of Bristol, September 2016). Both rely heavily on archival material.

Like stated earlier, the nature of this work is that it opens up more avenues of inquiry than it closes. There are several considerations that could add to the analysis of the familiar spirit. Most obviously, the inclusion of more sources that discuss the familiar would expand the literature in a way that provides more voices to the narratives and spread of ideas. While I have stated that this analysis is limited to pamphlets, more could actually be explored within this source when concerned with the familiar. For example, an inquiry into pamphleteer practices of observing, selecting, and editing witchcraft trials could help enlighten us on why certain elements of the familiar were recorded and emphasised. A study into the market forces of witchcraft pamphlets could expand on reasons why the familiar was included in pamphlets, highlighted in illustrations, and ultimately declined in appearance in the eighteenth century. The literature could also be expanded by exploring the possibility of appearances of the familiar spirit in other regions, considering for example, a comparative study of Basque familiars with English ones and occurrences of familiar-like spirits in English colonies. Analysis could also benefit from a transnational study of the spread of these pamphlet materials to European and New World readers, exploring the commentary and influence on witchcraft or preternatural beliefs in the areas. This analysis is also limited in its chronological scope and could benefit from considering the revival of familiar spirits in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. There are also themes, some of which were briefly acknowledged in the text, that could use expanding and exploring in order to further understand the familiar. For example, some of these are: the sexualisation of the familiar and the witch mark, male witches with familiars, audience reactions to pamphlets, the familiar spirit being assigned gender, the frequent mentions of breath and air in familiar narratives, and the artistic representations of familiars in a variety of media.

The familiar spirit allows us to gain insight into the culture of early modern English people, experiencing their voices and narratives in pamphlet material. While the familiar has been previously considered a detail in the larger narrative, this work aims to show that the familiar spirit opens many avenues for insight into a culture that both surprises us and reflects concepts we still hold today. Understanding this very strange creature and how it was regarded in the past raises questions about modern sensibilities towards animals and our modern attitudes to the ‘other’.

Table 1: List of Familiar Names

Anne	Hobb	Pigin
Ayleward	Jack	Pretty Man
Ball	Jacob	Prickeare
Beezebub	Jamara	Priscill
Benias	James	Pyman
Besse	Jeffry	Richard
Bidd	Jermarah	Robbin
Birds	Jesus	Rug
Blackman	Jezabell	Rutterkin
Bonne	Jill	Sacar
Browning	Joan	Sack&Sugar
Bunne	Jockey	Sandy
Collyn	Jude	Satan
Dainty	Lilly	Sparrow
Daniel the Prophet	Littleman	Suckin
Dicke	Lought	Susan
Elimanzer	Lyerd	Sydrake
Elizabeth	Margaret	Teates
Fancie	Mawde	Tibb
Frog	Meribell	Tissy
George	Minnie	Tom
Gille	Nanne	Trullibub
Ginne	Ned	Tyffin
Greedigut	Nicholas	Tyttey
Grissill	Panu	Will
Hangman	Peter	Willet
Harrie	Phillip	Wynowe

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A.D. 1563. 5 Eliz., c.16

John Phillips. *The examination and confession of certaine Wytches at Chensforde in the countie of Essex before the Quenes majesties Judges, the XXVI daye of July Anno 1566.* London: 1566.

The Examination of John Walsh, before Maister Thomas Williams, Commissary to the Reverend Father in God William bishop of Excester, upon certayne Interrogatories touchying Wytchcrafte and Sorcerye, in the presence of divers gentlemen and others, the XX of August, 1566.

Chrysostom, John. *The disclosing of a late counterfeyted possession by the deuyl in two maydens within the citie of London.* London: Richard Watkins, 1574.

A Rehersall both straung and true, of heinous and horrible actes committed by Elizabeth Stile, Alias Rockingham, Mother Dutten, Mother Devell, Mother Margaret, Fower notorious Witches, apprehended at winsore in the Countie of Barks. And at Abbington arraigned, condemned, and executed on the 26 daye of Februarie last Anno. 1579. London, 1579.

A detection of damnable driftes, practized by three vvitches arraigned at Chelmifforde in Essex, at the laste assises there holden, whiche were executed in Aprill. 1579. Set forthe to discouer the ambushementes of Sathan, whereby he would surprise vs lulled in securitie, and hardened with

[1] Given the anonymity of most early modern pamphlets, these are cited in chronological order.

contempte of Gods vengeance threatened for our offences. London: [J. Kingston], 1579.

W.W., *A true and just Recorde, of the Information, Examination and Confession of all Witches, taken at S. Oses in the countie of Essex; whereof some were executed, and other some entreated according to the determination of lawe. Wherein all men may see what a pestilent people Witches are, and how unworthy to lyve in a Christian Commonwealth. Written orderly, as the cases were tried by evidence, By W.W. 1582.*

Galis, Richard. *A brief treatise containing the most strange and horrible cruelty of Elizabeth Stile alias Rockingham and her confederates, executed at Abingdon, upon R. Galis.* London: J. Allde, 1579.

A true and most dreadfull discourse of a woman possessed with the Deuill who in the likenesse of a headlesse beare fetched her out of her bedd, and in the presence of seuen persons, most straungely roulled her thorow three chambers, and doune a high paire of staiers, on the fower and twentie of May last. 1584. At Dichet in Sommersetshire. A matter as miraculous as euer was seen in our time. London: J. Kingston, 1584.

A true and most dreadfull discourse of a woman possessed with the Deuill who in the likenesse of a headlesse beare fetched her out of her bedd, and in the presence of seuen persons, most straungely roulled her thorow three chambers, and doune a high paire of staiers, on the fower and twentie of May last. 1584. At Dichet in Sommersetshire. A matter as miraculous as euer was seen in our time. London: J. Kingston, 1584.

The apprehension and confession of three notorious witches. Arreigned and by iustice condemned and executed at Chelmes-forde, in the Countye of Essex, the 5. day of Iulye, last past. 1589 With the manner of their diuelish practices and keeping of thier spirits, whose fourmes are heerein truelye proportioned. 1589.

A true discourse. Declaring the damnable life and death of one Stubbe Peeter, a most wicked sorcerer who in the likenes of a woolfe, committed many murders, continuing this diuelish practise 25. yeeres, killing and deuouring

men, woomen, and children. Who for the same fact was taken and executed the 31. of October last past in the towne of Bedbur neer the cittie of Collin in Germany. Trulye translated out of the high Duch, according to the copie printed in Collin, brought ouer into England by George Bores ordinary poste, the xi. daye of this present moneth of Iune 1590. who did both see and heare the same. London: 1590.

G. B. *A most vvicked worke of a wretched witch (the like whereof none can record these manie yeeres in England.) Wrought on the person of one Richard Burt, seruant to maister Edling of Woodhall in the parrish of Pinner in the Countie of Myddlesex, a myle beyond Harrow. Latelie committed in March last, An. 1592 and newly recognised according to the truth. by G.B. maister of Arts*. London: R. B[ourne], 1592.

The most strange and admirable discouerie of the three witches of Warboys arraigned, conuicted and executed at the last Assises at Huntington, for the bewitching of the fiue daughters of Robert Throckmorton Esquier, and diuers other persons, with sundrie diuelish and grieuous torments. ; And also for the bewitching to death of the Lady Crumwell, the like hath not bene heard of in this age. London: 1593.

I.D., *The most wonderful and true storie, of a certaine Witch named Alse Gooderige of Stapen hill, who was arraigned and convicted at Darbie at the Assises there. As also a true report of the strange torments of Thomas Darling, a boy of thirteene yeres of age, that was possessed by the Devill, with his horrible fittes and terrible Apparitions by him uttered at Burton upon Trent in the Countie of Stafford, and of his marvellous deliverance.* London: 1597.

The triall of Maist. Dorrell, or A collection of defences against allegations not yet suffered to receiue convenient answere Tending to cleare him from the imputation of teaching Sommers and others to counterfeit possession of divells. 1599.

James VI/I. *Daemonologie,* Edinburgh: 1603.

A.D. 1604. 1 Jas. I, c.12

The most cruell and bloody murther committed by an Inkeepers wife, called Annis Dell, and her sonne George Dell, foure yeeres since On the bodie of a childe, called Anthony Iames in Bishops Hatfield in the countie of Hartford, and now most miraculously reuealed by the sister of the said Anthony, who at the time of the murther had her tongue cut out, and foure yeeres remayned dumme and speechlesse, and now perfectly speaketh, reuealing the murther, hauing no tongue to be seen. With the seuerall vvitch-crafts, and most damnable practises of one Iohane Harrison and her daughter vpon seuerall persons, men and women at Royston, who were all executed at Hartford the 4 of August last past. 1606. London: 1606.

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relation of the Devils accesse to her, and their conference together. London: 1621.

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Most fearefull and strange nevves from the bishoppricke of Durham, being a true relation of one Margret Hooper of Edenbyres, neere the river Darwent in the said bishoppricke. Who was most fearfully possessed and tormented with the devill, as also in what ugley shape he first appeared unto her, how lamentableye she was handled with this evill spirit, and at last how wonderfully the Lord delivered her. Affirmed by these cridible witnesses there present, November the fifteenth. 1641. Stephen Hooper. Iohn Hooper. Iohn Sley. Alexander Eglestone. Anthony Westgarth Alice Egleston. And divers others. London: 1641.

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The examination, confession, triall, and execution, of Joane Williford, Joan Cariden, and Jane Hott: who were executed at Feversham in Kent, for being witches, on Munday the 29 of September, 1645. Being a true copy of their evill lives and wicked deeds, taken by the Major of Feversham and jurors for the said inquest. With the examination and confession of Elizabeth Harris, not yet executed. All attested under the hand of Robert Greenstreet, major of Feversham. London: 1645.

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The witches of Huntingdon, their examinations and confessions; exactly taken by his Majesties justices of peace for that county. Whereby will appeare haw craftily and dangerously the devill tempteth and seizeth on poore soules. The reader may make use hereof against hypocrisie, anger, malice, swearing, idolatry, lust, covetousnesse, and other grievous sins, which occasioned this their downfall. London: W. Wilson, 1646.

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published by Matthevv Hopkins, witch-finder. For the benefit of the whole kingdome. London: 1647.

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A Collection of Modern Relations of Matter of Fact concerning Witches & Witchcraft upon Persons of People. London: 1649.

The Divel's Delusions; or A faithful relation of John Palmer and Elizabeth Knott, two notorious Witches, lately condemned at the Sessions of Oyer and Terminer in St Albans, Together with the Confession of the aforesaid John Palmer and Elizabeth Knott, executed July 16. London,1649.

Wonderfull newes from the north. Or, A true relation of the sad and grievous torments, inflicted upon the bodies of three children of Mr. George Muschamp, late of the county of Northumberland, by witch-craft: and how miraculously it pleased God to strengthen them, and to deliver them: as also the prosecution of the sayd witches, as by oaths, and their own confessions will appear, and by the indictment found by the jury against one of them, at the sessions of the peace held at Alnwick, the 24. day of April, 1650. Novemb. 25. 1650. Imprimatur, John Dovvname. London: 1650.

E.G. *A prodigious & tragicall history of the arraignment, tryall, confession, and condemnation of six witches at Maidstone, in Kent, at the assizes there held in July, Fryday 30. this present year. 1652. Before the Right Honorable, Peter Warburton, one of the Justices of the Common Pleas. / Collected from the observations of E.G. Gent. (a learned person, present at their conviction and condemnation) and digested by H.F. Gent. To which is added a true relation of one Mrs. Atkins a mercers wife in Warwick, who was strangely caried away from her house in July last, and hath not been heard of since.* London: 1652.

The tryall and examination of Mrs. Joan Peterson, before the Honorable Bench, and the Sessions house in the Old-Bayley, yesterday; for her supposed witchceaft [sic], and poysoning of the lady Powel at Chelsey: together with her confession at the bar. Also, the tryal, examination, and confession, of Giles Fenderlyn, who had made a covenant with the devil for 14 years, written with

the bloud of his two fore-fingers, & afterwards kill'd his wife: with the strange apparitions that appeared unto him in prison; and how the devil saluted him in the likeness of a lawyer. Likewise, the manner how he was enchanted, and made shot-free; and by the power and efficacy of a ring which the devil gave him, could find out any monies that was hid, and escape undiscover'd from his enemies; but his covenant being expir'd, he was aprehended, and (according to law) sentenc'd to be hang'd in chaines. London: 1652.

The witch of Wapping, Or An exact and perfect relation, of the life and devilish practises of Joan Peterson, that dwelt in Spruce Island, near Wapping; who was condemned for practising witch-craft, and sentenced to be hanged at Tyburn, on Munday the 11th. of April, 1652. Shewing, how she bewitch'd a child, and rock'd the cradle in the likenesse of a cat; how she frighted a baker; and how the devil often came to suck her, sometimes in the likeness of a dog, and other times like a squirrel. Together, with the confession of Prudence Lee, who was burnt in Smithfield on Saturday the 10th. of this instant for the murthering her husband: and her admonition and counsel to all her sex in general. London: 1652.

Doctor Lamb's Darling or Strange and terrible News from Salisbury being a true, exact, and perfect Relation, of the great and wonderful Contract and Engagement made between the Devil, and Mistriss Anne Bodenham. London: 1653.

M.Y. *The Hartford-shire wonder. Or, Strange news from vvare being an exact and true relation of one Jane Stretton the danghter [sic] of Thomas Stretton, of ware in the county of Hartford, who hath been visited in a strange kind of manner by extraordinary and unusual fits, her abstaining from sustenance for the space of 9 months, being haunted by imps or devils in the form of several creatures here described the parties adjudged of all by whom she was thus tormented and the occasion thereof with many other remarkable things taken from her own mouth and confirmed by many credible witnesses.* London: 1669.

The Full and true relation of the tryal, condemnation, and execution of Ann Foster (who was arrained for a witch) on Saturday the 22th of this instant August, at the place of execution at Northampton : with the manner how she by her malice and vvitchcraft set all the barns and corn on fire belonging to one Joseph Weeden living in Eastcoat, and bewitched a whole flock of sheep in a most lamentable manner ... : and also in what likeness the Devil appeared to her while she was in prison, and the manner of her department at her tryal. London: 1674.

Relation of the most remarkable proceedings at the late assizes at Northampton Conteyning truely and fully, the tryals, confessions, and execution of a most mischievous vvitch, notorious high-way-man, barbarous murderess. The first being Mary Forster, who by witchcraft destroyed above 30 sheep belonging to one Joseph Weedon, and afterwards burned to the ground his dwelling-house, and two large barns, full of corn and hay: to his damage above 300l. VVith her confession of the fact, how, and why she did it: and askign him forgiveness for the same. And a wonderful experiment of her divelish skill shewed in the goal, after she was condemned. The second a high-way-man, who had been 14 times in goal, and before his death discovered several others. The third a young vvench that killed her child, with the strange means how the same was discovered, and her penitent behaviour at the execution. Who all suffered at Northampton aforesaid, Saturday, Aug. 22. 1674. London: 1674.

An Account of the tryal and examination of Joan Buts, for being a common witch and inchantress, before the Right Honourable Sir Francis Pemberton, Lord Chief Justice, at the assizes holden for the burrough of Southward and county of Surrey, on Monday, March 27, 1682. London: 1582.

A True and impartial relation of the informations against three witches, viz., Temperance Lloyd, Mary Trembles, and Susanna Edwards, who were indicted, arraigned and convicted at the assizes holden for the county of Devon, at the castle of Exon, Aug. 14, 1682 with their several confessions, taken before Thomas Gist, Mayor, and John Davie, alderman, of Biddiford, in the said county, where they were inhabitants : as also, their speeches,

confessions and behaviour at the time and place of execution on the twenty fifth of the said month. London: Freeman Collins, 1682.

A tryal of witches at the assizes held at Bury St. Edmonds for the count of Suffolk on the tenth day of March, 1664 [i.e 1665] before Sir Matthew Hale, Kt., then Lord Chief Baron of His Majesties Court of Exchequer / taken by a person then attending the court. London: 1682.

The life and conversation of Temperance Floyd, Mary Lloyd; and Susanna Edwards three eminent witches lately condemed at Exeter assizes; together with a full account of their first agreement with the Devil: with the manner how they prosecuted their devillish sorceries. Also a full account of their tryal, examination, condemnation, and confession, at the place of execution: with many other things remarkable; and worthy observation. , London: J.W., 1682.

The tryal, condemnation, and execution of three vvitches viz. Temperace [sic] Floyd, Mary Floyd, and Susanna Edwards. Who were arraigned at Exeter on the 18th. of August, 1682. And being prov'd guilty of witch-craft, were condemn'd to be hang'd, which was accordingly executed in the view of many spectators, whose strange and much to be lamented impudence, is never to be forgotten. Also, how they confessed what mischiefs they had done, by the assistance of the devil, who lay with the above-named Temperence Floyd nine nights together. Also, how they squeezed one Hannah Thomas to death in their arms; how they also caused several ships to be cast away, causing a boy to fall from the top of a main-mast into the sea. With many wonderful things, worth your reading. London: J. Deacon, 1682.

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ensnaring the poore soule by this desperate practize of annoying the bodie: with the seuerall vses therof to the Church of Christ. Very necessary for the redeeming of these atheisticall and secure times. By Thomas Cooper. London: Nicholas Okes, 1617.

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legierdemaine and iuggling are deciphered: and many other things opened, which have long lien hidden, howbeit verie necessarie to be knowne. Heerevnto is added a treatise vpon the nature and substance of spirits and diuels, &c: all latelie written by Reginald Scot Esquire. London : Henry Denham, 1584.

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